

(Research/Review) Article

Policy Evaluation of the PKH Plus Programme in the Empowerment of Older Persons at the East Java Provincial Social Service

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Abstract: The government has launched various programmes to improve the welfare of older persons, yet social problems relating to them persist, making policy evaluation essential in order to assess whether such programmes achieve their intended goals. This study evaluates the PKH Plus social assistance programme for the empowerment of older persons at the East Java Provincial Social Service. Unlike previous studies that emphasise policy implementation, this research strengthens the policy evaluation perspective by applying William N. Dunn's six evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness and appropriateness. A qualitative descriptive method was used, with data collected through observation and interviews and analysed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. The results show that PKH Plus has been fairly effective and appropriate in improving the welfare of older persons in recipient regencies and cities, and is responsive to beneficiaries' needs through accompaniment, family capability meetings and the older persons' integrated health post (Posyandu). However, the programme remains constrained in terms of efficiency, adequacy and equity owing to a limited budget sourced solely from the regional budget, human resources that are merged with the regular PKH, and uneven access to integrated health post services for older persons. The evaluation recommends the institutional separation of PKH Plus from the regular PKH, the expansion of the budget and beneficiary quotas, and broader, more equitable service coverage.

Keywords: Elderly Welfare; Empowerment; PKH Plus; Policy Evaluation; Social Assistance.

1. Introduction

Indonesia faces complex development challenges, ranging from poverty and low levels of education to uneven access to health care. One of the groups most vulnerable to these problems is the older population. The government has implemented a number of programmes to improve the welfare of older persons, yet many problems concerning them remain, so that cooperation between various parties is required to develop more innovative approaches to improving their welfare (Pahlawan & Ratna, 2020). According to data from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, the number of older persons in Indonesia continues to grow each year and is projected to reach 48.2 million by 2035. The welfare of older persons is regulated by Law Number 13 of 1998 on the Welfare of Older Persons, which mandates the government to lead, guide and create a supportive environment for improving social security for older persons so that they may attain a better standard of living.

As part of the implementation of social assistance policy for potential and non-potential older persons, the Government of East Java Province, and in particular the East Java Provincial Social Service, provides individual support to older persons in the form of financial assistance amounting to IDR 500,000 per month, disbursed four times a year. This policy is grounded in Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2017 on the Non-Cash Distribution of Social Assistance. In the implementation of PKH Plus in East Java, the East Java Provincial Social Service plays a key role as a government institution focusing on the

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social field in order to assist individuals, groups and communities in improving their social functioning.

One effective model for reducing poverty is through community empowerment. Empowerment refers to efforts to provide opportunities and skills to disadvantaged communities so that they have the capacity and the courage to participate actively, express their opinions and choose the best course of action for themselves, their families and their communities. In essence, community empowerment aims to enhance people's capacity and self-reliance (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2013). International studies likewise show that cash transfer programmes contribute to reducing poverty and strengthening the empowerment of poor households in low- and middle-income countries (Bastagli et al., 2019).

Previous studies of PKH Plus have generally focused on the policy implementation stage, that is, on how the programme is carried out in the field. However, in order to ensure that a programme genuinely delivers benefits, is worth continuing and is well targeted, policy evaluation is required. Evaluation is an important stage in the policy cycle that assesses the extent to which a policy achieves its objectives and provides value for the target group (Dunn, 2003). In contrast to earlier studies, this research strengthens the policy evaluation perspective. The objective of this study is to evaluate the PKH Plus social assistance programme in the empowerment of older persons at the East Java Provincial Social Service using William N. Dunn's six policy evaluation criteria, namely effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness and appropriateness. The contribution of this study is to provide a more measurable assessment of both the successes and the shortcomings of the programme as a basis for future policy recommendations.

2. Literature Review

This section sets out the theoretical foundations that serve as the analytical lens of the study, namely policy evaluation theory, the concept of empowering older persons, and an overview of the PKH Plus programme.

Policy Evaluation Theory

Policy evaluation is the final and crucial stage in the public policy cycle. According to Widodo (2010), however well a policy is formulated, without an adequate assessment of its implementation it is difficult to determine whether the objectives of public policy are genuinely achieved. Dunn (2003) explains that policy evaluation produces information about the value or worth of the outcomes of a policy, so that evaluation not only assesses whether objectives have been achieved but also provides a basis for improvement and recommendations for subsequent policy.

