



## **Performance Optimization of Civil Servant Investigators at the Civil Service Police Unit: Evidence from Indonesian Local Government**

**Fahrudin Ahmad**

Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration and Social Sciences Universitas Bina Taruna Gorontalo, Indonesia

e-mail: [fahrudinahmad@gmail.com](mailto:fahrudinahmad@gmail.com)

### *ARTICLE HISTORY:*

Received: Mar 30, 2024

Revised: Apr 24, 2024

Accepted: Jun 17, 2024

### **Abstract**

Civil servant investigators represent a formally empowered yet structurally constrained enforcement institution within Indonesia's local governance system, where performance failures persist despite adequate legal mandates. This study examines PPNS performance in Gorontalo City Civil Service Police Unit through three analytical dimensions: inter-agency coordination, work productivity, and work quality. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were obtained from direct observation, semi-structured interviews with twelve purposively selected informants spanning institutional leadership, PPNS officers, a National Police investigator, civil servants, and community members, and document analysis, with thematic interpretation. Findings demonstrate that performance failure is not individual but structural, produced by three interlocking governance mechanisms: absence of institutionalized PPNS–Polri coordination that weakens procedural legitimacy, supervisory dependency that restricts autonomous enforcement judgment, and selective enforcement driven by patronage-based relational proximity. These mechanisms form a self-reinforcing equilibrium that stabilizes low enforcement effectiveness as an organizational norm rather than deviation. Theoretically, the study advances public sector performance literature by reframing enforcement failure as a structural interaction problem in which legal authority becomes decoupled from operational execution in hybrid administrative–law enforcement institutions, while identifying supervisory dependency and selective enforcement as distinct explanatory mechanisms.

**Keywords:** Civil servant investigator; Enforcement performance; Inter-agency coordination; Local governance; Supervisory dependency

### **Introduction**

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia has been a sustained governance agenda for more than two decades, driven by the recognition that the quality of public administration is closely linked to the competence, accountability, and performance of civil servants ([Maulana et al., 2022](#)). Despite continuous institutional strengthening through regulatory and structural reforms, the translation of performance-based civil service management into consistent improvements in bureaucratic outcomes remains uneven across levels of government ([Jumady & Lilla, 2021](#); [Tamsah et al., 2020](#)). This implementation gap is particularly evident in decentralized governance systems, where local governments carry primary responsibility for public service delivery and regulatory enforcement under conditions of varying institutional capacity ([Christensen et al., 2017](#); [Levitats & Vigoda-Gadot, 2020](#)).

In Indonesia's decentralized administrative system, local governments function not only as service providers but also as regulators and enforcers of regional norms. Gorontalo

City, established under Law Number 57 of 2001 as a provincial capital within Gorontalo Province ([Arsana & Olilingo, 2020](#)), represents a relevant case of sub-national governance dynamics. With 4,876 civil servants distributed across 41 regional work units, the city government has progressively expanded its regulatory and enforcement apparatus in line with regional development objectives. Regional regulations covering public order, building permits, sanitation, alcohol control, and civil servant discipline constitute the normative foundation of urban governance. However, the effectiveness of these regulations depends heavily on the capacity of enforcement institutions, particularly the Civil Service Police Unit.

Within this enforcement structure, Civil Servant Investigators occupy a legally mandated and operationally strategic role. Established under Gorontalo City Regional Regulation Number 6 of 2011 and supported by national legal frameworks such as Law Number 9 of 2015 on Regional Government and Government Regulation Number 27 of 1983 on Criminal Procedure Implementation, PPNS officers are authorized to conduct limited criminal investigations within their jurisdiction. Their functions include receiving reports, conducting initial crime scene actions, identifying suspects, executing searches and seizures, summoning witnesses, and performing other investigative procedures as legally prescribed. At present, Satpol PP Gorontalo City deploys 23 PPNS officers whose performance is critical in determining whether regional regulations function as enforceable legal instruments or remain symbolic policy statements.

