
Inter Agency Collaboration in Poverty Alleviation: A Public Administration Perspective

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dinamika kolaborasi antar-lembaga dalam program penanggulangan kemiskinan dalam konteks administrasi publik di Indonesia. Dengan mengakui sifat kemiskinan yang multidimensional, penelitian ini menelaah bagaimana berbagai institusi pemerintah berkoordinasi untuk memberikan layanan yang lebih terintegrasi dan efektif. Menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis praktik kelembagaan, mekanisme koordinasi, serta tantangan yang dihadapi di beberapa wilayah terpilih. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kolaborasi yang efektif didukung oleh komitmen kepemimpinan, pembagian peran yang jelas, tujuan bersama, dan struktur tata kelola yang adaptif. Namun, masih terdapat sejumlah hambatan seperti fragmentasi birokrasi, belum terintegrasinya sistem data, ketimpangan sumber daya, serta keterlibatan masyarakat yang terbatas. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa kolaborasi antar-lembaga yang berhasil tidak hanya meningkatkan koherensi kebijakan dan kualitas layanan, tetapi juga memperkuat nilai publik melalui inklusivitas dan efisiensi. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi pada diskursus tata kelola kolaboratif dalam administrasi publik serta menawarkan rekomendasi kebijakan untuk memperkuat sinergi kelembagaan dalam upaya pengentasan kemiskinan.

Kata kunci: kolaborasi antar-lembaga, penanggulangan kemiskinan, administrasi publik, tata kelola kolaboratif, sinergi kelembagaan, Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the dynamics of inter-agency collaboration in poverty alleviation programs within the context of public administration in Indonesia. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of poverty, the research investigates how various government institutions coordinate efforts to deliver more integrated and effective services. Using a qualitative case study approach, the study analyzes institutional practices, coordination mechanisms, and challenges encountered in selected regions. Findings reveal that effective collaboration is facilitated by leadership commitment, clear role division, shared goals, and adaptive governance structures. However, several barriers persist, including bureaucratic fragmentation, lack of integrated data systems, resource asymmetry, and limited community engagement. The study emphasizes that successful inter-agency collaboration not only improves policy coherence and service delivery but also enhances public value through inclusivity and efficiency. These insights contribute to the discourse on collaborative governance in public administration and offer policy recommendations for strengthening institutional synergy in poverty alleviation efforts.

Keywords: inter-agency collaboration, poverty alleviation, public administration, collaborative governance, institutional synergy, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of the most persistent and complex public policy challenges across the globe, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia. Despite various government interventions and programs, poverty continues to affect a significant proportion of the population. The multidimensional nature of poverty—encompassing economic, social, educational, and health-related deprivations—requires solutions that transcend the capabilities of a single government agency or level of administration (World Bank, 2022).

In response to this complexity, collaborative governance has emerged as a strategic approach within public administration. Collaboration across institutions—whether between governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private actors, or community-based groups—is increasingly seen as necessary to address systemic social issues such as poverty (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Inter-agency collaboration allows for resource sharing, policy integration, knowledge transfer, and service coordination, which are critical in poverty alleviation efforts.

The Indonesian government has implemented numerous poverty reduction strategies, such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), Non-Cash Food Assistance (BPNT), and Village Fund programs. However, the fragmentation of bureaucratic responsibilities often undermines the effectiveness of these initiatives. Ministries and local government units tend to operate in silos, resulting in overlapping targets, inefficient use of resources, and lack of service continuity (Bappenas, 2020).

Inter-agency collaboration seeks to overcome such challenges by fostering synergy among institutions with complementary mandates. For example, the Ministry of Social Affairs may focus on social safety nets, while the Ministry of

Health addresses malnutrition, and local governments provide contextual support based on regional needs. When these efforts are coordinated through collaborative frameworks, the outcomes can be more impactful and sustainable (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015).