Dunn (2003) proposes six criteria that may be used to evaluate the performance of a policy. First, effectiveness concerns whether the desired results have been achieved. Second, efficiency relates to how much effort and resources are required to achieve those results. Third, adequacy assesses the extent to which the results attained are able to solve the problem at hand. Fourth, equity relates to the fairness and even distribution of policy benefits among the target group. Fifth, responsiveness assesses whether the results of the policy satisfy the needs, preferences or values of the target group. Sixth, appropriateness questions whether the objectives of the policy are genuinely valuable and useful for society.

Dunn also distinguishes several evaluation approaches, namely pseudo-evaluation, which emphasises outcomes without questioning their value; formal evaluation, which refers to the official objectives of the policy; and decision-theoretic evaluation, which takes into account the goals and targets of various stakeholders. In this study, evaluation is directed towards the formal approach by assessing the achievement of the official objectives of the PKH Plus programme through the six criteria above.

The Concept of Empowering Older Persons

According to Hidayat et al. (2019), the concept of empowerment derives from the word 'power' (daya), so that to empower means to give strength to disadvantaged community groups that do not yet have the independent capacity to meet their daily needs such as food, clothing, housing, education and health. Sa'adah (2017) states that marginal groups, including older persons, are often in conditions of extreme poverty, lack of education and lack of skills, and therefore need to be empowered. Understanding the needs of the community is the first step in empowerment efforts.

Zastrow and Ashman (2013) emphasise that older persons require continuous assistance in the form of financial support and facilities, while also needing adequate attention and recognition of the roles they play. The empowerment of older persons is therefore not limited to the provision of funds but also encompasses accompaniment, health services and

social engagement so that older persons retain their social functioning within the community. In the context of low- and middle-income countries, social protection schemes for older persons have been shown to reduce poverty and improve wellbeing in later life (Lloyd-Sherlock et al., 2012). Community-based empowerment, such as the development of village-owned enterprises and the use of information technology, has also proved to be an effective strategy for enhancing the self-reliance of communities at the local level (Asmuni et al., 2020; Rohim et al., 2023).

The PKH Plus Programme

The PKH Plus programme is one manifestation of the implementation of Nawa Bhakti Satya, in particular Bhakti 1, 'A Prosperous East Java', which aims to reduce poverty and to bring about social justice and welfare. The programme is directed at the poor across 38 regencies and cities and focuses on vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, neglected older persons and female heads of household. In 2023, the programme was expanded to cover 25 regencies with 55,000 beneficiaries for stages one to three, each receiving assistance of IDR 2,000,000 per year through Bank Jatim. Implementation follows a top-down pattern, whereby the central government provides guidelines and direction while regional government is responsible for delivery in the field. Data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) show a decrease in the percentage of poor people in East Java from 10.49 per cent in September 2022 to 10.35 per cent in March 2023, which indicates a positive contribution from social assistance programmes including PKH Plus.

3. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. According to Qamariah et al. (2020), the qualitative method is a research process that produces descriptive data in the form of spoken or written words about people and observed behaviour using research instruments. The data in this study comprise primary and secondary data obtained through observation, interview and documentation techniques. The research site is the East Java Provincial Social Service as the institution managing the PKH Plus programme.

Data analysis was carried out in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. In order to address the objective of the study, the analysis was directed using Dunn's (2003) policy evaluation framework as the analytical lens. The six evaluation criteria, namely effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness and appropriateness, were applied systematically to assess the performance of the PKH Plus programme in the empowerment of older persons. This approach allows for a comprehensive assessment, not only of the programme's outputs but also of the benefits and value perceived by the target group.

4. Results and Discussion

The research findings are analysed using Dunn's (2003) six policy evaluation criteria. This analysis aims to assess the extent to which the PKH Plus programme in the empowerment of older persons at the East Java Provincial Social Service achieves its objectives and delivers tangible benefits to recipients.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness criterion assesses whether the desired results of the policy have been achieved. The PKH Plus programme demonstrates a fairly good level of effectiveness, reflected in the expansion of its coverage to 25 regencies with 55,000 beneficiaries and in its contribution to the decline in the percentage of poor people in East Java. Outreach activities and the Family Capability Improvement Meetings (P2K2) have also encouraged positive behavioural change among older beneficiaries. Nevertheless, there is one aspect that has not been fully effective, namely the even provision of health services through the integrated health post (Posyandu) for older persons, because not all older persons in the regencies and cities are able to attend these activities.

Efficiency

The efficiency criterion assesses the amount of effort and resources required to achieve results. The distribution of PKH Plus assistance is carried out electronically through beneficiaries' accounts at Bank Jatim, and the monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken by the East Java Provincial Social Service have made use of Google Forms, thereby improving transparency and the ease of data tabulation. However, the efficiency of the programme is still constrained because the human resources accompanying PKH Plus remain merged with the regular PKH, and the budget is sourced solely from the regional budget (APBD).

