



## Effect of Group Participative Communication and Economic Empowerment of Independent Women

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### Abstract

The study aims to analyze the effect of participatory group communication and the economic empowerment of female household towards economic independence. The female head of a family in the city of Batang, central Java, Indonesia has a condition of economic limitations. Therefore, the Pekka group paid attention to women heads of households to be empowered. The respondents were 229 female heads of household, consisting of nine single, married 150, widowed 70 Pekka. The research found a real influence between participatory communication between groups and economic empowerment on Pekka's economic independence. The results show that the direction of problem-solving communication has the most contribution in forming participatory communication groups, and access to capital has the most contribution in forming economic empowerment in realizing Pekka's economic independence.

**Keywords:** Group participatory communication; Economic empowerment; Independence women, Head of a family.



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### 1. Introduction

The female head of a family in the city of Batang has a condition of economic limitations. Efforts to alleviate poverty through empowerment and quality improvement of human resources, one of which is the empowerment program that is currently developed by Pekka Batang through participatory communication within Pekka groups, has the objective to empower the economy.

The principle of women's economic independence is to respect and prioritize women. Moreover, it provides opportunities for women to be able to overcome obstacles and family economic problems. Women's economic empowerment is carried out to organize a better life for the survival of household life.

One of the efforts in women's economic empowerment in the city of Batang through Pekka groups is to develop economic improvement activities through self-help with a revolving fund. The activity is named a saving and loan cooperative. The funds collected are then managed, and then the funds are lent to all members in turn.

Loans are given based on the ability to repay loan installments and the size of the business to be developed. Members are given knowledge about cooperatives, bookkeeping education through training so that they are able to manage the funds correctly. Members repay loans on time. They gradually began to be able to empower economically. Participatory communication is done openly, and all information is exchanged through Pekka groups, whether in discussion forums, dialogues, regular meetings, or sending messages through WhatsApp.

Participatory communication has been able to be carried out well in Pekka groups. However, Pekka members, in general, were more willing to listen to the information provided by the facilitators. The members thought that the information conveyed by the companion was considered to be more accurate, and the way of delivering was considered to be easier to comprehend and understand. Unlike the information that comes from the management of cadres, members consider that the management and cadres are less active in providing information quickly and accurately. Management and cadres are still not considered satisfying the members in explaining information clearly.

Economic empowerment is carried out at Pekka groups through training that has been carried out. Skills are developed through training in the hope that members who have skills such as sewing, cooking, beauty, entrepreneurship opening a grocery store, massaging, etc. can be developed in accordance with their talents and abilities related to venture capital.

The economic independence of Pekka groups can be realized if participatory communication can work in synergy among the management, cadres, members, and assistants. Therefore, in carrying out Pekka's economic empowerment, it requires more dynamic communication and efforts to empower the economy more sustainably after training through the Pekka center. The direction of the goal of independence can be realized if between participatory communication and economic empowerment can be done first so that relevant economic independence can be realized.

Based on the above explanation, the research aims to: (1) identify and describe participatory group communication and economic empowerment, and economic independence. (2) analyze the effect of participatory group communication and economic empowerment on economic independence.

## 2. Material and Method

The study used survey methods in Batang City - Central Java, Indonesia. The main advantage of the survey method is that it can make generalizations for populations based on an analysis of samples from that population. The study lasted eight months, which began in March to October 2019.

The population in this study was female heads of households in Batang City. The number of Pekka populations in Batang City was 535, and twelve villages were selected, namely: (Botolambat Village, Tulis Village, Sambojo Village, Wringin Gintung Village, Siberuk Village, Wonokerso Village, Jrasah Payung Village, Tegalsari Village, Bakalan Village, Juragan Village, Cempereng Village, and Beji Village). Sampling (Kerlinger, 2006) was done by a simple random sampling technique, and the sampling method was considered homogeneous. The subjects were taken from each stratum or each region proportionally or in balance with the number of subjects in each stratum or region. The number of respondents as many as 229 heads of families was obtained based on the Slovin formula with a fault tolerance chosen of five percent.

