

EXTENSION COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AND COUNSELING INTENSITY ON THE QUALITY OF FAMILY PLANNING EXTENSION SERVICES IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE STUNTING IN NORTH PADANG LAWAS REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

The stunting phenomenon is a difficult task for family planning extension workers in North Padang Lawas Regency, as well as a concern for the local government to provide assistance to families at risk of stunting. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of communication competence of extension workers on the quality of Family Planning (KB) extension services in an effort to reduce the stunting and how much influence the communication competence and counseling intensity have on the service quality of family planning. The study is based on a cross-sectional study, and the population is couples of childbearing age who are the target group of assistance by family planning Extension Workers in an attempt to reduce stunting in the community. The results of the study showed that communication competence significantly impacted service quality by 38.6%. Communication competence and extension intensity had a significant impact on service quality 80.9%. The findings can be used by extension workers to improve service quality and ensure adequate competence in stunting prevention programs.

INTRODUCTION

The condition of stunting is an obstacle to the development of health and human resources. Stunted children experience obstacles to growth and development, it is feared that future generations will not be able to be productive competitiveness in the world of work. The stunting phenomenon is a difficult task for family planning extension workers in North Padang Lawas Regency, as well as a concern for the local government to provide assistance to families at risk of stunting. So that the extension workers of the North Padang Lawas Regency Family Planning must be more active in providing counseling to the community, especially target families related to stunting prevention efforts.

One of the performance measures that government agencies can use to ensure they meet their duties and commitments is community satisfaction. When the community is directly involved in fulfilling the interests of each government institution, then a different view of society will automatically emerge. Therefore, government organizations that act as public servants of course do their best to

ensure the creation of a good impression and public satisfaction (Pramularso, 2020). The level of general public satisfaction with government institutions can be measured through the quality of services provided. Effectively managed quality can have a beneficial impact in achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty (Cvjetković et al., 2021; Hamzah & Shamsudin, 2020; Supriyanto et al., 2021).

The forms of services to the community carried out by BKKBN to reduce the stunting rate in Indonesia include providing assistance to target groups such as brides-to-be, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and mothers with toddlers, conducting counseling to the community related to information and education about stunting, and providing convenience of services in the form of facilitating routine family planning services held at health centers in each sub-district. In this case, the role of family planning extension workers has an important role because it is one of the jobs that are engaged in upstream, which does not only refer to one program but all government programs also run side by side to meet the understanding of public health and welfare. Therefore, it is necessary for family planning extension workers who are competent in this field so that they can reduce the prevalence of stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency.

The effort of North Padang Lawas Regency in reducing the stunting prevalence depends on people who have good knowledge. If the counseling delivered by family planning extension workers is continuous and can be well received by the community, it can result in changes in behavior and habits in the community. The quality of the work of family planning extension workers in helping the community determines the improvement of people's knowledge, attitudes, and skills in changing their lifestyles (Idris et al., 2021; Swanson et al., 2021; Tus, 2020). With the communication competence of extension workers and the intensity of counseling carried out by family planning extension workers in an effort to reduce stunting, it is hoped that the public will be aware of the danger of the long-term impact of stunting on children in the future.

Researchers feel that the success of Padang Lawas Regency in reducing stunting rates is an interesting phenomenon to study. One of the proofs of the success of family planning extension workers in reducing stunting rates in North Padang Lawas Regency is that the number of families at risk of stunting has decreased from the previous year. Although the stunting rate has decreased, North Padang Lawas Regency has its own challenges, namely the lack of competency training for family planning extension workers in North Padang Lawas Regency.

Based on the researcher's initial observations, in the reality in the field, there are several areas that are indeed very difficult to reach and resources such as infrastructure, budget, and human resources, namely family planning extension workers, are very limited. With limited resources, it certainly affects the implementation of counseling. The level of education and awareness of family planning extension workers can also affect the interaction and communication between family planning extension workers and the community. If the level of education is low, family planning extension workers may need to adapt their communication approach to match the level of community understanding; cultural and contextual aspects also affect communication and interaction between family planning extension workers and the community. In overcoming these challenges, it is important to conduct continuous evaluation and updates regarding communication competence and the intensity of counseling carried out in the field. So that the performance of family planning extension workers can produce quality services.

The researcher also obtained data on the recapitulation of stunted babies in 2024 which was data from the North Padang Lawas Regency health office which received assistance from the BAAS (Foster Father of Stunting Children) Program which is one of the BKKBN programs as an effort to prevent stunting. Based on this data, it was found that as many as 71 stunted babies spread across 4 (four) sub-districts. Thus strengthening the reason why the researcher chose North Padang Lawas Regency as the research location. The following is a table of the number of stunted babies by sub-district.

