THE MEANING OF WOMAN’S INDEPENDENCE IN ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR

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Abstract. The woman had double responsibility toward her family, on one side as a mother and the other side they had a productive job to help their family’s economic wealth. This study aimed to describe woman worker in the food home industry in Malang City to view their meaning of woman’s independence in economic behavior. This research used a study case approach with a data collecting method that uses an in-depth interview technique and qualitative analysis model. The study resulted that women workers in their meaning of woman’s independence are: 1) working and provide positive benefits for her and family, 2) support the household economy so hopefully it can improve the family quality of life better, 3) woman’s position in decision making inside the family is determined by their economic contribution in the family, and 4) opportunity to participate in community social activities. The economic behavior of women workers in their everyday life, in general, can support their families’ economic well-being. This research could give a contribution in the context of informal education in a family environment, especially instill awareness and understanding as well as realize it in life through attitude, action, and behavior of family members.

Keywords: woman’s independence, economic behavior, families’ economic well-being

INTRODUCTION

Women who work generally aim to increase their active role in economic activities by undergoing various types of work to earn a living. The responsibility for earning a living will become more prominent especially among women from underprivileged families due to the encouragement of household economic demands, so earning a living by working is a must. The poverty factor that causes these women to assume that the family economy is a shared responsibility in a family is not only the responsibility of the husband as the head of the family. This fact shows that women are not passive, but they are trying to overcome all economic difficulties with a survival strategy and carry out productive activities to meet the economic needs of their families.

One of the causes of women's poverty is mainly due to the existence of a patriarchal culture that causes structural inequality so that women become limited
to obtain an education, economic access, and organize. Factors in this obstacle that ultimately causes women to accept jobs as they are in accordance with existing conditions amid very limited work choices, such as choosing work near home and even willing to receive low wages (Swasono, 2009: 2). Patriarchal culture according to Noerhadi (Subono, 2000: 29-30) indirectly causes women's limited opportunities to move more advanced, for example in employment opportunities. Women's participation in economic activities along with an increase in the number of women who work outside the household and the number of occupations that can be entered by women, such as various women's jobs as small traders, factory workers, farm laborers and handicrafts become a source of income that will affect the economic level of the household (Sahara, 2000: 1). Working is expected to affect the level of welfare of the woman herself and her family, because the more women laborers enter the labor market, the higher the quality of life of women and their families. Asyiek, Syahri, and Molo (in Karnawati, 2018) found that in this work activity women can also find financial freedom and be more independent and be able to contribute to their household income by not only depending on their husband and even able to replace their husband's function as the main breadwinner.

Women's independence means having the power to make choices and participate in deciding issues in the household. Women will achieve independence if women work and do work that generates wages so that the income obtained can be decided by their own use (Munandar, 1982; Hastuti, 2007). This research was conducted in the city of Malang which has many home industries with the presence of women as workers. The focus of the research aims to comprehensively reveal the empowerment of women through the deep meaning observed from the conditions and various activities of women so that it is expected to obtain a clearer and deeper description of the independence of women who are able to play a role in economic behavior by working to contribute to the economic welfare of their families.

LITERATURE REVIEW OR RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Independence known as autonomy in Greek comes from the word *autos* meaning self and *nemin* means giving up or giving. Autonomy implies the power of self-regulation or the act of self-regulation or self-determination. Women who have autonomy or independence means having freedom without relying on other parties to be free to move and make choices according to their needs (Hastuti, 2007).

Independence is the ability of individuals to think and act according to their own impulses or wishes to meet their own needs and desires without relying on others (Arie Dyah Astuti, Indrawati, and Astuti, 2006). The independence of rural women includes independence regulating daily household needs, managing and managing household wealth, determining work options outside the home both
in agriculture, as well as other production fields, businesses and services, and trade and participating in activities in the community. Independence is the ability to bring women as human beings who have their own values in society (Postel in Saptari and Holzner, 1997). Sadli (1991: 28) states that women's participation in various economic activities allows women to have autonomy, power, and authority. Women's independence is associated with women who have quite high autonomy and power. Women have autonomy in choosing economic activities that do not depend on the opinions or views of others, also have power in the sense of the ability to make decisions effectively in making economic transactions. So that independence related to women's participation in economic activities can be interpreted as being independent of others, and the ability to make their own decisions in carrying out economic activities.