Primary data were collected from Pekka members through questionnaires conducted by Pekka members themselves in the city of Batang. The number of questions and Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of each variable are as follows: Participatory Group Communication (36 questions;  $\alpha = 0.622$ ); Pekka Economic Empowerment (24 questions;  $\alpha = 0.868$ ), and Pekka Economic Independence (24 questions;  $\alpha = 0.845$ ).

The data obtained from the questionnaire were then inputted into the Excel program and through the process of editing, coding, and cleaning. Then the data were analyzed using a computer program. The analyzes used in this study were : (1) descriptive analysis used to describe and categorize the variables of participatory communication, economic empowerment and economic independence using SPSS 22.0; and (2) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis to see the effect of participatory communication and economic empowerment on Pekka's economic independence.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Participatory Communication of Pekka Groups

Based on the results of categorization of low <50% and high> 50% in the participatory communication variable, the Pekka group was in the high category by 79.9%, and 20.1% belonged to the low category. The results are presented in Table 1 Communication categories of the 2019 Pekka group

Table-1. Distribution of individual answers based on participatory

Participatory Communication	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Low	46	20,1
High	183	79,9

n = 229

Based on the results of participatory communication categorization in Pekka groups seen in each dimension, the results showed that the aspects of ideas and thought were included in the high category of 64.4%, that is, respondents always and often provide ideas and ideas, have been present intensively in training activities and meetings, and have understood the types of activities carried out at each meeting in Pekka participatory communication of 35.4% respondents which were still relatively low.

The results on the dialogic dimension fell into the high category of 65.1%. This means that respondents are always and often involved in the dialogue to exchange information, provide opinions, contribute to problem-solving, take part in two-way communication activities either through face-to-face or through communication media, 34.9% of respondents fall into the low category. The results on the dimension of discussion intensity showed that respondents fell into the low category 54.1%, that is, respondents are not active in discussions to ask, give, and reject information or opinions related to discussion activities in which 45.9% of respondents fall into the high category, meaning that almost half of the respondents are always and often active in discussions, give information opinions and suggestions.

The results on the dimension of the direction of communication showed that respondents fell into the low category of 63%, that is, respondents tend to only follow the direction of communication from the companion, cadre, and management in which 36.2% of respondents fell into the high category which means that respondents tend to listen more to input, suggestions and be able to provide advice and good two-way communication occurrence so that the communication that is established leads to open and positive communication.

The results on the dimension of how to solve the problem fall into the high category - 67.2%. This means that more than half of respondents have good participatory communication in helping to solve problems in which 32.8% of respondents fell into the low category. This means that the direction of communication, dialogue, and the intensity of the respondents' discussions is low so that problem solving through participatory communication cannot solve the problem properly.

The results on the dimensions of leadership roles were considered into the high category - 71.2%. This means that respondents have a comprehensive leadership thinking in which 28.8% of respondents fell into the low category, that is, respondents do not have the skills. The results are presented in [Table 2](#).

**Table-2.** Distribution of categories per participatory communication indicator in the 2019 Pekka group

Communication Activities Participative	Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Idea and thought	Low	81	35,4
	High	148	64,6
Dialogues	Low	80	34,9
	High	149	65,1
Discussion Intensity	Low	124	54,1
	High	105	45,9
Communication direction	Low	146	63,8
	High	83	36,2
Problem Solving	Low	75	32,8
	High	154	67,2
Leadership Role	Low	66	28,8
	High	163	71,2

n = 229

### 3.2. Pekka Economic Empowerment

Based on the results of the Pekka economic empowerment variables, it falls into the low category, that is, 50.2 and 49.8 belongs to the high category. The results are presented in [Table 3](#).

**Table-3.** Distribution of individual answers based on PEKKA economic empowerment category 2019

Economic Empowerment	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Low	115	50,2
High	114	49,8

n = 229

Based on the results of each dimension of economic empowerment variables in the Pekka group, there were some different percentages. Access to capital is in the high category of 50.7%; that is, respondents always and often use physical strength as the main capital in improving the family's economy, developing skills provided free of charge by Pekka groups, improving their skills and attending training for venture capital. Based on the results of the business assistance dimension, it falls into the low category of 59%. This means that respondents consider that the assistance and training provided in Pekka groups are still not maximized to bring in income for them. Based on the results of the skill management dimension into the low category, 62%. This means that respondents have not been able to understand Pekka's problems, find expertise, and have not been able to maximize their existing skills. Based on the results of the risk management dimension, this belongs to the high category, that is, 51.1%. This means that respondents are able to identify, analyze, do, avoid, minimize, and implement training that has been taught in Pekka groups. The results are presented in [Table 4](#).