Table 1. Number of Stunted Babies by Sub-District

No.	Sub-District	Number of Stunted Babies
1	Halongonan	29
2	Padang Bolak	15
3	Portibi	19
4	Simangambat	8
Total		71

Source: North Padang Lawas Regency Health Office (2024)

Support from local governments, ongoing training, and cooperation between various parties can help improve communication competence. Therefore, research on communication competence and extension intensity can provide useful information to improve the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency. Research on the influence of extension communication competence and counseling intensity on the quality of family planning extension services has also not been conducted. Many researchers from the health sector have conducted research related to family planning counselors. However, no one has conducted research related to the quality of family planning extension services in the field. Based on these things, it adds to the researcher's interest in conducting research related to the influence of extension communication competence and counseling intensity on the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of communication competence of extension workers on the quality of family planning extension services, the influence of counseling intensity on the quality of family planning extension services and how much the influence of communication competence and counseling intensity on the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency. This research is academically useful as a reference for communication science study programs, theoretically increases knowledge about counseling communication and stunting, and practically provides input for government agencies, especially BKKBN, in planning and evaluating family planning programs related to stunting reduction and the quality of family planning extension services.

The hypothesis used in this study is:

- 1) H1: There is an influence of communication competence on the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce stunting
- 2) H2: There is an effect of the intensity of counseling on the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce stunting
- 3) H3: There is an influence of the communication competence of extension workers and the intensity of counseling on the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce stunting

METHODS

The type of method used in this study is the correlational method. This study used a quantitative approach. In this study, the population is couples of childbearing age who are the target group of assistance by family planning extension workers in an effort to reduce the stunting rate in North Padang Lawas Regency. The target groups of family planning extension assistance are brides-to-be, pregnant women, mothers who have children 0-24 months and mothers who have children 24-60 months.

In this study, it is known that as many as 3676 families are populations representing North Padang Lawas Regency, so the sample can be drawn using the Slovin formula.

$$S = \frac{3676}{1 + 3676 \cdot (0,05)^2}$$
$$S = \frac{3676}{10,19}$$
$$S = 360,74 \approx 361 \text{ (Rounded)}$$

Based on calculations using the Slovin formula, the number of samples to be studied is 361 people.

Data collection was carried out by researchers by distributing questionnaires both directly and with Google Forms. The data analysis technique used multiple liner regression analysis, T test, F test and determination coefficient test.

RESULTS

Individual Parameter Signification Test (T-Test)

Evaluating the extent of the influence of one independent variable on the dependent variable, assuming the other independent variables remain constant, or in other words, to prove whether each

independent variable included in the model has an influence on the dependent variable needs to be done by the T-test.

1. If the value of the sig < 0.05, or t calculated > t of the table , then there is an influence of variable X on variable Y, which means that Ha is accepted and H0 is rejected.
2. If the value of the sig > 0.05, or t calculated < t of the table , then there is no influence of variable X on variable Y, which means that H0 is accepted and Ha is rejected.

Based on the results of the statistical test that has been carried out, the results show the following results:

1. The results of the communication competence of extension workers (X1) on the quality of family planning extension services (Y) in an effort to reduce stunting were obtained with a value of $t = 12,668 > t \text{ table } 1,667$ with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). From these results, it can be concluded that Ha1 is accepted, which means **that Hypothesis 1 is accepted.**
2. The results of the effect of counseling intensity (X2) on the quality of family planning extension services (Y) in an effort to reduce stunting were obtained with a value of $t = 13,927 > t \text{-table } 1.667$ with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). From these results, it can be concluded that Ha2 is accepted, which means **that Hypothesis 2 is accepted.**

Simultaneous F Test

The simultaneous significance test (F test) was carried out to evaluate whether the regression model used was a feasible model to test the data and hypothesis proposed. The criteria used is that if the significance value (sig) < 0.05, then the research model is considered feasible to use. On the other hand, if the significance value (sig) > 0.05, then the research model is considered unsuitable for use.

