

Public Sector Synergy for Poverty Alleviation (Institutional Collaboration in Blitar Local Government)

^a Choirul Saleh; ^b Mochammad Zainal Mustofa

^{a,b} Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, East Java, Indonesia

ABSTRAK

Pengentasan kemiskinan merupakan tantangan multidimensi yang membutuhkan respons terintegrasi pada level pemerintahan daerah. Studi ini menganalisis praktik kolaborasi antarinstansi publik dalam penanggulangan kemiskinan di Kabupaten Blitar, Indonesia, dengan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya mekanisme formal (forum TKPK, sinkronisasi perencanaan, basis data terpadu) dan operasional (SLRT, Sidaksos, tim teknis lintas-OPD) yang mendukung koordinasi lintas sektor. Meski demikian, masih ditemukan kendala berupa ketidaksesuaian data, ego sektoral, keterbatasan sumber daya, serta rendahnya partisipasi masyarakat. Sebagai respons, pemerintah daerah melakukan inovasi kelembagaan melalui Rencana Aksi Tahunan (RAT), dashboard kemiskinan, aplikasi Sidaksos, gerakan gotong royong, dan kolaborasi pentahelix. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa tata kelola kolaboratif dengan dukungan inovasi adaptif dapat memperkuat sinergi kelembagaan. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pengayaan teori network governance dan kolaborasi antarorganisasi, sekaligus memberi implikasi praktis bagi penguatan tata kelola desentralisasi.

ABSTRACT

Poverty alleviation is a multidimensional challenge that requires an integrated response at the local government level. This study analyzes institutional collaboration practices in poverty reduction in Blitar Regency, Indonesia, using a qualitative case study approach through interviews, observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal the presence of both formal mechanisms (TKPK forums, planning synchronization, and integrated databases) and operational arrangements (SLRT, Sidaksos, and cross-agency technical teams) that facilitate inter-sectoral coordination. However, persistent challenges remain, including data discrepancies, sectoral ego, limited resources, and low community participation. In response, the local government has introduced institutional innovations such as the Annual Action Plan (RAT), poverty dashboard, Sidaksos application, the Gotong Royong movement, and pentahelix collaborations with universities and the private sector. These findings indicate that collaborative governance, supported by adaptive innovations, can strengthen institutional synergy. The study contributes to the theoretical discourse on network governance and inter-organizational collaboration, while also offering practical insights for enhancing decentralized governance.

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains a complex and multidimensional development challenge. In Indonesia, the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) employs a basic-needs approach to measure poverty, which defines it as the inability to meet minimum food and non-food expenditure thresholds. Although widely adopted, this income-based method has been widely criticized by global scholars. Benatar (2016) argues that measuring poverty solely by income, as used by the World Bank and national statistical agencies, is reductionist and fails to capture the diverse realities of poverty

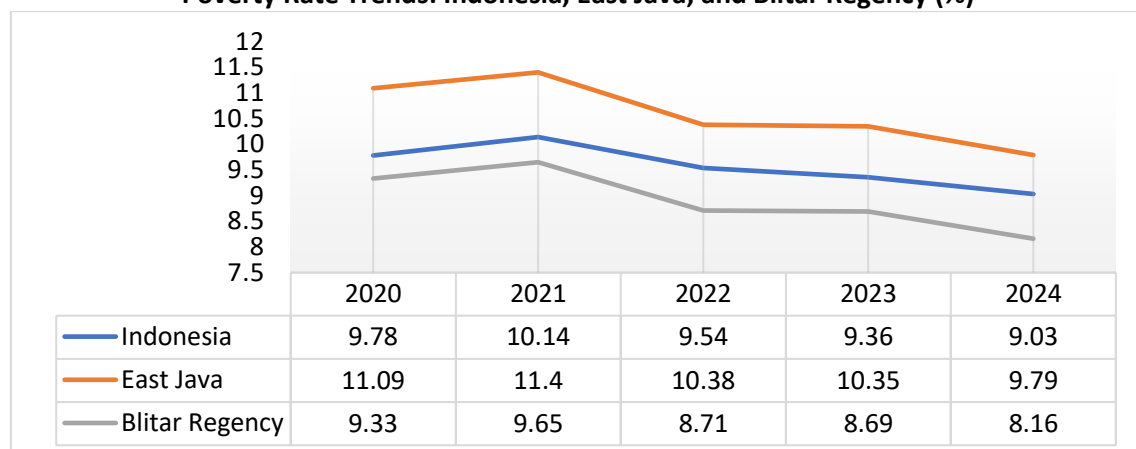
as experienced by individuals. In line with these critiques, Wolff (2020) and Madanipour et al. (2015) advocate for a more inclusive multidimensional poverty approach, encompassing access to education, health, employment, social protection, and civic participation. Recent studies further support the essential role of education and health in breaking intergenerational poverty cycles (Bici & Çela, 2017; Hofmarcher, 2021; Mihai et al., 2015).

Employment, as another crucial capability domain, also plays a key role in poverty dynamics. High rates of unemployment, both open and underemployment, are consistently associated with rising poverty levels (Royce, 2022; Van der Westhuizen & Swart, 2015). Consequently, poverty reduction strategies must go beyond monetary interventions and adopt comprehensive, cross-sectoral approaches that address the multiple dimensions of deprivation. In Indonesia, poverty alleviation strategies are often directly linked to macro-level indicators such as unemployment rates, economic growth, and the Human Development Index (HDI). However, prior research indicates that the relationship between these indicators and poverty is not always linear. For instance, Irawan (2022) found that economic growth in Sumbawa Regency had no significant effect on poverty reduction, whereas HDI and unemployment rates exhibited a stronger influence. Similar findings were reported by Resmarani and Sishadiyati, (2023) in North Jakarta and Lestari et al. (2021) in Bali Province, highlighting that improvements in HDI and human capital investment tend to have a more substantial impact on poverty alleviation than economic growth alone.

Several regional economic studies further support this argument. Royce (2022) emphasizes that major shifts in local economic structures due to deindustrialization, globalization, and weak investment have worsened poverty in the United States. In Indonesia, regional economic growth measured by Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) has been shown to have a negative and significant effect on poverty (Hamdani & Asnawi, 2023; Hutagaol et al., n.d.; Sinuraya et al., 2021). However, such effects are highly contextual, depending on local economic structures and institutional capacity to manage the equitable distribution of development outcomes. Economic growth that is non-inclusive and fails to generate quality employment can increase inequality and deepen structural poverty.