**Table-4.** Distribution of categories per indicator of economic empowerment in the 2019 Pekka group

Economic Empowerment in group	Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Capital Access	Low	113	49,3
	High	116	50,7
Business Accompaniment	Low	135	59,0
	High	94	41,0
Skill Management	Low	142	62,0
	High	87	38,0
Risk Management	Low	112	48,9
	High	117	51,1

n = 229

Based on the results of the categorization of economic independence variables, this fell into the low category, that is, 83.0%, meaning that more than half of respondents still have the ability to meet the needs of low life, productive business capabilities that have not been maximized, still unable to overcome and make decisions in a problem. However, 17.0% of respondents fall into the high category. The results are presented in [Table 5](#).

**Table-5.** Distribution of individual answers based on the category of independence economy in the 2019 Pekka group

Economic Independence	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Low	190	83,0
High	39	17,0

n = 229

Based on the results of each dimension on the economic independence variable, this shows different percentages. Dimensions of living needs belong to the low category, that is, 70.7%. This means that more than half of respondents often lend capital for living needs and sell assets for family economic needs. The dimension of productive business capability is in the low category of 78.1%; that is, more than half of the respondents only focused on being workers and did not have a side business. Dimensions of the ability to overcome problems fell into the low category of 86.9%, meaning that almost all respondents have not been able to pay installments and open a business for others. Dimensions of ability to make decisions fall into the low category 68.6%. This means that more than half the respondents do not have the courage to invest in a business and help business friends. The results are presented in Table 6.

**Table-6.** Distribution of categories per economic independence indicator for Pekka 2019

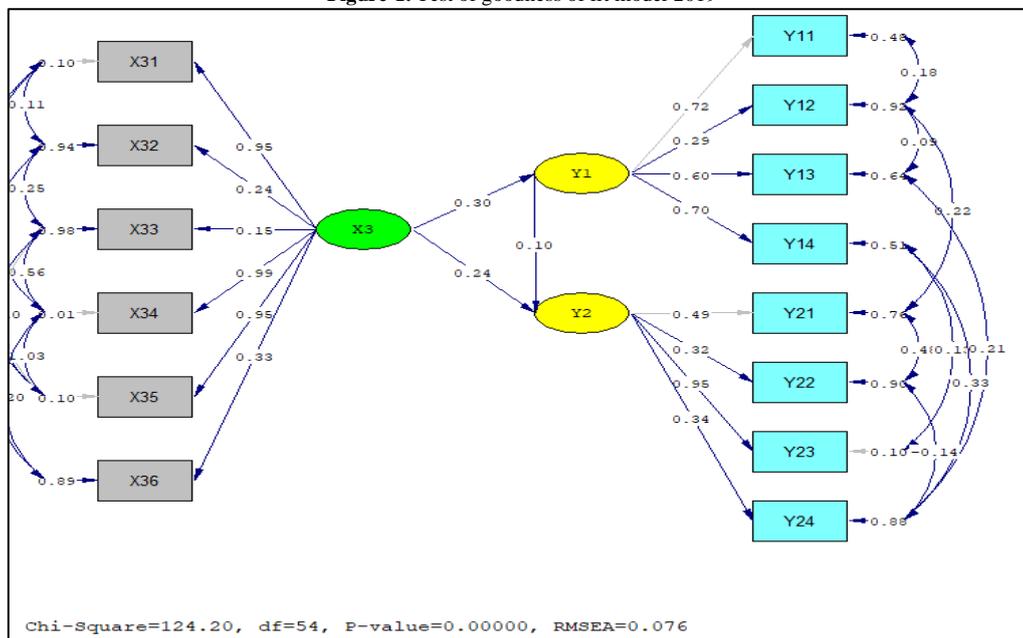
Economic Independence	Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Life need	Low	162	70,7
	High	67	29,3
Productive Business	Low	179	78,1
	High	50	21,9
Economic Independence	Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Problem Solving	Low	199	86,9
	High	30	13,1
Decision Making	Low	157	68,6
	High	72	31,4

