

# INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT FAMILY BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROGRAM KELUARGA HARAPAN DOING INDEPENDENT GRADUATION IN DEPOK CITY

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**Abstract.** The Indonesian government runs a poverty-relief program known as the Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH). The Program Keluarga Harapan, the program that carries the concept of conditional cash assistance, requires not only the provision of assistance for 'free,' but also a change in behavior or conditions, which is the long-term goal of the assistance scheme that has been provided. The implementation of the independent graduation reflects the state of the beneficiaries, who consciously believe that they can live their lives more independently. This condition means to be described by a question about the individual empowerment of the beneficiary families of the Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH), which conducts independent graduation in Depok City. This research describes the state of individual empowerment at beneficiaries in Depok City, which has declared independent graduation voluntarily. The method used is descriptive-qualitative, with data collected through in-depth interviews (with beneficiaries who conduct independent graduation, assistants, local village heads,) documentation studies, and observations. The research found three internal and one external characteristic that characterizes the beneficiary's empowerment: knowledge, self-confidence, the ability to make choices (agency), and social support from the beneficiary's immediate environment.

**Keywords:** empowerment; poverty; graduation; PKH

## I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty alleviation is one of the global goals outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals, aiming to create a world free of poverty. The idea of global goals makes the poverty alleviation program a priority agenda that consistently gets immediate attention in every leadership. According to BPS data [1], the number of poor people in March 2020 was 26.42 million, up 1.63 million from September 2019 and 1.28 million from March 2019. In other words, the percentage of poor people in March 2020 was 9.78 percent, up 0.56 percentage points from September 2019 and 0.37 percentage points from March 2019.

Poverty handling has always been a national spotlight that necessitates comprehensive and cross-sectoral management programs. Various program models aim for different outcomes and create the slogan "integrated poverty handling program." The integration in question is the presence of inter-organizer and inter-responsible integration with various bases, including social assistance programs, community empowerment programs, and small business empowerment programs (TNP2K [2]). The Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) scheme, which is part of the basic social assistance program, has received much attention (Rawlings and Rubio [3]). The Indonesian government then adopted the CCT program concept, beginning in 2007. The Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) was the name given to this CCT concept.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has increased the number of PKH participants from 9.2 million (KK) to 10

million (Iman [4]). With a total budget of IDR 37.4 trillion in 2020, PKH has a significant role as a national safety net required to fulfill the vision of poverty alleviation. According to data from the Ministry of Social Affairs [5], up to 1,179,304 beneficiaries have declared their intention to withdraw from PKH participation in 2020. This year, there are two types of graduations in PKH: independent graduation (withdrawing from personal awareness) with up to 341,773 beneficiaries and natural graduation (out of participation because there are no components) with up to 837,531 beneficiaries.

The PKH Program's initial scheme follows the PKH Graduation Technical Guidelines [6], stating that beneficiaries are expected to graduate after receiving assistance for five years. They are assumed to be better equipped to be empowered with the least amount of government assistance. The various services provided direct beneficiaries to be capable and independent so that when graduation occurs, there is an increase in economic and social aspects that are consistent with the concept of (empowerment). Thus, beneficiaries can be said to be (empowered).

According to Wallerstein [7], well-implemented empowerment has implications for a society's ability to alleviate poverty. Empowerment efforts will increase individuals' or communities' ability to deal with poverty; it also demonstrates that empowered individuals or groups have overcome the poverty conditions they have faced thus far. The link between empowerment and the Program

Keluarga Harapan is that the program that carries the concept of conditional cash assistance requires the provision of 'free' assistance and changes in behavior or conditions that are long-term goals of the assistance schemes that have been provided. Beneficiaries in poverty at the beginning of the program, which provides cash assistance and other assistance processes, are expected to gradually improve their living standards so that by the fifth year, they are ready to release assistance and experience changes in conditions to become more prosperous families, one of which is demonstrated by the implementation of independent graduation.

