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# THE EFFECT OF INCOME INEQUALITY, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT AND POPULATION DENSITY ON POVERTY IN ACEH PROVINCE

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the effect of income inequality, women's empowerment, unemployment, and population density on poverty levels in Aceh Province during 2017-2020. This study uses secondary data from 2017-2020 from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Aceh Province. The research method uses panel data regression analysis techniques, with the best model selection test obtained being the fixed effect model (FEM). The results showed that the variables of women's empowerment and population density significantly negatively affected the level of poverty. Meanwhile, income inequality and unemployment variables had no effect on the poverty level in Aceh Province in 2017-2020.

**Keywords:** Income Inequality, Unemployment, Women Empowerment, Poverty, Population Density

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#### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh ketimpangan pendapatan, pemberdayaan perempuan, pengangguran dan kepadatan penduduk terhadap tingkat kemiskinan di Provinsi Aceh selama tahun 2017-2020. Penelitian ini menggunakan data sekunder dari tahun 2017-2020 yang diperoleh dari Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) Provinsi Aceh. Metode penelitian menggunakan teknik analisis regresi data panel dengan uji pemilihan model terbaik yang diperoleh adalah fixed effect model (FEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan variabel pemberdayaan perempuan dan kepadatan penduduk yang berpengaruh negatif signifikan terhadap tingkat kemiskinan. Sementara variabel ketimpangan pendapatan dan pengangguran tidak berpengaruh terhadap tingkat kemiskinan di Provinsi Aceh tahun 2017-2020.

**Kata Kunci:** Ketimpangan Pendapatan, Pengangguran, Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Kemiskinan, Kepadatan Penduduk

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#### Introduction

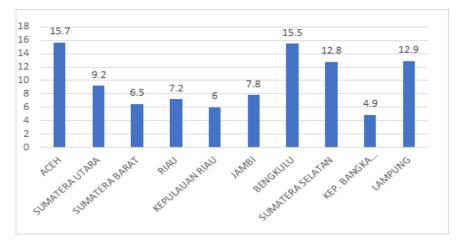
In today's economy, one of the most vital issues in the development of a country is the level of poverty. According to Todaro & Smith (2015), poverty is a source of problems that is the goal of the main policy on developing a country. In general, a country's poverty level is determined by differences in resources, abilities, and opportunities. Poverty has a negative impact on social and state life, such as increasing crime rates, not getting access to

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education and health, and not getting a decent life as a human being. In addition, poverty has a multidimensional nature meaning that the needs of various kinds of people so that poverty has primary aspects, such as poor in assets, politics, knowledge, education, social organization, and skills, as well as secondary aspects, such as poor in finance, information and social connections (Nuryitmawan, 2016; Suripto & Subayil, 2020).

In Indonesia, the problem of poverty is a big thing to be handled by both the central and local governments. In overcoming poverty, various views depend on the conditions that occur, such as poverty in an isolated and remote area from the aspect of food that does not experience a shortage but is limited to various accesses such as schools and health. While people experiencing poverty in the city live in overhangs of shops or under bridges, the ways of overcoming poverty are different (Maipita, 2014). Aceh Province is one of the provinces with a high poverty rate in Indonesia.



Source: BPS (2023b)

Figure 1: The Average Poverty Rate of the Provinces on the Island of Sumatra, 2017-2020

Since the 1990s, in the province of Aceh, most of the people of Aceh still live in poverty. This situation worsened with the earthquake and tsunami that hit Aceh in 2004, which caused economic activity to be destroyed, causing the poverty rate to continue to rise. After the earthquake in 2006, the poverty rate was 45% of the total population in Aceh province (Basyir et al., 2015). After the natural disaster and in line with the restarting of development, the regional government of Aceh Province is trying to reduce the poverty rate. However, until now, Figure 1 shows the average poverty rate for provinces on Sumatra Island in 2017-2020, with the highest poverty rate in Aceh province at 15.7%.

