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Meta-Analysis of Stunting Eradication Policy: A Review of National Policy Implementation Impact in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of stunting control policies in Indonesia, where the focus of this study is the effectiveness of the program and the challenges in achieving national targets in stunting control. This study uses a qualitative research method by adopting a literature review approach. The research data were obtained through bibliometric analysis of 123 Scopus-indexed scientific documents over the past 10 years or from 2015 to 2025. This study uses the approach of public policy adaptation theory in the VUCA. The results of the study indicate that although the national stunting rate shows a positive trend, significant regional disparities still occur. Therefore, the author concludes that effective stunting control requires targeted intervention from the government as a policy maker. Including encouraging inter-sectoral collaboration to achieve the goal of national stunting control, so that the government can ensure optimal growth and development for future generations.
Keywords: Stunting, Policy, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Stunting remains an important issue in terms of health development in Indonesia, which is related to long-term consequences for economic growth and improving the quality of human resources in Indonesia (Biswas et al., 2021). Despite various efforts that have been made, stunting remains a major problem. The Indonesian government has made reducing stunting a national priority and has done so by implementing various stunting control policies and intervention programs (Napirah et al., 2024). This study aims to analyze the implementation of stunting control policies in Indonesia, where the author focuses on the effectiveness of stunting policy programs and challenges in achieving national targets in stunting control.

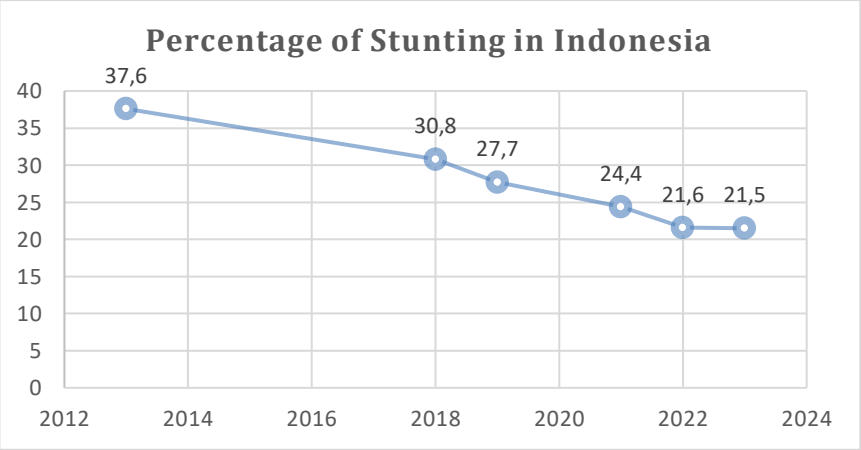

Figure 1. Stunting Prevalence Data in Indonesia (2013-2023)
source: 2023 SKI Thematic Report

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Nationally, the trend of decreasing stunting prevalence rates in recent years looks encouraging. However, there are differences in conditions in various regions which are still a major problem and require serious attention. Based on the data obtained by the author, it can be seen that there has been a significant decrease in stunting prevalence rates from 37.6% in 2013 to 21.5% over 10 years or in 2023. In detail, the stunting rate in 2018 was recorded at 30.8%, in 2019 it was 27.7%, in 2021 it was 24.4%, in 2022 it was 21.6% and in 2023 it was 21.5% (Sufri et al., 2024). The results of the decline in these figures are the result of the implementation of various government programs that intervene specifically in nutrition as well as various efforts to increase public awareness of the importance of balanced nutrition from an early age (Sanggelorang et al., 2024). In 2024, the government targets a reduction in the prevalence of stunting to reach 14% or even below. This shows that the achievement of reducing the prevalence of stunting last year is still far from the target set. Therefore, the government must continue to strive for various programs to reduce stunting rates, especially in areas that require priority and have high prevalence rates.

Meanwhile, behind the figures showing a positive trend, there are still worrying areas with quite high stunting prevalence rates. The three provinces with the highest stunting rates in 2023 are Central Papua (38.4%), East Nusa Tenggara (37.9%) and Papua Pegunungan (37.3%) (Lino et al., 2024). This condition shows that stunting control policies and programs are not implemented evenly throughout Indonesia. Bibliometric analysis of 123 scientific articles indexed in Scopus in 2015–2025 shows that government programs are very important to prevent stunting, but are often difficult to implement at the local level. The main causes of high stunting rates in these areas are factors such as limited access to health services, poor sanitation, poverty, and suboptimal feeding practices (Fauziah et al., 2023).

