



The Role and Participation of Family Welfare Empowerment Cadres (PKK) in Stunting Prevention: A Case Study in Bojonegoro

Ika Sylvia Ningtias^{1*}, Asihing Kustanti², Keppi Sukes³ 

^{1,2,3} Program Pascasarjana Sosiologi, Fakultas Pertanian, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Stunting yang merupakan kondisi kekurangan gizi kronis sejak 1000 hari kehidupan seorang anak masih menjadi masalah Kesehatan di Indonesia, menduduki peringkat kedua di dunia. Pemberdayaan kader kesehatan merupakan salah satu upaya yang dilakukan pemerintah dalam meningkatkan Kesehatan gizi balita. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi urgensi untuk memahami peran serta partisipasi kader Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK) dalam pencegahan stunting. Tujuan penelitian ialah untuk menganalisis peran dan tingkat partisipasi kader PKK dalam mengimplementasikan program-program pencegahan stunting. Metode penelitian termasuk penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus, menggunakan wawancara mendalam dan observasi terhadap kader PKK sebagai teknik pengumpulan datanya. Sementara teknik analisis data dilakukan dengan deskriptif menggunakan teknik analisis interaktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kader PKK berperan sebagai mediator penting dalam menyebarkan informasi gizi dan kesehatan, serta memfasilitasi akses masyarakat terhadap layanan kesehatan. Implikasi dari temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya pemberdayaan kader PKK sebagai strategi efektif dalam memerangi stunting, dan menekankan peran vital mereka dalam mendukung kesehatan anak serta pembangunan komunitas yang berkelanjutan.

ABSTRACT

Stunting which is a condition of chronic malnutrition since 1000 days of a child's life is still a health problem in Indonesia, ranked second in the world. Empowerment of health cadres is one of the efforts made by the government in improving the nutritional health of toddlers. This study underscores the urgency of understanding the role and participation of Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) cadres in stunting prevention. The purpose of the study was to analyze the role and level of participation of PKK cadres in implementing stunting prevention programs. The research method included qualitative research with a case study type, using in-depth interviews and observations of PKK cadres as data collection techniques. While the data analysis technique was carried out descriptively using interactive analysis techniques. The results showed that PKK cadres serve as important mediators in disseminating nutrition and health information, as well as facilitating community access to health services. The implications of these findings highlight the importance of empowering PKK cadres as an effective strategy in combating stunting, and emphasize their vital role in supporting child health and sustainable community development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Stunting refers to a condition in children characterized by impaired brain growth and development. It is primarily caused by prolonged inadequate nutritional intake, recurrent infections, and a lack of psychosocial stimulation. One of its distinctive features is that children affected by stunting have shorter stature compared to their peers of the same age, which consequently leads to a decline in cognitive abilities (Fentiana et al., 2021; Vinci, 2022). Children suffering from stunting are at a higher risk of contracting diseases and facing reduced productivity in the future. The factors contributing to stunting are believed to be inadequate nutritional intake during the first 1000 days of life, poor sanitation facilities, limited access to clean water, and poor environmental hygiene (Ambarwati et al., 2022; Sumartini, 2022).

*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: ika_sylvia@student.ub.ac.id (Ika Sylvia Ningtias)

Inadequate environmental hygiene conditions lead to the body facing additional challenges in combating diseases, thereby impeding nutrient absorption (Hijrawati et al., 2021; Sahira, 2023). A public health issue is considered chronic if the prevalence of stunting exceeds 20%. This indicates that the issue of stunting in Indonesia can be categorized as chronic, with a prevalence of 21.6% among toddlers in 2022, as reported by the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) conducted by the Ministry of Health (Endang Retno Surjaningrum et al., 2022; Fentiana et al., 2021). In East Java Province, the prevalence of stunting reached 19.2% in the same year. Despite successfully reducing the rate of stunting among children under five by 4.3 percentage points from the previous year, where the prevalence was 23.5% in 2021, this province still ranks 25th with the highest prevalence in Indonesia. This decrease has significant implications at the national level, considering the large population of East Java Province. Although the prevalence of stunting has decreased, the national target for 2024 is to reduce the prevalence of stunting to 14%. Based on the data obtained in August 2022, there were 2,225 toddlers who experienced stunting out of a total of 74,626 toddlers weighed in Bojonegoro Regency (Isnaini et al., 2022; Maryani, 2023). In February 2023, the number of stunted toddlers decreased to 2,027 out of a total of 74,443 toddlers weighed. Various efforts have been made and strengthened with the aim of reducing stunting cases in Bojonegoro Regency, including strengthening the role of the Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) cadres at the village level.

