

WOMEN, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL WELFARE
VOL. 3 NO. 3 (2026)

ISSN: 3064-2469

Women's Social Readiness in Indonesian Archipelago Economic Heroes Program (PENA): A Feminist Social Work Perspective from Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Bambang Rustanto, Dyah Asri Gita Pratiwi, Eri Susanto, Tuti Kartika, Ayi Haryani, and Aryohaji Istyawan*

To cite this article: B. Rustanto, D. A. G. Pratiwi, E. Susanto, T. Kartika, A. Haryani, and A. Istyawan, "Women ' s Social Readiness in Indonesian Archipelago Economic Heroes Program (PENA): A Feminist Social Work Perspective from Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia," *Women, Educ. Soc. Welf.*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 864–878, 2026. https://doi.org/10.70211/wesw.v3i3.567

Published online: July 30, 2026

Submit your article to this journal

View crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://journal.wiseedu.co.id/index.php/jiswel/about

OPEN ACCESS

https://doi.org/10.70211/wesw.v3i3.567

Women, Education, and Social Welfare Vol 3 No 3 (2026)

Check for updates

Research Article

Women's Social Readiness in Indonesian Archipelago Economic Heroes Program (PENA): A Feminist Social Work Perspective from Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Bambang Rustanto, Dyah Asri Gita Pratiwi, Eri Susanto, Tuti Kartika, Ayi Haryani, and Aryohaji Istyawan*

Received: April 24, 2026	Revised: May 13, 2026	Accepted: July 28, 2026	Online: July 30, 2026

Abstract

This study examines the social readiness of women beneficiaries transitioning from conditional cash assistance under the Family Hope Program (PKH) to productive entrepreneurship through the Indonesian Archipelago Economic Heroes Program (PENA) in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study involved ten women beneficiaries selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis and were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model and Creswell's horizonalization technique. The findings reveal that social readiness is ambivalent and manifested across four interconnected dimensions: emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, behavioral, and aspirational readiness. Social accompaniment helped transform transitional anxiety into achievement motivation, although cognitive readiness remained limited by low micro-financial literacy. Women demonstrated strong work resilience, but their behavioral readiness was constrained by the double burden and unequal distribution of domestic labor. The beneficiaries also expressed a need for continued technical assistance and more accessible financing. Feminist social work analysis confirms that these limitations are shaped more by time poverty and patriarchal inequalities than by individual shortcomings.

Keywords: Feminist Social Work; PENA; Social Readiness; Women Beneficiaries; Women's Empowerment.

Publisher's Note:
WISE Pendidikan Indonesia stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Copyright:
©
2026 by the author(s).
License WISE Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



INTRODUCTION

Poverty reduction has long been a central challenge in global development discourse, particularly in developing nations where structural inequalities intersect with gender-based deprivation [1], [2]. In Indonesia, poverty remains a multidimensional phenomenon deeply embedded in rural communities, where women, particularly those heading households, disproportionately experience economic vulnerability and are overrepresented among the poorest population groups [3], [4], [5]. The Indonesian government has historically responded to this challenge through conditional cash transfer mechanisms, most notably the Family Hope Program (*Program Keluarga Harapan*/PKH), which has served as the primary social protection instrument for millions of low-income households since its inception in 2007 [6], [7]. While such programs have demonstrated measurable short-term impacts on household consumption and child welfare indicators, their long-term effectiveness in fostering genuine economic independence remains fundamentally contested in both policy and academic circles.

The structural limitation of passive social assistance programs lies in their inherent tendency to generate dependency traps, a condition wherein beneficiaries become chronically reliant on state transfers, rendering them incapable of sustaining autonomous economic activity once assistance is withdrawn [8]. Empirical evidence from Indonesia and comparable Southeast Asian contexts demonstrates that beneficiaries of conditional cash transfer programs who exit without adequate entrepreneurial preparation remain highly vulnerable to poverty relapse, with post-graduation income levels frequently failing to sustain household welfare independently of state assistance [9]. This phenomenon signals a critical programmatic gap: the transition architecture between passive assistance and productive empowerment remains structurally underdeveloped, particularly for women beneficiaries who simultaneously navigate market uncertainties and entrenched domestic responsibilities.

Recognizing this systemic gap, the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs launched the Indonesian Archipelago Economic Heroes Program (*Program Pahlawan Ekonomi Nusantara*/PENA) as an innovative policy intervention designed to facilitate the graduation of productive-age PKH beneficiaries into sustainable micro-entrepreneurship [10], [11]. Through the provision of business capital, production equipment assistance, and entrepreneurial training, PENA represents a paradigmatic shift from charitable welfare toward productive empowerment [12]. However, the success of this programmatic transition is fundamentally contingent upon a prerequisite that policymakers have consistently underestimated: the social readiness of beneficiaries, particularly women to absorb, internalize, and operationalize entrepreneurial responsibilities within their existing socio-structural constraints.