n = 229

### 3.3. The Effect of Participatory Group Communication and Economic Empowerment on Economic Independence

Estimate (Loading Factor) and T test

**Figure-1.** Test of goodness of fit model 2019



**Table-7.** Results of processing and testing of goodness of fit

Goodness-of-Fit	Cutt-off-Value	Result	Conclusion
X <sup>2</sup> - Chi-square	Expected small	124.20	Has not reached <i>goodness of fit</i>
Significance	≥ 0.05	P = 0.000	
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.076	<i>goodness of fit</i>
GFI	Close to 1	0.94	<i>goodness of fit</i>
NFI	Close to 1	1.00	<i>goodness of fit</i>
CFI	Close to 1	1.00	<i>goodness of fit</i>

Table 7 shows the results of the processing for testing the goodness of fit which indicated that by using the chi-square test it could be concluded that the p-value was  $0.000 < 0.05$  so that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_a$  was accepted, which means the resulting model showed that the model was not good, but we could see other goodness of fit because the chi-square was influenced by data and models. In addition, SEM provides an alternative to using other goodness of fit indicators. RMSEA criteria produce a value of 0.076 0.08, which means that the resulting model is the goodness of fit.

The use of other goodness of fit criteria is as follows GFI, NFI, and CFI produce a value  $> 0.9$ , which means the resulting model has the goodness of fit. Because the results of the conclusions of several indicators produce the conclusion of the model of the goodness of fit, the hypothesis hypotheses testing can be done.

### 3.4. Hypothesis Testing Theory

Hypothesis 1 states that participatory group communication (X3) has a direct positive effect on Pekka's economic independence (Y2). From processing results, it can be obtained an estimated coefficient of 0.24, which means that the higher the participatory communication group (X3), the higher the economic independence of Pekka (Y2) both directly and indirectly. These results indicate that the theoretical hypothesis proposed is proven with a statistical value of  $9.07 > t\text{-table } 1.96$ , which means that  $H_0$  is rejected so that it can be concluded that there is a positive effect of the participatory communication group (X3) on Pekka's economic independence (Y2).

Hypothesis 2 states that the participatory communication group (X3) has an indirect positive effect on Pekka's economic independence (Y2). From processing results, it can be obtained an estimated coefficient of 0.03, which means that the higher the participatory communication (X3), the higher the economic independence of women household heads (Y2) indirectly and directly. These results indicate that the proposed theoretical hypothesis is proven with a statistical value of  $2.35 > t\text{-table } 1.96$ , which means that  $H_0$  is rejected so that it can be concluded that there is an indirect positive effect of participatory communication group (X3) on Pekka's economic independence (Y2).

The result shows that participatory communication groups have a real and positive influence on economic empowerment and economic independence. According to Kurniawati (2010), it revealed that the higher the participation, the higher the independence. Good participatory communication and empowerment will create maximum economic independence. Economic independence is one of the objectives of the community empowerment program. The poor certainly want economic independence so that they can prosper their lives. Lack of knowledge in managing finances, lack of skills in work, low levels of education, limited capital, and stalled businesses are some of the factors that make it difficult for them to realize their desires, namely economic independence in order to prosper their family life. The existence of these factors made the poor obtain a place, and empowered so they can develop themselves, increase knowledge in managing finances (Avilliani, 2012). Related to this, Wilkins *et al.* (2014) stated that participatory communication is communication that understands the process of dialogue in forming togetherness, where exchanges occur and put forward the idea that communication must activate critical reflexivity, dialogue, and awareness-raising.

In line with this, Putri *et al.* (2016) said that the empowerment of women must first begin by raising awareness of their potential so that potentials can be developed by providing skills, knowledge, and getting closer to sources. In addition, it minimizes threats that come from outside and conducts coaching continuously until the group is independent. This is what continues to be done in increasing Pekka's economic independence through participatory communication and economic empowerment.