The case of Blitar Regency reflects a similar situation. To provide a clearer picture, Graphic 1. Poverty Rate Trends: Indonesia, East Java, and Blitar Regency (2020–2024) presents the comparative development of poverty levels over the past five years:

Graphic 1.
Poverty Rate Trends: Indonesia, East Java, and Blitar Regency (%)

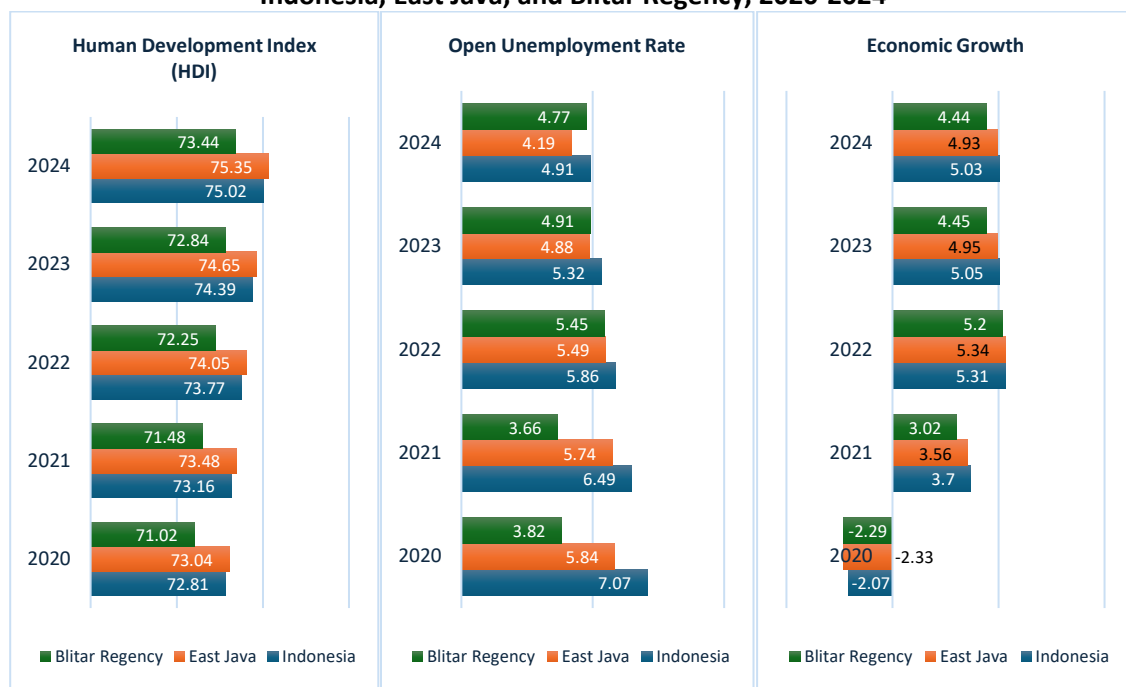


Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS) Blitar Regency, East Java, Indonesia, 2025

As illustrated in Graphic 1, according to data from BPS (Statistics Indonesia), the poverty rate in Blitar consistently declined from 9.33% in 2020 to 8.16% in 2024. This achievement outperforms both the East Java provincial average (9.79%) and the national average (9.03%).

However, other development indicators such as the Human Development Index (HDI), the Open Unemployment Rate (OUR), and economic growth have not demonstrated fully parallel performance. To illustrate these trends, Graphic 2, Human Development Index (HDI), Open Unemployment Rate (%), and Economic Growth (%) in Indonesia, East Java, and Blitar Regency (2020–2024), presents a comparative overview across the last five years.

Graphic 2.
Human Development Index (HDI), Open Unemployment Rate (%), Economic Growth (%) in Indonesia, East Java, and Blitar Regency, 2020-2024



Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS) Blitar Regency, East Java, Indonesia, 2025

As illustrated in Graphic 2, Blitar Regency's HDI in 2024 was recorded at 73.44, which remains below both the East Java provincial average (75.35) and the national average (75.02). The region's open unemployment rate reached 4.77%, slightly higher than the provincial rate of 4.19% but lower than the national rate of 4.91%. In terms of economic growth, Blitar's rate in 2024 stood at 4.44%, lagging behind East Java (4.93%) and the national level (5.03%). These patterns indicate that, while poverty reduction in Blitar has been relatively strong, improvements in broader socioeconomic indicators have been less consistent.

This term suggests that non-macro factors, particularly institutional dynamics and cross-sector collaboration, play a significant role in driving poverty reduction at the local level. Sustainable poverty alleviation strategies require intersectoral efforts to generate inclusive employment, support education systems that align with labor market needs, and expand the reach of social protection for vulnerable groups (Irawan, 2022; Resmarani & Sishadiyati, 2023). Institutional synergy aimed at enhancing human development and strengthening social resilience tends to be more effective in reducing poverty than solely pursuing economic growth. In fact, in several regional contexts, high economic growth does not automatically translate into poverty reduction when the distributional outcomes of development are not equitable (Daniel et al.,

2023).

In light of this phenomenon, it is essential to examine how public sector synergy is formulated and implemented in Blitar Regency. The local government has developed a Regional Poverty Reduction Plan (RPKD) for 2021–2026 and operates a Cross-Sectoral Poverty Reduction Coordination Team (TKPK) as a forum that brings together various government agencies. However, the effectiveness of this interagency collaboration must be evaluated empirically, especially given the prevalence of persistent challenges such as sectoral egos, data fragmentation, and weak institutional communication across many regions.

This study is purposed to explore in depth the practice of public sector synergy in efforts to alleviate poverty in Blitar Regency. The central focus lies on how inter-organizational coordination among OPD is structured, implemented, and perceived in terms of impact within the local context. A case study approach is employed to examine the institutional dynamics in designing and executing collaborative strategies, while also identifying emerging challenges and innovations on the ground. This research is not only conceptually relevant but also strategically significant for informing local government efforts in crafting collaborative governance models that address the root causes of poverty more comprehensively.

Specifically, the study focuses on four key areas:

1. The roles of respective local government agencies (OPD) in implementing poverty reduction programs;
2. The forms of coordination and institutional synergy in operation;
3. The structural and operational challenges encountered in cross-sector coordination; and
4. The local innovations developed to strengthen institutional collaboration.

Based on these focal areas, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do OPD in Blitar Regency perform their roles in implementing poverty reduction programs?
2. What forms of coordination and institutional synergy are manifested among OPD in addressing poverty reduction?
3. What structural and operational challenges are faced in the process of cross-sectoral coordination?
4. What local innovations have been developed to strengthen institutional collaboration in poverty alleviation efforts?

Theoretically, this study extends the application of collaborative governance and network governance theories by demonstrating how the TKPK functions as a Network Administrative Organization (NAO) within a decentralized government context, while also linking public sector innovations such as Sidaksos, the poverty dashboard, and pentahelix partnerships to the concept of capacity for joint action in the integrative collaborative governance framework. These theoretical insights directly inform the practical contribution of the study, identifying replicable design elements for other local governments, such as regular TKPK forums, integrated poverty data systems, annual action plans, and strengthened cross-sector partnerships. Thus, the findings not only advance academic discourse but also provide actionable guidance to address challenges of coordination, data fragmentation, and limited community participation in poverty alleviation efforts.