However, preliminary observation indicates that the performance of PPNS officers in Gorontalo City is characterized by several persistent constraints. First, inter-institutional coordination between PPNS and the National Police, which is structurally required under Indonesia's criminal procedural framework, remains weak in practice. In many ongoing investigations, Polri involvement is minimal or absent, creating procedural vulnerabilities and limiting enforcement effectiveness. Second, the quality of investigative execution is suboptimal, reflected in weak follow-up actions in enforcement cases. For example, violations of alcohol-related regulations often result in temporary closures, yet reopening occurs shortly after enforcement actions, indicating limited deterrent effect. Similar issues are observed in the handling of civil servant disciplinary violations, where enforcement outcomes remain inconsistent. Third, overall productivity of PPNS officers remains below organizational expectations, particularly in executing routine supervisory enforcement tasks, such as addressing civil servants absent from duty without authorization during working hours. These conditions reflect broader challenges in ensuring compliance with administrative discipline within local government institutions.

These performance issues suggest a structural rather than incidental problem. The gap between formal authority granted to PPNS officers and their actual operational effectiveness is influenced by multiple organizational and institutional factors, including competency development, supervisory mechanisms, inter-agency coordination, and performance accountability systems ([Berman et al., 2021](#); [Kruyen & Van Genugten, 2020](#)). Prior studies indicate that civil service performance failures in local governments often stem from misalignment between role expectations and capacity development systems ([Kusuma et al., 2023](#)). Moreover, weak meritocratic enforcement and limited accountability mechanisms can lead to a decoupling between formal performance

standards and actual behavior in public organizations ([Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018](#)). In the context of investigative institutions, inadequate monitoring and early intervention mechanisms further contribute to sustained performance inefficiencies ([Walker & Archbold, 2018](#)).

Despite extensive literature on civil service reform and public sector performance, limited scholarly attention has been given to the specific performance dynamics of Civil Servant Investigators within local government enforcement units in Indonesia. Existing studies tend to focus broadly on bureaucratic reform, police performance, or general civil service management, leaving a gap in understanding how specialized investigative civil servants perform within hybrid administrative–law enforcement institutions at the sub-national level.

Against this backdrop, this study analyzes the performance optimization of Civil Servant Investigators at the Civil Service Police Unit of Gorontalo City. In this study, performance optimization is understood as the systematic improvement of organizational, institutional, and operational factors that influence the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of PPNS functions. The study focuses on identifying structural constraints and enabling factors that shape investigative performance in local regulatory enforcement.

By examining the intersection of institutional design, inter-agency coordination, and operational capacity, this study contributes to the literature on public sector performance and law enforcement governance in decentralized systems. Practically, the findings are expected to provide evidence-based insights for improving the effectiveness of PPNS institutions in ensuring the enforceability of regional regulations. In a decentralized governance system where local regulations constitute the primary mechanism of social order, the performance of enforcement actors such as PPNS is not merely an administrative concern, but a fundamental determinant of state legitimacy at the local level.

## Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design to examine the performance optimization of Civil Servant Investigators within the Civil Service Police Unit of Gorontalo City. A qualitative approach is adopted because PPNS performance is not solely a measurable administrative output, but a socially and institutionally embedded phenomenon shaped by organizational routines, inter-agency relations, and enforcement practices in real-world governance settings.

In line with qualitative inquiry traditions, this study focuses on understanding meanings, practices, and contextual dynamics that shape investigative performance in its natural institutional environment ([Moleong, 2014](#)). Such an approach is appropriate because PPNS performance is inherently multidimensional, involving legal authority, coordination mechanisms, supervisory structures, and operational behavior that cannot be adequately reduced into isolated quantitative indicators ([Bazen et al., 2021](#); [Cheong et al., 2023](#)).