Individual empowerment is essential to study because when starting PKH participation, beneficiaries are in the same condition, namely being below the poverty line and thus eligible for assistance. Beneficiaries receive social assistance tailored to their components, equal assistance, and equal access to education and health services, but not all beneficiaries are willing to carry out independent graduation voluntarily. Beneficiaries who voluntarily withdraw from program participation are a method of achieving PKH goals, and the principle of conditional cash transfer is the program's central concept. The implementation of the independent graduation reflects the state of the beneficiaries, who consciously believe they can run their lives more independently. This research is intended to describe this condition.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach, emphasizing the depth of data to determine the quality of research results (Ibrahim [8]). This research aims to describe the individual empowerment of PKH's beneficiaries in Depok City, which has declared independent graduation. The Limo District was chosen as the research locus in Depok City because during the pandemic wave the Limo District continued to optimize the implementation of independent graduation. As evidenced, the Limo district has graduated 61 PKH participants until the end of February 2021 (Dinsos Depok [9]), in which all sub-districts did not experience this condition it becomes an exciting background to be used as a research location.

Data collection techniques are an essential step in the implementation of a research project. Data collection done correctly can yield reliable and valid results. The documentation study used in this research, namely profile data of Limo District, Depok City, which contains specific geographic and demographic information, and PKH membership data, which contains information on independent graduation conducted by participants, are some of the data collection techniques used in this research. PKH, information about Limo District obtained from trustworthy news sources online, theories used for analysis obtained by searching international journals and digital books. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with selected informants. Informants interviewed in-depth as the primary source of information were beneficiaries who did independent graduation on personal awareness. They have a business or a

job and have received PKH assistance for three years or more. Information obtained through questions and answers from a research guideline. Research questions developed in line with the course of the interview, and on this occasion, the researcher made itself a research instrument to explore in-depth information related to the research title.

The technical analysis [10] is conducted by first collecting data as primary data derived from the researchers' fieldwork experience. Second, data recording, which includes a sound recording, visual recording, and field notes. Third, data selection and processing in a final report consisting of sorting, coding classification (consisting of open, axial, and selective coding) in coding selection (aside from the two data, it can also be obtained from other sources such as maps and documents), then interpretation and elaboration.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Individual empowerment of Beneficiary Families of the Program Keluarga Harapan, which conducts independent graduation in Depok City, particularly in Limo District, is described by three internal and one external characteristic. The first characteristic is knowledge, which refers to the knowledge one possesses to increase one's empowerment. The second trait is self-assurance, which relates to mental preparedness to face problems and challenges. Third, the characteristics of the agency are referred to as decision-making ability. External support, which is characterized by the availability of social support, is the fourth characteristic.

### *Knowledge*

Knowledge characteristics are described based on field findings that beneficiaries who conduct independent graduation play an active role in gaining access to the information required to meet their development needs. *Individual empowerment* is defined by Hennink [11] as access to education, training, and information from formal or non-formal sources that can help to support decision making, self-confidence, and self-efficacy in recognizing problems, considering potential problem solving that can be done, and identifying sources for problem-solving.

The Program Keluarga Harapan target population is families identified in the Integrated Social Welfare Data (ISWD). Each target family has one family member who is the PKH's 'manager,' and the administrator is responsible for ensuring that obligations are met and program rights are accepted during the work process. The wives of the heads of families make up the majority of the representatives of the families receiving the program. The wife of the family's head plays an active role in household management. The PKH administrator, later known as the beneficiary, serves as the head of the household, ensuring that the family's needs are met. One of the initiatives is to start a business or get a job. Beneficiaries realize that they also have a stake in providing for the family's needs. Their economic problems are then addressed by seeking information to generate additional

income for the family. According to Midgley [12], said that the ability to solve problems represents a higher level of well-being than those who are unable to do so. Their efforts to seek information related to business or work that aids in the resolution of economic problems represent the degree of welfare or ability to achieve greater welfare than other people in similar circumstances.

Access to information is gained by contacting easily accessible sources such as relatives, friends, the head of the Neighborhood Association in the beneficiaries environment, and PKH assistants. Beneficiaries recognize that the work he has been doing for a long time and the PKH assistance he has received will not last forever, so he is looking for business opportunities that will increase family income. He was then able to obtain the business opportunity due to the availability of information sources provided by the PKH facilitator. According to Midgley [12], the community requires an environment that can provide opportunities and support the potential of its members, and this opportunity is fulfilled by having access to information from the surrounding environment to help increase beneficiaries' potential. It can be said that there is a correlation between a supportive environment and *individual empowerment* of beneficiaries, besides that the condition of beneficiaries' empowerment also contributes to improving the welfare of the community in that environment.