Table 1. Simultaneous F Test Results

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	4989.570	2	2494.785	759.945	.000b
Residual	1175.261	358	3.283		
Total	6164.831	360			
a. Dependent Variable: Service Quality					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication Competence, Intensity of Extension					

Source: Researcher's Processed Products (2024)

Based on the results of the tests that have been carried out, the F result is calculated as 759,945 so that it can be said that this research model can be used for further testing. Furthermore, if you look at the significance value listed in the table above with a sig value of 0.000 which means < 0.05 and it can be concluded that the communication competence of extension workers (X1) and the intensity of extension (X2) simultaneously affect the quality of family planning extension services (Y) in an effort to reduce stunting, Hypothesis **3 is accepted.**

Coefficient of Determination Test

This determination coefficient test is intended to measure how much the influence of extension communication competence (X1) and extension intensity (X2) simultaneously has an influence on the quality of family planning extension services (Y) in an effort to reduce *stunting* in North Padang Lawas Regency or in other words, the determination coefficient (R Square) aims to measure how far the independent variable can explain the bound variable. The results of the determination coefficient test are presented in table 2 below:

Table 2. Determination Coefficient Test Results

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.900a	.809	.808	1.812

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication Competence, Intensity of Extension
Source: Researcher's Processed Products (2024)

Based on Table 2, the R Square value in the determination coefficient calculation yields 0.809. The result of the determination coefficient is in the strong category (R square value is greater than 0.67). This can be interpreted that the communication competence possessed by extension workers and the intensity of counseling have an influence of 80.9% in determining the quality of services provided to pregnant women and mothers who have children in an effort to reduce stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency, while 19.1% is the influence of other factors that are outside this study, such as factors that are difficult to reach, and the distance that must be traveled by family planning extension workers.

Analysis of the Influence of Extension Communication Competencies on the Quality of Family Planning Extension Services in an Effort to Reduce Stunting

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis of the variables of extension communication competence consisting of three indicators, namely knowledge, skills and motivation with 8 question items. The results found that there was an influence of the communication competence of extension workers on the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency. This is seen from the Significance (Sig) value (Sig) of $0.02 < 0.05$. t-table at a confidence level of 95% (significance of 5% or 0.05) and degrees of freedom (df) = $N - k - 1 = 361 - 2 - 1 = 359$ where N = number of samples, and k = number of independent variables, then the t-table value is 1.667. This means that with a calculated t value of $12,668 > t$ table 1,667 that the variable of extension worker communication competence has a significant effect on improving the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency, so that the hypothesis proposed can be accepted as true.

Communication competence is a very important skill for family planning extension workers because the success of family planning programs is highly dependent on the ability of extension workers to effectively convey information, motivate, and influence the behavior of individuals or target groups. By having good communication competence, family planning extension workers can be more effective in achieving program goals, overcoming emerging challenges, and bringing sustainable positive change in society. If someone has high competence, they will also have high performance. This communication competency theory emphasizes the importance of family planning extension workers having good communication competence so that programs decrease stunting achievable. Communication competence refers to a person's ability to communicate effectively. These abilities include (1) a knowledge of the role of the environment (content) in influencing the content (content) and (2) communication messages (Hidayat, 2021). In this theory of communication competence, Brian Spitzberg and William Cupach believe that the competence of a communicator can be seen in 3 important elements, namely knowledge, skills and motivation where these three aspects are also indicators of the communication competence of extension workers in this study (Dinata, 2020). This study tries to describe how the influence and how much impact the communication competence of extension workers has on the quality of family planning extension services in an effort to reduce the stunting.

The efforts made by family planning extension workers to change community behavior through stunting reduction programs require good communication competence, and so far family planning extension workers have done according to their competencies. This can be seen from the results of the questionnaire on one of the statements derived from the knowledge indicator, namely "If there is something I want to ask, the family planning extension worker is able to explain well and clearly". A total of 194 respondents admitted that they agreed if the family planning extension worker could explain well and clearly and as many as 150 respondents also admitted that they strongly agreed with the statement. This means that in carrying out stunting prevention programs and assisting families at risk of stunting, family planning extension workers are able to provide information that is easy for respondents to understand so that there is a change in respondents' behavior in a better direction as an effort to prevent stunting.

This is also in line with previous research conducted by Maulida & Suriani (2021) which concluded that in an effort to prevent stunting, good communication skills are very necessary for cadres and health officers in delivering counseling, so that there can be a change in community behavior for the better. The results of his research also explained that communication carried out by cadres was 18 times better in efforts to change behavior towards prevention stunting. If it is associated with the theory of communication competence, it is part of the indicators of knowledge and skills.

Regarding the skills possessed by family planning extension workers, it is known that the majority of respondents answered that family planning extension workers explain information using language that is easy for respondents to understand, and are able to make the atmosphere of counseling feel comfortable and fun. This is reflected in 361 respondents, as many as 182 respondents answered that they agreed with the delivery of material in easy-to-understand language and as many as 189 respondents answered that they agreed with the ability of family planning extension workers to create a pleasant atmosphere during counseling activities. A pleasant atmosphere is very related to the quality of service so that it can affect the experience of respondents in getting a knowledge/information that they have just heard for the first time. This is because it can create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere for respondents. When respondents felt comfortable and happy when participating in counseling activities, they tended to be better at listening to the information conveyed by family planning extension workers. So that stunting prevention materials sound very interesting to follow.