Finally, the author is interested in raising this topic for research. First, because the high prevalence rate of stunting indicates that existing efforts are not fully effective. Second, a deep understanding of the factors that influence the implementation of stunting policies is needed to design more targeted and effective interventions. Then the results of this study are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of the implementation of stunting policies in Indonesia, and can provide recommendations for improving programs and strategies for the government in the future. Thus, the author hopes that efforts to eradicate stunting in Indonesia can run more effectively and achieve the targets that have been set, so that the next generation of the nation can grow and develop optimally.

Handling stunting in Indonesia is currently a fairly complex and multidimensional challenge for the government, this is not only influenced by health and nutritional factors but also by social, economic and environmental dynamics that continue to change. In this case, the discussion of stunting is important and a theoretical framework is needed as an analytical tool that can explain how public policies can actually be designed and implemented effectively amidst the uncertainty, complexity and change that are signs of the modern era. The author sees the most relevant theoretical framework for this is the theory of public policy adaptation in the VUCA Era, which has 4 theoretical indicators, namely Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (Flexibility, 2023).

The VUCA concept was introduced by the US Army War Collage which was then adopted into the study of management and public policy. In terms of public policy, this theory emphasizes the importance of adaptive, inclusive, and proactive strategies to see the extent of complexity in decision making and risk management in the midst of uncertain and uncertain conditions (Soraya et al., 2022). The main aspect of this theory is the adaptive structure that allows policies to adjust to changes that occur, while a resilient system must ensure that policies made can survive global uncertainty. In the context of stunting control, this means that policies must be designed flexibly to socio-economic changes such as poverty, sanitation, and also childcare patterns.

Literature review related to stunting control shows that the success of this program is highly dependent on an integrated multi-sector and multi-party approach, which is in line with the principle of collaboration in VUCA theory (Umamur, 2025). In addition, this theory also sees the importance of continuous evaluation as part of adaptive governance. With a responsive monitoring and evaluation scheme, the government as a policy maker can create targeted policies using accurate data to support the effectiveness of stunting reduction

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programs. This data-based and real evidence approach is the main focus in the development and implementation of adaptive policies and allows policies to be proactive in anticipating changes and new challenges (Flexibility, 2023).

Overall, the application of Public Policy Adaptation Theory in the VUCA Era in the context of stunting reduction in Indonesia provides a comprehensive and relevant framework for understanding dynamic and complex policy challenges. This theory supports the development of a flexible, collaborative, innovative, and resilient policy system that can increase the effectiveness of stunting reduction programs sustainably, while providing an appropriate response to the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity inherent in the current policy environment.

Stunting is a sign of long-term nutritional problems that are influenced by various factors such as inadequate nutritional intake, repeated infections, poor environmental sanitation, poverty, and less than ideal parenting patterns (Munawaroh et al., 2024). The concept of stunting emphasizes that the first 1,000 days of life from pregnancy to the age of 2 years is a very important period to determine the quality of children's growth and development in the future. Overcoming stunting in Indonesia is a national priority that focuses on accelerating the reduction in stunting prevalence to a target of 14% in 2024 through policies regulated in Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 (Rahmi et al., 2022).

Stunting is defined as a condition of failure to thrive in children due to chronic malnutrition that impacts physical growth and cognitive development. This policy prioritizes a multi-sectoral approach and is based on families at risk of stunting with five priority activities, namely data provision, family assistance, assistance to prospective brides and grooms, surveillance of families at risk, and audits of stunting cases (Kustanto et al., 2025). Interventions include specific nutrition interventions (focusing on pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and toddlers) and sensitive nutrition interventions (improving sanitation, access to clean water, education, and the economy). The implementation of this policy involves cross-sector coordination, from the center to the village, with strong regulatory support and systematic monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of the stunting reduction program throughout Indonesia (Siswati et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method and focuses on the implementation of stunting eradication policies in Indonesia. This study collected 123 scientific publications related to stunting policies in Indonesia from the Scopus database. The data used in this study came from relevant and internationally accredited articles collected through the Scopus database, which is widely known as one of the most complete sources of scientific information, including books, scientific journals, and conference proceedings (Bela et al., 2021). The data collection process was carried out carefully, where the author searched for articles using specific search terms.