The Family Welfare Empowerment Movement (PKK) is a movement that is often mentioned and is a partner of the government in ensuring the fulfillment of basic needs for the empowerment and welfare of families. The task of PKK, as part of the government, is to embrace and nurture the community to ensure that all layers of society benefit from development (Alvianta et al., 2021; Dangmei, 2016). The PKK provides support to government programs through its 10 Core PKK Programs. According to Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 2013, the PKK movement aims to empower communities with the goal of improving welfare and realizing families that are faithful, morally upright, healthy, progressive, and self-reliant, while also promoting gender equality, justice, legal awareness, and environmental consciousness (Apriliani, 2023; Kusumastuti & Darsono, 2019). PKK, as a grassroots movement, provides significant benefits especially in rural areas. Additionally, PKK also plays a crucial role in education development, particularly early childhood education (PAUD), as well as in the health sector by activating Posyandu and providing support to mothers during childbirth to reduce maternal and child mortality rates (Alam, 2024; Yudono & Adi, 2019). In the economic sector, PKK is expected to support small and medium enterprises run by women, equally important is the preparation of PKK cadres in every village, who are capable of self-development and adapting resources to the current dynamics (Indah, 2021; Yudono & Adi, 2019).

Currently, the government program is actively promoting efforts to prevent and reduce the prevalence of stunting, with the PKK cadres playing a crucial role in its implementation. Stunting, also known as impaired growth in children under five years old due to suboptimal nutrition intake during early life, has become the primary focus (Apriliani, 2023; Wardani, 2021). The causes of stunting include factors such as the socio-economic conditions of parents, nutritional intake during pregnancy, the baby's medical history, and parental knowledge of caregiving during the first thousand days after birth (Djauhari, 2017; Salma, 2022). Malnutrition occurs from early pregnancy to the postpartum period. Children who experience stunting also tend to experience a decrease in learning capacity, which could potentially reduce their performance and productivity in school to become suboptimal (Rohmah, 2022; Syalis & Nurwati, 2020). Globally, stunting is one of the targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Indonesia is currently striving to achieve SDG goal number 3, which is Good Health and Well-being (Opoku et al., 2022; Sri Rahayu & Nasrawati, 2023). Various risk factors contribute to the occurrence of stunting in Indonesia, which can originate from the mother, child, or the surrounding environment. Factors related to the mother include the mother's age during pregnancy, the mother's upper arm circumference during pregnancy, the mother's height, the practice of breastfeeding and complementary feeding, early breastfeeding initiation, and the mother's nutritional quality (Linda, 2020; Rinayati et al., 2023). Factors related to children include a history of low birth weight or prematurity, male gender, history of neonatal diseases, history of recurrent diarrhea, history of infectious diseases, and lack of immunization (Horidah, 2023; Indriawati & Darmawati, 2021). Furthermore, environmental factors such as low socioeconomic status, low level of education within the family especially the mother, low family income, inadequate sanitation, unclean drinking water, and exposure to pesticides also play a role in increasing the risk of stunting (Hamalding, 2020; Sri Rahayu & Nasrawati, 2023). In the prevention of stunting, the Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) plays a role in raising community awareness through mobilizing Dasa Wisma groups to conduct home visits, provide education to enhance family knowledge, and raise awareness of the importance of Antenatal Care (ANC) (Isni & Dinni, 2020; Jalantina, 2022). Supporting the healthy living movement, increasing the capacity of Dasa Wisma cadres accompanied by community empowerment facilitators, and strengthening the institutional working group to build commitment and