In the context of service quality, the theory of communication competence also explains that communicators must have motivation, this motivation plays an important role in determining how well family planning extension workers provide services or counseling to respondents. Family planning extension workers who have high motivation tend to be more involved and committed to their work. They will feel more responsible for the services or counseling they provide to the community. Moreover, judging from the results of filling out the questionnaire, the majority of respondents had the last education of high school graduates as many as 147 people, and undergraduate graduates as many as 113 people. A person with a high level of education will have higher knowledge. A high level of education will also affect a person in seeking and understanding information (Kristiyanti et al., 2021). This is a challenge for family planning extension workers to continue to provide assistance to the community about prevention programs stunting.

The mobility indicator on communication competence intends to measure the ability of family planning extension workers to provide encouragement through information and services, in this case a situation that can encourage respondents who are pregnant women and mothers who have clowns to participate in stunting prevention counseling activities. Based on the results of the questionnaire data, it was found that the majority of respondents gave answers agreeing that family planning extension workers had high enthusiasm when giving counseling with a total of 184 answers. Likewise, when I consulted with family planning counselors, I felt comfortable and safe to convey my problems, as many as 184 respondents admitted to agreeing and as many as 197 respondents admitted to agreeing with my statement that I had a desire to follow the advice given by family planning counselors. It can be concluded that motivated family planning extension workers tend to have higher enthusiasm and energy in dealing with the community. They will be more friendly, responsive, and have a positive attitude that can positively influence society.

The results of this study are supported by previous research conducted by Lusiana Andriani and Syafruddin Pohan (L. A. Lubis & Pohan, 2019) entitled Preparation communication competency of field officers of family planning in socialization of family planning program in Batang Angkola sub-district, South of Tapanuli. This study discusses the communication competence possessed by family planning extension workers can be measured from the success of family planning extension workers in socializing the Family Planning program to the community, especially inviting couples of childbearing age to use contraceptives. With their communication competence, it can help couples of childbearing age have awareness of the importance of using contraceptives and change the views of couples of childbearing age to participate in the family planning program effectively.

The results of this study are also in line with previous research conducted by O Subagja (Subagja, 2019) which concluded that employee competence affects the quality of birth certificate services at the Bogor Regency Population and Civil Registration Office. The magnitude of the influence of employee competency variables on the quality variable of a birth certificate service at DISDUKCAPIL Bogor Regency is determined by motives, traits, self- concept, knowledge, and Skills. Motivation, quality, self- concept, knowledge, and ability all play a role in determining how much the influence of employee competency variables on the quality of birth certificate services at DISDUKCAPIL Bogor Regency. The existence of this influence shows that there is a causal relationship between employee competence and the quality of birth certificate services, meaning that the improvement of employee competence is positively correlated with the quality of birth certificate services. Skills indicators have the most dominant influence.

Analysis of Counseling Intensity on the Quality of Family Planning Extension Services in an Effort to Reduce Stunting

An extension worker usually conducts counseling activities to increase public awareness, including increasing knowledge, attitudes and changes in community behavior as his goal. Communication activities in which there is a two-way interaction that ultimately results in imitation and modeling processes in the learning agenda is an activity of counseling. In the theory of extension communication competence, family planning extension workers must have the knowledge and skills needed to communicate effectively and appropriately. Spitzberg and Cupach argue that knowledge in this case is more emphasized on the "how" of communication than on the "what" of communication. These knowledge include knowing what to say, what kind of behavior to take in different situations, how others will respond and behave, who to communicate with, and understand the content of the message conveyed. This is because family planning extension workers are required to have credible abilities in conveying information, so that they can convince the target with the information conveyed.

The intensity of counseling intended in this study is the frequency of family planning extension workers carrying out counseling and mentoring activities as one of the efforts to reduce stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency. Basically, intensity is a state that can be measured by how often you do something. Some indicators that can be used to measure the level of intensity are motivation, duration of activities, frequency of activities, presentation, direction of attitude and interest. These six indicators were also used in this study.

In increasing knowledge and changing attitudes, the intensity of counseling plays a very important role, but is it something that is done as a form of efforts to reduce stunting. This is what this study wants to know. From the results of this study, it was shown that the effect of counseling intensity (X2) on the quality of service (Y) of family planning extension workers in an effort to reduce stunting was obtained with a t-value of 13,927 > t table 1.667 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p > 0.05$). So it can be concluded that the intensity of counseling is proven to have an influence on the quality of services carried out by family planning extension workers. In this study, the researcher will discuss the indicators used to measure the intensity of counseling that can affect the quality of family planning extension services.