## Participants

The study was conducted at the Civil Service Police Unit Office of Gorontalo City, Indonesia. This site was selected due to its direct relevance to the research focus, as it is

the institutional setting where PPNS officers are formally positioned and operationally deployed in the enforcement of regional regulations.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in, supervisory responsibility for, or experiential exposure to PPNS investigative activities. A total of 12 informants participated in the study, comprising: Head of Satpol PP (1), administrative supervisor (1), PPNS officers (4), National Police investigator/Polri liaison (1), civil servant staff/ASN (3), and community members (2).

This composition ensures multi-level and multi-perspective coverage, enabling analysis across hierarchical positions (strategic–operational levels), institutional domains (Satpol PP–Polri coordination), and external stakeholders (citizens as recipients of enforcement outcomes). Such diversity enhances analytical depth and supports triangulation of institutional performance assessments ([Cheong et al., 2023](#)).

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data were collected using three complementary techniques: First, direct observation was conducted to capture actual PPNS working practices, coordination behavior, and enforcement routines in their natural setting. This method enabled identification of gaps between formal procedural requirements and actual implementation in the field.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all informants. Interviews served as the primary data source and were guided by key dimensions of PPNS performance, namely: investigative work quality, productivity, and inter-agency coordination. The flexible structure allowed participants to elaborate on institutional constraints, operational challenges, and experiential insights beyond predefined categories. Third, document analysis was carried out on relevant institutional and legal materials, including regional regulations, PPNS appointment documents, enforcement reports, and coordination guidelines. These documents provided the formal regulatory framework against which empirical findings were interpreted.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using the interactive, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data condensation phase, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were systematically coded according to three analytical categories: (1) inter-agency coordination, (2) investigative performance quality, and (3) task productivity. In the data display phase, categorized data were organized into thematic matrices to identify patterns, divergences, and relational dynamics across informant groups. In the conclusion drawing and verification phase, emerging interpretations were continuously validated by tracing them back to raw data sources, ensuring that analytical claims remained empirically grounded rather than speculative.

### **Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods, comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documents to identify convergence and discrepancies in findings ([Cheong et al., 2023](#)). In addition, credibility was strengthened through informant triangulation, involving actors from

different institutional levels and roles, ensuring that findings reflect multiple perspectives rather than a single organizational viewpoint. This approach enhances confirmability and reduces interpretive bias by systematically cross-validating evidence across data sources.

## Results and Discussion

### Inter-Agency Coordination

Coordination, as operationalized in this study, refers to the formal and operational alignment between Civil Servant Investigators (PPNS) at the Gorontalo City Civil Service Police Unit and the institutional partners, most critically the National Police (Polri), whose involvement is legally mandated in the investigative process. Under Indonesia's criminal procedure framework, PPNS investigations are not legally autonomous. They are required to be conducted under the supervision of and in active coordination with Polri investigators, making inter-agency coordination not merely an organizational aspiration but a statutory precondition for lawful investigative action ([Manik et al., 2017](#); [Sitompul et al., 2021](#)).

The findings reveal a persistent and multi-source-confirmed coordination deficit that cuts across all levels of the institutional hierarchy. The Head of Office (informant AL) acknowledged that while coordination between PPNS and Polri had been formally established, "in its implementation, this coordination is sometimes not optimally carried out." The Head of the Personnel and General Sub-Division (informant YP) offered a sharper assessment, observing that coordination was deficient not only with Polri but also with the entire spectrum of judicial partners, including the prosecutor's office and courts, thereby rendering the investigative chain structurally incomplete. PPNS officers themselves (informants UP and IK) confirmed that Polri investigators were routinely absent from active investigation proceedings, a pattern also corroborated by a civil servant who stated that the examination process was conducted solely by Satpol PP personnel without any Polri presence. Most significantly, the Polri investigator (informant RK), the institutional counterpart whose involvement is formally required, independently confirmed that PPNS–Polri coordination was inadequate and attributed this condition to the Satpol PP side's failure to initiate coordination proactively.

