



Silo Mentality in Stunting Reduction Programs in Southeast Sulawesi

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze how silo mentality affects the effectiveness of stunting reduction program implementation in three regencys in Southeast Sulawesi: Buton, Central Buton, and South Buton. The problem is centered around silo mentality and it's affects. To adress this issue theoretical references are employed. Data is collected through in-depth interviews and analysis of local policy documents. The study concludes that that silo mentality is manifested in the form of non-integrated planning, weak collaborative commitment between OPDs, fragmentation of information systems, and passive leadership towards cross sector work. Despite the existence of convergence planning documents, implementation in the field is still procedural and administrative, without substantive coordination. This finding reinforces public organization theory which states that institutional reform and organizational culture change are key prerequisites for cross sector policy success.

Keywords: Silo Mentality; Stunting Reduction; Convergence; Collaboration

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INTRODUCTION

Stunting is a complex and multisectoral public policy issue as it relates not only to health, but also to sanitation, education, food security, social protection, and governance. The Indonesian government has responded to this issue through convergence policies, which require the integration of specific and sensitive nutrition interventions across sectors and levels of government. However, in the practice of decentralisation, the implementation of stunting policies often faces coordination challenges between Regional Apparatus Organisations (OPD), so that the reduction of stunting in many regions is still not optimal.

A number of studies show that the main failure in tackling stunting at the regional level lies not in the absence of regulations or planning, but in the weak convergence of implementation and coordination between regional government agencies (Levinson, et al., 2022; Atobishi, Moh'd Abu Bakir, & Nosratabadi, 2024). Sectoral planning, fragmentation of information systems, and low collaborative commitment mean that convergence policies often stop at the administrative and procedural level. Coordination forums such as the TPPS tend to be ceremonial, without binding cross-sectoral decision-making mechanisms, resulting in programmes running in parallel and failing to reinforce one another. Contrast with that previous studies emphasize that the success of multisectoral programs, including stunting reduction, depends heavily on effective cross-sector coordination (Febrian F & Yusran R, 2021; Imron et al., 2022; Phitra, Lipoeto, & Yetti, 2023 ; Fristiwi, Nugraheni, & Kartini, 2023).

Although the literature on stunting policies is relatively well developed, there are clear scientific gaps. First, empirically, most studies focus on the technical aspects of programmes, institutions and output achievements, but do not explain in depth why bureaucratic fragmentation persists even though a convergence framework is in

place. Second, at the theoretical level, stunting studies rarely utilise perspectives on bureaucratic behaviour and organisational culture to understand the failure of cross-sectoral coordination. Third, methodologically, few studies use a comparative qualitative approach to reveal variations in silo practices between regions in the context of the same policy. Thus, the dimension of silo mentality as the root cause of stunting policy implementation has not been systematically explored in public administration studies. This gap is particularly evident in decentralized settings, where formal convergence structures coexist with persistent sectoral fragmentation.

This article offers theoretical, empirical and policy contributions by positioning silo mentality as the main analytical framework for understanding the failure of stunting policy convergence. Unlike previous studies that view coordination issues primarily as technical or institutional issues, this study asserts that policy fragmentation is a manifestation of bureaucratic behaviour, a closed organisational culture, and weak cross-sectoral integrative leadership. Theoretically, this study enriches the public administration literature by linking stunting policy to the discourse of public organisations, policy implementation, and collaborative governance. Empirically, this article presents contextual evidence from an archipelagic region with limited institutional capacity, a context that has been relatively underrepresented in previous studies and shows that the failure of convergence is not solely due to weaknesses in policy design, but is reinforced by silo mentality, organisational fragmentation, resource constraints, and the geographical characteristics of the region. From a policy perspective, this study confirms that accelerating the reduction of stunting requires bureaucratic cultural reform and the strengthening of integrative leadership.