In the article search, the author used a combination of structured keywords in the Scopus search column, namely: TITLE-ABS-KEY (stunting AND policy AND indonesia) AND PUBYEAR > 2015 to PRESENT. The data that was successfully collected was then analyzed descriptively based on various parameters, including year of publication, publishing institution, country of publication, name of journal or publication, type of document, and research topic to provide a comprehensive picture of the trends and developments in stunting research in Indonesia. Furthermore, to produce more in-depth research map information, the data was exported in the Export RIS file format.

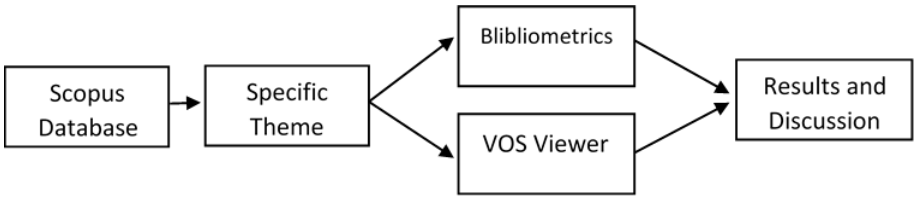

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Figure 2. Data Collection and Processing Stages Flow
Source: processed by the author, 2025

Figure 2 shows the flow of data collection and processing stages. First, search for stunting policy themes in Indonesia in the Scopus database. Second, download the data obtained with the RIS file type. Then to retrieve bibliometric data from the Scopus chart by opening the analysis menu. Then the RIS file type is entered into the VOSviewer software for data analysis. Finally, download the data results from the analysis menu on the coverage and results of VOSviewer (Subekti, 2022).

In the analysis, the author used VOSviewer software to map the development of research based on the major theme of stunting in Indonesia by observing the frequency of words that appear in the literature and visualizing the relationship between the main theme and current literature (Rosanti et al., 2021). In addition, it is also to explore and describe the condition of stunting in Indonesia more efficiently and systematically, so that it can provide deeper insights into this issue and support evidence-based decision-making in public policy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Stunting Publications in Indonesia and Its Academic Trends

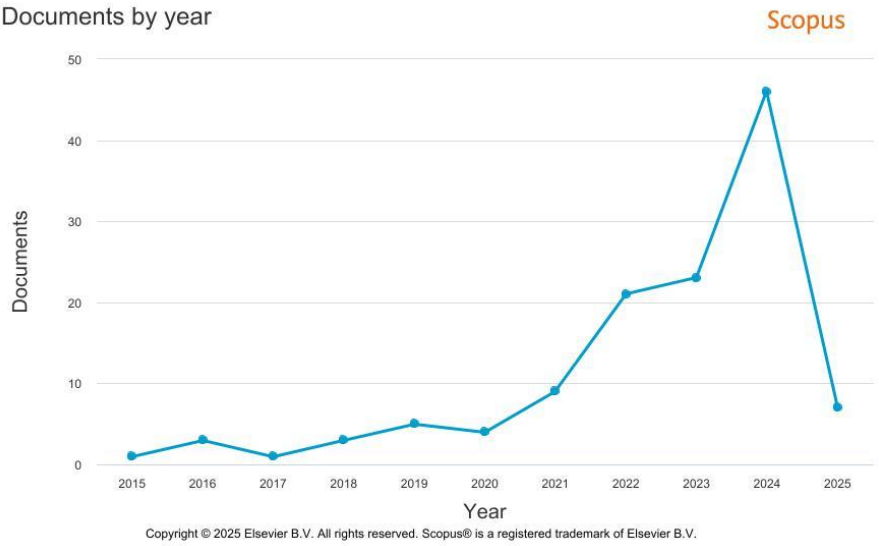

Figure 3. Documents by year
source: scopus database

The search results on the Scopus database with a specific theme related to the research topic obtained 123 global scientific publications. Bibliometric analysis produced diverse and varied data. Scientific publications related to stunting policies in Indonesia produced in the last ten years, namely 2015 to 2025, have various points of view. This study analyzes and classifies data starting from the year of the document. The country that contributed the most scientific publications, journal sources, document types, fields of study, authors, institutional output, and document affiliations (Hanifah, 2024).