The Special Region of Yogyakarta (*Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*/DIY) presents a compelling and analytically significant context for examining this phenomenon. Despite its status as a nationally recognized center of education and cultural heritage, Yogyakarta continues to experience relatively high poverty rates compared to other Indonesian provinces, with the poverty rate remaining above 11 percent during 2022–2023 [4]. Within this provincial context, Gunungkidul Regency continues to experience a disproportionately high incidence of poverty, with a poverty rate of 15.60 percent in 2023, markedly exceeding both the Special Region of Yogyakarta provincial average of 11 percent and the national poverty rate of 9.36 percent recorded in the same period [5].

The sub-district of Wonosari, as the administrative capital of Gunungkidul, concentrates the highest population density in the regency while simultaneously hosting one of the largest clusters of PENA beneficiaries, making it an ecologically and sociologically strategic locus for investigation. The karst topographic constraints of the region, historically limiting agricultural productivity, have compelled local communities, particularly women to pivot toward trade, home-based crafts, and micro-food production as primary livelihood strategies, amplifying the stakes of entrepreneurial readiness within this specific geographic context.

Theoretically, social readiness constitutes a complex socio-psychological construct that cannot be reduced to mere willingness or motivation. Drawing upon Slameto's framework [13] foundational readiness framework, individual preparedness for role transformation encompasses three interdependent dimensions: physical, mental, and emotional conditions; needs, motives, and goals; and skills and knowledge. This tripartite framework is significantly enriched by Bandura's social cognitive theory, which operationalizes each dimension more precisely: Slameto's mental and emotional conditions are deepened through Bandura's conceptualization of self-efficacy, the belief in one's capacity to execute required tasks, producing the emotive-attitudinal readiness dimension; Slameto's skills and knowledge domain is extended through Bandura's social cognitive learning mechanisms, yielding the cognitive readiness dimension; and Slameto's physical conditions are grounded in Bandura's notion of enactive mastery experience, learning through direct performance, constituting the behavioral readiness dimension [14].

Together, these frameworks provide a robust analytical architecture for assessing the preparedness of women beneficiaries navigating the PENA transition. Nevertheless, the application of these frameworks in isolation from structural gender analysis risks pathologizing individual women's limitations while systematically ignoring the patriarchal structures that produce and reproduce those limitations.

This is precisely where feminist social work theory enters as an indispensable analytical corrective [15]. Feminist social work challenges the individualistic bias inherent in conventional readiness frameworks by foregrounding how gender-based power asymmetries, manifested through the double burden of productive and reproductive labor, time poverty, and the devaluation of indigenous knowledge systematically constrain women's capacity for entrepreneurial readiness [16]. The concept of the "second shift," wherein women perform paid economic work only after completing unpaid domestic labor, is particularly salient in the context of poor rural women, where patriarchal household norms remain deeply entrenched and the redistribution of domestic responsibilities is rarely negotiated [17].

Despite the growing body of literature on conditional cash transfer graduation programs in the Global South, several critical lacunae persist. Existing studies predominantly evaluate PENA and analogous programs through quantitative outcome metrics: graduation rates, income levels, and business survival rates. Without adequately examining the qualitative, lived experiences of women beneficiaries during the transition process [10], [11], [12], [18]. While feminist critiques of microfinance and women's empowerment programs are well-established in the global literature, their systematic application to Indonesia's specific social protection graduation architecture remains conspicuously absent. Furthermore, the intersection of feminist social work practice with indigenous socio-cultural contexts in rural Java, particularly

the ways in which Javanese patriarchal norms mediate women's entrepreneurial readiness, has received minimal scholarly attention. No prior study has specifically examined the social readiness dynamics of PENA beneficiaries in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, despite the region's unique socio-geographical characteristics and its persistently anomalous poverty profile within an otherwise culturally affluent provincial context.

This study advances existing scholarship in three distinct ways. It offers the first systematic phenomenological investigation of women beneficiaries' social readiness within the PENA program framework, generating empirically grounded insights into the subjective experiences of poverty graduation that quantitative evaluations cannot capture. It pioneers the application of feminist social work analysis as an integrative lens through which conventional readiness theories are critically interrogated and contextually repositioned within Indonesia's patriarchal rural social structure. It further contributes a geographically specific analytical contribution by situating the investigation within the Special Region of Yogyakarta, whose paradoxical combination of cultural prestige and persistent rural poverty constitutes a theoretically generative case for understanding the structural contradictions embedded in Indonesia's poverty graduation policies.