This convergence of accounts across institutional lines, ranging from unit leadership, operational PPNS staff, affected civil servants, and the Polri counterpart, constitutes strong triangulated evidence that the coordination failure is structural rather than incidental. It is not that individual officers fail to coordinate in isolated cases; rather, the coordination mechanism itself is not functioning as a routine operational practice. The consequences in Gorontalo City are visible and concrete: cases involving civil servants caught consuming alcohol during working hours, premises sealed but reopened within days, and violators processed solely by Satpol PP without Polri involvement, all of which generate documented public dissatisfaction and erode institutional credibility in regional regulatory enforcement. This finding is consistent with prior studies showing that the absence of institutionalized coordination protocols between PPNS and Polri constitutes a major structural barrier to effective investigations, while limited Polri supervision significantly

weakens the procedural validity of PPNS investigative outcomes ([Banerjee et al., 2021](#); [Thalib et al., 2017](#); [Zulyadi, 2020](#)).

At the theoretical level, this finding contributes to the literature on inter-agency coordination in law enforcement by demonstrating that coordination failure between PPNS and Polri is not merely a relational or attitudinal problem, but a governance design problem. The legal architecture mandates coordination, while the organizational infrastructure, including joint protocols, shared communication channels, and institutionalized referral procedures, has not been operationally established to support it. Coordination can be understood as the integration of goals and activities across separate organizational units to achieve collective objectives efficiently. Without such integration, individual actors lose their operational reference point, a condition reflected in PPNS practice in Gorontalo City, where officers proceed independently not because they choose to, but because institutional mechanisms for coordinated action do not exist in operational form ([Sari, 2021](#)).

### **Work Quality**

Work quality, as examined in this study, refers to the assertiveness, decisiveness, and technical competence with which PPNS officers execute their investigative mandate against civil servants who violate regional regulations. It encompasses not only the technical quality of investigative procedures but also the willingness and capacity of PPNS officers to apply sanctions consistently, without deference to informal social relationships or passive compliance with bureaucratic inertia.

The findings reveal a work quality deficit rooted in two interrelated organizational dysfunctions: supervisory dependency and the absence of proactive investigative initiative. The Head of Office (informant AL) acknowledged that PPNS officers face unresolved operational challenges in executing disciplinary investigations, citing cases including the failure to process a civil servant caught consuming alcohol at a licensed vendor and the rapid resumption of operations at sealed premises as evidence that enforcement outcomes remain below organizational standards. The Sub-Division Head (informant YP) provided a more direct assessment, characterizing PPNS work quality as “low,” particularly in relation to the failure to take decisive action against civil servants violating working-hour discipline regulations.

This pattern is further reinforced by testimony from PPNS officers themselves. Both informants SA and YB stated that their ability to carry out assertive enforcement actions is highly dependent on supervisory instruction, with one officer noting, “I cannot do things that do not align with my superior’s wishes.” This statement reflects not procedural compliance but operational dependency, where enforcement action is contingent upon explicit managerial authorization. Such a condition indicates that officers are structurally constrained from exercising autonomous judgment in the field, resulting in delayed or absent enforcement actions even in cases where violations are evident. From the perspective of service recipients, this condition is also observable. The community informant SB confirmed that PPNS officers frequently failed to impose sanctions on civil servants caught violating working-hour regulations or consuming alcohol, resulting in violations that go unaddressed and enforcement that lacks credibility.

This convergence of evidence across hierarchical levels, from managerial leadership, operational PPNS officers, and community members, indicates that the work quality problem is not individual but structural in nature. The issue is not merely a lack of competence, but a systematic dependency on hierarchical approval that limits the exercise of professional judgment in enforcement contexts.

