

# The Influence of Social Capital on the Poverty Level of Business Actors during the Period of Natural Disasters and the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

*This study aims to determine the influence of social capital on the poverty level of business actors in the Urban Forest of Palu City. This study used quantitative methods to test the theory or variables studied (social capital and poverty variables). The population of this study was business actors who are included in the poor category in the Urban Forest of Palu City with a total of 82 business actors. Determination of the sample used the census technique so that the entire population was used as samples. Data were collected by observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Then, the data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to identify the influence of social capital on the poverty variable. The results showed that social capital influences the poverty level of business actors in the Urban Forest of Palu City with a value of 8.7% while the remaining 91.3% is influenced by other variables outside this study.*

## Keywords

business actors; COVID-19; disaster; poverty; social capital



## I. Introduction

Poverty is an interesting issue to be discussed (Amalia, 2015). Poverty reduction policies in Indonesia tend to rely on economic approaches, such as infrastructure development (physical capital), credit assistance (financial capital), and education and health assistance (human capital). Meanwhile, poverty is a complex issue, involving many resources including social capital (Nasution, 2017). The utilization of social capital for development has been studied in various countries (Serageldin & Dasgupta, 2001). For more than 30 years, Indonesia has implemented a development model with an emphasis on economic growth (An-naf, 2011; Zain, 2010).

The Indonesian government has implemented various poverty alleviation programs through ministries and agencies (Amalia, 2015). However, the programs are not integrated, partial, and sectoral in which they independently according to the policies of the related agencies (Hadi, 2009). Many strategies and efforts have been made to address the poverty issue, but from a social perspective, one of the dimensions of poverty is the dimension of social relations. Concerning social relations, one of the aspects to address the poverty issue is social capital (Amalia, 2015).

Social capital is an important element in the concept of natural, physical, and human capital, as well as for positive and negative interests (Dasgupta & Serageldin, 2000). Positive interests are in the form of profits, while negative interests are losses. Social capital plays a role in handling poverty (Amalia, 2015). Social capital is part of social life, networks, norms and beliefs that encourage participants to act together more effectively to achieve common goals. It indicates that social networks have value and social contacts affect individual and group productivity. In a more operational form, these ideas can be

derived in an ideal form, namely a shared hope and interest in society. This form of social capital can be a driving force for joint community action and social care for fellow citizens. Social capital is an effort that describes individuals and groups to gain profits (Sobel, 2002).

This study focuses on the role of social capital in reducing the poverty level of business actors in the Urban Forest of Palu City affected by natural and non-natural disasters. Natural disasters include earthquakes, liquefaction, and tsunamis, while the non-natural disaster is the COVID-19 pandemic. Field observations showed that many business actors find it difficult to develop their businesses due to the impact of natural and non-natural disasters, which then lead them to poverty. Disaster recovery is carried out through improving the economy and community livelihoods as a development effort. It is done as it is considered as social capital. Social capital plays a vital role in disaster recovery through the functions of trust, social norms, participation, and networks (Nakagawa & Shaw, 2004).

Dimensions of social capital contribute to the formation of trust, norms, and participation in social activities and social networks. Poverty reduction policies are not only related to increasing economic capital but also expanding access to social capital (Nasution, 2017). It shows that social capital is important in reducing poverty, especially for business actors who are affected by natural and non-natural disasters. Therefore, the research question focuses on how much social capital affects the poverty level of business actors in the Urban Forest of Palu City.

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Social Capital**

Experts from various disciplines have used the concept of social capital in the early twentieth century (van Oorschot, Arts, & Gelissen, 2006). Social capital is a social science concept popularized by Robert Putnam (Bjørnskov & Sønderskov, 2013). Academically, social capital has been the subject of discussion since the 1990s and this concept is an old concept (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Besides, social capital has also been the subject of discussion and economic literature since the mid-1990s. Indeed, the concept of social capital originates from sociology, but economists try to adopt it into economic concepts related to social capital and market failure (Knorringa & van Staveren, 2007).

The term social capital is now generally accepted and not only in sociological, political and economic studies but also in various disciplines, especially in the social sciences (Bjørnskov & Sønderskov, 2013). In recent years, various scientists have been happy with the concept of social capital as it is considered attractive and promising (van Oorschot, Arts, & Gelissen, 2006), even various social science disciplines can be facilitated by the social capital paradigm (Robison, Schmid, & Siles, 2002).

Social capital is one of the new concepts used to measure the quality of relationships in communities, organizations, and society (Wahjudin, 2011). Social capital is an effort that describes individuals and groups to gain profits (Sobel, 2002). However, the understanding of social capital varies because it is interpreted differently by some experts (Quibria, 2003). The view in defining the concept of social capital is categorized into two groups. The first group focuses on the network of social relationships, while the second group focuses on the characteristics inherent in individuals involved in social interactions (Ancok, 2003).