Guided by the theoretical framework and identified research gaps, this study is directed by the following central research question: how is the social readiness of women beneficiaries of the Indonesian Archipelago Economic Heroes Program (PENA) manifested in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia? This overarching question is further elaborated through four specific inquiries examining the emotive-attitudinal dimensions of their transition experience, the cognitive readiness capacities and limitations they demonstrate in managing entrepreneurial resources, and the ways in which the double burden of domestic and productive labor shapes their behavioral readiness in sustaining micro-entrepreneurship activities within the PENA.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach, selected on the grounds that the social readiness of women beneficiaries navigating a complex policy transition is fundamentally experiential, contextual, and resistant to quantitative reduction. Consistent with Creswell & Creswell [19] assert that qualitative inquiry seeks to understand meanings individuals ascribe to social problems, this study does not test statistical hypotheses but rather captures and interprets lived realities as experienced and articulated by research subjects themselves.

The phenomenological design specifically aims at distilling the essential structure of women beneficiaries' lived experiences. Their fears, motivations, self-perceptions, and structural frustrations as articulated through in-depth interviews and corroborated through participatory observation at their business sites. This approach aligns with Rustanto's perspective [20] that phenomenological approaches foreground situated interpretations of beneficiaries regarding assistance, independence, and surrounding structural pressures [20].

Research Settings

The study was conducted in Wonosari Sub-district (Kapanewon Wonosari), Gunungkidul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta during June 2023. This site was purposively selected given its status as Gunungkidul's administrative capital and primary economic center, while simultaneously hosting one of the regency's largest concentrations of both PKH beneficiaries and PENA program clusters. The region's karst topographic constraints, which historically restrict agricultural productivity and compel local communities (particularly women) toward trade and home-based micro-industries, further render Wonosari a theoretically generative site for investigating women's entrepreneurial readiness under conditions of ecological and structural vulnerability.

Research Participants

Ten women PENA beneficiaries were designated as primary informants through purposive sampling, selected against strict inclusion criteria: serving as household heads or primary economic providers, officially registered as active PKH beneficiaries prior to PENA transfer, having received the IDR 5,000,000 business capital stimulus, and having operated their businesses for a minimum of one full production cycle of three to six months. This sample size is consistent with phenomenological research conventions, wherein Creswell & Creswell [19] recommend three to ten participants as sufficient for achieving informational depth. Thematic saturation was confirmed when no new categories emerged across the final interviews, with identical themes recurring consistently across all ten informant accounts.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews using a flexible semi-structured guide built around Slameto and Bandura's social readiness pillars, complemented by participatory observation at informants' business locations and documentary study of official poverty statistics, beneficiary profiles, and regional demographic data from the Regional Bureau of Statistics and Dinsos P3A Gunungkidul.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model, proceeding simultaneously and cyclically throughout fieldwork rather than linearly at its conclusion [19], [21]. This process moved through three stages.

First, data reduction was conducted through systematic coding of verbatim transcripts into thematic clusters encompassing emotive-attitudinal readiness, cognitive entrepreneurial barriers, self-efficacy, and behavioral time management constraints. Second, data display was carried out through structured narrative presentation reinforced by direct interview quotations from women beneficiaries. Third, at the conclusion drawing stage, Creswell's horizonalization technique was applied to the reduced and displayed data: significant statements were extracted, non-repetitive and non-overlapping meanings were clustered into themes, and structural and textural descriptions were constructed to produce a comprehensive phenomenological essence of women's social readiness.

Trustworthiness was ensured through source data triangulation, cross-checking interview data against field observations, social companion accounts, and macro-sectoral BP

data and member checking, wherein preliminary findings were returned to informants for verification, positioning research subjects as equal partners whose voices were portrayed honestly and without conceptual distortion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study reveal that the social readiness of women beneficiaries of the PENA program in Wonosari Sub-district, Gunungkidul, Special Region of Yogyakarta, manifests as a deeply ambivalent and structurally conditioned phenomenon across four interconnected thematic dimensions.

Emotive-Attitudinal Readiness: From Transitional Anxiety to Emergent Motivation

The dominant affective experience among informants during the initial phase of PENA socialization was one of high transitional anxiety, deeply rooted in the existential fear of losing the financial security that PKH had provided as a regular, reliable consumption stabilizer for their households over multiple years. The prospect of graduating from PKH triggered profound psychological distress that manifested in somatic symptoms, sleep disturbances, and emotional collapse, a pattern consistently reported across all ten informants, suggesting a shared experiential structure rather than isolated individual responses. Informant N, a 42-year-old operator of a small grocery stall in Kalurahan Wunung, articulated this experience with striking vividness:

> "At first, my eyes immediately welled up with tears and my whole body was trembling when I was told I would be graduated and transferred to PENA. The PKH money was always certain to come every three months for my children's schooling, whereas the income from running a small stall like this is never guaranteed. I was terrified that if my stall had no customers, my children would not be able to buy snacks or go to school because the PKH assistance had already been revoked. It felt like being released into a forest without anything to hold on to." [22]