Analysis of scientific publication data from Scopus in the period 2015 to 2025 shows interesting dynamics in the research landscape. In general, there is an increase in the number of indexed documents from 2015 to 2024. This increase indicates a growth in research activity, which could be caused by various factors such as increased funding, cross-institutional collaboration, or greater focus on certain topics (DK Sari et al., 2024). The most productive publications occurred in 2024 with 46 documents. Then the data dropped drastically in 2025, with only 7 documents. This is because 2025 has only been running for a few months and has only accommodated publications that have been indexed until early March. These figures can be influenced by the natural cycle of research in the field concerned, such as delays in the publication process, or delays in the Scopus index.

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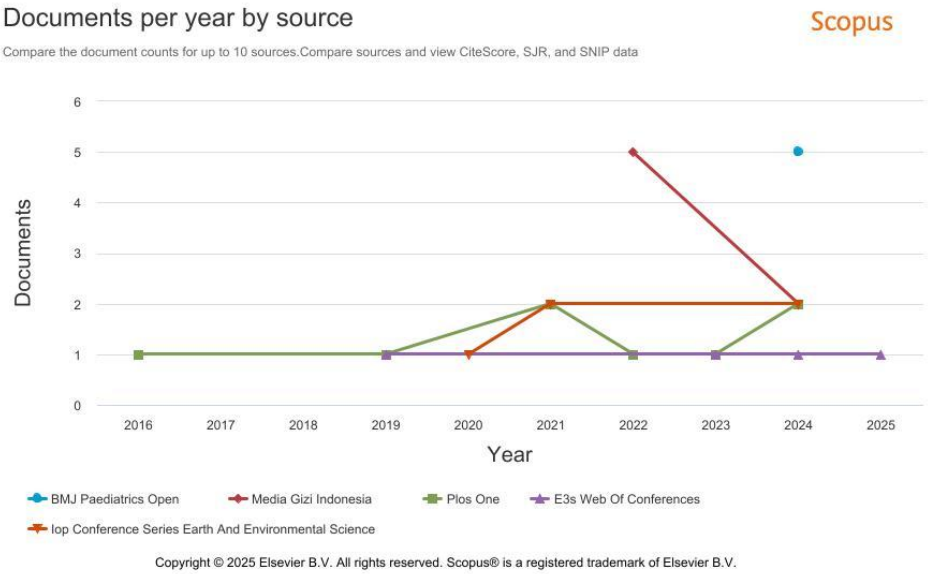

Figure 4. Documents per year by source
source: scopus database

The graph above shows the number of documents per year from various sources of scientific publications. There are a total of 123 search results in that time period. The four main sources shown in the graph are Plos One, Media Gizi Indonesia, E3s Web of Conferences, and IOP Conference Series Earth and Environmental Science. Plos One shows a relatively stable trend, starting with one publication in 2016 and increasing to two publications per year from 2021 to 2025. Media Gizi Indonesia has a more fluctuating pattern, with a peak of five publications in 2022, but then decreasing to one publication in the following years.

E3s Web of Conferences started appearing in the data in 2019 with one publication, increasing to two in 2021, and then stabilizing at one publication per year. The IOP Conference Series Earth and Environmental Science shows consistency with one publication per year from 2020 to 2025. This graph provides an overview of the dynamics of scientific publications from different sources over the last decade, showing variations in productivity and consistency across different publication sources.