Social capital is a means to create a strong bond in a society (Ancok, 2003). Social capital covers two categories, namely emphasizing social relationships network and emphasizing the characteristics inherent in individuals involved in social interactions. Social capital is greatly needed by the community to maintain the continuity of their lives in the face of the information technology era. Even though face-to-face meetings are increasingly rare, communication is expected to exist through multimedia channels. The quality of society with high social capital is characterized by the existence of concepts, competencies, connections, credibility and concern. Some important efforts to increase social capital are group training, character education, building rapport, and school and family education. Hasibuan (2020) stated that the size of the effect of remittance income also depends on the close relationship with the family. How close the family relationship with the remittance sender will affect the size of the amount of remittance to be sent. If the relationship with the family in the area of origin is strong, the number of remittances that will be sent as a form of family support will be relatively larger and stable. Family support is a form of interpersonal relationship that includes attitudes, actions, and acceptance of family members, so that family members feel that someone is paying attention.

Social capital is not merely seen as an outcome but rather a process (Fathy, 2019). Social capital undergoes continuous formation and always accumulates itself. Unlike other forms of capital, social capital will never run out when used. The quality of social capital will get better if it is often used. Some general factors influencing capital formation are habits, position (role of actors), education, socioeconomic class, and personal values (Fathy, 2019). Social capital is rooted in the notion of trust, norms, and informal networks and the belief that social relations are a valuable resource (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Social norms, social networks, and trust are indicators of social capital. Trust becomes a tool for measuring social capital beyond group membership (Knorringa & van Staveren, 2007).

Moreover, Knorringa & van Staveren (2007) suggest some dimensions commonly used to measure social capital which covers social networks, norms, and values as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Dimensions of Social Capital

No.	Dimensions	Indicators
1.	Social network	Relationships of individuals as families Relationships of individuals as friends Relationships of individuals as neighbors
2.	Norms	Unwritten rules describe the value of groups of business actors
3.	Values	Communication and interaction between individuals is strongly influenced by certain rules Communication and interaction between individuals is strongly influenced by social norms in the local community Interaction between individuals in groups shows mutual trust

## 2.2 Poverty

What is poverty? Poverty is a deprivation problem (Hakim & Zuber, 2008). Poverty is a concept that has two dimensions, namely economic, political and socio-psychological dimensions (Huraerah, 2013). Poverty is a specter in society. Various efforts have been made to alleviate poverty, but the poverty rate does not decrease significantly (Amalia, 2015). The poverty reduction policy strategies that have been implemented show some mistakes (Suharto, 2009), including:

First, the policies are oriented to the economic aspect rather than the multidimensional aspect. The poverty alleviation policy strategy with a focus on the economic aspect proved to be a failure as poverty alleviation with a reduction in economic matters does not represent the real problem of poverty. The phenomenon of poverty is very diverse, not only covering the economic dimension but also related to the cultural and structural or political dimension. In the cultural context, poor people are indicated by institutionalized values such as apathy, apolitical, fatalistic, powerlessness, and others. Meanwhile, in the context of structural or political dimensions, people who experience economic poverty are essentially due to structural and political poverty. This poverty occurs as the poor do not have the means to be involved in the political process and do not have political power. As a result, they occupy the lowest social structure. There is an assumption confirming that structurally poor people will be poor in the economic field.

Second, the policies are more charitable (generosity) compared to productivity. Poverty reduction policy strategies that are only based on charity will not be able to generate encouragement from the poor to make efforts and try to solve the poverty they face. They will always depend on the help provided by other parties. Thus, don't expect them to be productive. Indeed, poverty reduction programs should be directed to be productive.

Third, the poverty reduction policies view the poor as objects rather than subjects. According to Huraerah (2013), the poverty reduction policy strategy positions the poor as objects (the target of change), not as subjects (the agents of change). If they are treated as objects, it means that they are passive humans. They should be used as subjects, namely as agents of change who are actively involved in poverty reduction program activities.

Fourth, the government is a ruler rather than a facilitator. In dealing with poverty, the government still acts as a ruler that too widely intervenes in the lives of the poor. They ignore the potential of the poor. On the other hand, the government should act as a facilitator to develop the potential of the poor. The new paradigm of identifying the poor emphasizes what the poor have than what the poor do not have. The potential of the poor can be personal and social assets, as well as various problem-solving strategies that have been implemented locally.

Some dimensions are considered capable of measuring poverty, such as education, income, and age. The relationship between age and poverty is not linear (Datt & Jolliffe, 1999; Gang, et al., 2006). Income or expenses will be low at a relatively young age, then increase in middle age, and then decline again in old age. Based on the life cycle hypothesis, poverty is relatively high at a young age, decreases during middle age, and then increases again in old age (Datt & Jolliffe, 1999). Poverty patterns follow individual characteristics, for example, education level and income. Education can increase the stock of human capital that can increase productivity which can result in poverty reduction. The relationship between education and poverty is important as education reduce the poverty.