Literature Review

A Multidimensional Approach to Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is a complex phenomenon that cannot be adequately explained by income deprivation alone. The multidimensional approach emphasizes that poverty involves deprivations across various aspects of life, such as education, health, living standards, employment, and social participation (Benatar, 2016; Madanipour et al., 2015; Wolff, 2020). This understanding broadens the scope of policy interventions and demands cross-sectoral strategies grounded in collaborative governance, precisely the focus of this study on institutional synergy in the Blitar local government. Chipunza and Ntsalaze (2025) stress that effective poverty alleviation strategies must consider social determinants and local institutional structures. Wang et al. (2025) further argue that the success of poverty reduction is largely determined by the integration of financial access, social services, and institutional readiness. In this context, collaboration among OPD becomes essential for enabling effective multidimensional interventions.

The importance of using contextual and integrated indicators is also underscored by D'Attoma and Matteucci (2024), who recommend employing statistical methods such as latent class analysis to explore interrelations among poverty dimensions. Zulkifli and Abidin (2023) and Rusli et al., (2024) add that social, psychological, and environmental dimensions, as well as the quality of public governance (participation, accountability, e-government) are critical determinants of anti-poverty policy success. These findings reinforce the pivotal role of local government agencies in driving institutional innovation and synergy.

This multidimensional perspective is also confirmed by other scholarly works. Education is strongly correlated with economic mobility and the likelihood of escaping poverty (Bici & Çela, 2017; Mihai et al., 2015; Thorbecke, 2015). Health is both a consequence and a determinant of poverty, and is thus a central indicator in multidimensional frameworks (Apostu et al., 2024; O'Donnell, 2024; Oshio, 2019). Household expenditure and consumption levels reflect basic capabilities for achieving a decent standard of living (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023; Laderchi et al., 2003), while unemployment significantly contributes to high poverty rates in local contexts (Hutagaol et al., n.d.; Irawan, 2022; Royce, 2022). A recent study by Mustofa et al. (2025) finds that education and health significantly influence poverty reduction, whereas expenditure does not consistently serve as a key determinant. This further supports the importance of multidimensional approaches and the necessity for intersectoral coordination in local poverty policy interventions.

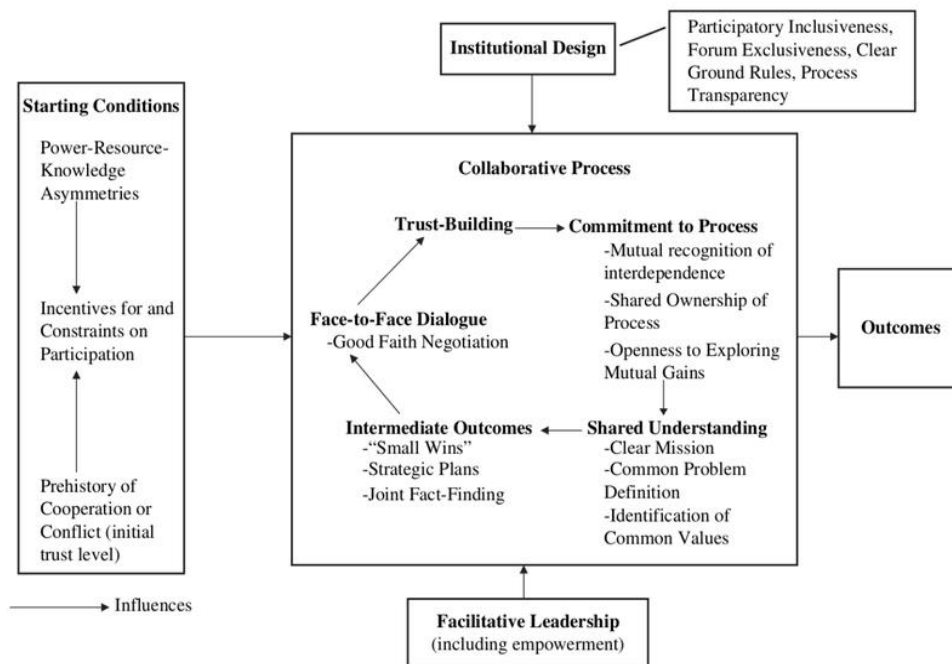
Additionally, literature indicates that regional economic growth generally exhibits a negative correlation with poverty; higher growth tends to reduce poverty levels (Hamdani & Asnawi, 2023; Sinuraya et al., 2021). However, as noted in regional studies, this relationship is highly contextual, depending on the structure of the local economy and the institutional capacity to ensure equitable distribution of development outcomes (Royce, 2022). Therefore, institutional synergy at the local level must be supported by a productive and inclusive regional economic ecosystem to ensure that multi-agency interventions yield maximum impact. In sum, existing literature consistently supports the notion that effective poverty mitigation requires a multidimensional approach integrated with institutional synergy. This study, which focuses on the coordination and collaboration among government agencies in Blitar Regency, is grounded in this theoretical

understanding to address both structural and operational challenges in implementing more effective and context-sensitive poverty reduction programs.

Inter-Agency Collaboration in Government Governance

Inter-agency collaboration in government governance represents a strategic approach to addressing the complexity of public problems that cannot be resolved through sectoral efforts alone. The primary theoretical foundation for understanding this concept is the Collaborative Governance Framework developed by Ansell and Gash (2008) as illustrated in Figure 1. This framework emphasizes that effective collaboration is formed through a formal, deliberative, and consensus-based process involving both state and non-state actors. The success of such collaboration is determined by four key elements: the initial conditions of inter-party relationships, an inclusive institutional design, facilitative leadership, and a collaborative interaction process that includes face-to-face dialogue, trust building, and joint commitment.