This finding is theoretically significant because it identifies supervisory dependency as the proximate mechanism through which work quality deteriorates, a dynamic that has been widely discussed in civil service performance literature but less frequently supported with direct empirical testimony from enforcement officers. Effective public service performance requires not only technical competence but also autonomous professional judgment. In this study, however, such capacity appears constrained among PPNS officers due to organizational culture that limits professional discretion ([Kruyen & Van Genugten, 2020](#)). Public service motivation is more likely to translate into strong performance when organizational structures provide both normative support and operational autonomy. In the absence of such conditions, even motivated officers tend to adopt passive and instruction-dependent work patterns ([Christensen et al., 2017](#)). Work quality encompasses knowledge, skills, and capability in task execution. However, the evidence from this study suggests that capability alone is insufficient to produce effective enforcement outcomes. Instead, organizational permission structures determine whether capability can be translated into effective enforcement performance.

### **Work Productivity**

Work productivity, as operationalized in this study, refers to the ratio of enforcement outputs achieved to the organizational resources, including human, legal, and logistical resources, invested in the investigative process. Productive PPNS performance implies that assigned tasks are completed at the standard and frequency specified by supervisors and mandated by regional regulations, with consistent and impartial enforcement across the full population of potential violators.

The findings identify a productivity deficit characterized by two interrelated organizational pathologies: task non-completion and selective enforcement. The Head of Office (informant AL) acknowledged that the investigation of civil servants violating working-hour regulations was “not optimally handled,” noting that violations were frequently allowed to pass without enforcement action. The Sub-Division Head (informant YP) similarly confirmed that supervisor-assigned tasks were executed at sub-optimal levels, particularly in relation to the enforcement of regulations against civil servants absent from duty without official authorization.

This pattern is further supported by operational and external accounts. PPNS officers (informants IK and UP) indicated that enforcement actions were partially conducted through verbal warnings; however, civil servant informant UH provided a more critical empirical account, stating that enforcement actions were applied selectively, where some violators were processed while others were deliberately ignored due to informal protection linked to family relations or proximity to officials. This indicates that enforcement is not uniformly applied across cases. Community informant NW independently corroborated

this pattern, observing that sanctions were often not imposed even in cases of clear and visible violations.

Taken together, these accounts suggest that the issue is not merely low productivity in terms of output quantity, but a distorted productivity pattern, where enforcement effort is present but unevenly distributed. In this condition, productivity is shaped not by workload capacity, but by social and relational filters that influence which violations are acted upon and which are ignored.

This convergence of evidence across institutional actors, including managerial, operational, and community perspectives, indicates that the productivity deficit is structural rather than incidental. It reflects a systematic pattern in which enforcement is selectively applied rather than universally implemented.

This finding is theoretically significant because it aligns with the argument that selective enforcement emerges in civil service systems where meritocratic accountability is weak and informal social ties influence administrative behavior. Selective enforcement tends to emerge in civil service systems where meritocratic accountability is weak and informal social relations influence administrative behavior. Under such conditions, enforcement officers often rationally adjust their behavior toward selective compliance, particularly when performance evaluation is weakly linked to enforcement outcomes and proximity to power reduces accountability risks ([Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018](#)). Enforcement consistency, defined as the uniform application of rules without discrimination, is a fundamental determinant of organizational legitimacy. Inconsistent enforcement creates a cumulative erosion of compliance, as each unaddressed violation weakens the deterrent effect of future enforcement actions ([Berman et al., 2021](#)). Work productivity is generally understood as the maximization of outputs relative to available inputs. However, the evidence from this study indicates that productivity in the PPNS context is constrained not primarily by resource limitations, but by patronage-based distortions in enforcement behavior. This suggests that increasing resources alone will be insufficient unless underlying accountability structures are also reformed.

### **Institutional Governance Mechanisms Underlying PPNS Performance Dynamics**

Across the three analytical dimensions, the evidence converges on a single and more fundamental theoretical proposition: PPNS performance in Gorontalo City does not reflect isolated organizational weaknesses, but a systemic governance failure shaped by interlocking institutional mechanisms. Rather than representing separate issues of coordination, work quality, and productivity, the findings demonstrate that these dimensions operate as a mutually reinforcing configuration of dysfunction that stabilizes low performance as an organizational equilibrium.

