

Collaborative Partnerships from an Islamic Perspective: A Conceptual Approach to Reducing Stunting in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction:

The integration of dimensions from the Theory of Planned Behavior with the Collaborative Behavior approach and Islamic values through the concept of Ta'awun gives rise to the dimension of Ta'awun Collaborative Behavior, which is useful in reducing stunting, driven by transformational leadership and cross-functional collaboration. Ta'awun Collaborative Behavior is a collaborative behavior rooted in Islamic values, emphasizing the spirit of mutual help and cooperation for the common good. This concept is important for strengthening social solidarity and supporting the achievement of collective goals across various fields.

Objectives:

This study aims to identify and analyze the forms of collaborative behavior within the concept of Ta'awun, as well as its application in social and institutional contexts based on Islamic values.

Methods:

A qualitative study approach was employed with a literature review of Islamic sources, including the Qur'an, and specific collaborative behavior concepts such as Ar Rahmah, Al Birr, Al Ukhuwah, and As Shaffan Collaborative Behavior.

Results:

The study found that Ta'awun encompasses four forms of collaborative behavior: Ar Rahmah (compassion and ethics), Al Birr (empathy and selfless contribution), Al Ukhuwah (brotherhood and solidarity), and As Shaffan (coordination and sincere assistance). All these forms are based on Qur'anic teachings that emphasize helping one another in righteousness and piety.

Conclusions:

Collaboration founded on Islamic spiritual and ethical values through the concept of Ta'awun can build strong and productive social relationships, contributing to advancements in various social and institutional fields.

Keywords: Ta'awun Collaborative Behavior; Theory of Planned Behavior; cross-functional collaboration; Stunting elevation

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of stunting in Indonesia has shown a significant decline over the past five years, dropping from 30.8% in 2018 to 21.5% in 2023, with an average annual decrease of 1.85%. Although this progress is positive, major challenges remain to achieve the target reduction of 14% by 2024. Accelerating specific and sensitive interventions is crucial, particularly in maternal nutrition, monitoring child growth and development, supplementary feeding, and immunization. Stunting is a multidimensional issue involving health, nutrition, sanitation, education, and economic

aspects, requiring a collaborative cross-sectoral approach. The success of stunting programs cannot be achieved by one sector alone but through synergy among ministries, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and communities. Within this collaboration, leadership plays a vital role as a driver, aligning vision and goals, and facilitating intersectoral communication. Leaders also act as mediators to unify differing interests and encourage innovation and adaptation to field dynamics.

Visionary leaders play an important role in promoting renewal and flexibility in program implementation strategies to optimally achieve shared goals [1]. They are responsible for coordinating resources such as workforce, funding, and materials to support effective cross-sectoral collaboration. Trust among stakeholders is key in this process, requiring leaders to demonstrate integrity, transparency, and strong commitment. One relevant leadership approach is inspirational motivation, a dimension of transformational leadership emphasizing instilling vision, motivation, and enthusiasm within teams [2]. Leaders with this style can manage change adaptively and effectively guide teams through various transition phases [3].

Success in reducing stunting prevalence requires effective communication to unify vision and goals, solid coordination to align policies and work programs, and close collaboration in implementing field interventions [4]. Each sector plays a critical role, ranging from providing access to health and nutrition services [5], ensuring clean water availability [6], improving sanitation conditions, to educating communities about the importance of parenting and balanced nutrition [7].

With cross-sectoral synergy across various functions, the implemented programs can complement each other, target populations more precisely, and enhance the effectiveness of stunting prevention and management efforts [8]. This collaboration also strengthens monitoring and evaluation, ensuring each step aligns with targets and allowing strategy adjustments based on data and field needs [9].

Addressing stunting is not the responsibility of a single sector but an orchestration of cross-sectoral harmony and cooperation. Human behavior shows that humans are complex beings, requiring much time to understand due to its intricacies. Both internal and external factors influence human behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior, developed by Ajzen, has become one of the most effective approaches to understanding and predicting human behavior [10]. Perceived Behavioral Control refers to an individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a particular behavior [11]. People are more inclined to collaborate if they feel they have sufficient control over the cooperation process [12].

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a framework widely used in public health to understand and predict human behavior, emphasizing the roles of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in shaping intentions and behaviors [13]. Recently, the TPB model has been expanded to include additional factors that explain specific behaviors and social processes [14]. Recent research integrates new variables such as social identity, habits, and more nuanced moderation of behavioral control to provide a more comprehensive understanding of human behavioral dynamics [15].