This study aims to analyze how silo mentality within regional bureaucracies constrains the implementation of stunting convergence policies in Southeast Sulawesi, which were selected because they have high prevalence of stunting and diverse geographical characteristics and institutional capacities, focusing on planning, coordination, data sharing, and leadership dynamics across OPDs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design to deeply explore the phenomenon of silo mentality in the regional bureaucracy. This approach was chosen because it is able to explain contextually and interpretatively how organisational behaviour and institutional dynamics affect the convergence of stunting reduction programs. The research focused on three regencies in Southeast Sulawesi Province, namely Central Buton, South Buton and Buton, which were selected based on their high stunting prevalence rates and the complexity of their local governance.

The main data sources of this research are primary and secondary data (Creswell, 2018). Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants consisting of officials in Regional Apparatus Organisations (OPDs) such as Bappeda, the Health Office, the Community and Village Empowerment Office, the Food Security Office, the Social Office, and representatives from the TPPS (Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team).

Using purposive sampling (Sugiyono, 2018), to ensure that the study captured perspectives from actors with direct authority, operational responsibility, and experiential knowledge of the stunting convergence program. A total of twelve key informants were selected, consisting of six structural officials and six technical staff across OPDs directly involved in stunting policy implementation. This

composition enabled the study to obtain both strategic and operational insights, covering institutions such as Bappeda, the Health Office, the Food Security Office, the Social Affairs Office, the Community and Village Empowerment Office, and the TPPS team. Sampling adequacy was reached when thematic saturation occurred, indicated by the absence of new information in the final interview sessions. The selection of informants from three different regencies also strengthened the comparative design, allowing the analysis to capture institutional variations contributing to silo mentality. Secondary data were collected from various official local government documents, including the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), Regent Regulation on TPPS, stunting action plan documents, and convergence action implementation reports (forms 1.3, 2.1, and 6.3). In addition, journal articles and previous research reports were also used to triangulate the data.

The data in this study were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which allowed the researcher to work iteratively between the field and the evolving interpretation of findings (Creswell, 2018). The analysis began with data reduction through verbatim transcription, initial coding of significant statements, and categorization of emerging themes related to planning fragmentation, sectoral ego, information barriers, and leadership dynamics. These codes were then refined through axial coding to establish relationships among sub-themes. Subsequently, data were displayed in comparative and thematic that contrasted the conditions in Buton, Central Buton, and South Buton regencies, enabling the identification of patterns of similarity and divergence across cases. Lastly, conclusions were drawn and verified through continuous cross-checking with the raw data, triangulation with policy documents, and inter-informant

comparison to ensure validity and analytical consistency.

Data validity was strengthened with source and method triangulation techniques. Triangulation is done by comparing interview results between informants, matching them with official documents and activity reports, and examining the consistency between regencies in implementing the stunting policy. The validation process also includes member-checking with several informants to ensure the correctness of data interpretation.

This research adhered to ethical standards as required by academic guidelines and has received approval from the Postgraduate Research Ethics Committee of Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University. Prior to data collection, each informant was provided with a clear explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights as participants, including the right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained in writing, and confidentiality was strictly maintained by anonymizing all personal identifiers and using code labels in transcripts and reporting. All audio recordings and documents were securely stored and accessible only to the research team, ensuring the protection of participant privacy and ethical integrity throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Silo Patterns in Planning and Implementation

The results show that the three regencies studied, namely Central Buton, South Buton and Buton, have patterns of planning and implementing stunting programmes that are still very sectoral. Although planning documents such as the RPJMD and the Regional Action Plan for Stunting Reduction have included a convergence approach, their implementation is not accompanied by an

effective coordination mechanism. Each OPD still prepares its work plan independently and runs programmes based on sectoral main tasks and functions.

In Central Buton Regency, for example, it was found that sensitive intervention programmes such as sanitation and food security were not clearly linked to stunting reduction targets. Coordination between OPDs is only ceremonially done during musrenbang forums or TPPS meetings, but not continued in the form of cross-sectoral teamwork in the field. Similarly, in South Buton Regency, the specific nutrition interventions run by the Health Office are not integrated with family assistance and education activities by the Community and Village Empowerment Office.