The province of Aceh is fascinating because it is given a privilege, namely in the form of special autonomy with the implementation of Islamic law the province of Aceh (Sanur, 2020). In addition, Aceh Province is divided into 18 districts and five cities with different poverty levels. Based on Figure 2, the average poverty rate during 2017-2020 in Regencies and Cities in Aceh Province was the highest in Aceh Singkil Regency, namely 21%. Overall, the data shows that the poverty rate in districts and cities in Aceh Province is still high, at above 10%, except for Banda Aceh City. According to Ananto et al. (2020), development in the economic aspect of Aceh is still very lame, especially in making programs that can directly or indirectly reduce poverty.

As for Aceh, which is a province that implements Islamic law, it has a high poverty rate. In fact, if traced to Islam, Allah SWT orders Muslims to work and try and devote all the potential within individual Muslims to obtain economic changes that are better in fulfilling their needs (Hakim & Syaputra, 2020). This is supported by research (Estes & Tiliouine, 2014)

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which shows that Islamic countries included in the Islamic Cooperation Organization have high poverty levels even in 23 Asian and 27 African countries.

Source: BPS Provinsi Aceh (2022)

Figure 2: Poverty Data Series for District and City in Aceh Province for 2017-2020

■ 2017 ■ 2018 ■ 2019 ■ 2020

Studies on income inequality variables by Nadhifah & Sakti (2019) show that income inequality positively and significantly affects increasing poverty. This research is different from the research of Oktaviani et al. (2022), which shows that income inequality does not affect poverty. Research conducted by Amalia (2017) and Abda & Cahyono (2022) shows that unemployment significantly affects the poverty rate. However, this is different from the research of Suripto & Subayil (2020) and Zuhdiyaty & Kaluge (2017), which explain that unemployment has no significant positive effect on poverty. Another study by Rapii & Wahdatussopia (2020) shows that women's empowerment significantly reduces poverty. Meanwhile, another study by Adnan & Amri (2020) shows that women's empowerment has no significant effect on poverty. Research on population density by Maarif (2022) shows that population density positively and significantly affects poverty. However, these results are different from the research of Munira & Juliansyah (2022), which shows that population density has little effect on poverty levels.

Based on some of these previous studies, there are differences in research results related to the effect of poverty. This research is interesting to study besides using the gender empowerment index variable, which is still very rare, and also using regencies and cities in Aceh Province, which apply Islamic law but have a high poverty rate. In addition, this study aims to determine the factors of income inequality, women's empowerment, unemployment, and population density on the poverty rate in Aceh Province during 2017-2020 based on the available data. In addition, the election for the province of Aceh was based on the privileges of the province of Aceh as a province that is allowed to use Islamic law in Indonesia.

#### **Literature Review**

## **Poverty**

Poverty is often interpreted as a low condition in various economic, social, and other ways. According to the BPS (2021), a person is said to be poor when he is incapable of economic aspects, especially in meeting basic needs such as food and non-food, measured

in terms of monthly per capita expenditure below the poverty line. According to the BPS (2023a), the income classified as poor is IDR 535,547.00/capita/month. Increasing poverty in the community is basically due to two things, namely natural aspects, such as poor environmental conditions, insufficient knowledge, and the impact of natural disasters, and non-natural aspects, such as the impact of errors in economic policies, corruption, unstable political conditions and mismanagement of natural resources (Iskandar, 2012).

In general, poverty can be a bust of welfare for the community. In theory *vicious cycle of poverty,* poverty is considered to have no end and is based on all elements causing poverty to be interconnected with one another (Nurkse, 1953). According to Sharp et al. (1996), poverty that arises in the community environment is caused by an imbalance in the ownership of resources which has an impact on an unequal distribution of income, differences in the quality of human resources which have an impact on low wages and productivity, and differences in access to capital.

# **Poverty in Islam**

In language, poor in Islam through the noun Masdar derived from the word *sakana-yaskunu-sukun*. This word means silence, which is an individual who has not been able to fulfill his life needs, so it is referred to as silence which causes poverty (Wibowo et al., 2021). In overcoming poverty, Islam instructs humans through the Al-Quran and Hadith, among others. First, behavior towards oneself tries to obtain sustenance on Earth for every creature because Allah has guaranteed it in Q.S. Hud verse 6. In addition, Muslims are also prohibited from begging, greedy and wasteful. Second, behavior toward other people through zakat, infaq, and alms to the poor (Hakim & Syaputra, 2020).