It was further said; economic independence could only be realized if development was carried out on community initiatives as a form of awareness to be independent. Economic independence is an attitude in which people can regulate, fulfill, and not depend on the will of others in activities aimed at obtaining goods and services that become their needs (Sugeng, 2008). Independent behavior is the basic foundation of a person in improving the quality of work in Sagir's work (Kamil, 2010). The independent soul grows and develops along with the growth of the concept of entrepreneurship and soul (independent) is determined by three main components that exist in a person, namely will, perseverance and tenacity (Soetomo, 2016).

Economic independence has become a necessity or demand that must be realized immediately. Dependence on outsiders will always be the cause of someone, or the family does not become independent in the family economy. According to Avilliani (2012), economic independence is defined as a nation, community, or family that has economic resilience to various crises and does not depend on outsiders. A person or group is said to have a strong identity and character if they have economic independence. In line with the results of the study by Shomedran (2016) regarding economic independence, the results showed a change in the economic independence of the citizens, which can be seen from an increase in income from waste savings and the existence of business from processed waste crafts. Economic independence cannot be achieved without good communication within the Pekka group.

Group communication through research findings (Nuryanti, 2018) states that the bona fide group theory is a collection of two or more individuals whose presence of each individual has meaning and value for individuals with one another. Comprehensive group communication through bona fide group theory according to the opinions of Puthnam and Stohl (2003) in Littlejohn and Karen (2012); Frey (2003); comprehensive group through bona fide group theory has made a communication process occurs in which there are attitudes, actions, loyalties, and empowerment; whereas the activity of processing inputs includes reliability, group linkages, individual interactions, and task-oriented interactions; and creating outputs in which there are trust, environmental interrelation, group interaction, and group independence.

Based on the research findings, it can be seen that the direction of communication has the greatest contribution to supporting participatory group education. The direction of communication carried out in Pekka groups is an open direction of communication and provides positive information in supporting the progress of Pekka group communication. However, there are still group members who are still not active in providing ideas and thought in meetings or discussions. Furthermore, with regard to economic empowerment, access to capital is the most contributing dimension in supporting economic empowerment, indeed within the Pekka group, group members are still hampered in accessing capital to become independent. Despite this, Pekka groups have been faced with economic independence, most Pekka group members have been able to meet the necessities of life, open productive micro-businesses even though only small businesses, have the ability to overcome problems and have the courage to make decisions. Many Pekka members have culinary skills such as making chips from the processing of their own natural resources or clothing, such as sewing and making crafts to help meet their daily needs. The Pekka program continues to invite and encourage Pekka members to be active and enthusiastic in participating in all the training to continuously support skills even though the training is not conducted on a scale basis. Related to this, according to Suharto (2015), the role of a protector in assistance is important to be done in order to maximize social supervision to all Pekka groups so that they can become independent.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the categorization of participatory communication variables in Pekka groups is 70% high. It appears that the highest dimension is the role of leadership. Pekka's economic empowerment is in the low category of 49.8%, with the highest dimension being risk management. The Pekka group already understands how to overcome risks in entrepreneurship. The results show the economic independence variable is in the low category of 17.3%, with the highest percentage in the decision making dimension. This means that Pekka groups like to have the courage to go forward and be brave in making decisions for economic independence.

The results of SEM analysis show that there is a direct and tangible influence between participatory communication within Pekka groups and Pekka's economic empowerment to Pekka's economic independence. This is supported by the implementation of Pekka's economic empowerment, which is marked by the involvement and participation of groups to get involved in planning, formulating, and implementing program activities and the sense of ownership and participation of groups in the implementation of activities and training within Pekka. Pekka's participatory communication also indirectly influences Pekka's economic independence, and participatory communication influences Pekka's economic empowerment. There is a change in the economic group, i.e., realizing the economic independence of Pekka group members marked by an increase in income and a creation of a business from processed natural resources themselves, handicrafts, and also increased public speaking skills even though not everything can be maximally and evenly distributed felt by Pekka groups. On the other hand, assistance has been carried out well by facilitators in Pekka activities through participatory communication and economic empowerment in realizing Pekka's economy. The effect of participatory group communication is greater than that of the Pekka economic empowerment.

The research also shows that if the scope of Pekka's economic independence is bad or good, it is caused by participatory communication of the group prior to Pekka's economic empowerment, so researchers place more emphasis on participatory communication in Pekka groups than Pekka's economic empowerment in order to achieve maximum economic independence.

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