This fragmentation leads to overlapping activities and wastage of resources. For example, there are family latrine development programmes conducted by two different OPDs with unsynchronised approaches, locations and indicators. As a result, although there is an increase in the number of stunting-related programmes, their impact on reducing prevalence is not significant because they are not directed at the priority locus together.

On the other hand, the weak integrated planning system also has implications for budgeting that is not synergistic. There is no cross-sectoral budgeting mechanism that can ensure that budget allocations actually support convergence actions. Some OPDs even admit that they do not have a special budget for stunting activities, and only "leave" the nomenclature in the regular programmes that are already running.

This shows that the existence of convergence planning documents has not been able to penetrate structural barriers within the regional bureaucracy. Silo mentality remains the norm in decision-making and programme implementation.

Stronger institutional interventions are needed to encourage collaborative and data-driven cross-sectoral work plans.

This study shows that although the convergence approach has become a national policy in handling stunting, practices at the local level are still dominated by sectoral working patterns or silo mentality. This reinforces the statement Febrian, RA, (2015) and Prasojo (2023) which states that public bureaucracies often work in a weak coordination system due to rigid organizational structures and a lack of incentives to work across sectors. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the context of Buton, Central Buton and South Buton regencies, where convergence is only reflected in documents, not in substantial implementation.

One important dimension is the lack of synergy in program planning and implementation. In South Buton, the planning of nutrition-sensitive interventions by the Food Security Office was not coordinated with the Health Office, resulting in inaccurate targeting. This shows that the constraint lies not in the absence of policies, but rather in the weak technical integration mechanisms across sectors. As described by Fristiwi et al., (2023), The failure of nutrition program convergence in the regions is often due to the absence of a strong system of coordination and functional leadership.

The failure of planning integration in Buton, Central Buton, and South Buton can be explained by the implementation gap theory Winter (2012), which emphasises the gap between policy design and practice. Although the planning documents included a convergence approach, the working logic of the regional bureaucracy still followed a rigid sectoral pattern. This is reinforced by the limitations of technical mechanisms across OPDs, so that policies only remain at the level of formal documents. Thus, unsynchronised planning is not merely a technical problem,

but reflects weak institutional capacity to transform the bureaucratic structure towards cross-sectoral coordination.

If this pattern continues, stunting reduction programmes have the potential to be ineffective even if the number of interventions increases. In the future, without reforming cross-sectoral planning and budgeting instruments, each OPD will continue to work towards partial targets, making it difficult to achieve collective results. Conversely, if in the future local governments are able to integrate collaborative performance budgeting, convergence will have a significant impact by minimising programme duplication and increasing resource efficiency.

Sectoral Egos and Low Collaborative Commitment

Sectoral egos are reflected in the unwillingness of OPDs to share roles, resources or information. In interviews, some OPDs stated that stunting is the domain of the Health Office, so they do not feel it is in their interest to be actively involved. This shows the lack of cross-sectoral awareness of the relevance of their programmes to nutrition and child development issues.

This is exacerbated by the absence of a technical and operational coordination forum. The TPPS (stunting reduction acceleration team) forum is more administrative and ceremonial, rather than a space for strategic decision-making across sectors. As a result, programme implementation in each OPD runs in parallel and does not strengthen each other. Collaboration only occurs in reporting, not in programme design or implementation.

The lack of commitment is also evident from the routine absence of OPDs in coordination meetings. Two regencies do not even have documents of meeting results that serve as a common reference. Communication between agencies tends to be reactive and incidental, only occurring

when there is an audit or supervisory visit from the province or centre.

Furthermore, the absence of sanction or reward mechanisms for participation in convergence means that OPDs do not feel encouraged to break out of sectoral working patterns. Convergence has not been a key performance indicator in the organisation's annual evaluation, so there is no structural impetus to change collaborative behaviour.

These findings suggest that there needs to be an approach that fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility on the issue of stunting. Coordination must be framed in the logic of cross-sector performance, not merely administrative obligations.