resource support for ANC (Allyreza, 2023; Nurhidayah et al., 2019). Active involvement in village deliberations and participatory planning. Updating data and information on Posyandu activities and other health programs. In tackling stunting, the Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) plays a role as an agent of change to empower the community, thus achieving the goals of health development (Citraksumasari, 2020; Maryani, 2023). Research on the involvement of Family Welfare Empowerment Cadres (PKK) is crucial in supporting the government's efforts to combat stunting. This study aims to increase women's participation in development, particularly in the health sector in Kalirejo Village, Bojonegoro District, Bojonegoro Regency. The findings of this research are anticipated to offer new insights for stakeholders, which can be utilized in shaping policies through training programs, educational campaigns, as well as monitoring and evaluating the role of PKK cadres in stunting prevention. The objective of this research is to present a comprehensive overview of the role of Family Welfare Empowerment Cadres (PKK) in stunting prevention in Kalirejo Village, Bojonegoro District, Bojonegoro Regency.

2. METHOD

In this study, a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design was used (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018; Waruwu, 2023). The use of this descriptive design is expected to provide a broad overview of PKK cadre strategies in socializing about stunting. The research subjects consisted of 18 PKK cadres in Kalirejo Village, Bojonegoro. Data collection techniques used included in-depth interviews and observations. The researcher acted as the main instrument in data collection, supported by the use of recording devices, cameras, and interview guides (Ardiansyah, 2023; Dewi, 2022). The instrument used as a reference consisted of questions about stunting prevention strategies commonly used by local PKK cadres adopted from research (Ji et al., 2019). The research procedure commenced with the researcher physically visiting the PKK locations situated within Kalirejo village. During these visits, meticulous observations were carried out to ascertain the various activities undertaken by the PKK members during several core events. These observations aimed to capture the nuanced dynamics and strategies employed by the PKK cadres in disseminating information and raising awareness about stunting prevention within the community. Following the observational phase, the researcher proceeded to conduct in-depth interviews with select PKK cadres. These interviews were structured to elicit comprehensive insights into the PKK's involvement and contributions to stunting prevention initiatives within the village. By employing a combination of direct observations and qualitative interviews, the research aimed to gain a holistic understanding of the PKK's engagement in stunting prevention activities at the grassroots level in Kalirejo village. Furthermore, in the data analysis stage, the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model technique (Miles & Huberman, 2012) was used to uncover and understand the gathered data comprehensively, enabling the presentation of comprehensive and contextual findings regarding the involvement of PKK Cadres in the development of Kalirejo Village community. This method grants researchers the freedom to delve into the experiences and perspectives of PKK Cadres through in-depth interviews and direct observations. Data Analysis Techniques showed in Figure 1.