## **Income Inequality**

Income inequality is an extreme problem in economic development. Income inequality can be interpreted as a difference in the income earned by the community so that it impacts income that stands out in the community's economy (Todaro & Smith, 2015). That is, high-income will be more prosperous, and low-income will be poorer. According to Kuznets (1955), the development process occurs in an unequal income distribution; however, when the development has progressed to a successful point, it will impact an increasingly even income distribution.

# Women's Empowerment

Empowerment of women is a business's ability to gain access and control in obtaining economic, social, cultural, and political resources so that women can play an active role in providing solutions and overcoming problems so that they are free from underdevelopment (Kuncoro & Kadar, 2016). Empowering women is one of the crucial things for regional economic development. This is based on the fact that women are the object most vulnerable to economic poverty, health, malnutrition, and low-income levels, commonly found in underdeveloped areas in Indonesia. Empowerment of women can be seen in two aspects. The first is on individual aspects related to the main issues raised, such as property ownership sources, government access, and gender. The second is on the community aspect with issues such as resource transfer, strengthening institutional framework, and access to government organizations (Rapii & Wahdatussopia, 2020).

This research uses a gender empowerment index that measures the active role of women in social and economic life. The gender empowerment index is divided into three aspects, namely first, women's representation in parliament, calculated by comparing men and women in parliament. Second, the decision selection is calculated by comparing men and women from the work of staff, managers, professional workers, and technicians. Third, the income distribution is calculated from the income of non-agricultural women and men workers (Tanziha et al., 2021).

## Unemployment

Unemployment is the condition of a person who is included in the labor force but has yet to find a job (Sukirno, 2016). Meanwhile, according to the BPS (2022a), an indicator of someone being said to be unemployed is a resident who has not yet worked but is still looking for work or is preparing for a new business or a resident who is not looking for work because they have been accepted to work but have not started doing work. Unemployment is included in macroeconomic problems that have an impact on individual life. This is caused by losing a job means that individuals will have difficulty meeting the necessities of life and declining living standards as well as psychological pressure.

According to Mankiw (2016), several reasons cause unemployment. First is wage rigidity, namely the failure of wages by companies where the labor supply is not following the demand. Second is job search, when workers look for jobs matching their expertise. Third, the minimum wage regulation, namely when wages are set above the balance point for various reasons, will impact the industry, laying off workers, and causing unemployment. Fourth, labor unions are a cartel where workers can go on strike when it is not following the expected policies. Fifth, the theory of efficiency wages, that is, company operations are more efficient when wages are at the top of the balance.

## **Population Density**

Population density is an area's total population in a square kilometer land area (Gatiningsih & Sutrisno, 2017). Population density is influenced by three factors: birth rate or fertility, population movement or migration, and death rate or mortality. Basically, the needs of the population is something that must be controlled in economic development. This is based on Malthus(1798); in theory, humans in life need food, while in fact the growth rate of food ingredients is much slower than the rapid rate of population growth. So if the population growth rate is not limited, it will cause food shortages and become a source of poverty. In the current development of the theory of Malthus (1798), is still quite relevant, especially in developing and poor countries, where technological development is still running slowly, so that it is unable to meet the needs of the community.