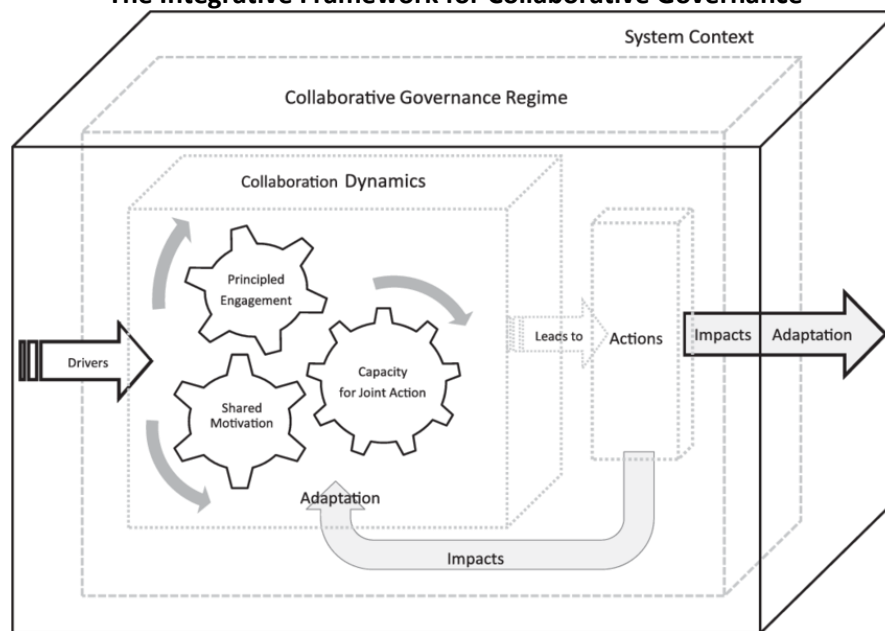
Figure 1.
Model Collaborative Governance Ansell and Gash



Source: Ansell & Gash (2008)

This framework was further expanded by Emerson et al. (2012) through the Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance, which introduced three core components in the development of a collaborative governance regime: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. These components operate within a complex governance system and are typically triggered by external pressures or internal requirements within a jurisdiction, as stated in Figure 2.

Figure 2.
The Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance



Source: Emerson et al., (2012)

An understanding of institutional coordination structures is further enriched by the Network Governance perspective proposed by Provan and Kenis (2008). They distinguish three forms of network governance: shared governance, lead organization, and network administrative organization (NAO). This concept is particularly relevant for analyzing inter-organizational collaborative structures among OPD, especially in synergistic efforts such as poverty alleviation, where institutions like Bappeda or TKPK may function as network managers. Various empirical studies support this theoretical framework. Khan and Han (2023) demonstrate that the effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration is significantly influenced by institutional capacity, including service delivery, evaluation, and operational performance. Through a systematic review, Azis and Eko (2021) state that the application of collaborative governance in poverty reduction remains limited and requires a multidimensional and participatory approach. Tando and Haryanti (2020) emphasize the importance of sensitivity to local contexts, community participation, and the involvement of the private sector in building inclusive inter-institutional collaboration. Lawelai and Nurmandi (2022) add that the quality of participation, fair resource allocation, and program sustainability are critical elements in ensuring effective collaborative governance.

A study by Tommy et al. (2025) confirms that collaborative governance enhances coordination, accountability, communication, and organizational adaptive capacity. Their findings also highlight that power imbalances, lack of trust, and goal misalignment are fundamental challenges in collaboration that need to be addressed by strengthening institutional structures and processes. Although focused on organic waste management, Wicaksana et al. (2025) identify similar structural barriers in collaborative governance, such as weak institutional commitment, limited coordination mechanisms, and inadequate intersectoral linkages, which reflect broader challenges commonly faced by local governments in delivering collaborative public services. Meanwhile, Mukhlis and Perdana (2022) enrich the Indonesian local context through a study on climate change

policy in Bandar Lampung, which involved the establishment of a Climate Change Resilience Coordination Team. Their study underscores that successful collaboration requires trust-building, equality of roles, and effective cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, while also highlighting the importance of adaptively managing cultural, political, and institutional barriers.

Yakin et al. (2025) found that collaborative strategies mediated by co-innovation and government empowerment significantly improve regional poverty alleviation outcomes, particularly when influenced by geopolitical and bureaucratic leadership factors. Collectively, this body of literature supports the relevance of collaborative approaches in local government governance. The effective implementation of collaboration necessitates an adaptive institutional design, conducive relational dynamics, and the strengthening of capacity and leadership among strategic actors. In the context of this study, these theories and empirical insights form the foundation for understanding how inter-agency synergy in Blitar Regency can enhance the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs contextually and sustainably.

Public Sector Innovation and Local Governance

Innovation in the public sector is a crucial element in enhancing the capacity of local governments to address complex social issues such as poverty. According to Moore and Hartley (2010), public sector innovation is not only about the adoption of new technologies, but also about creating public value through the redesign of processes, structures, and relationships among actors. In the context of local governance, innovation promotes policy flexibility, strengthens inter-agency networks, and fosters citizen participation. Torfing et al. (2019) add that local governance innovation often materializes through cross-sector collaboration, which enables more adaptive and responsive solutions to citizens' needs. Accordingly, institutional innovations that emerge from OPD collaboration form an essential foundation for achieving contextual and sustainable poverty reduction at the local level.

This study contributes to the literature by providing an in-depth empirical analysis of inter-agency synergy in poverty alleviation at the local government level, particularly within the context of decentralized governance in Indonesia. Unlike prior research that predominantly focuses on sectoral programs or macroeconomic indicators, this study highlights institutional dynamics, collaborative practices, and local innovations that shape integrated poverty reduction efforts. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the operationalization of cross-sector collaboration through the TKPK mechanism in Blitar Regency, offering a contextual model for public sector synergy in addressing multidimensional poverty.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth the institutional collaboration practices of the public sector in poverty alleviation in Blitar Regency. This design was chosen because it allows for a contextual understanding of complex phenomena, particularly the inter-organizational interactions among local government agencies in designing and implementing collaborative strategies. In line with Creswell (2012), qualitative inquiry aims to uncover meanings constructed by social actors through interaction and experience, with a focus on the deep interpretation of social reality. A case study design is considered appropriate for addressing "how" and "why" questions concerning institutional collaboration in real-life settings (Yin, 2018). To ensure data richness and validity, the study applied triangulation of techniques and sources. Technique triangulation consisted of in-depth

interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. Source triangulation was achieved by involving 27 informants from ten strategic government agencies, including the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda), Social Affairs Office, Health Office, Education Office, Cooperatives and SMEs Office, Industry and Trade Office, Food Security Office, Housing and Settlement Office, Fisheries and Livestock Office, and the Manpower and Transmigration Office.

A total of 27 semi-structured interviews were conducted using snowball sampling. Each interview lasted on average 60 minutes, was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia (with occasional local terms), recorded with informant consent, and transcribed verbatim. The interviews focused on themes of poverty, cross-sectoral coordination, institutional challenges, and local innovations. Informant confidentiality was protected through anonymization using coded initials, and all recordings and transcripts were securely stored in the researcher's personal drive. Non-participant observations were carried out during FGDs and TKPK coordination meetings, while document analysis included the RPJMD (Regional Development Plan), RPKD (Regional Poverty Reduction Plan), and coordination meeting minutes to strengthen the institutional context. Data analysis was conducted manually through three stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. A codebook was developed deductively from collaborative governance theory Ansell & Gash (2008) and the integrative collaborative governance framework (Emerson et al., 2012), and further refined inductively from field data. Analytical rigor was enhanced through peer debriefing with two fellow researchers, and by comparing coding results to achieve consistency. Negative cases, such as agencies formally included in TKPK but not actively participating, were analyzed to enrich the understanding of collaboration dynamics. The final analysis employed pattern matching (Yin, 2018) to align empirical findings with theoretical expectations, particularly regarding dialogue, trust, shared commitment, and joint action capacity.