Although collaboration between facilitators does assist monitoring, this dependence indicates that the management of resources is not yet fully optimal.

Adequacy

The adequacy criterion assesses the extent to which the results attained are able to solve the problem. Assistance amounting to IDR 2,000,000 per person per year helps to reduce the cost-of-living burden of older beneficiaries, but it does not yet fully meet their needs, particularly for older persons with serious health conditions. In addition, the limited quota means that not all older persons who are in fact eligible are able to receive assistance. Health services through the integrated health post for older persons, as part of the programme, are already available, but their coverage is not yet even, so that the level of adequacy of the programme remains partial.

Equity

The equity criterion assesses the fairness and even distribution of benefits. The selection of targets is prioritised towards regencies with the highest levels of poverty and the largest numbers of older persons so that the programme is well targeted. However, budget and quota limitations mean that the distribution of benefits is not yet entirely even, either between regions or between individuals. The diversity of conditions among older persons, both those who are still productive and those who are non-potential, as well as differences in language such as Javanese and Madurese, presents a particular challenge. The presence of interpreters from among the PKH Plus facilitators helps to overcome communication barriers so that the programme can still reach a diverse group.

Responsiveness

The responsiveness criterion assesses whether the results of the policy satisfy the needs and preferences of the target group. The PKH Plus programme has received considerable support from the community, and older beneficiaries perceive significant benefits. Through the P2K2 activities, facilitators encourage the improvement of family capabilities while also inviting the community to undertake promotive efforts, such as recognising the importance of caring for and attending to older persons. Media attention and the active use of the East Java Provincial Social Service website to upload agendas and to provide a channel for criticism and suggestions demonstrate that the programme is fairly responsive to public needs and aspirations.

Appropriateness

The appropriateness criterion questions whether the objectives of the policy are genuinely valuable and useful. The objectives of the PKH Plus programme, namely to make the welfare of beneficiaries a priority, to reduce the cost-of-living burden, to encourage self-reliance, and to reduce poverty and social inequality, are highly relevant to the needs of older persons. These objectives are also grounded in a strong legal basis, ranging from the Law, Presidential Regulation and Regulations of the Minister of Social Affairs to the Governor's Regulation, and are supported by social protection theory, which emphasises the need to protect poor families from social risks. From the standpoint of appropriateness, therefore, this policy can be judged to be appropriate and valuable.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The implementation of the PKH Plus programme is influenced by a number of supporting factors, namely: cooperation between the East Java Provincial Social Service and various institutions such as the Health Service, the District and City Social Services, and Bank Jatim as the disbursing agent; community support, which involves the participation of all levels of society, with older persons perceiving significant benefits; the commitment of the implementing officials, which influences the smooth delivery of the programme. Collaboration between the government, related institutions and the community is indeed one of the keys to the success of development and empowerment programmes at the local level (Rizkiansyah et al., 2023). The inhibiting factors in the implementation of the programme are as follows: limited human resources, because the focus of PKH Plus is still merged with the regular PKH, which gives rise to dependence in implementation; budget constraints, because the allocation of funds is sourced solely from the regional budget and is also used to address other social welfare problems; limited facilities, in particular the uneven attendance at the integrated health post activities for older persons, even though the Posyandu is a principal aspect of medical examination for older persons.

5. Conclusion

Based on the evaluation using Dunn's six criteria, the PKH Plus programme in the empowerment of older persons at the East Java Provincial Social Service can be judged to have functioned fairly well, although it is not yet optimal in all respects. In terms of effectiveness, appropriateness and responsiveness, the programme demonstrates good achievement, because its objectives are relevant, grounded in a strong legal basis, and supported by the community and stakeholders. However, in terms of efficiency, adequacy and equity, the programme still faces obstacles in the form of a limited budget sourced solely from the regional budget, human resources that remain merged with the regular PKH, and uneven coverage of the integrated health post services for older persons.

This study recommends that the management of PKH Plus be institutionally separated from the regular PKH, that the budget and beneficiary quotas be expanded, and that the coverage of health services through the integrated health post for older persons be improved so as to be more even. Continuous monitoring and evaluation need to be carried out so that the implementation of the programme remains in line with the targets that have been set. Synergy between policy implementers and the community, together with government innovation in choosing the best means of delivering the programme, is the key to making the implementation of PKH Plus increasingly effective and well targeted.

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