First, the breakdown in PPNS–Polri coordination is not merely an operational gap but a legitimacy rupture in the investigative architecture. The absence of institutionalized coordination weakens the legal and procedural foundation of investigations, reducing enforcement actions to administratively incomplete processes that lack full statutory backing. Second, the emergence of supervisory dependency reflects a deprofessionalization mechanism, in which enforcement authority is not exercised through autonomous judgment but through hierarchical permission structures. This condition suppresses

proactive decision-making and transforms investigative behavior into instruction-dependent compliance rather than rule-based enforcement. Third, selective enforcement introduces a patronage distortion mechanism, where productivity is no longer defined by output volume or task completion, but by socially filtered enforcement choices that prioritize relational proximity over regulatory consistency.

When combined, these three mechanisms generate a reinforcing institutional loop. Weak coordination reduces procedural certainty, which increases reliance on hierarchical approval. Supervisory dependency then discourages autonomous enforcement behavior, creating space for discretionary and selective application of rules. Selective enforcement, in turn, erodes institutional credibility, weakening the normative pressure required to sustain coordination and professional accountability. The result is not linear underperformance, but a self-stabilizing system of low enforcement effectiveness that persists without external intervention.

This configuration explains why incremental reforms targeting only one dimension, such as improving coordination protocols or increasing supervisory control, are unlikely to produce substantial performance gains. The dysfunction is not additive but systemic, where each dimension reproduces and amplifies the others. In this sense, PPNS performance failure in Gorontalo City should be understood as an institutionally embedded equilibrium of dysfunction, rather than a temporary administrative shortfall.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study extends prior literature on bureaucratic performance and enforcement institutions by demonstrating that performance failure in local investigative agencies is best explained through a multi-mechanism interaction model rather than single-factor explanations ([Jumady & Lilla, 2021](#); [Tamsah et al., 2020](#)). The findings suggest that enforcement institutions in decentralized settings may develop stable patterns of dysfunction when legal authority, organizational autonomy, and accountability systems are misaligned, producing a durable gap between formal institutional design and operational reality.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study offers three interrelated theoretical contributions to the literature on civil servant investigator performance in Indonesian local governance. First, it advances a micro-organizational perspective on PPNS performance failure by providing empirical evidence from the operational level of a city-based Civil Service Police Unit. This extends the predominantly legal-normative discourse on PPNS authority ([Manik et al., 2017](#); [Sitompul et al., 2021](#)) toward a grounded organizational explanation of how formal investigative authority is enacted, constrained, or effectively neutralized in everyday enforcement practice.

Second, the study develops the concept of supervisory dependency as an organizational mechanism of performance suppression, demonstrating that work quality deterioration is not primarily driven by motivational deficits, but by a structurally embedded expectation that enforcement action requires hierarchical authorization. Through direct testimony from PPNS officers, the findings show that professional discretion is systematically subordinated to supervisory approval, offering a mechanism-level

explanation that contributes to public sector performance theory and bureaucratic behavior literature ([Kruyen & Van Genugten, 2020](#); [Levitats & Vigoda-Gadot, 2020](#)).

Third, the study conceptualizes selective enforcement as a structural productivity distortion mechanism, rather than an individual ethical deviation. It demonstrates that enforcement outputs are systematically shaped by social proximity and informal relational networks, producing discriminatory application of regulatory standards. This finding strengthens theoretical arguments that weak accountability systems and informal patronage relations generate predictable patterns of enforcement inconsistency in civil service institutions ([Berman et al., 2021](#); [Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018](#)).