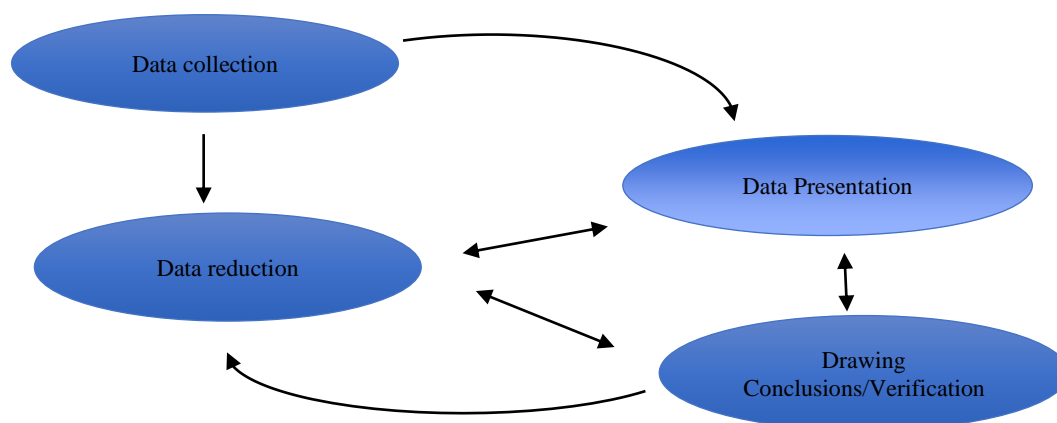


Figure 1. Data Analysis Techniques

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In an interview with an experienced Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) cadre, it was revealed that their role in preventing stunting is highly significant. As the main driving force at the village level, PKK cadres act as catalysts in spreading awareness and knowledge about stunting to the community. They serve as motivators, encouraging mothers to take preventive actions such as providing balanced nutrition to their children and participating in government-provided health programs. The role of the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) is carried out through activities such as the Posyandu Balita (Integrated Health Post for Toddlers), Posyandu Remaja (Integrated Health Post for Adolescents), Kelas Ibu Hamil (Pregnant Women Class), and Bina Keluarga Balita (Family Development for Toddlers) with the Great Parent School (SOTH). The Great Parent School (SOTH) is a program initiated by the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) in Indonesia in collaboration with PKK cadres in the villages. The aim of this program is to enhance parents' knowledge and skills in providing appropriate care for their children, especially toddlers. SOTH is also part of the government's efforts to address various social and health issues, such as stunting. Through this program, it is hoped that parents can improve their parenting practices and build good communication with their children. SOTH activities are conducted in 13 meetings throughout one semester, covering various topics that are expected to enhance parents' capacity in educating and accompanying their children's growth amidst the challenges of modern times. In Kalirejo Village, SOTH is attended by 20 parents and held at the Harapan Bangsa Early Childhood Education Center. After the 13 meetings, an evaluation will be conducted to assess the parents' understanding of the materials provided in the Great Parent School (SOTH). As a form of appreciation for the participating parents, a graduation ceremony will be held, where they will wear graduation gowns similar to those of university graduates. This certainly becomes a special attraction and pride for the parents, motivating them to apply their knowledge on child care in the prevention of stunting in their daily lives. The following are documentation of SOTH activities.



Figure 2. Implementation of SOTH

In addition, PKK cadres also serve as facilitators who assist in monitoring the growth of children in their villages. They actively provide education to mothers about the importance of balanced nutrition and good health practices. Furthermore, PKK cadres also oversee the cleanliness and sanitation of the environment, ensuring that the living environment of children remains clean. Not only that, they also provide counseling to mothers with children who experience stunting and regularly monitor and report to relevant authorities so that necessary actions can be taken promptly. With their holistic and integrated role, PKK cadres become the forefront in the efforts to prevent stunting in the community. Research results also support the importance of the role of PKK cadres in preventing stunting. Findings indicate that villages with active and trained PKK cadres tend to have lower stunting rates compared to villages with fewer active PKK cadres. This emphasizes that the involvement and active role of PKK cadres in educating the community about stunting, promoting balanced nutrition, monitoring child growth, and maintaining environmental cleanliness play a crucial role in addressing the issue of stunting. Therefore, collaboration between PKK cadres, the government, and the community is vital in efforts to prevent stunting and achieve a better public health target. In the context of efforts to prevent stunting, the interaction with a

PKK cadre reveals a significant portion of their participation in driving preventive actions at the local community level. Through in-depth interviews, it is revealed that PKK cadres play a role as change agents directing energy and resources towards a better understanding of the importance of balanced nutrition in child growth. They not only act as information providers but also as social catalysts capable of building awareness and changing community behaviors through an integrated educational and social approach. From this perspective, the role of PKK cadres is not limited to carrying out administrative tasks but includes a counseling dimension and a role model in shaping healthy practices in daily life. By using appropriate and empathetic communication strategies, they successfully connect concepts of nutritional health with the social and cultural context of the local community.

Through structured counseling and training programs, the role of PKK Cadres is very significant in mobilizing and supporting the creation of a conducive environment for better nutrition practices in households. In the context of preventing stunting, their contribution has a very important impact. They not only provide information and knowledge about nutrition needed by the community, but also facilitate the implementation of these practices in daily life. In addition, cross-sectoral cooperation and inter-agency networks are important foundations in strengthening the impact of PKK Cadres' efforts. Collaboration with health institutions and local governments not only expands access to relevant resources but also enables the development of more comprehensive and effective programs in combating stunting. This analysis highlights the important role of PKK Cadres in coordinating joint efforts and directing limited resources towards sustainable solutions in the prevention of stunting at the village level.