A parallel experience of emotional disruption, compounded by a sense of perceived injustice regarding program targeting, was expressed by informant S, a 36-year-old home-based cassava chip producer in Kalurahan Pulutan:

> "Honestly, I initially felt resentful and a sense of injustice. Why was I the one who had to be removed from PKH, while my neighbor whose house is far nicer still receives it? My confidence immediately collapsed because I was afraid that the five million rupiah capital would be exhausted just to patch daily debts rather than becoming a business. Having to face customers and market competition made me so anxious that I could not sleep during the first weeks." [23]

This perception of PENA graduation as an unwanted imposition rather than an opportunity was consistently articulated across all ten informants in varying expressions, from

informant N's terror of market uncertainty to informant S's sense of injustice regarding program targeting. The social companion of informant R, a 35-year-old PKH field facilitator in Wonosari Sub-district, corroborated these accounts from the practitioner's perspective, providing structural context to what informants had already expressed:

> "The initial resistance was very strong. Beneficiaries regarded PENA graduation as a form of 'punishment' rather than liberation. They had become too comfortable with the passive assistance scheme. Our role as companions here had to be extraordinarily patient. Injecting motivation, transforming the mindset from a receiving mentality to a giving mentality, and convincing them that their self-worth is far greater when they are capable of standing independently through their own business." [24]

Significantly, the emotive-attitudinal trajectory among informants was not static. Through sustained and empathetic social accompaniment, several informants reported a gradual psychological shift, from paralytic anxiety toward nascent achievement motivation and growing self-esteem, suggesting that this readiness dimension is the most responsive to relational intervention when accompaniment is sufficiently intensive and gender-sensitive.

Cognitive Readiness: Structural Deprivation of Entrepreneurial Knowledge

Fieldwork findings unequivocally identified cognitive readiness as the weakest and most structurally compromised dimension of social readiness among informants. The most pervasive limitation was the near-total absence of micro-financial management literacy. Specifically the systemic failure to maintain any separation between business capital and household consumption funds. informant M, a 45-year-old chicken soto warung operator in the urban center of Wonosari, described this cognitive gap with disarming candor:

> "I do not know how to properly calculate profit and loss. The point is, if there is money in the cash drawer after selling, that is what I use to buy ingredients for tomorrow. The remainder goes directly to the children's allowance and buying rice. I am often confused. My stall feels busy and the food keeps selling out, yet somehow the five million rupiah capital from the government quietly diminishes and I can no longer afford to buy supplies in larger quantities." [25]

A complementary cognitive limitation, the inability to conduct rudimentary business opportunity analysis or product differentiation. It was articulated by informant Su, a 39-year-old producer of instant thiwul in Kalurahan Karangrejek:

> "I make thiwul because that is all I have ever known how to do. I simply followed what my neighbors were doing. I do not know how to create proper packaging or register the necessary permits. If asked what the weaknesses of my business are, I would not even know how to answer. The important thing is that I make it and consign it to the market. If it does not sell, then I just accept it." [26]

The social companion of informant R, further confirmed the systemic nature of this cognitive limitation from the field:

> "The cognitive readiness of our women beneficiaries is genuinely very minimal in the managerial domain. The five-million-rupiah PENA capital is extremely vulnerable to silent leakage if not carefully monitored. They know how to produce goods, but they are blind to cash flow management and market mapping. They tend to cluster around identical business types, which triggers market cannibalism at the village level." [24]

Behavioral Readiness: Physical Resilience Undermined by the Double Burden

Women beneficiaries in Wonosari consistently demonstrated high physical work resilience and strong technical competence in their chosen business domains. However, the effectiveness of this physical resilience was systematically undermined by the structural imposition of the double burden, the expectation that women perform the full scope of domestic reproductive labor in addition to their productive entrepreneurial activities, without any equitable redistribution of household responsibilities from male family members.

Informant K, a 31-year-old mother of two operating a home-based tailoring business in Kalurahan Kepek, provided the most visceral phenomenological account of this double burden:

> "Since joining PENA, my sleeping hours have been drastically reduced. In the early hours of the morning I already have to cook, bathe the children, and take them to school. After returning from the market I immediately start the sewing machine until the afternoon. Later at night, after the children have gone to sleep, I still have to iron the sewn garments until one in the morning. My husband only does odd jobs and when he comes home he just rests. He is not accustomed to helping cut fabric or doing anything in the kitchen. Sometimes I feel so exhausted that it truly feels like I cannot go on and I want to give up." [27]

A strikingly parallel account was offered by informant RU, a 47-year-old traditional cake and market snack vendor in Kalurahan Selang:

> "I have to be very clever in dividing my time between making cakes, minding the stall, and managing household affairs. Orders for cakes are frequently forced to be declined because I simply do not have time to handle them alone. My body feels completely worn out. My feet have to keep standing in the kitchen and at the stall from dawn until night without anyone to replace me in my world." [28]

This inequitable domestic arrangement was explicitly articulated across multiple informant accounts, most vividly by informant K, who described her husband's complete non-participation in household tasks, and by informant RU, who bore the totality of both domestic and business operations without any support. The social companion R, corroborated this pattern from field observations, contextualizing it within broader patriarchal household norms:

> "Behaviorally, the PENA mothers are very resilient and hardworking. They are not the type of people who are lazy. However, their primary constraint is time management due to domestic burdens that are absolutely imposed on them. Husbands in rural areas still largely hold the principle that household affairs and child-rearing are the wife's responsibility, even though the wife is now contributing the primary income through the PENA business." [24]

Aspirational Readiness for Program Sustainability: Toward Gender-Responsive Aftercare

Analysis of informants expressed hopes revealed a consistent and urgent collective need for sustained post-graduation protective infrastructure. Not a return to passive cash dependency, but a structured, gender-responsive aftercare ecosystem providing ongoing technical guidance, market protection, and accessible capital pathways. Informant N articulated the aspiration for continued accompaniment with particular clarity:

> "My hope to the social companions is that they do not grow tired of looking after our situation. If possible, visit our businesses once a month and teach us new marketing methods. If we are simply released after being given capital, it is like a small child who has just learned to stand but is then abandoned at the side of a busy road. We need to be protected when at any moment the prices of basic commodities suddenly spike." [22]

The aspiration for gender-responsive capital access pathways was expressed with particular urgency by informant K, whose business growth was structurally constrained by the inaccessibility of formal financial institutions:

> "I really want this tailoring business to grow to be able to buy a more modern overlock machine. But if I want to borrow from a formal bank, the requirements are enormously complicated and require collateral that I do not possess in my own name. My hope is that through PENA there will be a special pathway for us women to obtain additional capital without having to face the strangling interest rates of informal moneylenders." [27]

The social companion, informant R, provided the programmatic perspective on sustainability, advocating for an integrated aftercare architecture connecting PENA with the Desa PRIMA program and the Department of Cooperatives and SMEs:

> "Graduation from PKH does not mean severing the social relationship entirely. The sustainability of PENA businesses depends very heavily on the aftercare phase. We from the social companion association continue to propose that the PENA scheme be integrated with the empowerment clusters of other agencies the Department of Cooperatives and SMEs as well as Dinsos P3A through the Desa PRIMA program. So that there is comprehensive market oversight for women business actors post-graduation." [24]

Discussion

The findings across the four thematic dimensions illuminate a phenomenon that defies reductive interpretation: the social readiness of women PENA beneficiaries in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is neither a matter of individual psychological preparedness nor a straightforward programmatic outcome, but a structurally conditioned process shaped by gender inequality, patriarchal household arrangements, and accumulated rural poverty [29], [30]. Engaging these findings through Slameto's readiness framework, Bandura's social cognitive theory, and feminist social work analysis reveals a multi-layered portrait of ambivalent readiness with significant implications for how poverty graduation programs are designed and evaluated [13], [14].

The emotive-attitudinal dimension showed the most dynamic trajectory: high transitional anxiety during PENA socialization gradually shifted toward achievement motivation through sustained social accompaniment. This anxiety aligns with Bandura's concept of weakened self-efficacy as a barrier to role transition [31]. yet feminist social work rejects an individualized reading of this response: the anxiety documented among informants reflects a rational reaction to institutional withdrawal from women structurally positioned as sole managers of household survival, with limited access to collateral, networks, and safety nets [32], [33]. The horizontal tension reported between beneficiaries further signals a programmatic risk insufficiently examined in prior literature: selective graduation targeting can generate community-level fragmentation when eligibility criteria lack transparency [34].

The gradual shift toward achievement motivation observed here provides empirical support for self-efficacy as a malleable, relationally responsive construct, positioning the social companion not merely as a compliance monitor but as a catalyst for psychosocial transformation, consistent with broader social work literature on the helping relationship [35], [36]. This suggests PENA's accompaniment structure should be formally resourced as a gender-sensitive intervention rather than an administrative afterthought.

The cognitive readiness dimension revealed the most structurally entrenched challenges, most notably the near-total absence of micro-financial literacy and the inability to separate business capital from household consumption funds. This reflects a capability deprivation in Sen's sense: not merely a missing skill, but an absence of the cognitive infrastructure needed to convert entrepreneurial activity into sustainable capital accumulation [37]. Feminist social work explains the persistence of this deprivation as a product of time poverty imposed by patriarchal domestic arrangements, which leave women's cognitive bandwidth continuously consumed by unpaid care work. The indigenous production knowledge held by informants further represents a genuine economic competence that formal markets devalue through bureaucratic packaging, permit, and branding requirements; labeling this as a cognitive deficiency uncritically accepts the market's own devaluation of that knowledge [16], [33].