## **Research Methods**

The operational definition in this study is:

**Table 1: Variable Operational Definition** 

|                         | Definition   | Source |
|-------------------------|--|--------|
| Dependent Variable      |  |        |
| Poverty Level (Y)       | Reflects the percentage of the number of poor people in a region in a given year   | BPS    |
| Independent Variables   |  |        |
| Income Inequality (X1)  | Using the Gini Index, which looks at the level of income inequality, ranges from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (perfect inequality).                   | BPS    |
| Women Empowerment (X2)  | The women's empowerment variable is proxied by using the Gender Empowerment Index (IPG) through the following calculations (Tanziha et al., 2021): | BPS    |
|                         | $\mathit{IPG} = rac{I_{\mathit{par}} + I_{\mathit{dm}} + I_{\mathit{inc-dis}}}{3}$  |        |
|                         | Where:  I = Representative index in parliament I = Decision-making index I = Income distribution index   |        |
| Unemployment (X3)       | The percentage of the number of unemployed from the total labor force in an area.  | BPS    |
| Population Density (X4) | Comparison of the total population to the area.  | BPS    |

This research uses quantitative research based on theory in measuring research variables through numbers in analyzing data with statistical procedures. This research uses panel data with secondary data types from 2017-2020 based on the available data at the Central Statistics Agency. The number of observations in this study was 92 observations with a population and sample of all regencies and cities in Aceh Province, totaling 23 of them Simeulue, Aceh Singkil, South Aceh, Southeast Aceh, East Aceh, Central Aceh, West Aceh, Great Aceh, Pidie, Bireuen, North Aceh, Southwest Aceh, Gayo Lues, Aceh Tamiang, Nagan Raya, Aceh Jaya, Bener Meriah, Pidie Jaya, Banda Aceh, Sabang, Langsa, Lhokseumawe, Subulussalam.

This study uses panel data regression, a combination of data *time series* and *cross section* (Priyono, 2016). The use of panel data regression in this study consists of *a common effect model* (CEM), *fixed effect model* (FEM,) and *random effect model* (REM) with the equation model used as follows:

$$KEM = a_0 + \beta_1 KET + \beta_2 IPG_{it} + \beta_3 PEN_{it} + \beta_4 SP_{it} \varepsilon_{it}$$
(1)

Where:

KEM : Poverty (%)

KET : Income Inequality (0-1)

IPG : Gender Empowerment Index (0-100)

PEN : Unemployment (%)

K.P. : Population density (people/km<sup>2</sup>)

 $a_0$ : Constant

 $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ : Regression Coefficient

i : Regencies and Cities in Aceh

t : Year (2017-2020)  $\varepsilon_{ii}$  : Standard Error

Choosing a panel data model, in general, will have an impact on difficulties in model specifications. The residuals have three kinds, namely residuals time series, cross section and a combination of both. There are several methods in estimating the panel data regression model including common effect model (CEM), fixed effect model (FEM) and random effect model (REM) (Widarjono, 2005):

1) Chow test

H<sub>0</sub>:Common Effect Model (CEM) H<sub>1</sub>:Fixed Effect Model (FEM)

2) Hausman test

H<sub>0</sub>:Random Effect Model (REM) H<sub>1</sub>:Fixed Effect Model (FEM)

3) Lagrange Multiplier test

H<sub>0</sub>:Common Effect Model (CEM) H<sub>1</sub>:Random Effect Model (REM)

The results of the selected model will be tested with classical assumptions to provide certainty that it has estimation certainty, is not biased, and is consistent with the panel data regression results. In addition, the selected CEM and FEM models will be tested for heteroscedasticity and multicollinearity, while the REM model will be tested for multicollinearity and normality (Ekananda, 2014).

#### **Results and Discussion**

# **Descriptive Statistics**

Table 2 is descriptive statistics describing the variables used in this study.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics** 

|                | Poverty (%) | Income<br>Inequality<br>(0-1) | Gender<br>Empowerment<br>Index (0-100) | Unemployment<br>(%) | Population density<br>(people/km²) |
|----------------|-------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mean           | 16.16696    | 0.289467                      | 58.86946                               | 5.930109            | 111.8873                           |
| Median         | 16.09500    | 0.289500                      | 57.91500                               | 6.120000            | 96.93392                           |
| Maximum.       | 22.11000    | 0.363000                      | 78.53000                               | 12.51000            | 301.9318                           |
| Minimum        | 6.900000    | 0.213000                      | 47.27000                               | 1.030000            | 16.56268                           |
| Std. Deviation | 3.627019    | 0.033457                      | 7.602900                               | 2.514603            | 70.10835                           |
| Obs.           | 16.16696    | 0.289467                      | 58.86946                               | 5.930109            | 111.8873                           |