### **Practical Implications**

This study generates three levels of practical implications for improving PPNS performance in Indonesian local governments. At the inter-institutional level, the persistent coordination deficit between PPNS and the National Police requires formal institutional redesign. This includes the establishment of joint investigation protocols, structured coordination forums, standardized case referral mechanisms, and explicit procedural triggers that mandate Polri involvement in PPNS-led investigations. Without such institutional infrastructure, coordination will remain ad hoc and operationally inconsistent. At the organizational level, the identified supervisory dependency necessitates a shift in performance management architecture from directive control to standards-based autonomy. Supervisors should define clear enforcement benchmarks while allowing PPNS officers discretionary authority to execute field decisions without requiring case-by-case approval. Evidence from experimental public administration research suggests that combining autonomy with performance incentives significantly improves enforcement effectiveness ([Banerjee et al., 2021](#)), reinforcing the relevance of this reform direction for Satpol PP institutions. At the accountability level, the selective enforcement pattern highlights the need for transparent, outcome-based monitoring systems. This includes the institutionalization of measurable indicators such as case completion rates, enforcement consistency ratios, and public feedback mechanisms. Such systems reduce the space for discretionary or patronage-based enforcement behavior by increasing visibility and organizational cost of non-uniform enforcement practices ([Febriyanti et al., 2023](#)).

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the single-site case study design at Gorontalo City Satpol PP provides rich contextual depth but limits external generalizability. The combination of coordination deficits, supervisory dependency, and patronage-based enforcement patterns identified in this study may vary across different Satpol PP institutions in other regions of Indonesia. Future research should therefore adopt comparative multi-site designs to examine whether the three-dimensional performance failure identified here represents a broader systemic pattern or a context-specific institutional condition.

Second, the cross-sectional nature of the study captures PPNS performance at a single point in time, which limits the ability to assess temporal dynamics. As a result, the study cannot determine whether the observed performance deficits are stable, worsening,

or subject to institutional change. Longitudinal research is needed to track how PPNS performance evolves in response to shifts in leadership structures, accountability mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination arrangements, thereby enabling stronger causal inference regarding the persistence or transformation of performance failures.

Third, the study relies primarily on qualitative data obtained from interviews and direct observation, without access to systematic administrative datasets such as case completion rates, enforcement statistics, or formal performance evaluation records. Future studies should integrate administrative and quantitative performance indicators to complement qualitative insights and strengthen evidence triangulation, particularly in measuring enforcement consistency and investigative effectiveness.

Most importantly, while this study identifies the structural mechanisms underlying PPNS performance failure, it does not empirically evaluate which reform interventions are most effective in addressing these mechanisms. Future research should therefore move toward evaluative and quasi-experimental designs to test the effectiveness of targeted policy interventions, including formalized PPNS–Polri coordination protocols, performance-based supervisory delegation systems, and transparent enforcement monitoring mechanisms. Such studies are essential for translating diagnostic findings into actionable governance reforms in Indonesian local enforcement institutions.

## **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that PPNS performance failure at the Gorontalo City Civil Service Police Unit is not the result of individual shortcomings but a structural equilibrium produced by interlocking governance mechanisms in which dysfunction becomes self-reinforcing. The absence of institutionalized PPNS–Polri coordination weakens the procedural legitimacy of investigations from the outset, while supervisory dependency restricts professional discretion by making enforcement action contingent on hierarchical authorization rather than autonomous judgment. Simultaneously, selective enforcement shaped by social proximity and informal relational networks undermines consistency in regulatory application and erodes institutional credibility. Together, these mechanisms interact to stabilize low enforcement effectiveness as a systemic condition rather than an anomaly. Theoretically, the study reframes PPNS performance failure as a structural interaction problem, extending public sector performance literature by showing how formal legal authority in decentralized enforcement settings becomes decoupled from operational practice through the combined effects of coordination breakdown, hierarchical dependency, and distributive bias in enforcement behavior. Practically, the findings indicate that isolated reforms targeting coordination, supervision, or monitoring are insufficient because each intervention is absorbed into the same structural logic; effective improvement therefore requires integrated reform across institutional design, decision-making autonomy, and accountability systems. The study is limited by its single-site qualitative design and reliance on perception-based data, constraining generalizability and outcome validation, and future research should employ comparative multi-site and mixed-method approaches as well as quasi-experimental designs to test and refine intervention models capable of disrupting this enforcement failure equilibrium, shifting the agenda from further diagnosis toward evidence-based institutional redesign.

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