From an ethical perspective, the study obtained formal approval from Universitas Brawijaya, which issued an official research permit addressed to the Regent of Blitar through the National Unity and Political Agency (Bakesbangpol). The permit was then forwarded to each relevant government agency, which granted written approval and designated appropriate informants. Before each interview, informants were informed of the study's objectives and provided informed consent either verbally or in writing. Confidentiality was ensured through anonymization, and access to the data was restricted to the researcher. The researcher has no structural affiliation with the Blitar Regency Government, thereby maintaining a neutral position. Potential biases were minimized through data triangulation, peer validation, and continuous reflexivity throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Role of Local Government Agencies in Poverty Alleviation in Blitar

The findings indicate that poverty alleviation efforts in Blitar Regency involve various local government agencies (OPD), each with specific but complementary roles and programs. The following table outlines the roles of each OPD in addressing poverty in the region.

Table 1.
Main Roles and Programs of OPD in Blitar Regency's Poverty Alleviation Efforts

Local Government Agency	Main Roles and Programs
Regional Development Planning Agency	Coordination of poverty alleviation program planning and budgeting across government agencies.
Social Affairs Office	Poverty data collection (DTKS) and distribution of social assistance (PKH, BPNT).
Health Office	Health services for the poor (JKN-PBI, stunting prevention, Posyandu).
Education Office	Scholarships and educational assistance for underprivileged students (regional KIP, equivalency programs).
Office of Manpower, and Office of Cooperatives and SMEs	Job training, labor-intensive programs, and empowerment of poor family MSMEs.
Village and Community Empowerment Office	Utilization of Village Funds for poverty programs and rural economic empowerment.
Public Works and Spatial Planning Office (PUPR)	Development of basic infrastructure (uninhabitable house improvement, clean water, neighborhood roads).
Population and Civil Registration Office	Proactive civil registration services to support access to social assistance.
Office of Women Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control, and Family Planning	Economic empowerment for poor women and protection for vulnerable children.
Agriculture and Food Security Office	Agricultural assistance for poor farmers and family food development.

Source: Author's compilation from field data, 2025

As shown in Table 1, each OPD operates within a distinct area of intervention that is nonetheless interconnected within the broader framework of poverty alleviation. The findings indicate that poverty alleviation efforts in Blitar Regency involve various OPDs, each with specific yet complementary roles. The Social Affairs Office plays a central role in managing poverty data and distributing social assistance. Although the Social Affairs Office manages DTKS, annual verification is limited by budget constraints, creating inaccuracies that weaken targeting precision of PKH and BPNT. As one official noted, "Since 2022 we have conducted annual verification and validation of poor households, but we can only do it once a year due to budget constraints." Similarly, the Manpower Office focuses on empowerment through training programs, with an informant explaining that "in 2023 we specifically targeted extremely poor households, providing entrepreneurship and soft-skill training, including digital marketing, to 150 beneficiaries divided into five groups."

The Health and Education Offices are primarily engaged in strengthening human capital. According to the Health Office, "poor residents in Blitar receive free services at local health centers, with the district covering BPJS premiums for those without health insurance." Meanwhile, the Education Office highlighted limitations in scholarship targeting: "The PIP program often fails to reach the right students because we have no direct oversight, as the funds are transferred directly to individual bank accounts." The Education Office's scholarship support is important, but the lack of oversight over PIP transfers indicates weak institutional control, reducing program effectiveness. The Public Works and Spatial Planning Office (PUPR) provides essential infrastructure such as housing, water, and roads, yet faces difficulties in integrating data. A housing official explained that "when we overlay our uninhabitable housing data with

the stunting list, they often do not match, making it difficult to identify the right beneficiaries.” The Food Security Office also linked agricultural performance to poverty, stating that “around 74% of residents depend on agriculture, so if the sector prospers, three-quarters of the population benefits, but small landholdings and high production costs keep many farmers poor.”

Other agencies contribute in more indirect but still relevant ways. The Industry and Trade Office indicated that “our role is mainly providing product-processing, packaging, and marketing training rather than direct poverty programs.” Likewise, the Cooperatives and SMEs Office stated, “we support poor micro-entrepreneurs through training, business mentoring, and access to financing, so that they can become self-reliant rather than dependent on aid.” The Livestock Office acknowledged a more limited scope, explaining that “we have no specific poverty programs; support is given only to those who are already engaged in livestock farming, since starting from zero would likely result in failure.” Finally, Bappeda serves as the cross-sectoral integrator. An informant emphasized that “as both the planning agency and the Regional Coordination Team for Poverty Alleviation (TKPK) secretariat, Bappeda ensures coordination through KISS (coordination, integration, synchronization, and synergy) by preparing the Annual Action Plan and the Regional Poverty Reduction Plan (RPKD).”

This division of roles correlates with the multidimensional approach to poverty reduction (Madanipour et al., 2015; Wolff, 2020), which emphasizes that poverty does not stem solely from a lack of income but also from deprivation across multiple dimensions such as education, health, employment, and environmental quality. Consequently, an effective poverty reduction strategy requires simultaneous interventions by multiple sectors and actors, as reflected in the roles played by OPD in the Blitar context. Chipunza and Ntsalaze (2025) also indicate the importance of coordinated interventions grounded in local institutional structures, such as those facilitated through TKPK.

Furthermore, the collaborative structure established through the TKPK reflects the principles of Collaborative Governance as conceptualized by Ansell and Gash (2008). This approach views collaboration as a deliberative, consensus-based process among state actors, contingent on institutional design, facilitative leadership, and shared goals. The existence of the TKPK as an interagency coordination forum has created a framework that allows for distinct but interconnected role divisions. This is in line with the Network Administrative Organization (NAO) model within the Network Governance theory (Provan & Kenis, 2008), where Bappeda functions as the central coordinating node, managing the vision, planning, and evaluation among OPDs. Conceptually, this configuration reinforces the perspective of Wang et al. (2025), who argue that poverty alleviation success is strongly influenced by institutional capacity and the integration of public services. In this sense, OPD synergy, organized within a collaborative framework, represents not merely an administrative function but also the embodiment of governance capacity in addressing complex and multidimensional issues such as poverty.