Women's independence is not only determined by the role of women in managing the household economy, but there is an expansion of opportunities for interaction outside the home to be able to develop their potential. Women who earn income to meet their own needs or help with household needs can make women economically independent. The independence of women is not only determined by the social status and economic status of women in the household. Nevertheless, women's participation in economic activities allows women to have independence (Sadli, 1991).

The economic contribution of women in the household is a force that enables women to play a role in decision making in various aspects of household activities and their environment (Sajogyo, 1990). Although the control of some resources by women does not necessarily positively correlate to women's power in the household. If women have economic independence in gender ideology that gives birth to the subordination of women does not necessarily lift women to have a strong bargaining position (Abdullah, 2001).

Women's independence has an important role in efforts to improve women's welfare. Independent women could make choices of activities that can be used as capital to increase their abilities so that they have a strong position economically, socially in the household and outside the household.

The results of the research by Basukiyatno (2003) found that the form of independence of women in running social businesses and economic ventures can have implications in various activities including openness to get along with outsiders so that they are not only in the domestic sector that lacks information but can establish broad social relationships and run business in the economic sector such as trade, especially agricultural products. Independence in making decisions can educate himself to be careful in choosing, strong and disciplined.

Arie Dyah Astuti's research result, et al (2006) found that women, in this case, working wives showed a degree of independence by having the ability to think and act according to their own impulses or wishes to meet their own needs and desires without depending on others, especially on the husband economically. The results of this study are consistent with Wolf's (1997: 61) opinion which states that by working that encourages a wife to reduce dependence on her
husband, so women who have their own income or have money will be autonomous and free to issue opinions. Mokalu's research results (2016) found that women have a strong will with independent entrepreneurship through increased skills and training from local governments to be freed from the problem of economic limitations. However, there are weaknesses in the mentality aspect of entrepreneurship which causes the business to continue. The entrepreneurship mentality requires a long process and training programs organized by the government must be in accordance with the needs and challenges of the times, helping to facilitate women in improving their quality by doing entrepreneurship. The results of Hastuti's research (2007) found that poor women have a simple lifestyle in fulfilling food, clothing, and housing. They work hard without complaining even though they have to drain almost all of their time and energy, by utilizing the surrounding resources even though they have not been able to fully access and control the available resources. Women's independence does not mean women decide something without consultation with their husbands and other household members, but independence is more interpreted as an effort to help husbands in meeting and managing household needs and participation in social activities without neglecting their duties as housewives. The independence of women is defined as the freedom of women from domestic violence and the freedom to determine what and when to carry out various activities at home and outside the home while still being communicated to their husbands.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research approach, to determine the phenomenon of the problems of women domestic industry workers in the city of Malang. Qualitative methodology as a research procedure will produce descriptive data in the form of written words or responses from people and observable behavior. Strategies undertaken in the research process include research approaches and designs, location determination, subject determination, field data collection techniques, data validity, and data analysis techniques. In this study referring to the opinion of Spradley (in Sugiyono, 2016) called social situation or social situations consisting of 3 (three) elements, namely places, actors and activities that interact synergistically. The informants were determined purposively by the consideration or evaluation of the researcher with the assumption that the informants chosen were representative.

Data collection uses observation and interview techniques using data collection guidelines, namely directly from the source itself, both regarding views or opinions as well as about the facts experienced by informants, so that the data obtained has a high enough validity and can be trusted. Observation is done by passive participatory observation (passive participation) so that researchers come to the place of activities of people who are observed but not involved in these activities. Data collection is also carried out with interviews conducted openly.
(open interview) by giving the freedom for informants to answer questions and provide views freely and openly and it is possible to ask questions in depth with in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants or research subjects using criterion-based selection based on the assumption that the subject was an actor in the research theme. The key informants or actors in this study were women in the home industry workers, entrepreneurs who employed and administrators of the PKK associations in the village where the women lived. The selection of key informants refers to the opinion of Ahmadi (2005), namely that good informants are those who have the knowledge and experience needed to deepen the data and information of researchers, have communication skills, be open, have time to be interviewed and are willing to participate in research.