Table 2 illustrates the highest poverty variable of 22.11% in Aceh Singkil Regency in 2017. The lowest is 6.9% in Banda Aceh City in 2020, and the average poverty rate in districts and cities in Aceh Province is 16.16%. The highest income inequality variable was 0.363 in Langsa City in 2019, and the lowest was 0.213 in Bener Meriah Regency in 2017, and the average level of income inequality in districts and cities in Aceh Province was 0.289. The highest gender empowerment index variable was 78.53 in Sabang City in 2017, and the lowest was 47.27 in Aceh Besar District in 2017, and the average was 58.86. The highest unemployment variable was 12.51% in Lhokseumawe City in 2018, and the lowest was 1.03% in Bener Meriah Regency in 2019, and the average unemployment rate was 5.93%. The highest population density variable was 302 people/km² in North Aceh District in 2019, and the lowest was in Sabang City in 2017 of 17 people/km² with an average of 112 people/km².

## Panel Data Regression

After carrying out the classical assumption test, we then look at the results of the panel data regression by selecting several of these models common effect model (CEM), fixed effect model (FEM) and random effect model (REM), and Chow test, Hausman as well as Lagrange Multiplier (L.M.) in this study.

**Table 3: Test Results** 

| Variable           | CEM         | FEM                       | REM          |  |  |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| С                  | 26.35472*** | 31.93451***               | 23.56433***  |  |  |
| X1                 | -20.92883*  | -1.131063                 | -2.118967    |  |  |
| X2                 | -0.024847   | -0.063671**               | -0.069502*** |  |  |
| Х3                 | -0.365723** | -0.084426                 | -0.107252    |  |  |
| X4                 | 26.35472    | -0.100022***              | -0.018380*   |  |  |
| Adjusted R-Squared | 0.1131      | 0.9509                    | 0.0810       |  |  |
| Prob (F-Statistic) | 3.9020      | 0.0000                    | 0,.224       |  |  |
| Chow Test          |             | 293.117255***             |              |  |  |
|                    |             | (Cross-section Chi-square | )            |  |  |
| Hausman Test       | 9.516703**  |                           |              |  |  |
|                    |             | (Cross-section random)    |              |  |  |

Note: \*p<0.10; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Based on table 3, the test results show that the selection of the best model is the fixed effect model (FEM) at the poverty level by looking at the probability value cross-section

random < 0,05 (H<sub>1</sub> accepted). In the poverty level model, the value of Adjusted R-Squared of 0.9509, which means that the variables of income inequality, gender empowerment, unemployment, and population density can explain the poverty rate variable of 95.9%. In comparison, the remaining 4.1% is explained in other variables outside the study. The F test value of 0.000 shows that the variables of income inequality, gender empowerment, unemployment, and population density have a simultaneous effect on the level of poverty. The t-test with a probability level of <0.05 shows that only gender empowerment and population density significantly negatively affect the poverty rate. Meanwhile, income inequality and unemployment have no effect on the poverty level in Aceh Province.

# **Classic Assumption Test**

In this study, the classical assumption test was carried out with two tests: the multicollinearity test and the heteroscedasticity test.

|          | KET (X1)  | IPG (X2)  | PEN (X3)  | K.P. (X4) |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| KET (X1) | 1.000000  | 0.036732  | 0.316565  | -0.027381 |
| IPG (X2) | 0.036732  | 1.000000  | -0.177232 | -0.334348 |
| PEN (X3) | 0.316565  | -0.177232 | 1.000000  | 0.396344  |
| KP (X4)  | -0.027381 | -0.334348 | 0.396344  | 1.000000  |

**Table 4: Multicollinearity Test** 

Based on table 4, the results of the multicollinearity test show that all variable coefficients are <0.8, thus indicating no symptoms of multicollinearity in all independent variables in this study.