Furthermore, aspects of organizational behavior and work culture show that many OPDs maintain their sectoral areas. In Central Buton, non-health OPDs do not consider the issue of stunting to be their work domain. This is in line with Prasojo (2023) and Levinson et al (2022) which emphasizes that silo mentality is not only structural, but also cultural - embedded in the values, norms and daily practices of bureaucratic employees. An organizational culture that rejects collaboration will strengthen policy fragmentation, even though the structure and system have been designed to be integrated.

Salomo & Rahmayanti (2023) and Ariefiani & Ekowanti (2024), who document decentralization challenges across Indonesia, where sectoral fragmentation and limited feedback mechanisms hinder effective stunting intervention. Strengthening data management systems, improving analytic capacity, and fostering institutional cultures that value accountability are therefore crucial for accelerating progress in decentralized stunting governance

Simbolon et al (2021) in Bengkulu also highlighted persistent barriers in interagency communication, resource

scarcity, complex bureaucracy and weak supervisory structures. Permanasari et al. (2020) in their research on 13 priority regencies showed that the challenge in implementing convergence is the continued existence of sectoral egoism in each OPD due to suboptimal socialisation, resulting in many people not yet fully understanding the stunting prevention programme.

Collaborative commitment is a crucial factor, as explained by Damayanti et al (2021), who stated that in the case of Trenggalek, it was possible to transform the ego among actors and the negative stigma surrounding stunting into a collective strength capable of combating the high stunting rate in Trenggalek regency. The stunting problem in Trenggalek regency can be reduced through cooperation among actors from various sectors because stunting is a form of failure of various policies that must be addressed together. The same explanation is stated by Sulistio Diliwanto Binsasi & Kanisius Kono (2025), who say that although the reduction in stunting has not been as desired, there is awareness based on the Whole of Government (WOG) approach, where the strategy emphasised is coordination and collaboration between government agencies to address the issue comprehensively. In the prevention of stunting in North Central Timor Regency (TTU), this approach aims to ensure that various government sectors work synergistically.

The phenomenon of sectoral ego demonstrates the low level of shared motivation among OPDs, as emphasised in the collaborative governance framework (Ansell, C., & Gash, 2008). Non-health OPDs still view stunting as a matter for the Health Office, and therefore do not develop a shared sense of ownership. This indicates a failure to internalise the values of the whole-of-government approach, which should emphasise cross-sectoral synergy. In other words, the barriers to

collaboration are not merely structural, but are related to bureaucratic behaviour that is resistant to the redistribution of roles and responsibilities.

If sectoral egoism is allowed to continue, fragmentation will deepen, and the TPPS will only function as an administrative forum. However, if incentive and reward mechanisms based on collaborative performance are developed in the future, shared commitment can grow. This transformation will enable collective action that accelerates the achievement of stunting reduction targets, as in the case of Trenggalek, which successfully reduced stunting through strengthened cross-sectoral collaboration.

Information Fragmentation and Closed Data Systems

One important aspect of convergence is openness and integration of data between sectors. However, this study found that the information system supporting the stunting programme is still sectoral and closed. Each OPDs manages its own data without a sharing platform that can be accessed together, even by TPPS members.

In South Buton and Central Buton regencys, there is no shared dashboard system that contains comprehensive stunting programme indicators. As a result, programme planning and monitoring are conducted without a consistent data base. This makes it difficult to make strategic decisions, both in determining priority locations and allocating resources.

Some OPDs are reluctant to share data on the grounds that it is not finalised or internal. An exclusive and hierarchical bureaucratic culture makes information disclosure a major obstacle in cross-sectoral work integration. This practice creates information asymmetry that weakens trust and synergy between OPDs.

In some cases, stunting data available in the health sector is not linked to data from the education or sanitation sectors. This causes analyses of the causes and solutions of stunting to be partial and not holistic. In fact, a comprehensive understanding is needed to develop targeted interventions.

To realise evidence-based convergence, it is crucial to build an open, interoperable and jointly controlled data system. In addition to digital infrastructure, it is also necessary to reform the bureaucratic culture towards the principles of transparency and collaborative accountability.