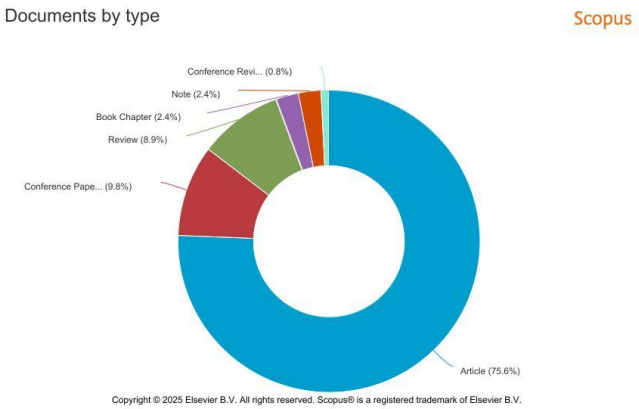

Figure 5. Documents by type
source: scopus database

Data analysis of 123 documents indexed in Scopus between 2015 and 2025 shows that articles are the most dominant type of publication, reaching 93 documents or 75.6% of the total. Other significant document types are conference papers with 12 documents (9.8%)

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and review articles with 11 documents (8.9%). Meanwhile, book chapters and notes each only contributed 3 documents (2.4%), and conference reviews were the least common type of document with only 1 document (0.8%). The dominance of articles as a type of publication indicates that scientific journals are still the main forum for researchers to disseminate their research results (Azzahra et al., 2025). On the other hand, the contribution of conference papers shows that scientific conferences also play an important role as a forum for disseminating research, especially in fields that are developing very rapidly (Hartono et al., 2023). The low number of conference reviews may indicate that this type of publication is less in demand or has stricter standards (Rizal et al., 2024).

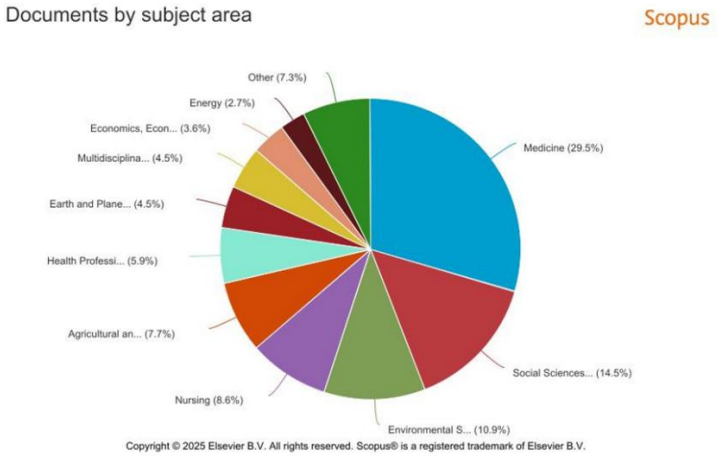

Figure 6. Documents bye subject area
source: scopus database

Based on bibliometric analysis of the Scopus database for the period 2015-2025, from a total of 123 documents, the Medicine field dominates with 65 documents (29.5%) because the topic of stunting is closely related to the health sector. Then, Social Sciences is in second place with 32 documents or 14.5% of the total publications. The dominance of Social Sciences indicates significant attention to social issues, human behavior, public policy, and other aspects related to society (Rahman et al., 2024). This may be due to the increasing complexity of global social problems, such as climate change, economic inequality, and social conflict, which require intensive research from a social science perspective (Saputri et al., 2020). In addition, awareness of the importance of social understanding in decision-making and policy implementation can also encourage increased publications in this area (Prosperous, 2024). Research in the Social Sciences is often interdisciplinary, allowing for collaboration with other fields such as health, environment, and technology, thus broadening its scope and relevance (Hasan et al., 2023).

Mapping: Co-occurrences and Narrative Analysis

The co-occurrence analysis is used to identify research directions and popular themes, and it has been proven to help track the progress of research programs and science (Hartono et al., 2023). This study used a minimum number of keyword occurrences of five times in all included studies. Publications were analyzed using VOSViewer where Figure 6 shows 50 identified keywords that can be classified into five groups.