**Table 2.** Dimensions of Poverty

<b>No.</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1.	Education	Education can increase the stock of human capital Education increases productivity Education reduces poverty
2.	Income	Business field as a source of income Additional income outside of business Partnership in productive activities

### 2.3 Relationship of Social Capital and Poverty

The concept of social capital comes from the idea that the member society may not be able to individually cope with various problems faced (Syahra, 2003). There is a need for cooperation from all members of the related community to address the problem. Besides, social capital is one of the important factors affecting the economic growth of the community (Ancok, 2003). Without harmony and cooperation, it will be increasingly difficult to develop a community's economy. The role of social capital is as important as other economic infrastructure. Research in developing countries shows the important role of social capital in reducing poverty (Narayan & Pritchett, 1999; Tenzin, Otsuka, & Natsuda, 2013).

## III. Research Methods

This study used a quantitative method to test the theory or variables studied (social capital and poverty variables). The population was business actors who are included in the poor category in the Urban Forest of Palu City with a total of 82 business actors. The sample was determined using the census technique so that the entire population was used as samples. Data were collected by observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Then, the data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to examine the effect of social capital on the poverty variable. The hypotheses of this study are:

Hypothesis :  $H_0$  = Social capital has no effect on poverty  
 $H_a$  = Social capital affects poverty

## IV. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results

The results of this study cover the results of testing the validity and reliability of social capital and poverty variables, as well as the results of hypothesis testing.

#### a. Results of Validity and Reliability Testing of Social Capital Variable

The following test results indicate that all questionnaire items in this study are valid and reliable. It is indicated by the Corrected item-Total Correlation value that is higher than the correlation coefficient of 0.3. Meanwhile, reliability is indicated by Cronbach's Alpha value which is higher than 0.7. The detail can be seen in the following table:

**Table 3.** Validity and reliability of the social capital variable

	Item-Total Statistics			Reliability Statistics	
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
xq1	24.2805	6.723	.738	.793	.840
xq2	24.3171	7.478	.604	.816	
xq3	24.2439	7.594	.515	.829	
xq4	24.2317	7.835	.473	.835	
xq5	24.2927	6.950	.701	.800	
xq6	24.2195	7.235	.666	.806	
xq7	24.1707	7.748	.455	.839	

Source: SPSS Results, 2021.

### b. Results of Validity and Reliability Testing of Poverty Variable

The following test results indicate that all questionnaire items in this study are valid and reliable. The detail results can be seen in Table 4 below.

**Table 4.** Validity and reliability of poverty variable

	Item-Total Statistics			Reliability Statistics	
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
yq8	19.8780	4.034	.807	.750	.827
yq9	19.9146	4.919	.577	.804	
yq10	19.9024	5.299	.380	.839	
yq11	19.8780	5.392	.363	.841	
yq12	19.8537	4.028	.776	.757	
yq13	19.7805	4.371	.682	.780	

Source: SPSS Results, 2021.

The table above shows that all questionnaire items are valid and reliable as indicated by the Corrected item-total Correlation value which is higher than the correlation coefficient of 0.3. Ghozali (2011) states that the validity is seen from the correlation coefficient higher than 0.3. Meanwhile, reliability is indicated by Cronbach's Alpha value higher than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1975).

### c. Results of Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression. The results are presented in the following table:

**Table 5.** Results of Simple Linear Regression

ANOVA <sup>b</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	45.638	1	45.638	7.586	.007 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	481.301	80	6.016		
	Total	526.939	81			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Capital

b. Dependent Variable: Poverty

Source: SPSS Results, 2021.

The table above shows that the value of  $F_{count}$  is higher than the value of  $F_{table}$  ( $7.586 > 3.110$ ). It indicates that social capital influences poverty. Besides, the significance value obtained is smaller than the probability value ( $0.007 < 0.05$ ). It means that social capital has a significant effect on poverty. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted.

Besides, the results of hypothesis testing can also be seen from the t-test (partial test). The results of the t-test are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Results of Simple Linear Regression

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.812	2.566		6.551	.000
	Social Capital	.289	.105	.294	2.754	.007



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a. Dependent Variable: Poverty

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Source: SPSS Results, 2021.

The table above shows that the significance value obtained is smaller than the probability value ( $0.007 < 0.05$ ) which means that social capital has a significant effect on poverty. Besides, the value of  $t_{\text{count}}$  is higher than  $t_{\text{table}}$  ( $2.754 > 1.990$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, which means that social capital has a significant effect on poverty.

Moreover, the effect of social capital on poverty can also be seen from the following table:

**Table 7.** Effects of Variable X on Y

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.294 <sup>a</sup>	.087	.075	2.45281

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Capital

b. Dependent Variable: Poverty

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Source: SPSS Results, 2021.

