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Synergy Among Government, Universities, NGOs, and Communities: Redefining the Path Towards a Poverty-Free Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Poverty remains a multifaceted challenge that requires adaptive, collaborative, and evidence-based strategies. This study analyses the role of dynamic governance and multisectoral collaboration in strengthening poverty alleviation efforts in Bogor Regency. Using a qualitative approach through Focus Group Discussions involving government agencies, international organisations, philanthropic enterprises, and community representatives, the research explores the capacity of dynamic governance to enhance policy effectiveness. The analysis focuses on three capabilities: thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across. The pentahelix collaboration model—linking government, academia, the private sector, civil society, and the media—remains suboptimal due to sectoral egoism and inadequate data-sharing mechanisms. The study emphasises that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty, requires inclusive governance, coherent regulation, and community empowerment. It concludes that effective poverty alleviation depends on dynamic, adaptive, and sustainable synergy among government institutions, universities, non-governmental organisations, private actors, and local communities within an integrated collaborative framework.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of Indonesia's most pressing development challenges despite a consistent decline in poverty rates over the past two decades. Its complexity extends beyond economic deprivation to encompass limited access to education, healthcare, housing, and social participation (Singh & Chudasama, 2020). This multidimensional nature shows that poverty is not only about income insufficiency but also structural inequality that restricts equitable access to welfare. Although Indonesia's economy continues to grow, this progress has not resulted in a proportional reduction in poverty, as economic gains remain unevenly distributed and often exacerbate regional disparities (Kitole et al., 2024). Thus, poverty alleviation demands multidimensional, adaptive, participatory, and collaborative approaches. The dynamic governance framework provides a useful lens for analysing institutional adaptability in public policy. It reflects governments' ability to allocate resources flexibly, innovate policies, and adapt programs to local contexts (Prasetyo, 2023). According to Neo and Chen (2007), three key capabilities underpin dynamic governance: thinking ahead (anticipating challenges), thinking again (critical reflection and policy learning), and thinking across (cross-sectoral collaboration). These capabilities are vital in Indonesia, where poverty varies across regions and is influenced by geographical, institutional, and socio-economic factors. Empirical studies indicate that targeted government expenditure on social services, health, and local economic empowerment has a greater impact on reducing poverty than relying solely on GDP growth (Kitole et al., 2024; Fitri & Amri, 2025). However, local governments often rely on rigid, sectoral budgeting that fails to adequately account for local variation, thereby limiting the effectiveness of their policies (Fitri & Amri, 2025).

However, government action alone is insufficient. Poverty is inherently complex and requires multi-actor collaboration. The pentahelix model, involving government, academia, the private sector, NGOs, media, and communities, has proven effective in fostering innovation and integration, particularly during economic resilience crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Pratama et al., 2023). Cross-sectoral collaboration reduces program duplication, stimulates innovation, and strengthens socio-economic outcomes at the community level (Akbar et al., 2025). However, empirical findings indicate that sectoral egos, weak coordination, and limited accountability continue to impede effective collaboration (Mukhlis et al., 2024). These issues are compounded by fragmented data systems and the absence of integrated monitoring mechanisms that would otherwise enhance collective impact (Ramadiana et al., 2023).

Community participation is another crucial factor in assessing a program's sustainability. Lukman (2024) finds that initiatives co-designed with local communities tend to be more durable and contextually appropriate because they reflect local needs and foster mutual trust. Similarly, Mukhlis et al. (2024) emphasise that community participation legitimises programs and enhances accountability at the local level. These insights reaffirm the argument that participatory approaches are integral to inclusive governance, particularly when addressing structural poverty. However, weak regulatory frameworks continue to pose significant challenges. Azizi and Agustin (2024) reveal that inter-agency coordination remains limited due to the absence of collaborative legal mechanisms. In contrast, Krishnappa and

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Agarwal (2023) suggest that community-driven governance models, supported by inclusive regulation, can overcome these institutional barriers.

In this context, Bogor Regency offers a useful case for examining the interaction between dynamic governance and multisectoral collaboration. As one of the most populous regions in West Java, Bogor experiences both urban industrial growth and persistent rural poverty. Although poverty reduction objectives have been incorporated into the Medium-Term Regional Development Plan (RPJMD), implementation remains constrained by bureaucratic rigidity, weak coordination within the Local Poverty Reduction Coordination Team (TKPKD), limited data quality, and underdeveloped graduation programs. Moreover, the pentahelix collaboration model has yet to function optimally due to sectoral fragmentation and inadequate data-sharing mechanisms.