Forms of Coordination and Institutional Synergy

Blitar Regency has implemented various forms of inter-agency coordination to ensure that poverty reduction programs are aligned and mutually reinforcing. The following table outlines the identified institutional coordination mechanisms along with their descriptions.

Table 2.
Forms of inter-agency coordination and institutional synergy among OPD

Type of Coordination	Core Activities
Regular TKPK Forum	Quarterly inter-agency forum led by the Vice Regent, aimed at program evaluation, action synchronization, and joint problem-solving.
Planning and Budget Synchronization	Integration of poverty programs into the RKPD and APBD through inter-agency matrices and coordination meetings before the development planning forum (Musrenbang).
Integrated Poverty Data System	Utilization of verified DTKS and P3KE data via the Sidaksos platform as a shared targeting base among agencies.
Integrated Referral Services (SLRT / Puskesmas)	One-stop service mechanism that channels complaints from poor residents to relevant technical agencies based on specific needs.
Technical Team / Cross-Agency Working Group	Formation of ad-hoc task forces (e.g., Extreme Poverty Team, Data Working Group) for focused and collaborative interventions.
Non-Governmental Partnership	Involvement of BAZNAS, CSR, LAZ, and universities in poverty programs through the CSR Forum and TKPK Partnership Subdivision coordination.

Source: Author's compilation from field data, 2025

Blitar Regency has adopted multiple forms of inter-agency coordination to ensure that poverty reduction programs are aligned and mutually reinforcing. As shown in Table 2, these include formal forums, technical arrangements, integrated services, and external partnerships. The regular TKPK forum is the main deliberative space for cross-sectoral planning and evaluation. A Bappeda officer explained, "We hold TKPK meetings at least twice a year, once for planning and once for evaluation." Another informant emphasized, "Through the planning process, Bappeda coordinates via KISS (coordination, integration, synchronization, and synergy) to ensure that the Annual Action Plan and the RPKD are aligned."

Coordination also occurs at the subdistrict level. The Health Office reported, "Every subdistrict has mini cross-sector forums held four times a year, attended by the subdistrict head, family planning officers, education officials, religious leaders, village heads, police, and the military." These are not merely ceremonial events; as the same official added, "These forums usually discuss stunting cases, immunization, and poor residents who still lack access to national health insurance." Service innovation has also strengthened coordination. The Social Affairs Office highlighted how SLRT/Puskesmas works in practice: "At the village level, 50 households were initially proposed, but only 30 were confirmed as genuinely poor and then referred to the relevant technical agencies." They further explained its role as a one-stop referral point: "SLRT serves as the main entry for complaints, so residents do not get confused about where to go. They simply come to the village office and are directed to the appropriate agency."

Coordination through the integrated poverty data system remains both essential and challenging. The Food Security Office explained, "When we need DTKS data, we must formally request it from the Social Affairs Office and coordinate permissions with other agencies, including the Cooperatives and SMEs Office." They added, "Without a recommendation from the Social Affairs Office, we cannot proceed, because everything is based on DTKS." The Housing Office also stressed the need for data alignment: "For uninhabitable housing programs, we rely on data from the Social Affairs Office; if it is not synchronized, the beneficiaries will not match."

Meanwhile, supporting OPDs also highlighted their collaborative involvement. A Cooperatives and SMEs officer stated, "We involve CSR from local companies, while universities often support us through student fieldwork or business mentoring programs." Another added, "The CSR forum is often used to channel support to microenterprises, especially those run by poor households." Process tracing further illustrates how coordination produces tangible outcomes. The

establishment of a cross-agency Data Working Group enabled a joint review of DTKS and P3KE lists, which in turn cleaned the beneficiary database and reduced exclusion errors in social assistance targeting.

Referring to the Collaborative Governance model by Ansell and Gash (2008), the TKPK forum in Blitar reflects a core element of collaborative processes, formal engagement of government actors in an equitable dialogical space aimed at building trust and consensus. Meanwhile, the active participation of institutions like BAZNAS and the shared use of DTKS data across agencies illustrate efforts to incorporate external actors into a participatory governance framework. Furthermore, the coordination and data integration through Sidaksos and the One Data system demonstrate the presence of capacity for joint action, as emphasized by the Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance developed by Emerson et al. (2012). This framework identifies three critical dimensions for effective collaboration: principled engagement (meaningful and equitable interaction), shared motivation (mutual trust and commitment), and capacity for joint action (institutional and technical capacity for collective action). In the Blitar context, the integration of citizen complaint systems via SLRT and the formation of ad hoc teams for addressing extreme poverty reflect active collaborative dynamics that are responsive to real needs in the field.

The network governance approach by Provan and Kenis (2008) is also evident in this coordination model. Bappeda and TKPK function as a network administrative organization (NAO), a central coordinating entity that manages the collaborative network across OPDs to ensure the poverty reduction programs are jointly planned and executed. This is particularly evident in the integrated intervention model targeting extremely poor households, which requires cross-sector orchestration from social assistance to basic infrastructure and guarantees of access to education and health services.

On the other hand, findings regarding the involvement of BAZNAS and the cross-use of DTKS by multiple OPDs reinforce the relevance of a multi-partner governance approach, as explained by Mustari et al. (2024). In this model, collaboration among government actors, civil society, and religious institutions is shown to optimize both public and non-public resources more effectively. This also aligns with the principles of a multidimensional poverty reduction strategy, where interventions from OPDs and their partners address not only economic aspects but also housing, education, health, and social empowerment. Therefore, the forms of coordination and institutional synergy in Blitar Regency reflect an integration of collaborative theoretical approaches and practical cross-sectoral operations, functioning adaptively and participatorily. Such collaboration is a crucial prerequisite for preventing fragmented poverty strategies and for addressing the root causes of poverty in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Challenges in Inter-Agency Coordination

Although coordination mechanisms have been put in place, this study identifies a number of challenges that hinder the optimization of synergy among OPDs in Blitar Regency. The following table outlines the key challenges and core issues encountered in inter-agency coordination processes.

Table 3.
Challenges in institutional coordination and synergy for poverty alleviation

Challenge	Core Issues
Data Discrepancies and Validity	Inconsistent sources and timing of data collection across agencies result in mismatched program targets. Integration of DTKS and P3KE is still in progress.
Sectoral Ego and Vertical Fragmentation	Agencies tend to focus on their sectoral programs. Horizontal and vertical coordination, especially with central and provincial governments, is still limited.
Limited Human Resources and Budget	Personnel and funding are insufficient to carry out coordination and integrated services, particularly in remote areas.
Program Overlaps	Several inter-agency programs operate in parallel without synergy, leading to inefficiency in aid distribution.
Low Community Participation	Limited understanding and involvement of residents hinder the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions.