To tackle the underlying causes of stunting, it has been recognized that the Village apparatus plays a crucial role in implementing a range of targeted interventions. These interventions are designed to address the specific needs and capabilities of the community. They encompass various initiatives such as enhancing social protection for families affected by stunting, preventing early marriages, delivering training on healthy and safe nutrition, and disseminating information on family planning. Moreover, the Village organizes campaigns and promotions to encourage the consumption of local complementary foods, conducts practical demonstrations on feeding infants and children, and promotes growth stimulation. Additionally, efforts are made to foster clean and healthy living behaviors, provide education on child rearing through early childhood education programs and toddler family care, and ensure households have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities.

Discussion

The interview results with PKK cadres regarding their role in preventing stunting reveal several significant findings. Firstly, the findings highlight the importance of PKK cadres as agents of change at the community level in raising awareness and knowledge of the public about stunting and the necessary health practices to prevent it. PKK cadres not only function as the main drivers in disseminating information about stunting but also serve as motivators and facilitators in assisting mothers and families to adopt balanced nutrition practices and maintain environmental cleanliness (Rantung et al., 2018; Ruiz-Mallén et al., 2022; Yayan, 2020). Moreover, the research findings indicate that the role of PKK cadres in preventing stunting has been in line with their designated tasks and functions. These consistent findings reflect a theoretical understanding of the role of change agents at the community level in influencing health behaviors (Juni, 2024; Riana et al., 2019; Yumna, 2023). Kader PKK, by serving as a motivator and primary driver at the village level, has successfully brought about a transformation in the mindset and actions of the community regarding stunting prevention (Alvianta et al., 2021; Vissy, 2024). Furthermore, the support of Health Sociology theory, which emphasizes the importance of community-level interventions in creating a supportive health environment, is also relevant in this context (Ningsih et al., 2022; Rinayati et al., 2023). The role of PKK cadres as facilitators in providing counseling, monitoring, and support to the community strengthens this theory. Thus, this research not only confirms the suitability of the PKK cadres' role with their designated tasks and functions, but also supports the theories underlying the importance of the role of community change agents in efforts to prevent stunting.

PKK cadre participation in stunting prevention efforts has aligned with their responsibilities and roles as agents of change within the community. This discovery is in line with theories emphasizing the crucial role of local agents of change in influencing public health behaviors and practices. The active involvement of PKK cadres as drivers, motivators, and facilitators in spreading information about stunting, advocating for balanced nutrition practices, and monitoring child growth has made a significant contribution to stunting prevention at the village level (Mukodri, 2023; Nur Elly et al., 2021; Siti, 2024). Support from relevant theories, such as the Theory of Behavior Change and the Theory of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP), strengthens the results of this research (Citrakesumasari, 2020; Hidayati et al., 2022; Jalantina, 2022). The involvement of PKK cadres that is focused on counseling, monitoring, and supervision significantly contributes to enhancing awareness and practices of public health, particularly in

relation to preventing stunting (Indah, 2021; Indah & Arisna, 2022; Maryani, 2023; Wardani, 2021) As trained and organized change agents, PKK cadres have successfully translated these theories into tangible actions on the ground, resulting in a positive impact on reducing community-level stunting rates. In the context of integrating research findings into existing knowledge, the interview results with PKK cadres enhance our understanding of the importance of active and trained PKK cadres in preventing stunting. These findings provide a foundation for the development and strengthening of stunting prevention programs involving PKK cadres as key partners. Thus, this interview result not only reinforces existing theories on the role of PKK cadres in stunting prevention but also contributes to the formation of new theories that emphasize the importance of PKK cadres' participation in overall public health efforts.

4. CONCLUSION

The outcomes of this study align with its objective, which is to underscore the proactive role of the PKK in endeavors to combat stunting. Conducted as a case study in one of the villages in Bojonegoro Regency, this research effectively elucidates the pivotal role and active engagement of the Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK) cadres in stunting prevention initiatives. Through thorough analysis, it was discovered that PKK cadres serve as influential catalysts for change by disseminating knowledge pertaining to balanced nutrition, hygiene, and pertinent health practices. The research findings carry substantial implications, showcasing the pivotal role of PKK cadres in combating stunting within communities. By delving into the grassroots level through in-depth analysis, the study highlights how PKK cadres serve as proactive agents of change, actively disseminating crucial knowledge on nutrition, hygiene, and health practices. These findings underscore the significance of community empowerment and the proactive involvement of PKK cadres in safeguarding the health of children and promoting optimal growth within society.

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