This study examines the synergy among actors involved in poverty alleviation within Bogor Regency, exploring how the dimensions of thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across can enhance adaptive and collaborative policy practices. Using Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with representatives from government, NGOs, philanthropic organisations, statistical institutions, and community actors, the research seeks to capture diverse perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of developing inclusive and adaptive poverty-reduction strategies. The findings are expected to inform policy formulation by strengthening the implementation of dynamic governance and pentahelix collaboration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the eradication of poverty. Ultimately, this study aims to develop a dynamic, collaborative, and evidence-based governance model that supports Indonesia's commitment to achieving a poverty-free society.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach designed to explore the dynamics of collaborative governance and the operationalisation of dynamic governance in poverty alleviation initiatives. The qualitative design was chosen because it enables an in-depth understanding of complex social interactions, policy processes, and institutional relationships that quantitative methods cannot adequately capture (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Within this approach, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used as the primary data collection method. FGDs are particularly suitable for eliciting shared experiences, collective reflections, and diverse perspectives among stakeholders engaged in a standard policy issue (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

The research was conducted in Bogor Regency, West Java, an area characterised by a large and heterogeneous population, persistent poverty, and pronounced rural–urban disparities. According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2024), Bogor Regency continues to face unequal access to education and healthcare services, a high dependence on informal employment, and uneven economic development between subdistricts. The region was deliberately selected as the study site because poverty alleviation has been explicitly incorporated into its Medium-Term Regional Development Plan (RPJMD). This makes Bogor a relevant context for examining how principles of dynamic governance and the pentahelix model are implemented in local government practices.

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Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure inclusion of key actors across multiple sectors relevant to the poverty alleviation ecosystem. The sample included representatives from international non-governmental organisations (BRAC and Islamic Relief), Bappenas (the National Development Planning Agency), BPS (Statistics Indonesia), philanthropic business organisations, and the Bogor local government. This composition reflects the pentahelix collaboration principle, ensuring that perspectives from government, the private sector, academia, civil society, and community organisations are adequately represented. The inclusion of these diverse stakeholders was intended to capture cross-sectoral insights into coordination, policy alignment, and institutional challenges.

Two rounds of Focus Group Discussions were conducted between March and May 2024. Each session lasted 120-150 minutes and was facilitated by an independent moderator experienced in participatory research. The discussions followed a semi-structured guide designed around the three core dimensions of dynamic governance—thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across (Neo & Chen, 2007). This structure enabled participants to reflect on anticipatory policy planning, institutional learning mechanisms, and intersectoral collaboration practices in the context of poverty alleviation. All sessions were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and supplemented with detailed field notes to ensure completeness and contextual richness of the data.

To enhance the credibility and validity of the data, several methodological strategies were employed. First, source triangulation was employed by cross-verifying information obtained from different stakeholder groups (Patton, 2015). This ensured that findings reflected a balanced perspective rather than a single-institutional viewpoint. Second, member checking was conducted by returning key thematic summaries to participants for validation and feedback (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process not only enhanced the accuracy of interpretations but also strengthened the study's trustworthiness and transparency.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, following the systematic framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analytical process comprised six stages: (1) familiarisation with the data through iterative reading of transcripts; (2) generating initial codes to categorise significant statements; (3) searching for patterns and potential themes; (4) reviewing and refining themes for internal coherence; (5) defining and naming key themes; and (6) producing interpretive narratives that link empirical findings to theoretical constructs. The analytical focus centred on four major domains: (1) dynamic governance capacities, (2) data quality and information systems, (3) pentahelix collaboration mechanisms, and (4) regulatory and institutional frameworks supporting poverty reduction initiatives.

Throughout the analytical process, the researchers maintained a reflexive stance to mitigate potential biases and ensure the integrity of interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). NVivo 12 was used to support data management and coding, thereby enhancing consistency and auditability. Ethical considerations were carefully observed; participants provided informed consent, confidentiality was maintained, and data were anonymised to protect identities.

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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) revealed a broad consensus among participants that poverty alleviation remains a key development priority aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1: No Poverty. Participants agreed that special attention should be given to the eradication of extreme poverty, defined as living on less than USD 2.15 per day—a target established for elimination by 2030 (World Bank, 2022). In this regard, Bogor Regency has demonstrated structural commitment by explicitly integrating poverty alleviation into its Medium-Term Regional Development Plan (RPJMD).