Several previous studies related to the role of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Performance still leave many interesting gaps to be explored. Research on the influence of transformational leadership on performance reveals two main gaps: controversy in research findings and limitations as well as directions for future research. A study by [16] concluded that transformational leadership does not have a significant effect on performance, whereas [17] stated that transformational leadership significantly contributes to improving organizational performance. Conversely, [18] revealed a significant negative effect on employee performance, which contrasts with the findings of [19] who showed that all four dimensions of transformational leadership positively influence organizational performance. This inconsistency indicates the need for further research to clarify contextual or methodological factors that may moderate or mediate this relationship.

In addition, limitations of previous studies also provide room for deeper exploration. Hilton et al (2023) highlighted that their study did not examine other factors that might affect the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance, thus recommending testing this leadership style in different industry contexts. Meanwhile, [20] emphasized the importance of follow-up studies to explore the influence of transformational leadership on other strategic components of organizational performance, such as team collaboration. This gap

suggests the need for a more holistic and integrative approach, such as adding moderating or mediating variables, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of transformational leadership on organizational performance.

It can be concluded that research on the role of Transformational Leadership in organizational performance still has a very wide scope for development. Therefore, this study is expected to provide meaningful contributions by bridging existing literature gaps through proposing a new concept integrating the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the value of Ta'awun (mutual cooperation). Based on the research gaps related to the relationship between Transformational Leadership and organizational performance, as well as the limitations of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, coupled with the phenomenon of declining stunting rates in Central Java, the research problem arises as to whether Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour can improve the performance of stunting reduction efforts in Central Java. From this problem, several research questions are formulated focusing on the role of various forms of collaboration such as Ar Rahmah Collaborative Behavior, Al Birr Collaborative Behavior, Shaffan Collaborative Behavior, and Al Ukhuwah Collaborative Behavior in enhancing cross-functional coordination and the performance of the stunting reduction team, as well as how cross-functional coordination itself can strengthen the performance of that team.

OBJECTIVES

Research on the role of Transformational Leadership in organizational performance still has a very broad scope for development. Therefore, this study is expected to make a significant contribution by bridging existing literature gaps through the proposal of a new concept that integrates the Theory of Planned Behaviour with the value of Ta'awun. Based on the research gaps concerning the relationship between Transformational Leadership and organizational performance, as well as theoretical gaps in the Theory of Planned Behaviour, combined with the phenomenon of declining stunting rates in Central Java, the research problem arises whether Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour can enhance the performance of stunting reduction efforts in Central Java. From this issue, several research questions are formulated focusing on the role of various forms of collaboration such as Ar Rahmah Collaborative Behavior, Al Birr Collaborative Behavior, Shaffan Collaborative Behavior, and Al Ukhuwah Collaborative Behavior in improving cross-functional coordination and the performance of the stunting reduction team, as well as how cross-functional coordination itself can strengthen the team's performance.

METHODS

This study employs a mixed method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method uses an explanatory research approach with a causal nature to explain cause-and-effect relationships between variables, specifically the dimensions of Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour such as Ar-Rahmah, Al-Birr, Al-Ukhuwah, Shaffan Collaborative Behavior, Cross-Functional Integration (CFI), and the performance of the stunting reduction team. Meanwhile, the qualitative method uses an interpretivist approach that emphasizes human understanding and interpretation, focusing on exploring sources related to the development of the Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour model to improve the performance of the stunting management team. Primary data was obtained directly from Technical Implementation Officers in the JEKUTI development area (Jepara, Kudus, Pati), while secondary data was sourced from the Central Java Provincial Health Office and related literature.

Quantitative data collection was conducted using questionnaires distributed both directly and online to the entire population (census), while qualitative data was gathered through systematic literature review, Focus Group Discussions with experts in the Qur'an and management, and in-depth interviews with relevant informants. The study population consisted of 164 Technical Implementation Officers, with a sample of 161 respondents using a census technique. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS 29.0 software to test complex relationships between variables.

RESULTS

The main focus of this program includes strengthening results-based planning and budgeting, improving implementation quality through TPPS, and developing an integrated data system to monitor and evaluate convergence actions. Enhancing human resource capacity is also a priority to support effective implementation. All these efforts aim to create synergy in delivering integrated interventions that support sustainable acceleration of

stunting reduction. The performance of the stunting reduction team is defined as the effectiveness and efficiency of cross-sector teams in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs and interventions to accelerate stunting reduction in an integrated and sustainable manner. The performance indicators align with the National Action Plan for Stunting Reduction outlined in Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021, which includes strengthening planning and budgeting, improving implementation quality, enhancing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, as well as human resource capacity development.

In the Qur'an, the principles underlying Al Ukhuwah Collaborative Behavior can be found in several verses that teach about cooperation, good communication, and mutual support in brotherhood. Surah Al-Mumtahanah (60:8) emphasizes the importance of active contribution in achieving common goals with an awareness of collective responsibility, while Surah Al-Hujurat (49:12) teaches the importance of building open and honest communication, avoiding suspicion and gossip, which can damage relationships between individuals.