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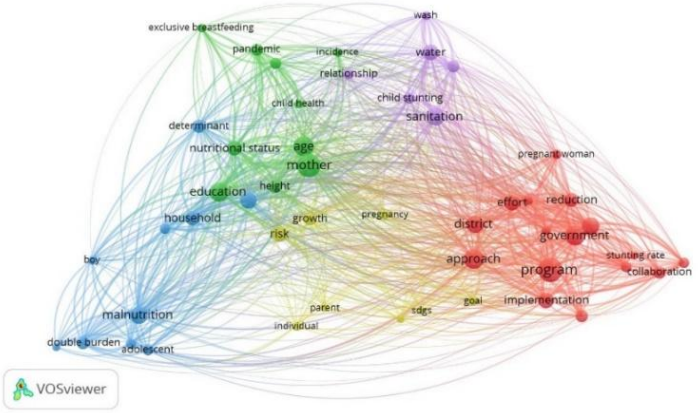

Figure 7. Co-occurrence of keywords
Source: Processed by the author with VOSviewer Software

Colors indicate groups, while image labels indicate keywords or terms that appear frequently (Subekti, 2022). Image labels indicate frequently occurring keywords or terms, while colors indicate clusters. Unlike image mapping, clustering is used to gain insights or descriptions of bibliometric clustering (Deda et al., 2024). VOSviewer groups them into 5 clusters based on keywords such as policy, stunting and Indonesia. This can be seen in the table of contents for each cluster below:

Table 1. VOSviewer Cluster Analysis

Cluster 1 (16 Items)	*Approach, Collaboration, District, Effort, Government, Implementation, Pregnant Woman, Prevention, Program, Quality, Reduction, Role, Stakeholder, Stunting Prevention, Stunting Rate, Stunting Reduction.*
Cluster 2 (10 Items)	*Age, Child Health, Covid, Education, Exclusive Breastfeeding, Height, Incidence, Mother, Nutritional Status, Pandemic.*
Cluster 3 (10 Items)	*Adolescent, Boy, Country, Determinant, Double Burden, Household, Malnutrition, Obesity, Risk Factor, Thinness.*
Cluster 4 (8 Items)	*Goal, Growth, Individual, Parent, Pregnancy, Risk, SDGs, Sustainable Development.*
Cluster 5 (6 Items)	*Child Stunting, Hygiene, Relationship, Sanitation, Wash, Water.*

Source: Processed by the author with VOSviewer Software

This table groups keywords related to the topic of stunting into five thematic clusters. Cluster 1 has the largest number of keywords, which is 16 items, and focuses on the approach, collaboration, and role of the government in preventing and reducing stunting. Cluster 2 consists of 10 items that cover broader aspects of child health, including education, exclusive breastfeeding, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cluster 3 also consists of 10 items, highlighting nutritional risk factors such as malnutrition, obesity, and the double burden (double burden of nutritional problems), as well as demographic characteristics such as adolescent age and gender. Cluster 4 includes 8 items related to the sustainable development goals (SDGs), child growth, and factors related to pregnancy and the role of parents. Finally, Cluster 5 consists of 6 items that emphasize the importance of sanitation, hygiene, and access to clean water in preventing stunting.

This keyword clustering provides a comprehensive overview of the various dimensions related to the problem of stunting. Here is a more in-depth analysis of each cluster. Cluster 1 (16 Items) talks about approaches and interventions. The size of this cluster shows that this study pays great attention to strategies, programs, and policy implementation related to stunting. Keywords such as "collaboration", "role", and "stakeholders" emphasize the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration and involvement of various parties in efforts to prevent stunting.

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Then, Cluster 2 (10 Items) looks at it from a broader context of child health. This cluster links stunting to general child health factors. This includes "COVID", which shows that the study considered the impact of the pandemic on children's nutritional status and health. Next, Cluster 3 (10 Items) shows the issue of nutritional risk factors. This cluster identifies various risk factors that contribute to nutritional problems, including "malnutrition", "obesity", and "double burden". The inclusion of the terms "adolescents" and "boys" shows that the study considered the vulnerability of certain age groups and genders.

Meanwhile, Cluster 4 (8 Items) looks at it from the perspective of development goals and related factors. This cluster emphasizes the importance of a sustainable development framework in addressing stunting. "SDGs" indicates that this study seeks to prevent stunting with a broader global development agenda. Finally, Cluster 5 (6 Items) highlights environmental and sanitation factors. This cluster highlights the importance of sanitation, hygiene, and access to clean water in preventing stunting. The focus on these environmental factors indicates that the study recognizes the important role of healthy environmental conditions in supporting optimal child growth.