The clustering of beneficiaries around identical business types additionally points to a structural design flaw that cognitive training alone cannot resolve, since the resulting market saturation undermines viability regardless of individual literacy levels [38], [39]. This calls for pre-disbursement market mapping and strengths-based recognition of existing knowledge, rather than a purely deficit-oriented literacy intervention.

The behavioral readiness dimension showed strong physical work resilience, consistently undermined by the double burden of unredistributed domestic labor, becoming a mechanism through which women's structural exploitation is intensified rather than alleviated [10]. This constitutes a lived enactment of the second shift, in which women who take on productive economic activity must additionally perform a full round of uncompensated domestic labor without institutional recognition [40]. Feminist social work insists this burden is not a negotiation problem addressable through communication or time-management training, but a structural one rooted in a normalized sexual division of labor that patriarchal structures have constructed and legitimized across generations [41]. Addressing this dimension therefore requires structural interventions, such as shared-labor incentives or childcare support, rather than individual-level coaching.

The aspirations dimension revealed a structural awareness among beneficiaries of the macro-forces constraining their entrepreneurial trajectories, including commodity price volatility and collateral-based exclusion from formal banking institutions. This challenges deficit-oriented framings of poor women's economic capacities and calls for a strengths-based reorientation beginning from their existing structural knowledge [16]. The collateral exclusion described by informants reflects a gender-specific financial barrier rooted in the concentration of asset ownership in male names, channeling women toward exploitative informal moneylending [33]. The proposed integration of PENA with complementary agency programs reflects the broader principle that sustainable empowerment requires durable institutional ecosystems rather than episodic capital transfer; feminist social work reframes these aspirations as assertions of a right to economic justice rather than mere service requests [16].

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that women's social readiness within Indonesia's PENA program is fundamentally ambivalent, shaped less by individual psychological deficits than by structural patriarchal inequalities that simultaneously produce transitional anxiety, cognitive time poverty, and the double burden of productive and reproductive labor. By integrating Bandura's readiness framework with feminist social work analysis, this study advances a critical contribution to the intersection of gender, poverty, and social policy: genuine empowerment cannot be achieved by transferring economic responsibilities to women without dismantling the structural conditions that constrain them. Poverty graduation success must therefore be reconceptualized, from a statistical threshold of program exit toward the achievement of structurally supported, gender-just, and self-determined economic independence.

LIMITATIONS

This study carries several limitations worth acknowledging. The phenomenological design and purposive sample of ten women beneficiaries in Wonosari Sub-district restricts transferability to broader PENA implementation contexts across Indonesia's diverse regional landscapes. Data collection within a single temporal window captures a cross-sectional snapshot rather than longitudinal entrepreneurial trajectories. Future research would benefit from mixed-methods designs and broader geographic sampling.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Author
Aryohaji Istyawan – Politeknik Kesejahteraan Sosial Bandung (Indonesia);
orcid.org/0009-0009-5719-943X
Email: istyawan@outlook.com

Authors
Bambang Rustanto – Politeknik Kesejahteraan Sosial Bandung (Indonesia);
orcid.org/0009-0006-3884-9431
Dyah Asri Gita Pratiwi – Politeknik Kesejahteraan Sosial Bandung (Indonesia);
orcid.org/0009-0000-9001-0277
Eri Susanto – Politeknik Kesejahteraan Sosial Bandung (Indonesia);
orcid.org/0009-0004-3843-4098
Tuti Kartika – Politeknik Kesejahteraan Sosial Bandung (Indonesia);
orcid.org/0009-0006-2715-5557
Ayi Haryani – Politeknik Kesejahteraan Sosial Bandung (Indonesia);
orcid.org/0009-0009-2822-7761
Aryohaji Istyawan – Politeknik Kesejahteraan Sosial Bandung (Indonesia);
orcid.org/0009-0009-5719-943X

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

B.R. conceptualized the study, developed the research design, and supervised the overall research process. D.A.G.P. and E.S. contributed to instrument development, data collection, and primary manuscript drafting. T.K. managed data collection and supported analysis and interpretation. A.H. contributed to methodological development and validation. A.I. supported formal analysis, contributed to manuscript writing, and critically reviewed and edited the manuscript for important intellectual content. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

"The authors declare no conflict of interest, financial or otherwise, that could have influenced the design, execution, interpretation, or publication of this study."

DECLARATION OF USE OF AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

The authors used Claude AI (Anthropic) for grammar refinement, language editing, and typographical review during the preparation of this work. After utilizing the tool, the authors thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as necessary, ensuring that all intellectual contributions, theoretical arguments, empirical interpretations, and scholarly judgments remain entirely the authors' own. The authors assume full responsibility for the article.