Discussions with stakeholders highlighted distinct yet complementary perspectives. Representatives from the BPS emphasised the importance of developing disaggregated, reliable, and dynamic poverty data, highlighting that effective targeting relies on timely and accurate data systems. Bappenas emphasised alignment between local initiatives and the national RPJMN, underscoring policy coherence across governance levels. NGOs highlighted the importance of community capacity-building and participatory approaches. At the same time, philanthropic enterprises viewed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs—particularly those promoting micro entrepreneurship—as long-term social investments that contribute to sustainable local development (Nugraha et al., 2023)

Despite these commitments, implementation challenges persist. Most poverty alleviation programs in Bogor Regency remain short-term, oriented towards immediate relief rather than long-term empowerment. This finding resonates with Azizi and Agustin (2024), who attribute persistent policy rigidity to bureaucratic inertia and insufficient flexibility in adapting to local contexts. NGO representatives further pointed out a policy–practice gap, where centrally designed programs often fail to reflect local socio-economic realities (Lukman, 2024). According to BPS (2024), rural–urban disparities in Bogor continue to exacerbate household vulnerability, especially in peripheral subdistricts with limited access to markets and public services.

The graduation schemes, designed to assist beneficiaries' transition from dependency to self-reliance, have not yet functioned effectively. This is mainly due to the absence of post-assistance mentoring and limited follow-up monitoring. Furthermore, evaluation mechanisms remain predominantly top-down, leaving little room for participatory learning and adaptation. Consequently, opportunities for institutional learning—an essential element of thinking again in the dynamic governance framework (Neo & Chen, 2007)—remain underutilised.

In terms of collaborative governance, the research identified that cross-sectoral collaboration in Bogor Regency has yet to reach its full potential. The local government continues to dominate the policy arena, while the roles of NGOs, academia, and the private sector are still marginal. The Local Poverty Reduction Coordination Team (TKPKD) has not yet fully exercised its coordination mandate, consistent with findings by Mukhlis et al. (2024), who observed similar institutional weaknesses in other local contexts. Barriers such as sectoral ego, limited communication forums, and a lack of mutual trust hinder collaboration.

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However, Akbar et al. (2025) argue that cross-sectoral collaboration is essential not only to reduce program duplication but also to ensure resource efficiency and the sustainability of poverty alleviation initiatives.

Another central theme emerging from the discussions was the fragility of governance. National policy frameworks tend to be top-down, constraining local innovation and flexibility. The TKPKD itself lacks sufficient authority, institutional capacity, and financial autonomy to perform an integrative coordinating role. Data quality issues exacerbate these challenges: fragmented databases, inconsistent indicators, and the absence of integrated data systems lead to inefficient targeting and the exclusion of eligible households. This corroborates Akbar et al. (2025), who highlight that disjointed data management significantly undermines the accountability and impact of social programs. Moreover, Krishnappa and Agarwal (2023) emphasise that without formalised legal frameworks to institutionalise multi-actor collaboration, inclusive governance remains aspirational rather than operational.

Discussion

The findings reveal persistent gaps between the dynamic governance framework and its practical implementation in Bogor Regency. While the integration of poverty alleviation objectives into the RPJMD demonstrates progress in forward thinking, shortcomings remain evident in rethinking and cross-sector thinking. Neo and Chen (2007) assert that these three capabilities must function synergistically for governance systems to remain adaptive and innovative. In Bogor, the absence of mechanisms for reflection and intersectoral learning limits the transformative potential of ongoing poverty programs.

Critical reflection, the essence of thinking again, appears underdeveloped. As Prasetyo (2023) observes, local policies often fail to adjust to evolving community dynamics due to rigid bureaucratic routines and limited feedback mechanisms. The stagnation of graduation programs illustrates this weakness: despite their inclusion in planning documents, insufficient attention has been paid to long-term empowerment and follow-up support. Strengthening participatory evaluation frameworks could foster evidence-based learning and encourage the co-production of knowledge between policymakers and communities, thereby operationalising adaptive governance principles.

The dimension of thinking across—which emphasises collaboration and intersectoral integration—remains underdeveloped. The underutilization of the pentahelix model indicates that coordination mechanisms are fragmented and trust among actors remains fragile. The limited role of the TKPKD aligns with the findings of Mukhlis et al. (2024), who argue that coordination bodies often lack clear mandates, adequate resources, and institutional legitimacy. Conversely, Pratama et al. (2023) note that successful pentahelix collaboration depends on three interrelated conditions: trust, role equality, and sustained communication. Without these, multi-actor partnerships tend to be symbolic rather than substantive, resulting in fragmented interventions rather than coherent policy ecosystems.