Overall, this clustering shows that this study analyzed stunting from multiple perspectives, including intervention strategies, child health factors, nutritional risks, development goals, and environmental influences (Supadmi et al., 2024). These findings can be the basis for further research on the effectiveness of stunting prevention programs, the impact of the pandemic on children's health, the relationship between malnutrition and obesity, and the role of sanitation and hygiene in reducing stunting rates. Such research is important for developing more effective and targeted interventions in addressing stunting problems.

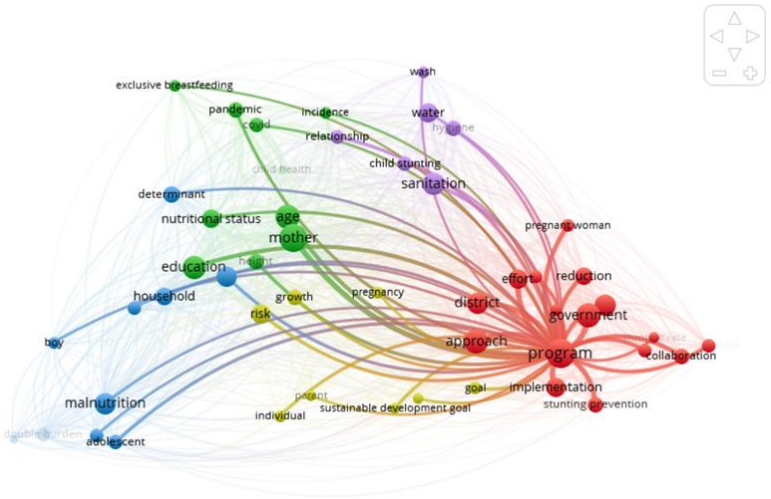

Figure 8. Visualization of stunting network in Indonesia
Source: Processed by the author with VOSviewer Software

Visualization of stunting networks in Indonesia highlights several important aspects related to the impact of policy implementation (Sufri et al., 2024). It is seen that government programs have a central role in stunting prevention efforts, reflected in the cluster dominated by the terms "program," "government," and "implementation." The approach used and the objectives to be achieved are also the focus of the study, indicating an evaluation of the effectiveness of government strategies. The link between the "district" local government and the program shows the importance of policy implementation at the local level, while highlighting that policy implementation often faces challenges at the local level (Afandi et al., 2023).

In addition, factors such as sanitation, clean water, exclusive breastfeeding, education, and maternal nutritional status also emerged as important determinants of stunting (Yunitasari et al., 2022). This indicates that policies that focus on improving sanitation, promoting exclusive breastfeeding, and increasing access to education and nutrition have a significant impact on reducing stunting (Hartono et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic is

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also a contributing factor, highlighting that government policies need to consider the impact of the pandemic on stunting control efforts (Muhafidin, 2022). Overall, this visualization shows that the implementation of government policies has a complex and multisectoral impact on the problem of stunting in Indonesia.

To accelerate the reduction in stunting rates in Indonesia, strengthening policy implementation at the regional level is crucial, requiring adequate technical and financial support and effective coordination between stakeholders (Wardani et al., 2021). In addition, the focus on specific interventions that have proven to be effective, such as promoting exclusive breastfeeding, improving sanitation, and increasing access to clean water, needs to be increased. The government also needs to adopt an integrated multisectoral approach, involving the health, education, public works, and social sectors (Miranda et al., 2023). Finally, regular measurement of policy impact is important to evaluate the effectiveness of government programs and identify areas for improvement, so that interventions can be adjusted and optimized.

While the visualization shows a focus on government efforts, it is important to consider gaps and challenges in policy implementation (Sunarya, 2023). Further research may be needed to identify factors that hinder the effectiveness of government programs, such as lack of coordination between sectors, limited human resource capacity, and lack of community participation.