The integration of the dimensions from the Theory of Planned Behavior with the concepts of Collaborative Behavior and Islamic Values particularly the principle of *Ta'awun* (mutual assistance) has led to the formulation of a new construct known as Ta'awun Collaborative Behavior. This concept encapsulates the spirit of working together in goodness with sincere intentions, driven by faith and a desire to seek the pleasure of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). It consists of four interrelated dimensions, each reflecting both collaborative behavior and Islamic values.

1. Ar Rahmah Collaborative Behavior refers to actions marked by kindness, honesty, and mutual assistance in every interaction. It emphasizes moral integrity and ethical behavior, as well as cooperation in performing good deeds. These behaviors create a trustworthy and honest working environment, rooted in compassion, as guided by QS. *Al-Maidah*: 2.
2. Al Birr Collaborative Behavior is driven by respect, openness, and mutual concern. This form of collaboration moves beyond individual task completion and highlights the importance of teamwork in achieving shared goals. It fosters empathy and care for others' well-being, encouraging a harmonious and respectful work atmosphere, in line with QS. *Al-Hujurat*: 10.
3. Al Ukhuwah Collaborative Behavior is built upon the values of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* Islamic brotherhood within a teamwork context. It promotes open communication, mutual support, and a strong sense of responsibility and empathy among members, as taught in QS. *At-Taubah*: 71.
4. Shaffan Collaborative Behavior refers to the genuine happiness that arises from helping others achieve shared goals without expecting anything in return. It includes selfless cooperation and joy in supporting others, in accordance with QS. *Al-Insan*: 8-9, QS. *Al-Ma'idah*: 2, and QS. *An-Nisa*: 114.

In summary, Ta'awun Collaborative Behavior represents the collective efforts and mutual support of a team or group in striving toward a common goal through good deeds, guided by conscience and the intention to gain the pleasure of Allah. This behavior is reflected through the dimensions of Ar Rahmah, Al Birr, Al Ukhuwah, and Shaffan Collaborative Behavior, each embodying distinct values that reinforce meaningful and spiritually grounded collaboration.

The integration of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) with Islamic values, particularly the principle of *Ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), forms a new approach in social marketing management known as Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour. TPB explains that an individual's intention to perform a behavior is influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. When applied to the context of stunting reduction, this theory helps to understand the motivation of stakeholders such as health workers, local officials, and community members in participating actively in the program. However, when Islamic values are incorporated especially *Ta'awun*, which emphasizes collective responsibility, social empathy, and helping others as a form of worship motivation extends beyond personal or social expectations to include moral and spiritual obligations.

This integration strengthens the individual's attitude toward collaborative actions, reinforces social norms of cooperation, and increases perceived control by building mutual trust and support among team members. In practice, this approach is realized through cross-functional teams supported by Inspirational Motivation Leadership, which encourages stakeholders across different sectors to align their goals and work together effectively. Ta'awun

Collaborative Behaviour enhances cross-sectoral coordination, data integration, and performance evaluation. The model encourages teamwork among ministries, local governments, NGOs, religious institutions, and other community actors, supported by initiatives such as the SATU DATA system and convergence-based capacity building. Thus, by integrating TPB with Islamic values, Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour provides a spiritually grounded, socially responsive, and operationally effective framework to improve cross-functional performance in accelerating stunting reduction efforts.