Triangulation technique is carried out to combine various data collection techniques and existing data sources so that it can be used to test the credibility of data collection and various data sources. Triangulation in credibility testing is defined as checking data from various sources in various ways, and at various times. Triangulation is done with reference to source, technique and time. The purpose of triangulation is more on increasing the understanding of researchers about what has been found, and further increasing the strength of the data (Sugiyono, 2016). After the data is collected it will be analyzed according to the objectives of the research focus. Data analysis refers to those involving 4 (four) components, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and draw a conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research resulted in findings from the results of in-depth interview studies and observations on key informants, according to the focus of research on views on the meaning of women's independence in economic behavior. Findings on the meaning of women's independence in the views of women workers in the study results of this study found in 4 (four) statements that can be described, namely a) the ability to work and provide positive benefits for themselves and their families, b) the ability to support the household economy so that it is expected to improve the quality of family life for the better and c) the ability to get a position in family decision making that is determined by the economic contribution in family and d) Opportunity to participate in community social activities.

The Meaning of Women's Independence

Women's views on the meaning of independence are first expressed as the ability to work and provide positive benefits for themselves and their families. As information obtained at the interview said that implicitly women work more based on economic demands and hope that the work done will provide additional fortune to increase the economic capacity of the family. By working they hope to get
income because this is a real phenomenon that they bear the demands of economic
needs that are quite heavy while the husband's income has not been able to meet
the needs of the family. This is one of the reasons women help work and are
involved in finding additional income.

In choosing their work, they also consider several reasons, such as the
flexibility and ease of doing work without leaving their main role as mothers who
must take care of their children and the responsibilities of taking care of their
household. As told by the following Mrs. SYT:

"... women may work but the main thing is the work at home must be
completed first ... like caring for and raising children ... taking care
of the household ... so women still have to work while being
demanded to support the family's needs so work can manage time ...
between responsibility at home and outside ...
"

Many female workers choose to work in the home industry sector as
casual daily laborers who have work rules that are still simple and tend to be
familial. Women feel themselves to be independent if they have the ability and are
involved in making a living or producing products in the home industry so that
they get positive benefits not only from income, but they feel there is an economic
learning process for themselves and their families. Positive benefits are obtained
by gaining social access in interacting socially with the public environment
outside of his household so that women have a lot of experience with their
interactions and participation in social activities.

Women's views on the meaning of independence are the second ability to
support the household economy so that it is expected to improve the quality of
family life for the better. As told by the following informant Mrs. YUL:

"An independent woman is a woman who is able to work to earn
extra income to pay for schooling for children ... odd jobs for
husbands whose income is uncertain ... just enough for daily needs ...
if I come to work then I can help to the future of children to be able
to study well ".

This phenomenon can be understood that in general the motivation of
working women is certainly driven by the hope of increasing the economic
capacity of the family. Working women trying to supplement their income in
addition to survival also hope that by working they can bring a better condition
than before. With the ability to support this family economy, women feel they
have independence because they can contribute to the economy that can improve
their family lives, especially in efforts to meet children's educational needs, health
needs and other needs.

In accordance with Munandar's opinion (in Hastuti, 2007) that women
would be said to be independent if they worked and earned wages and could
decide their own use. Women are said to be independent if they play a role in the education and care of children and can earn a living and obtain opinions to meet their own needs or for their families. Women's participation in economic activities enables women to have independence so that what these women workers do is not based on coercion, but rather is seen as a willingness and based on a sincere attitude and moral responsibility to overcome shared problems.