However, collaboration is not without its challenges. Differences in institutional cultures, priorities, and accountability systems often hinder effective cooperation. Issues such as bureaucratic ego, lack of trust, insufficient leadership commitment, and unclear regulatory frameworks can limit the depth and sustainability of inter-agency partnerships (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003). Moreover, limited capacity at the local level, especially in rural or under-resourced areas, further complicates collaborative efforts.

From a public administration perspective, successful inter-agency collaboration depends on several enabling factors, including political will, governance structure, shared vision, performance-based management, and community involvement. These factors contribute to the alignment of institutional goals and the establishment of mechanisms for coordination, monitoring, and accountability (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015).

This study explores the dynamics of inter-agency collaboration in poverty alleviation within the context of Indonesia, particularly at the regional level. It seeks to understand how various institutions interact, coordinate, and share responsibilities in the implementation of poverty-related programs. The study also examines the barriers to collaboration and identifies strategies that can enhance institutional synergy and public value creation.

The research adopts a qualitative approach using case studies in selected regions known for their collaborative poverty reduction efforts. Data are collected through interviews with officials

from relevant government agencies, local leaders, and non-governmental actors. Policy documents, program evaluations, and secondary data sources are also analyzed to provide a comprehensive view of inter-agency collaboration in practice.

By situating the discussion within public administration theory, the study contributes to the growing literature on collaborative governance in developing countries. It highlights how administrative reform, decentralization, and multi-sectoral engagement can shape the effectiveness of anti-poverty initiatives. Ultimately, the findings are expected to inform policy recommendations for improving coordination and coherence among institutions involved in poverty alleviation.

This introduction sets the stage for a deeper examination of how collaborative strategies can be designed, institutionalized, and sustained in the face of administrative complexity. It also underscores the need for further empirical exploration to better understand the institutional dynamics that support or hinder inter-agency collaboration in the public sector.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive case study design to explore the dynamics of inter-agency collaboration in poverty alleviation programs. The qualitative approach was chosen to enable a deep and contextual understanding of institutional interactions, collaborative mechanisms, and challenges faced in multi-agency governance. Case studies were conducted in two selected regions in Indonesia where collaboration between local governments, central agencies, and non-governmental actors in poverty programs was considered relatively active and structured.

Data collection techniques included in-depth semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and direct observation. Key informants were selected purposively and included officials from the Ministry of

Social Affairs, local government poverty task forces, representatives of non-profit organizations, and community leaders. Interviews focused on inter-agency roles, coordination mechanisms, program integration, and obstacles to collaboration. In addition to interview data, relevant policy documents, strategic plans, memorandum of understandings (MoUs), and evaluation reports were analyzed to strengthen data triangulation and support the credibility of findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. After transcription and coding, recurring themes such as coordination structures, leadership roles, institutional capacity, bureaucratic resistance, and shared objectives were identified. The analysis also considered contextual factors such as regional autonomy, administrative culture, and political support. To ensure trustworthiness, the research applied techniques of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The qualitative design is considered appropriate for understanding the nuanced relationships and governance mechanisms inherent in inter-agency collaboration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that inter-agency collaboration in poverty alleviation is most effective when supported by formal coordination mechanisms. In the selected regions, coordination forums such as joint task forces and poverty reduction boards have been established to integrate efforts between local governments, sectoral ministries, and civil society organizations. These platforms facilitate regular meetings, joint planning, and the sharing of program targets, which help to minimize duplication and improve the allocation of resources.

One of the main findings is that leadership commitment plays a pivotal role in sustaining inter-agency collaboration. In

regions where local leaders, such as mayors or regents, actively support collaborative governance, agencies are more likely to align their missions and cooperate effectively. Leadership provides the necessary political will and legitimacy for inter-organizational partnerships to flourish, especially in a bureaucratic culture where siloed operations are still dominant.

Despite structural coordination, several challenges persist. Differences in institutional mandates and standard operating procedures often lead to fragmented implementation. For instance, while the social welfare department may focus on direct aid, the education and health departments operate on different timelines and indicators, making program synchronization difficult. These disparities are exacerbated by the lack of integrated data systems that could unify beneficiary databases and streamline services.