**Table 5: Uji Heteroscedasticity** 

|             | С     | KET (X1) | IPG (X2) | PEN (X3) | K.P. (X4) |
|-------------|-------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Probability | 0.501 | 0.622    | 0.825    | 0.408    | 0.8       |

Based on table 5, the results of the heteroscedasticity test show that all probabilities for the independent variables are > 0.05, so the results describe no heteroscedasticity symptoms.

## Discussion

Based on the estimation test results, the *fixed effect* model explained that H1 was rejected; namely, income inequality did not significantly affect poverty in Aceh Province. However, these results explain that income inequality is the control of assets controlled by the rich over the poor when the rich expand their assets by opening new investments resulting in market competition with other competitors so that one of them becomes bankrupt. This will cause unemployment to competitors who go bankrupt and absorb labor by asset owners simultaneously. Income inequality can cause economic inefficiency, weaken social balance, and cause economic injustice (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Income inequality can continue to increase, controlled by only a handful of parties. However, asset owners still need poor workers to expand their assets so that income inequality does not affect the decline and increase in the poverty rate of an area (Auria, 2021). In addition, the social factors of individuals who are extravagant in obtaining their income are also influential in influencing the poverty level. These results follow the research of Hendri & Iswandi (2022), which shows that income inequality has no significant effect on poverty.

Through estimation test on the *fixed effect* model explained that H2 was accepted, namely, women's empowerment negatively and significantly affected poverty in Aceh Province. According to Todaro & Smith (2015), women in their social and economic life are

closely related to poverty. This happens because when women in family education have low economic status, it will impact low family life, especially poverty-related. So that when women begin to participate in various generations to improve their status for a more prosperous life in the development process, that will be obtained as part of investment in human resources. These results follow the research of Saptatiningsih et al. (2015), which shows that empowering women can reduce poverty.

Based on the estimation results of the *fixed effect model* explained that H3 was rejected; namely, unemployment did not significantly affect poverty in Aceh Province. Unemployment is divided into people looking for work, starting a business, those not looking for work because it is impossible to get a job for educational reasons, and people who have jobs but are not yet working. Among the four categories of open unemployment, not all are in the formal sector, some are in the informal sector, and some people have jobs but work less than 35 hours a week. However, according to BPS (2022b), if the job lasts more than 35 hours, it is called a full-time employee. In addition, some people have *part-time* jobs but have a higher income than those who have regular jobs, which are part of the open unemployment (Hilmi et al., 2022). Meanwhile, according to the Central Statistics Agency, individuals are called working. These results follow the research of Suharlina (2020) and Lestari (2017), which shows that unemployment has no effect on poverty.

Based on the results of the estimation test through the *fixed effect model* illustrates that H4 is accepted, namely, population density has a negative and significant effect on poverty in Aceh Province. A high population density will have a good impact if utilized, especially in absorbing jobs, increasing new investment and education, and reducing poverty (Nyompa et al., 2019). In addition, the population density will also encourage economic externalities or agglomeration, which affects reducing poverty, due to the very high aspects of productivity and labor income, which are in the direction of reducing community poverty. The results of this study follow the research of Azizah et al. (2022), which shows that population density has a significant negative effect on poverty.

#### Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the model selected in the best selection test is the panel data regression analysis *fixed effect* model (FEM). The variables of gender empowerment and population density significantly negatively affect the poverty rate. Meanwhile, income inequality and unemployment did not affect the poverty rate in Aceh Province in 2017-2020. The *adjusted r-squared* value is 0.9509, which means that the variables of income inequality, gender empowerment, unemployment, and population density can explain the poverty rate variable of 95.9%. In comparison, the remaining 4.1% is explained by other variables outside the study.

This research can be used as a reference, especially about the effects of women's empowerment, unemployment, population density, and income inequality on poverty in Aceh Province during 2017-2020. This research has limitations, especially in 2017-2020 in Aceh Province. In addition, the use of limited variables in influencing poverty levels. Future studies can add to the years and other variables affecting poverty levels, such as economic growth, export levels, and the human development index.

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