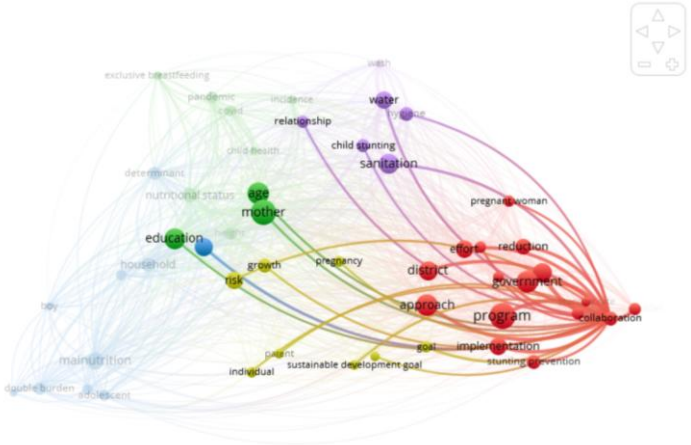

Figure 9. Stunting policy from a collaborative perspective
Source: Processed by the author with VOSviewer Software

Then, this study also looks from a collaborative perspective on the implementation of stunting policies in Indonesia (Lino et al., 2024). First, the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships is clear, where effective handling of stunting requires the involvement of various parties, including government institutions at the national and district levels, health service providers, community organizations, researchers, and the private sector (Rahman et al., 2024). Second, the relationship between "collaboration," "program," and "implementation" indicates the need for well-coordinated and integrated programs, which include aligning efforts across sectors such as health, education, and sanitation, and ensuring that programs are tailored to the specific needs of local communities (NMW Sari et al., 2022).

Collaboration between researchers and policy makers can help identify effective interventions and track progress towards stunting reduction targets (Afandi et al., 2023). In addition, although not explicitly seen, collaboration also requires intensive community involvement, therefore policies and programs must be designed in consultation with the community to ensure cultural appropriateness and fulfillment of local needs (Astuti et al., 2025). Finally, while visualizations may not explicitly indicate the challenges at hand, collaborative efforts often face obstacles such as lack of coordination across different agencies or organizations, conflicting priorities, limited resources, and communication barriers.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis, this study shows stunting interventions in Indonesia. The study findings show that the national stunting rate has decreased significantly, but the prevalence of stunting is still high in some areas, indicating that policy implementation is uneven. High stunting rates can be caused by a number of factors, including limited access to health services, inadequate sanitation, poverty, and sub-ideal feeding practices. This analysis not only shows how important government programs are in preventing stunting, but also shows how difficult it is to implement them at the local level. To reduce stunting effectively, serious interventions with clear targets are needed. To address the problem in areas with high prevalence, the government can collaborate with other sectors.

Table 2. Conclusions and characteristics of stunting

Aspect	Explanation
Definition of Stunting	A condition of failure to thrive due to chronic malnutrition, affecting height and cognitive development.
National Target	Reducing the prevalence of stunting to 14% by 2024
Main Regulations	Presidential Decree No. 72 of 2021 concerning Acceleration of Stunting Reduction
Policy Approach	Multisectoral and based on at-risk families with 5 priority activities
Specific Interventions	Nutritional supplementation, exclusive breastfeeding, immunization, monitoring child growth and development
Sensitive Intervention	Improvement of sanitation, access to clean water, education, family economic empowerment
Implementation	Cross-sector coordination from central to village level, systematic monitoring and evaluation
Challenge	Regional disparities, access to health services, sanitation, poverty, and inter-sectoral coordination need to be strengthened.

Source : processed by the author, 2025

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, there are several strategic steps the government needs to take to strengthen efforts to accelerate stunting reduction in Indonesia. First, the government needs to pay more attention to areas with a high stunting prevalence. The disparity between regions indicates that uniform policies are not yet fully effective, necessitating more intensive support, including technical assistance, budget allocation, and strengthening the capacity of local governments. Furthermore, intersectoral coordination needs to be improved so that programs related to health, sanitation, education, and social protection do not operate in silos. Stronger integration will ensure that specific and sensitive nutrition interventions complement each other and produce optimal impacts for families and children. Furthermore, the government needs to implement adaptive policies by maximizing data utilization. Continuous monitoring and evaluation, particularly at the village and household levels, will help the government adjust interventions based on changing social, economic, and public health conditions. Finally, increased nutrition and parenting education for families must be continuously strengthened through health cadres, medical personnel, and community leaders. This approach is relatively easy to implement and has a direct impact on the behavior changes needed to prevent stunting.

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