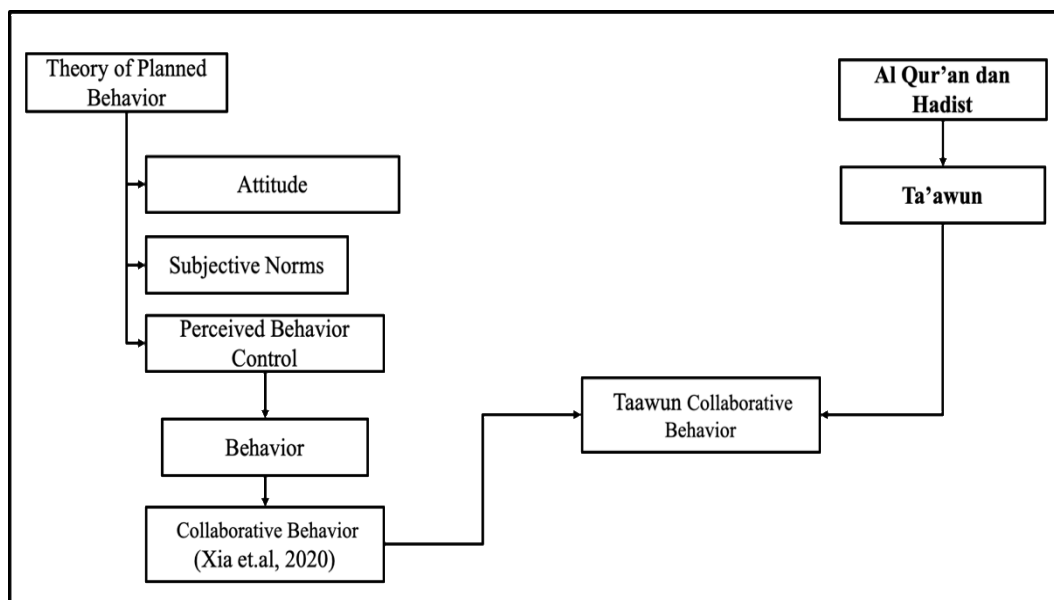


Figure 1 Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour : Theory of planned behaviour and islamic value integration

Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour is a collaborative behavior rooted in Islamic values, emphasizing the spirit of mutual help, cooperation, and assisting one another to achieve common good. This behavior is based on sincere selflessness and aims to strengthen social solidarity and accelerate the achievement of collective goals. Ta'awun occurs not only between individuals but also among groups and institutions, and can be applied in various fields such as education, health, and economic development. This concept develops into several specific forms of collaborative behavior, namely Ar Rahmah, Al Birr, Al Ukhuwah, and As Shaffan Collaborative Behavior. Ar Rahmah emphasizes compassion, honesty, and ethics in collaboration; Al Birr focuses on empathy, care, and selfless contribution; Al Ukhuwah strengthens the sense of brotherhood and solidarity; while Shaffan emphasizes coordination and sincere assistance without expecting anything in return. All these forms are inspired by teachings from the Qur'an, such as in Surah Al-Ma'idah: 2, which commands people to help one another in goodness and piety. Overall, this concept shows that collaboration based on spiritual and ethical values can build strong and productive social relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully fills the gap of transcendental values in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by introducing the conception of Collaborative Behaviour. The study also develops a new concept derived from the comprehensive integration of TPB, the concept of Collaborative Behaviour, and Islamic values through the Ta'awun approach (cooperation and mutual assistance). The study demonstrates that integrating transcendental values and collaboration within the TPB framework can strengthen the understanding and prediction of collaborative behavior that contributes to improving team performance, particularly in the context of reducing stunting in Central Java.

The significant benefit of this research lies in its ability to provide practical insights into more effective and targeted interventions to improve the nutrition of children, pregnant women, and families as a whole. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a basis for developing more focused and collaborative policies and programs to address stunting, involving various stakeholders such as local governments, the health sector, and the broader community. Thus, this research not only enriches the theoretical literature on TPB and collaborative behavior but also offers a

tangible contribution to efforts to reduce the prevalence of stunting through a holistic and contextual approach aligned with the social and religious values of the community.

In conclusion, the integration of the Theory of Planned Behaviour with Islamic values, particularly the principle of *Ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), offers a powerful and holistic approach to enhancing collaborative behavior in public service initiatives such as stunting reduction. By combining cognitive-behavioral motivation with spiritual and moral imperatives, *Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour* fosters stronger commitment, shared responsibility, and synergy across sectors. Supported by cross-functional integration and inspirational leadership, this approach enhances team performance, improves coordination, and ensures that stunting reduction programs are implemented more effectively and sustainably. In the context of Central Java, this integrated model contributes significantly to building a unified, data-driven, and community-engaged framework capable of addressing complex health challenges through collective action.

This study presents practical and theoretical implications for public sector management and collaborative governance. The integration of Theory of Planned Behaviour with Islamic values through *Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour* highlights the importance of moral and spiritual dimensions in strengthening team coordination and performance. Practically, it offers a culturally relevant model for government institutions in predominantly Muslim regions, especially in stunting reduction efforts. This approach promotes not only inter-agency collaboration but also enhances the motivation, accountability, and integrity of civil servants by rooting collaboration in shared religious and social norms. Despite its strengths, this study has several limitations. First, the research is context-specific and centered on stunting reduction in Central Java, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions or sectors. Second, the integration of Islamic values, while effective in certain cultural contexts, may not be as applicable in more diverse or secular environments. Third, the study focuses primarily on cross-functional coordination and leadership, without deeply examining other structural, political, or resource-based challenges that may affect team performance. Future research should consider applying this integrated model in other regions or sectors, such as education, disaster management, or poverty alleviation, to test its broader applicability. Comparative studies between regions with different religious or cultural values could also help assess the universality of *Ta'awun Collaborative Behaviour*. Additionally, longitudinal research is recommended to evaluate the long-term impact of this model on service delivery outcomes, particularly how moral-spiritual motivations sustain collaboration and performance under varying policy or leadership changes.

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