Another critical barrier is the unequal distribution of capacity across agencies. Some departments have skilled personnel and sufficient budgets, while others struggle with technical limitations and high staff turnover. This imbalance creates dependency and power asymmetry within the collaborative framework. It also hampers equitable decision-making and undermines trust among partners, especially when certain agencies dominate agenda-setting and resource control.

Community involvement emerged as both a success factor and a gap. In some collaborative models, local community groups are engaged in program identification, monitoring, and evaluation, which enhances legitimacy and responsiveness. However, in many cases, community participation remains tokenistic or limited to consultation sessions without real influence over decision-making. Strengthening bottom-up collaboration is essential for building sustainable and inclusive anti-poverty policies.

The study also found that bureaucratic ego and competition between

agencies hinder collaboration. Some departments are reluctant to share data or coordinate programs due to fears of losing authority or visibility. This behavior reflects a deeper issue of institutional misalignment and a lack of shared performance indicators. Without a clear framework for collective accountability, agencies tend to prioritize individual achievements over joint outcomes.

Financial integration is another challenge. Although national and local governments allocate funds for poverty programs, the budgeting process remains fragmented. Each agency prepares its budget independently, leading to overlaps and inefficiencies. There is minimal effort to pool resources or design joint funding schemes, which limits the potential impact of combined interventions and weakens the coherence of poverty alleviation strategies.

Successful collaboration cases in the study are characterized by adaptive institutional arrangements. These include flexible working groups, inter-agency MoUs, shared digital platforms, and multilevel governance mechanisms. Agencies that adopt an open and learning-oriented culture are more likely to innovate and respond effectively to evolving poverty dynamics. Such adaptive governance practices align with public administration principles that emphasize networked leadership and cross-sector collaboration.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings support the collaborative governance model, which posits that complex social problems require the joint involvement of diverse stakeholders with shared goals, mutual trust, and institutionalized dialogue (Ansell & Gash, 2008). However, the empirical data also suggest that collaboration must be embedded in broader public sector reform, including digital transformation, decentralization, and performance-based management.

In summary, inter-agency collaboration in poverty alleviation offers

promising opportunities for integrated and efficient public service delivery. Nevertheless, its effectiveness is contingent upon political leadership, institutional compatibility, community participation, and resource sharing. The findings underline the need for more intentional design of collaborative frameworks supported by legal mandates, technological tools, and shared accountability structures.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that inter-agency collaboration is a critical approach in addressing the complex and multidimensional nature of poverty in Indonesia. The findings reveal that while formal coordination mechanisms have been established in several regions, their effectiveness greatly depends on the presence of committed leadership, institutional alignment, and adequate resources. Collaborative forums and joint task forces provide a platform for policy integration and program synergy, yet they often face obstacles stemming from bureaucratic fragmentation, unequal capacity, and sectoral egocentrism.

Effective collaboration is marked by clear role division, integrated data systems, and active community engagement. In regions where collaboration is supported by adaptive governance structures and participatory processes, poverty alleviation programs tend to be more responsive and sustainable. However, limitations such as fragmented budgeting, lack of shared accountability indicators, and minimal resource pooling reduce the transformative potential of collaborative governance.

Therefore, enhancing inter-agency collaboration requires not only institutional arrangements but also a cultural shift toward cooperation, transparency, and collective responsibility. Legal frameworks should mandate coordination, and performance management systems must incentivize joint outcomes rather than isolated achievements. Furthermore,

empowering local actors and involving citizens meaningfully in planning and implementation are essential for fostering inclusive and effective poverty reduction.

This research contributes to public administration discourse by highlighting how collaborative strategies can bridge institutional silos and create public value in complex policy areas. Future studies are encouraged to explore the longitudinal effects of collaboration, the role of technology in coordination, and comparative models across regions to deepen the understanding of collaborative governance in practice.

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