Source: Author's compilation from field data, 2025

As presented in Table 3, the identified challenges indicate that most obstacles stem from intersectoral coordination issues and limitations in institutional capacity. One major problem is data discrepancies and validity. As noted by the Social Affairs Office, "From 2022 to 2024, we have continuously conducted verification and validation for poor households, but only once a year because of budget constraints" (Social Affairs Office). Similarly, the Housing Office explained, "We overlay uninhabitable housing data with DTKS, then cross-check it with extreme poverty and stunting lists before field verification and validation" (Housing Office). These statements highlight the difficulties of ensuring synchronized and updated data across agencies.

Another recurring obstacle is sectoral ego and fragmentation. The Manpower Office acknowledged, "The biggest challenge is sectoral ego in coordination, as well as rapid changes in field conditions and data" (Manpower Office). Likewise, an officer from the Cooperatives and SMEs Office emphasized, "Each agency still wants to take credit for success. Sometimes we are not informed of potential beneficiaries we could support. This shows sectoral ego is still present, even though it has started to decrease" (Cooperatives and SMEs). Limited human resources and budget further constrain coordination. As a Disperindag official admitted, "Our budget is only about 300 million to cover 22 subdistricts and 248 villages, which is clearly insufficient. Without additional support, we cannot effectively implement integrated programs" (Disperindag). This shortage of both personnel and financial resources hampers the ability to maintain consistent coordination and service delivery.

Program overlaps also occur, reducing efficiency. A Bappeda officer described, "At the provincial level there is also a CSR forum, but it often overlaps because when we request support, it is redirected back to the companies located here" (Bappeda). Likewise, the Livestock Office confirmed, "There is overlap in program responsibilities. For example, food processing training can be under the province or under us, creating duplication" (Livestock Office). Lastly, low community participation remains a critical issue. The Health Office explained, "Some village heads are still unsupportive, and as a result, their residents refuse to be surveyed or visited. They fear the stigma of having their children labeled as stunted" (Health Office). This illustrates how limited grassroots involvement undermines the sustainability of poverty alleviation programs. These empirical challenges collectively illustrate systemic barriers that weaken cross-sectoral collaboration.

Sectoral egos that result in data-hoarding behavior, combined with the lack of data updating due to limited human resources and time, reflect a weak capacity for joint action as

conceptualized in the Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance by Emerson et al. (2012). Inadequate institutional capacity emerges as a critical constraint in building shared commitment and effective collaborative action. This is supported by Khan and Han (2023), who emphasize the importance of service, evaluative, and operational capacity in enhancing inter-agency collaboration. Moreover, the lack of intersectoral coordination at the field level, including the uneven involvement of village-level officials, reflects a deficiency in principled engagement and shared motivation among stakeholders. Ansell and Gash (2008) argue that successful collaboration hinges on the early and active involvement of all actors, alongside face-to-face dialogue to build trust and shared commitment. When community participation is suboptimal and communication between central and grassroots levels is imbalanced, equitable deliberative space fails to materialize.

In this context, the challenges in coordination also reveal structural limitations within the network, as theorized by Provan and Kenis (2008) through the lens of Network Governance. Without a strong network administrative organization (NAO), such as Bappeda or TKPK, effectively playing a managerial role in collaboration, power asymmetries and sectoral dominance continue to obstruct agenda alignment. Other issues, such as overlapping assistance and incomplete data verification, serve as reminders that poverty reduction strategies cannot rely solely on sectoral datasets. As emphasized by the multidimensional approach (Chipunza & Ntsalaze, 2025; Wolff, 2020), poverty is a complex and interconnected phenomenon that demands a cross-sectoral strategy underpinned by accurate and integrated data. Nevertheless, the spontaneous inter-agency solidarity that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that coordination can be effective when driven by shared urgency and collective awareness. This supports the idea that collaboration is often triggered by external drivers such as crises, as noted in the "drivers" dimension of Emerson et al. (2012) model. Hence, these various challenges highlight that strengthening institutional synergy for poverty alleviation in Blitar Regency requires the development of collaborative mechanisms not solely based on formal structures, but also those that foster institutional capacity, participatory dialogue, and adaptive governance practices. Coordination must not rely solely on forums or top-down instructions, but instead be supported by shared values, enabling systems, and inclusive participation across all levels.

Local Innovations for Strengthening Synergy

Blitar Regency has initiated several innovations and new initiatives aimed at improving coordination and the effectiveness of its poverty alleviation programs. These innovations have emerged from both internal initiatives within the local government and as responses to national policies. The following table outlines key innovations along with their descriptions implemented in Blitar Regency.

Table 4.
Local innovations supporting institutional synergy in poverty reduction

Innovation/Initiative	Description
RPKD and Annual Action Plan	Formulation of the 2021–2026 RPKD and Annual Action Plans (RAT) through inter-agency collaboration as a roadmap and performance contract for poverty alleviation.
Dashboard and Sidaksos Application	Development of a poverty data dashboard and the Sidaksos application to facilitate integration, verification, and validation of village-level extreme poverty data.
Gotong Royong Movement	A multi-stakeholder initiative (involving local government agencies, villages, communities, and the private sector) to collectively assist extremely poor households through a multi-sectoral approach.

Innovation/Initiative	Description
Integrated Microenterprise Support	Post-social assistance programs providing business mentoring through inter-agency synergy: capital assistance, training, and marketing for poor households.
Pentahelix Collaboration	Engagement of universities and corporations in village assistance and poverty program funding through CSR MoUs and community service activities.

Source: Author's compilation from field data, 2025

Table 4 illustrates that the innovations undertaken by the Blitar Regency Government encompass integrated planning, information technology, interagency collaboration, and cross-sector partnerships. One Bappeda officer explained, "Bappeda serves as the TKPK secretariat, so the coordination of the Annual Action Plan (RAT) and the RPKD is managed through KISS (coordination, integration, synchronization, and synergy)" (Bappeda). These institutional mechanisms provide a formalized framework to ensure coherence in planning and implementation. Technological innovation is also evident. The Social Affairs Office highlighted the role of Sidaksos: "We use Sidaksos to integrate DTKS and P3KE data down to the by-name, by-address level, so the targeting of extreme poverty is more accurate" (Social Affairs Office). In practice, this digital tool has allowed agencies to jointly validate household data, which improved program targeting and led to performance-based incentives from the central government. At the same time, community-based initiatives have also emerged. A Disnaker official described, "The extreme poverty gotong royong program involves government agencies, villages, and CSR so that poor households receive assistance from multiple sectors" (Disnaker).