The table above shows that the R Square value is 0.087 indicating that the effect of social capital contributes 8.7% to poverty, while the remaining 91.3% is affected by other variables outside this study.

## 4.2 Discussion

Poverty is an important and urgent issue to be addressed immediately as it is related to humans and humanity. The Indonesian government has implemented various poverty alleviation policies and strategies by launching various poverty alleviation programs such as Cash Transfer Program, Family Hope Program, Rice Subsidy Program, School Operational Assistance Funds for Poor Students, and others (Yamin & Dartanto, 2016).

The issue of addressing non-economic factors of poverty has been raised at the 1995 United Nations conference in Copenhagen, which revived the idea of social capital as a strategy for poverty alleviation (Fournier, 2002). Previous studies have confirmed that social capital is seen as a factor that can facilitate better cooperation in providing services that benefit all members of society and the community (Narayan and Pritchett, 1999; Grootaert, 1998; Krishna and Uphoff, 1999). Social capital can serve as a bridge for communities to gain access to productive resources such as bank credit through social networks (Van Bastelaer, 1999; Grootaert, 2001).

Social capital can reduce poverty if there is connectivity between the social networks through resource exchange mechanisms such as the flow of information, job opportunities, financial support, or learning between poor and non-poor communities (C. Grootaert, 1998). Social capital is considered a non-economic factor that can bridge access to productive resources (Yamin & Dartanto, 2016). It is evidenced by the results of this study that social capital has a significant effect on poverty. Field observations showed that business actors in the Urban Forest of Palu City experienced a downfall during the period of natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. It results in poverty because businesses cannot operate properly. Before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, natural disasters caused business actors in the Urban Forest of Palu City to lose their property, and then it is

worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic in which they could not operate normally, even some closed.

The presence of the government, especially the Palu City government is greatly needed to bridge the gap in business actors in this city. The central government's policies implemented by the Palu City government have made business worse and caused poverty as business operations cannot run normally. Indeed, the economic stimulus policy implemented by the government can ease the burden of business actors, especially for those who have credit in banks (Lutfi, Buntuang, Kornelius, Erdiyansyah, & Hasanuddin, 2020). However, this is only temporary as it is only valid for six months. Besides, the government also issued some policies for business actors that can ease their burden. The government has to solve disaster problems (both natural and non-natural disasters) so that business operators can run their businesses normally (Riadi & Erdiyansyah, 2021) and it finally can address poverty issues faced by business actors in the Urban Forest of Palu City.

Various approaches have been applied to overcome poverty. The results of a study in West Java Province tend to rely more on an economic approach in poverty reduction, for example, infrastructure development, credit assistance, and education and health assistance (Kharisma, Remi, Wardhana, & Minarso, 2020). Meanwhile, poverty is a complex issue that involves other factors, including social capital (Gannon & Roberts, 2020). Social capital is believed to have a major impact on the community and its members (Cahyono & Adhiatma, 2021).

Poverty arises as a result of the development model in Indonesia which emphasizes excessive economic growth and ignores the cultural aspects of the nation (Cahyono & Adhiatma, 2021). In its development, the growth orientation is tried to be balanced with the orientation to equity, for example, specific poverty reduction programs. It is necessary to take various approaches, including social capital. The dimension of social capital describes everything that makes people work together to achieve common goals and is bound by values and norms that grow and are obeyed (Dasgupta & Serageldin, 2000).

Meanwhile, Coleman (1988) emphasizes that the dimension of social capital is inherent in the structure of social relations and social networks in a society that creates a variety of social obligations, creates a climate of mutual trust, brings reform channels, and sets norms and social sanctions for members of society. Strengthening social capital is by maximizing the role of social institutions by focusing on strengthening aspects of trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefits, as well as paying attention to cultural factors and applicable values (Cahyono & Adhiatma, 2021). The core dimension of the study of social capital lies in the ability of the community (nation) to work together to build a network to achieve common goals. The cooperation is characterized by a pattern of reciprocal and mutually beneficial inter-relationships and it is built on trust supported by positive and strong social norms and values.

Social capital in society should be understood that there is diversity (religion, culture, interests, social status, education, income, expertise, gender) in the members of the community. Therefore, it needs a deep understanding of diversity. Meanwhile, understanding values and norms is important. Important elements in social capital are a sense of belonging among members, a network of cooperation, a sense of trust and security, giving, participation, and proactive.



## V. Conclusion

Poverty reduction policies are not only related to increasing economic capital but also expanding access to social capital. Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that social capital affects the poverty of business actors in the Urban Forest of Palu City with a value of 8.7%, while the remaining 91.3% is influenced by other variables outside this study. The variables can be in the form of empowerment, training, direct assistance, government policies, and others.

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