REFERENCES

[1] R. Gu and F. Nie, "Does empowering women benefit poverty reduction? Evidence from a multi-component program in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China," *J. Integr. Agric.*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 1092–1106, Dec. 2021. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2095-3119(20)63436-0

[2] K. K. Sen, A. J. Chapman, and B. B. Saha, "Women's empowerment: A catalyst for addressing energy poverty and energy inequality in developing countries," *Energy*, vol. 313, Art. no. 133982, Jun. 2024. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.energy.2024.133982

[3] L. A. Pujiwati, Z. Fatoni, N. Alabshar, D. Harfina, T. Munawaroh, and N. Widaryoko, "Determinants of household extreme poverty among female-headed households in Indonesia: Does disability matter?," *J. Poverty*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 308–330, Jun. 2025. https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2024.2338156

[4] BPS Gunungkidul, "Poverty profile of D.I. Yogyakarta September 2022," Gunungkidul, Indonesia, 2023. [Online]. Available: https://gunungkidulkab.bps.go.id/en/pressrelease/2023/01/16/905/poverty-profile-of-d-i--yogyakarta-september-2022.html

[5] BPS Gunungkidul, *Kabupaten Gunungkidul dalam Angka 2025*. Gunungkidul, Indonesia: BPS Kabupaten Gunungkidul, 2025. [Online]. Available: https://gunungkidulkab.bps.go.id/id/publication/2025/02/28/3aaca00e571452697d05b31b/kabupaten-gunungkidul-dalam-angka-2025.html

[6] E. Yuliani and R. Nasrudin, "The effects of the Indonesian conditional cash transfer program on transition out of agriculture," *World Dev.*, vol. 173, Art. no. 106425, May 2024. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106425

[7] A. A. Sinulingga, Asrinaldi, M. Saeri, and A. Zetra, "Beyond imitation: Adaptive policy transfer in Indonesia's conditional cash transfer," *Glob. Soc. Policy*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 74–108, Jun. 2026. https://doi.org/10.1177/14680181261425188

[8] S. Bourdin, V. Cottereau, F. Hermet, P. Jean-Pierre, and E. Medeiros, "How have Europe's outermost regions dealt with the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis? Effects, policies and recommendations," *Reg. Sci. Policy Pract.*, vol. 15, no. 8, pp. 1820–1841, Nov. 2023. https://doi.org/10.1111/rsp3.12690

[9] N. Cahyadi, R. Hanna, B. A. Olken, R. A. Prima, E. Satriawan, and E. Syamsulhakim, "Cumulative impacts of conditional cash transfer programs: Experimental evidence from Indonesia," *Am. Econ. J. Econ. Policy*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 88–110, Nov. 2020. https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20190245

[10] Asyhabuddin, I. Alfi, and Ageng, "Towards economically independent villages: Community empowerment through the Pahlawan Ekonomi Nusantara (PENA) program in Banyumas District," *J. Pemberdaya. Masy. Madani*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 155–170, Dec. 2025. https://doi.org/10.21009/JPMM.009.2.11

[11] K. Karnadi and T. Widodo, "Analysis of the effectiveness of the Indonesian Economic Heroes Program (PENA)," *Int. J. Educ. Dyn.*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 484–493, Jun. 2024. https://doi.org/10.24036/ijeds.v6i2.497

[12] R. Kusumaningrum, A. Nurlitasari, B. Supriyatno, A. Hakim, and C. Haposan, "Strategic management of the Ministry of Social Affairs in promoting self-reliance and prosperity among beneficiary families of the Family Hope Program," *J. Indones. Sos. Sains*, vol. 5, no. 12, pp. 3339–3382, Jan. 2025. https://doi.org/10.59141/jiss.v5i12.1551

[13] Slameto, *Belajar dan Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhinya*, 6th ed. Jakarta, Indonesia: Rineka Cipta, 2015.

[14] A. Bandura and D. Cervone, *Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective on Human Nature*, 2nd ed. Hoboken, NJ, USA: Wiley, 2023. [Online]. Available:

https://books.google.co.id/books?id=uEq2EAAAQBAJ.
https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394259069
[15] W. Livingston, "Feminist social work: Unfinished business," *Practice*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 197–199, May 2023. https://doi.org/10.1080/09503153.2023.2212984
[16] L. Dominelli and J. Campling, *Feminist Social Work Theory and Practice*, 5th ed. London, U.K.: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017. [Online]. Available: https://books.google.com.sv/books?id=Y5lGEAAAQBAJ
[17] B. Fawcett, "Feminisms in social work and social care: Backwards, forwards or something in between," *Int. Soc. Work*, vol. 66, no. 3, pp. 831–841, Nov. 2022. https://doi.org/10.1177/00208728221095962
[18] V. Amalia, "The impact of the PENA program on the digitalization of women-led MSMEs in Semarang," *J. Technol. Manag. Technopreneursh.*, vol. 13, no. 2, Dec. 2025. https://doi.org/10.54554/jtmt.2025.13.02.005
[19] J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications, 2022. [Online]. Available: https://books.google.co.id/books?id=Rkh4EAAAQBAJ
[20] B. Rustanto, *Penelitian Kualitatif Pekerjaan Sosial*, 1st ed. Bandung, Indonesia: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2015.
[21] M. B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and J. Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: SAGE Publications, 2020. [Online]. Available: https://books.google.co.id/books?id=p0wXBAAAQBAJ
[22] Informant N, "PENA beneficiary," interview, Wonosari, Indonesia, Jun. 2023.
[23] Informant S, "PENA beneficiary," interview, Wonosari, Indonesia, Jun. 2023.
[24] Social Companion R, "PKH field facilitator," interview, Wonosari, Indonesia, Jun. 2023.
[25] Informant M, "PENA beneficiary," interview, Wonosari, Indonesia, Jun. 2023.
[26] Informant Su, "PENA beneficiary," interview, Wonosari, Indonesia, Jun. 2023.
[27] Informant K, "PENA beneficiary," interview, Wonosari, Indonesia, Jun. 2023.
[28] Informant RU, "PENA beneficiary," interview, Wonosari, Indonesia, Jun. 2023.
[29] A. A. BlackDeer, "Unsettling feminism in social work: Toward an Indigenous decolonial feminism," *Affilia*, vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 615–628, Nov. 2023. https://doi.org/10.1177/08861099231193617
[30] A. Istyawan, "Kemiskinan perdesaan dan perkotaan: Sebuah literature review," *Akad. J. Mhs. Humanis*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 973–986, May 2025. https://doi.org/10.37481/jmh.v5i2.1365
[31] A. Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, 6th ed. New York, NY, USA: Worth Publishers, 1997. [Online]. Available: https://books.google.co.id/books?id=eJ-PN9g_o-EC
[32] J. Balcar, L. Johnson Filipová, Z. Brixiová Schwidrowski, and P. Sinha, "Networking increases the probability of women's start-ups in EMDEs," *J. Dev. Stud.*, vol. 60, no. 7, pp. 1071–1087, Jul. 2024. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2023.2297647
[33] M. Akter, S. Akter, M. Rahman, and C. V. Priporas, "Mapping the barriers to socio-economic freedom in internationalisation of women-owned SMEs: Evidence from a developing country," *J. Int. Manag.*, vol. 29, no. 6, Art. no. 101067, Dec. 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2023.101067
[34] R. Yulfa, H. Puspitawati, and I. Muflikhati, "Tekanan ekonomi, coping ekonomi, dukungan sosial, dan kesejahteraan perempuan kepala keluarga," *J. Ilmu Kel. dan Konsum.*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 14–26, Jun. 2022. https://doi.org/10.24156/jikk.2022.15.1.14
[35] H. Sinai-Glazer, "The essentials of the helping relationship between social workers and

clients," *Soc. Work*, vol. 65, no. 3, pp. 245–256, Jul. 2020. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swaa028
[36] H. Ferguson, L. Warwick, T. Disney, J. Leigh, T. S. Cooner, and L. Beddoe, "Relationship-based practice and the creation of therapeutic change in long-term work: Social work as a holding relationship," *Soc. Work Educ.*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 209–227, Feb. 2022. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2020.1837105
[37] A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 1st ed. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1999. [Online]. Available: https://books.google.co.id/books?id=NQs75PEa618C
[38] B. A. Bamfo, F. Asiedu-Appiah, and E. Ameza-Xemalordzo, "Developing a framework for entrepreneurship ecosystem for developing countries: The application of institutional theory," *Cogent Bus. Manag.*, vol. 10, no. 2, Art. no. 2195967, Dec. 2023. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2195967
[39] M. Hruskova, C. Mason, and S. Herzog, "Mapping entrepreneurship support organisations: An examination of the 'cluttered landscape' critique," *Local Econ.*, vol. 37, no. 7, pp. 541–563, Nov. 2022. https://doi.org/10.1177/02690942231173655
[40] A. Hochschild and A. Machung, *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home*, 4th ed. New York, NY, USA: Penguin Publishing Group, 2012. [Online]. Available: https://books.google.co.id/books?id=St_6kWcPJS8C
[41] V. Yadav, J. Unni, R. Naik, and S. Dutta, "Gender differentials in entrepreneurship: Insights from a multi-method study," *J. Entrep.*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 30–64, Mar. 2022. https://doi.org/10.1177/09713557211069283.