Not only do beneficiaries' ability to access service facilities provide information about business opportunities, but it also describes the state of their empowerment. According to the United Nations [13], one form of poverty is limited access to education and other services; when beneficiaries can access these services, it means that it has broken free from the cycle of poverty that has ensnared it. The affordability of health and education services demonstrates this. The Program Keluarga Harapan, an aid program with a *Conditional Cash Transfer* (CCT) scheme, aims to reduce poverty by creating a welfare program that requires the development of behavior that beneficiaries are expected to carry out.

#### *Self-confident*

Beneficiaries who have independent graduation have confidence that they will be able to meet their needs even if they withdraw from program participation. This is also related to the concept of sustenance, as it is expected that there will be other sources of sustenance aside from the government's PKH assistance. Internal factors relate to one's belief in one's own ability to achieve one's life goals. Beneficiaries believe they are capable of meeting household needs on their own and no longer require assistance. Besides that, beneficiaries also feel that there are many people whose conditions are more in need than themselves, so when measuring their abilities, they feel that they should be more capable than people with more difficult conditions than themselves.

Confidence is an important factor in determining how ready beneficiaries are to release their assistance and is optimistic that it will be able to meet its own needs without

the assistance of the government. This is consistent with Hennink's [11] agency concept, in which the self-confidence component is included in the form of self-identity, which forms a person's ability to make the choices he desires.

Beneficiaries' confidence factor in Limo District is influenced more by external beliefs, specifically the divine value that there is always sustenance for every human being. This contradicts Lauster's opinion, which states that self-confidence is simply defined as a person's belief in his ability to act accompanied by a sense of freedom rather than anxiety while maintaining the aspect of responsibility. The self-confidence of beneficiaries graduate who completed this independent graduation was influenced more by beliefs about the concept of sustenance provided by God than by belief in one's abilities. These two factors interact, but external factors are more influential in describing the confidence of beneficiaries graduates.

#### *Ability to make choices (agency)*

The concept of *empowerment* is closely related to the ability to make decisions as explained by Alston [14] that when a group or individual has the capacity or ability to identify effective choices, make choices, they can implement real choices to produce action and the expected result is what is called *empowerment*. The beneficiaries agency, which performs independent graduation, is formed by expanding assets and capabilities. According to Samman and Santos [15], the achievement of the agency will be determined by assets and capabilities, where assets are material ownership such as land, housing, livestock, and savings, and capabilities are internal human things that can be capital. They have a source of income because beneficiaries have a business or a job.

The ability to make choices occurs because of an increase in assets and capabilities. Poverty makes a person powerless to choose what he wants due to limitations in material and power relations. Beneficiaries who did independent graduation tend to have increased power. First, in terms of assets, independent graduates' beneficiaries have sources of income either from businesses that are run in their own homes or working for other people. By having their source of income, they are no longer too dependent on government assistance because their needs have been fulfilled. Although the beneficiaries feel that their lives have not changed significantly, they are grateful. After all, they do not have to worry about not having money because they have assets that can be sold at any time if it is in an emergency. Other than thinking of income as an increase in assets.

The character of the recipients of these benefits tends to be more initiative to seek business or job opportunities. related to the previous point regarding knowledge; they can access the information needed to develop their capacity. An example is promoting products through social media or supplying merchandise from e-commerce to get low prices and sell them at competitive prices. This ability allows the beneficiaries to be more creative in generating unlimited growth opportunities. With increased assets and capabilities,

beneficiaries have more alternative options to solve their problems than expecting only one income source from government assistance. Increased assets and capabilities convince the beneficiaries to resign voluntarily because, without any help, they are ready to live their lives. Beneficiaries' confidence is strengthened by having a source of income because they are no longer concerned that their needs will not be met. The ability to choose the desired life path is influenced by the increase in assets and abilities of beneficiaries.