In terms of information and data, all regencys studied do not yet have an open and cross-sectoral information system. This hampers evidence-based planning and prevents adaptive policies from being developed. The absence of a shared dashboard or data interoperability means that decision-making relies on partial data produced by each OPD. Phitra et al (2023) and Katmawanti et al (2023) Their evaluation also shows that reporting on convergence in the regions is more administrative than analytical, reinforcing what this study also found.

Nisa et al., (2025) revealed that the same problem encountered in reducing stunting in Makassar City lies in the inconsistency of data between relevant OPDs, where a 12% difference in stunting prevalence rates was found between the data from the Health Office and Bappeda. This is exacerbated by bureaucratic resistance to sharing data between OPDs, which hinders the information consolidation process. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an integrated platform that connects all relevant OPD databases to improve programme effectiveness.

In the southeast Sulawesi context, the fragmentation of information systems between government agencies indicates a lack of data interoperability, even though

information transparency is a key requirement for evidence-based policy. Bureaucratic resistance to data sharing reveals a strong culture of exclusivity and hierarchy that runs counter to the principle of public accountability. Data inconsistencies across agencies cause significant differences in stunting prevalence, which leads to misguided policies.

Weak Leadership and Resistant Organizational Culture

Leadership plays a central role in encouraging cross-sector collaboration. However, in the findings of this research, weak leadership is one of the main factors that strengthen the existence of silo mentality. In the three regencies studied, regional heads tend not to play the role of policy integrator. Political directives to encourage convergence are not followed by clear operational steps at the OPD level.

The lack of initiative from regional leaders means that the convergence agenda does not have sufficient thrust. OPD heads feel free to determine their own priorities without having to coordinate with other OPDs. TPPS meetings are often ceremonial and not followed up with binding decisions. This shows that leadership commitment on the issue of stunting is still symbolic.

On the other hand, the organizational culture developed in the regional bureaucracy tends to maintain the status quo. Innovation and collaborative initiatives are not adequately appreciated or supported. Employees tend to choose to work according to safe sectoral procedures rather than taking risks by establishing cross-sector collaboration. This resistance to change creates a comfortable space that is difficult to penetrate.

In addition, there is no reward system or incentives for OPDs or employees who successfully encourage cross-sector collaboration. Without recognition or structural support, the

collaborative spirit is difficult to grow. Some innovations that emerge are personal and not institutionalized, so they are not sustainable when there is a change of officials.

Therefore, building transformational leadership and collaborative organizational culture is an urgent agenda in regional bureaucratic reform. Cross-sector leadership training is needed, strengthening team performance incentive systems, and instilling the value of working together as part of a modern bureaucratic ethos that is adaptive to multidimensional development challenges such as stunting.

Leadership plays a crucial role in driving convergence, but is unfortunately weak in terms of initiative, monitoring and institutionalizing coordination. In Buton Regency, the RPJMD does place stunting as a priority issue, but without any technical directives or cross-sectoral decrees. This is in line with Winter (2012) which emphasizes the importance of enabling leadership in public policy, especially in the context of policy implementation involving actors across sectors and organizations.

The weakness of regional and OPD leadership demonstrates the absence of enabling leadership, which should function as a policy integrator (Winter, 2012). Without clear direction, each OPD feels free to pursue its own sectoral agenda. Furthermore, a bureaucratic organisational culture that is comfortable with the status quo reinforces resistance to innovation. Thus, the failure of convergence is not only due to regulatory factors, but also because leadership has failed to drive cultural change in the bureaucracy towards collaboration.

Syafrawati et al (2023) noted limited convergence at sub-district and village levels, where implementation momentum was hindered by unclear mandate distribution and technical capacity gaps. It all caused by weak leadership.

Synthesis of Findings: Silo Mentality as a Structural and Cultural Barrier

The findings across Buton, South Buton, and Central Buton show that silo mentality appears in multiple forms and affects every stage of the stunting reduction policy cycle: planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting. These conditions reflect not only technical administrative gaps but also structural and cultural constraints embedded in the regional bureaucracy. Despite the formal adoption of convergence policies, local practices remain fragmented and dominated by sectoral logics.