Moreover, governance and data management weaknesses continue to constrain the effectiveness of local poverty programs. Fragmented databases and inconsistent metrics hinder coordination across agencies, reducing transparency and accountability. Akbar et al.

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(2025) emphasise that integrated data systems are indispensable for aligning local policies with national strategies, thereby enabling evidence-based decision-making and effective monitoring. Similarly, Krishnappa and Agarwal (2023) advocate for collaborative legal frameworks to formalise coordination between governmental and non-governmental actors, ensuring that intersectoral partnerships are sustainable and institutionalised rather than ad hoc.

From a policy perspective, several implications follow. Strengthening the authority, capacity, and resources of the TKPKD is essential to transform it into a truly functional coordination platform. Developing integrated poverty data systems and ensuring interoperability among government databases will improve targeting accuracy and policy coherence. Furthermore, optimising graduation programs through long-term empowerment, mentorship, and entrepreneurship support can enhance sustainability. Establishing regular multi-actor collaboration forums would also help build trust and foster a culture of shared accountability. Regulatory incentives should be introduced to encourage private sector participation and social innovation, while trust-building mechanisms—such as joint monitoring and transparent evaluation—can further reinforce collaboration.

Finally, this study opens directions for future research. Quantitative analyses can assess the statistical relationship between the intensity of multi-actor collaboration and multidimensional poverty outcomes. Comparative studies across regions may reveal variations in TKPKD performance and identify best practices. Furthermore, additional research could investigate how digital technologies, including integrated data platforms and AI-based poverty mapping, can enhance the adaptive capacity of local governments and promote data-driven decision-making within the dynamic governance framework.

Overall, the study confirms that adaptive and collaborative governance are indispensable for achieving sustainable poverty reduction. Dynamic governance principles—thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across—provide a conceptual pathway toward more inclusive, flexible, and evidence-based policymaking. However, their practical realisation requires political commitment, institutional reform, and a culture of collaboration rooted in mutual trust among all actors within the pentahelix ecosystem.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reaffirms that effective poverty alleviation requires an integrated approach that combines dynamic governance, multi-actor collaboration, and inclusive regulatory frameworks. The case of Bogor Regency demonstrates a strong structural and institutional commitment to poverty reduction through its incorporation of relevant objectives into the Medium-Term Regional Development Plan (RPJMD). However, persistent challenges—such as bureaucratic rigidity, fragmented coordination, poor data quality, and the limited operationalisation of graduation schemes—continue to undermine the effectiveness of implementation. These findings are consistent with Azizi and Agustin (2024), who argue that rigid administrative systems and the absence of enabling regulatory environments hinder local innovation and cross-sectoral cooperation.

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Graduation programs, which are designed to transition households from dependency to economic self-reliance, remain underdeveloped. The lack of sustained follow-up support and empowerment mechanisms suggests that current poverty alleviation policies still tend to adopt charity-based paradigms rather than transformative, capacity-building approaches. As Prasetyo (2023) emphasises, adaptive governance requires iterative learning and responsiveness to local dynamics. Therefore, strengthening mechanisms for participatory evaluation and institutional reflection is essential to ensure that policies remain contextually relevant and sustainable over time.

The study further highlights that cross-sectoral collaboration, as outlined in the pentahelix model—which encompasses government, academia, the private sector, civil society, and the media—is indispensable for addressing the multidimensional nature of poverty. However, as observed by Mukhlis et al. (2024) and Pratama et al. (2023), such collaboration in Bogor Regency remains underutilised due to limited trust, weak coordination, and the absence of regular communication platforms. Enhancing collaborative legal frameworks and establishing institutionalised coordination mechanisms are necessary to transform the pentahelix model from a theoretical ideal into a functional governance tool.

Additionally, integrated data systems are crucial for enhancing targeting accuracy, monitoring effectiveness, and promoting evidence-based policymaking. Akbar et al. (2025) underline that fragmented databases not only weaken accountability but also limit opportunities for policy learning and coordination. Therefore, developing interoperable and transparent data infrastructures should be prioritised to support dynamic and inclusive decision-making processes.

Overall, this study concludes that achieving sustainable poverty alleviation in Indonesia depends on local governments' ability to operationalise dynamic governance principles—thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across (Neo & Chen, 2007)—in synergy with the pentahelix collaboration model. Strengthening institutional capacity, promoting participatory evaluation, and fostering regulatory coherence are crucial to align local actions with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1, which aims to eradicate extreme poverty. Through these measures, a more adaptive, collaborative, and equitable governance framework can be established, paving the way toward a poverty-free Indonesia.

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