#### *Social Support*

The next characteristic that explains the condition of *individual empowerment* of beneficiaries who conducts independent prosperous graduation is social support. Environmental aspects that support change, according to Hennink [11], can be a supporting mechanism for achieving individual empowerment. A supportive environment is associated with the availability of resources in the surrounding environment that beneficiaries require to achieve the anticipated empowerment. The family, the environment, and the government all provide this assistance. Family support is an important factor in increasing empowerment. As the smallest and closest organizational unit, the family provides the necessary support in the form of moral support, advice, information, and material assistance.

The majority of beneficiaries are his wife with a husband who is the breadwinner and the main *decision-maker* in the family. With these conditions, beneficiaries receive moral support in the form of advice and advice when their business encounters difficulties. There is also financial assistance available to beneficiaries if she wishes to start a business. Family support is obtained from other families, such as parents, siblings, and children, for beneficiaries, who is the primary breadwinner.

Another form of support available to increase empowerment is support for the surrounding environment, which is realized through the support of neighbors. Beneficiaries obtain the information they require from neighbors who are quite close and are even considered brothers. This indicates an active-proactive relationship in which the environment has access to knowledge and provides access and then follows up with the process of continuously seeking the information required to the source of that information, which has implications for the *individual empowerment* of the beneficiary itself. Beneficiaries is better able to develop the business that has been run with the availability of information, while also forming self-confidence, confidence in self-ability, and available alternative options so that they are more prepared when conducting independent graduation. This is in line with the opinion mentioned by Hennink [11] that the relationship between agency and environmental support is at the core of individual empowerment. In line with the opinion of Zastrow [16] that human needs can be met with the efforts of themselves and their families, if they are unable to fulfill them themselves, the neighbors and the surrounding environment are willing to help meet these various needs.

The government assists in the form of material and non-material support to one of the beneficiaries who participate in the e-warong trial program. This material assistance is provided in the form of money and goods to complement the needs of the upcoming grocery store. Involving a beneficiary in business training as a provider of knowledge to be applied in the process of running a business provides non-material support. Capacity building and productivity, according to Chambers [17], are critical strategies for poverty reduction. Improving business skills is one concrete step. By involving a beneficiary in training, business skills are facilitated, and acknowledge that the knowledge is useful for him to apply in real-world business practices such as financial management. By increasing the ability and ownership of business assets in the form of goods, making beneficiaries achieve an agency called Samman and Santos [15] is part of the formation of *individual empowerment*.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Beneficiary families who graduate independently have a distinct personality that reflects their sense of self-sufficiency. They are eager to learn about new business/job opportunities and have easy access to the information they require. The character of this knowledge stems from their realization that they cannot rely on government assistance and must rely on their abilities to meet the needs of their families. Another distinguishing feature is that they are confident that even if they do not receive PKH assistance, they will be able to survive; this is also supported by spiritual values that are believed to be about sustenance. Another characteristic is that they have the authority to make their own decisions in the household due to an increase in assets and abilities that provide a beneficiary with more options in making decisions based on their life goals and values.

Then the next character is related to the role of family, environment, and government in providing assistance that contributes to Beneficiary Families' empowerment. The beneficiary receives information and psychological support from his family. When the beneficiary requires assistance, the environment becomes a source of information and material support. The government provides administrative assistance in the form of simplified licensing, as well as material assistance in the form of business funding assistance.

Based on the foregoing, it is concluded that Beneficiary Families of the Program Keluarga Harapan do not always achieve empowerment within the five-year time frame specified by the program. Empowerment is dependent on how their awareness and willingness to rely on themselves without government assistance is developed. This awareness and willingness are determined not always by economic capacity, but rather by their mindset or willingness to develop themselves. When the mindset is awakened, they will take the initiative to find alternative solutions to problems; having alternatives allows them to

better determine which choices will be made to continue their lives. That is how self-empowerment or *individual empowerment* can be achieved to the point where the beneficiary is prepared to withdraw from program participation by conducting independent graduation. This is the main objective of the poverty alleviation program, which is to improve the welfare of poor families to become sustainable prosperous families.

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