Structurally, each OPD continues to operate based on its own programs, budgets, and priorities due to the absence of a cross-sectoral planning and budgeting mechanism. Coordination bodies such as the TPPS lack authority to enforce integrative work processes, resulting in unaligned programs and duplicated interventions. South Buton illustrates this

clearly, where nutrition-sensitive interventions were planned without coordination with the health sector, causing mismatched targets and ineffective resource use. Central Buton faces similar constraints due to the lack of technical guidance that could harmonize planning across OPDs.

Culturally and behaviorally, collaboration has not become part of the bureaucratic ethos. Many OPD staff remain reluctant to share data, responsibilities, or decision-making because stunting is perceived as the domain of the health sector. Leadership weaknesses further reinforce this pattern; in Buton, convergence priorities stated in the RPJMD were not followed by clear directives or monitoring, allowing OPDs to maintain sectoral agendas.

The following table presents a comparison between South Buton, Central Buton and Buton regencies based on the dimensions of silo mentality analyzed in the study:

Table 1 Comparison of Silo Mentality Dimensions in Handling Stunting

Dimension	South Buton Regency	Central Buton Regency	Buton Regency
Planning & Implementation	Sensitive nutrition programs are not coordinated with health sector; sectoral and unaligned implementation.	Each department (OPD) plans independently without locus integration or cross-sectoral budgeting.	No shared mapping of stunting locus; programs follow internal cycles without technical interagency direction.
Sectoral Ego & Collaboration	Low OPD participation in stunting task force meetings; non-health OPDs feel no obligation to participate.	OPDs protect sectoral boundaries; collaborative efforts seen as a burden without incentives.	Coordination limited to the health sector; other OPDs do not perceive stunting as their responsibility.
Information & Data Fragmentation	No shared dashboard system; data is not shared across OPDs.	Data remains within sectors; not used for intersectoral planning or convergent evaluation.	No integrated reporting system; OPDs submit isolated sectoral reports.
Leadership & Organizational Culture	Regional head directives not followed up technically; task force meetings are symbolic.	Heads of OPD do not promote cross-sectoral work; siloed work culture persists.	RPJMD commitments are not translated into monitoring or binding inter-OPD policies.

Source: Processed from Research Results

A comparative examination of Buton, Central Buton, and South Buton reveals that silo mentality manifests with varying intensity and forms across the three regencies, shaped by institutional capacity,

leadership style, and sectoral coordination practices. South Buton shows the strongest patterns of sectoral fragmentation, where nutrition-sensitive interventions in sanitation and food security are planned

and executed without alignment to health indicators or stunting locus priorities. Coordination forums such as TPPS operate ceremonially, with low OPD attendance and minimal follow-up actions, reflecting a weak collaborative culture. In contrast, Central Buton demonstrates slightly better structural preparation, as convergence documents and planning templates are more complete; however, the implementation remains highly sectoral due to limited technical mechanisms for integrating OPD work plans. Data sharing is also more restricted in Central Buton, reinforcing silo behavior through exclusive information control. Buton Regency, while facing similar challenges, exhibits comparatively stronger leadership signals stunting is prioritized in the RPJMD and some OPDs attempt ad hoc coordination yet without binding cross-sector directives, these efforts remain fragmented and inconsistent.

Across all three cases, the comparison shows that the depth of silo mentality correlates with the strength of integrative leadership and clarity of technical coordination mechanisms. South Buton's weak leadership translates into minimal cross-sector interaction, while Central Buton's structural readiness is not matched by operational collaboration, and Buton's partial leadership commitment fails to institutionalize coordination. Similarly, information management practices vary: South Buton lacks any shared data platform, Central Buton maintains closed sectoral data systems, and Buton attempts limited data exchange but without standardized interoperability. These contrasts indicate that while the three regencies share the same national policy framework, local governance dynamics produce different expressions of silo mentality, influencing the effectiveness of convergence implementation. The comparative analysis thus highlights that breaking sectoral boundaries requires not only structural alignment but also

leadership capable of institutionalizing cross-sector incentives and fostering a collaborative bureaucratic culture.