Support for microenterprises also reflects collaborative innovation. An officer from the Cooperatives and SMEs Office stated, "We assist poor microenterprises after social assistance, not only with capital but also with packaging and marketing training" (Cooperatives and SMEs). These interventions demonstrate a shift from short-term welfare to long-term empowerment. Similarly, cross-sectoral collaboration extends through pentahelix partnerships. As one official noted, "We often use the CSR forum to support microenterprises, and universities also contribute through student fieldwork (KKN) and village mentoring" (Cooperatives and SMEs). Process tracing of these innovations reveals how collaborative mechanisms directly enhanced outcomes. For example, the adoption of Sidaksos enabled joint validation of DTKS and P3KE lists, which reduced targeting errors and provided the evidence base for Blitar to receive central government performance incentives. Likewise, the design of RAT and RPKD institutionalized inter-agency agreements, while the gotong royong movement mobilized multi-stakeholder solidarity for extremely poor households. These empirical innovations illustrate how collaboration is translated into practice, which resonates with broader theories of public sector innovation.

The data-driven and collaborative approach also reinforces the theory by Torfing et al. (2019), which emphasizes that innovations in local governance typically emerge from cross-sector synergies that are adaptive to citizens' needs. This is reflected in the strengthened inter-agency collaboration through the development of the Annual Action Plan (RAT), the integration of SLRT/Puskesmas services, and the updating of extreme poverty data by name and address. As a result, Blitar Regency has improved program targeting accuracy and achieved tangible outcomes, including performance-based incentives from the central government for its success in reducing extreme poverty. Furthermore, collaborative awareness is beginning to emerge at the OPD level, fostering a more participatory work culture. Although challenges remain, such as data quality, consistency of cross-sectoral commitment, and the scale of entrepreneurial

interventions, the institutional innovations demonstrate that local governance can progressively evolve through collaborative and learning oriented approaches.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that public sector synergy in poverty alleviation in Blitar Regency has evolved through structured institutional coordination and cross-organizational collaborative practices. The existence of the Regional Poverty Reduction Coordination Team (Tim Koordinasi Penanggulangan Kemiskinan, TKPK) is perceived as a foundational mechanism for aligning programs across local government agencies (OPD) that address multiple dimensions of poverty, ranging from social assistance and education to health and economic empowerment. Various forms of coordination have been implemented, including regular TKPK forums, integrated planning and budgeting, unified poverty data systems, SLRT/Puskesmas-based integrated services, and partnerships with non-governmental actors.

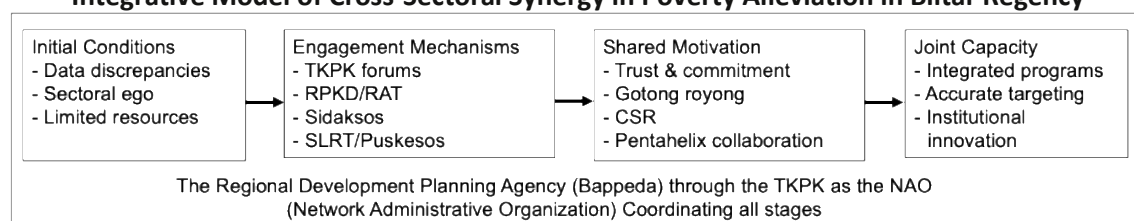
Nevertheless, coordination challenges remain, including inter-agency data discrepancies, sectoral ego, limited resources, potential program overlaps, and suboptimal community participation. At the same time, Blitar Regency has demonstrated adaptive capacity through institutional and technological innovations, such as the formulation of the Regional Poverty Reduction Plan (RPKD) and Annual Action Plans (RAT), the development of a poverty dashboard and Sidaksos application, the Gotong Royong Movement, the integration of microenterprise support, and pentahelix collaborations with universities and the private sector. These innovations are perceived by informants and supported by planning documents as efforts to improve targeting accuracy and strengthen cross-sectoral synergy.

To strengthen its theoretical contribution, this study integrates three frameworks Collaborative Governance, the Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance, and Network Governance into a single analytical lens. Collaborative Governance explains how structured engagement through TKPK forums enables deliberation, trust-building, and consensus across agencies. The Integrative Framework emphasizes the importance of principled engagement, shared motivation, and joint capacity, which in Blitar are reflected in mechanisms such as Sidaksos, SLRT, and the Gotong Royong initiative. Meanwhile, Network Governance provides the Network Administrative Organization (NAO) perspective, positioning Bappeda in TKPK as the coordinating entity that aligns diverse actors and resources.

Synthesizing these perspectives, this study proposes an integrative model (Figure 3) that maps how initial conditions (data discrepancies, sectoral ego, limited resources) trigger engagement mechanisms (TKPK forums, RPKD/RAT, Sidaksos, SLRT), which subsequently foster shared motivation (trust, gotong royong, CSR, and pentahelix collaboration), and ultimately strengthen joint capacity (integrated programs, improved targeting accuracy supported by Sidaksos data, and institutional innovations documented in RAT and TKPK reports). Bappeda plays a pivotal role as NAO, ensuring coherence and sustainability of the collaborative system.

Figure 3.

Integrative Model of Cross-Sectoral Synergy in Poverty Alleviation in Blitar Regency



Source: Researcher modified results, 2025

In conclusion, the findings suggest that a cross-sectoral synergy model anchored in collaborative governance supported by data integration, institutional innovations, and multi-actor participation is perceived to enhance the effectiveness of poverty alleviation efforts in Blitar Regency. However, long-term impacts remain conditional on consistent implementation and the availability of comprehensive administrative data, which future studies should continue to monitor and evaluate.

Based on the findings, public sector synergy in poverty alleviation in Blitar Regency needs to be further strengthened through several strategic measures. First, institutional strengthening of the Poverty Reduction Coordination Team (TKPK) is essential, supported by more permanent legal arrangements (e.g., Regent or Regional Regulations) and adequate human and financial resources. Second, integration and regular updating of poverty data must be prioritized through the use of applications such as Sidaksos, the establishment of cross-agency data management teams, and the development of public dashboards to promote transparency and accountability. Third, cross-sector collaboration should be extended beyond planning to field-level implementation through joint working platforms involving village governments and local communities. Fourth, institutional capacity development is required through inter-agency collaborative training in partnership with universities, complemented by standardized operational guidelines to ensure continuity of innovation. Fifth, community participation should be strengthened by optimizing village-level development forums (Musrenbang), citizen forums, and the engagement of NGOs and local leaders to enhance social oversight of poverty alleviation programs. By adopting these measures, poverty alleviation in Blitar Regency can become more coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable. For future research, comparative studies with other regions are recommended to assess the scalability of Blitar's innovations (such as Sidaksos and the Gotong Royong Movement), alongside evaluations of the long-term impacts of integrated data systems and the role of community participation in sustaining collaborative poverty reduction initiatives.

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