The third meaning of woman's independence can be expressed as the ability to get a position in family decision making which is determined by her economic contribution in the family. The family is the smallest unit in society which certainly cannot be separated from family decision making. In Javanese society who generally adheres to patrilineal lineage patterns, family customs play a very influential role as the head of the family. In tracing the results of the interview with Mrs. SYN, it can be quoted as follows:

"... in making family decisions, I have my own role and part, especially in matters of the needs of children and households, we used to discuss before making big and important decisions, with me having an income then I also have a portion in making decisions too ..."

The narrative can be interpreted that with the independence of women involved in making a living, the role of family decision making in the family environment has a balanced portion with her husband, meaning there is a proportionate portion of the portion.

The economic contribution of women in the household is a force that enables women to play a role in decision making in various aspects of household activities and their environment (Sajogyo, 1990). The economic ability of women who have income opens opportunities to be able to interact widely outside the home or in social activities. Income is one of the variables that can be used as an indicator to see power in the household related to decision making (Cohen, 1998).

The position of women in their family environment will influence their decision-making roles. This phenomenon can be observed from the information search that the role of women in decision making is influenced by the economic role of women who work will be greater than women who do not work. So, it can be said that the position of women in family decision making is largely determined by the size of their economic contribution to the family.

The fourth meaning of women's independence can also be observed from the active role of women in social activities. Community social activities carried out together are usually part of women's activities, in this case, the wife as a member of the community. Community social activities are an important part of maintaining harmonious relations with the women's community in close social ties. Besides that, there are consequences such as obtaining social sanctions for community members who ignore these social activities.
These social activities are related to public interests such as mutual cooperation, community service, PKK, recitation and other social activities aimed at establishing hospitality. Social activities related to the interests of individuals in the event of birth, marriage to death in religious events conducted or such as Javanese rituals that do festivity or salvation.

Women who carry out social activities related to individual interests, the contribution of time, energy and material in the form of money or goods given depends on the close relationship between individuals. Community social activities related to the public interest will depend on the ability of each individual, for several reasons in providing material compensation. The participation of women in social activities is a means to maintain harmonious relations with society at large.

The results of the interview with the informant Mrs. MN are as follows:

"... to contribute ... then I can decide for myself for social activities ... the husband does not forbid and believe that I do for the good of the community to be maintained friendship between neighbors ... must be able to help each other help ... "

Individual social activities such as births, circumcisions, marriages, and deaths or other events often involve neighbors or relatives. Women who do not have the material abilities then they usually give more energy assistance and take the time for it also even allows permission at work because of rewang. Women's involvement in social activities is often to avoid social sanctions that apply in their environment. This social activity is mainly to foster relationships with neighbors or relatives for hospitality. Fostering relationships and hospitality is done by visiting relatives or close neighbors and can even be done almost every time because of the close relationship and distance of residence between them.

Social groups that are followed by women such as dasa wisma and PKK are conducted social gathering activities, savings, and loans and counseling about health, welfare improvement, skills in accordance with group agreements. Mothers carry out these activities on their own initiative when household chores and outside work are done, so this shows how women have independence inside or outside the household.

The independence of women can be seen from the association in their environment, which women can freely make friends with relatives and neighbors to carry out social activities. The meaning of independence for women does not mean deciding everything without consultation with her husband or other household members. Independence means that women do not depend on their husbands economically. Women come to work solely to help ease the burden on their husbands in meeting household needs. The independence of women can also be seen from their behavior in managing the household or doing activities outside the household, as well as carrying out social activities without neglecting the main task as a housewife.
Various statements in interpreting women's independence in economic behavior can be described in the following scheme:

![Diagram](image)

**CONCLUSION**

Based on exposure and data analysis and discussion described in this study, the conclusions of the results of this study that the meaning of women's independence in economic behavior include a) the ability to work and provide positive benefits for themselves and their families, b) the ability to support the household economy so that it is expected can improve the quality of family life for the better and c) the ability to get a position in making family decisions that are determined by the economic contribution in the family and d) the ability to actively participate in social activities.

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**BIODATA**

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