This reinforces the argument that convergence strategies are not simply left to institutional design, but require deep reforms in bureaucratic behavior. This change is not only a matter of what to do but also how to do and is closely related to how bureaucratic actors understand, internalize and negotiate their role in cross-sectoral issues. Here, the concepts of organizational learning and collaborative governance Ansell, C., & Gash (2008), Emerson (2012) dan Emerson & Nabatchi (2015) developing patterns of interaction based on trust, shared commitment and collective incentive systems is particularly relevant.

Collaborative governance, as articulated by Ansell, C., & Gash (2008), emphasizes consensus-oriented, deliberative processes that build trust and mutual understanding among diverse stakeholders. While collaborative governance frameworks are designed to foster shared authority and inclusive decision-making (Ansell, C., & Gash, 2008), the stunting reduction programs demonstrates how weak institutional support constrain their implementation. Effective collaborative governance requires more than formal agreements, it demands institutional redesign that embeds participation, ensures equitable voice and supports adaptive systems. As He & Puranam (2021) and Fisher et al., (2020) assert, trust and legitimacy in collaborative governance are built through repeated, meaningful interactions, not top-down delegation.

The phenomenon of sectoral ego, weak collaborative commitment, and the ineffectiveness of TPPS forums in this study reflects a failure to build collaborative governance, where essential preconditions such as trust building, shared motivation, and joint capacity Ansell, C., & Gash (2008) and Emerson &

Nabatchi (2015) have not developed at the local level. This situation is further exacerbated by the *implementation gap* Winter (2012), namely the discrepancy between policy design and practical execution. Although convergence documents on stunting reduction have been formally adopted at the district level, their implementation remains procedural rather than substantive, constrained by siloed bureaucratic structures, organizational cultures resistant to collaboration, and weak integrative leadership that should function as the unifying force across sectors.

This research not only confirms previous findings, but also enriches the study with contextual evidence from underdeveloped regions that often escape the attention of national policies. The findings suggest that stunting reduction policies must be supported by structural and cultural bureaucratic transformation. Without intervention at the level of implementation and organizational behavior, convergence strategies risk becoming empty slogans amidst a bureaucracy that continues to operate within sectoral logic.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that silo mentality remains a major barrier to effective stunting convergence in Buton, South Buton, and Central Buton regencies. Sectoral planning, fragmented data systems, low collaborative commitment, and weak integrative leadership collectively prevent convergence policies from being implemented substantively. These findings show that bureaucratic behavior and organizational culture not merely institutional design are central to understanding why multisectoral programs fail to achieve expected outcomes. Therefore, convergence will continue to function as an administrative formality unless regional bureaucracies

undergo structural and cultural transformation.

However, this research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study relies on a relatively small number of key informants, which may limit the diversity of perspectives captured, even though thematic saturation was reached. Second, the analysis is based on three regencies within one province, so the findings may not fully represent variations in governance contexts across Indonesia. Third, the study focuses on perceptions and institutional processes rather than quantitatively measuring program outcomes, which restricts the ability to assess the direct impact of silo mentality on stunting prevalence. These limitations provide opportunities for future research to expand the empirical scope, incorporate mixed-method approaches, and examine the causal pathways between bureaucratic behavior and health outcomes.

Despite these limitations, several policy recommendations emerge. Local governments should strengthen cross-sectoral planning and budgeting mechanisms, including mandatory integration of OPD work plans and shared performance indicators for convergence programs. Developing interoperable data systems is essential to support evidence-based decision-making and reduce information asymmetry among OPDs. Additionally, provincial and national governments should institutionalize incentive and accountability frameworks that reward OPDs for collaborative performance. Finally, leadership development programs and cultural change initiatives are needed to foster a collaborative ethos within regional bureaucracies, ensuring that convergence becomes a substantive, not symbolic, strategy for accelerating stunting reduction.

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