The first indicator in the intensity of counseling is the motivation indicator. Motivation indicators on the intensity of counseling refer to a number of factors that measure the level of encouragement, desire, or motivation of the community or target group to be actively involved in counseling activities. This indicator helps in evaluating the extent to which counseling has succeeded in stimulating the interest and motivation of the audience to take part in counseling activities as well as adopting the desired change in behavior or knowledge. The results of this study found that the majority of respondents admitted to agreeing with the statement "I have a high desire to find information on the schedule of counseling activities organized by 218 family planning extension workers and I am enthusiastic about participating in stunting prevention counseling activities as many as 201 respondents. This proves that family planning extension workers are able to stimulate the community to participate in counseling activities. The act of motivating the community is an important step in efforts to reduce stunting rates and improve the welfare of children and society as a whole. Some communities may have stigmas or myths related to stunting that can hinder participation in prevention programs. With the right motivation and accurate counseling, people can reduce stigma and eliminate unfounded myths, so that they are more accepting and open to prevention programs.

The next indicator is the indicator of the duration of activities on the intensity of counseling which refers to the time spent organizing counseling activities. In the results of the questionnaire data, it is known that as many as 175 respondents answered yes and 134 respondents admitted that they strongly agreed with the statement that family planning extension workers always provide assistance and counseling on stunting to me. However, even though the majority of respondents agree with the above statement, there are still respondents who have different opinions. There were 52 respondents who had different opinions. This can be interpreted that not all family planning counselors provide assistance and stunting counseling to respondents, so this needs to be an evaluation for family planning counselors to provide equal assistance to respondents who are target families at risk of stunting.

The third indicator is the indicator of the frequency of activities on the intensity of counseling which refers to how often counseling activities are carried out in a certain period of time. This indicator helps in evaluating the level of activity or consistency of counseling carried out to achieve certain goals. Based on the results of the respondents' data, it was found that the majority of respondents said they

agreed to attend the counseling activity on the prevention of stunting once a month. However, in my statement that I attend activities twice a month, as many as 91 respondents have different opinions. This happens because there are several areas that are difficult to access both family planning extension workers and respondents, at least counseling activities are accompanied by Posyandu activities which are usually carried out routinely once a month in each neighborhood so that many family planning extension workers cannot provide counseling activities more than 1 time a month.

Furthermore, the presentation indicator on the intensity of counseling refers to a number of factors that assess the quality and effectiveness of the way of delivering information or counseling materials to the audience. This indicator helps in evaluating how well the message or extension material is conveyed to the community or target group so that it can be well understood and inspire changes in desired behavior or knowledge. Counseling is a part of non-formal education that aims to improve the way adults behave so that they have better skills, attitudes, and knowledge and are able to determine alternative options that will be decided so that existing problems can be solved as an effort to improve their welfare (Khaliq et al., 2023). To find out the extent to which the respondents understood the material presented, the Family Planning Extension Officer asked the respondents questions about the material presented earlier, so that it was known whether the respondents understood and listened to the counseling carefully, or the way the Family Planning Extension Officer delivered the difficult to understand Family Planning Extension Officer. Judging from the results of the questionnaire, it was found that as many as 210 out of 361 respondents admitted that they agreed that family planning extension workers actively asked questions to participants, and as many as 209 respondents admitted that they agreed that family planning extension workers gave respondents the opportunity to ask questions. From these results, it can be concluded that family planning extension workers involve respondents to participate in counseling activities. So that with the involvement of respondents during the activity, it is hoped that it can increase knowledge, and change behavior in prevention efforts stunting.

Another indicator in the intensity of counseling is an indicator of the direction of attitude and interest. Attitude direction indicators refer to a number of factors that measure changes in attitudes or views of the community or target groups towards the topics or issues conveyed in extension activities. Meanwhile, this interest indicator is a factor that measures the level of interest and involvement of the community or target group in extension activities. The results of the questionnaire showed that the majority of respondents agreed with the statement submitted. This can be interpreted that the majority of respondents agree with the counseling activities organized by family planning extension workers, causing respondents to be interested in attending these activities. The respondents also agreed with the stunting counseling activities held by family planning counselors so that they could provide additional information to strengthen behavioral changes in stunting prevention.

The results of this study are also supported by the value of the regression coefficient of extension intensity (X2) is 0.624, meaning that assuming that the extension communication competency variable (X1) and constant (a) is 0 (zero) and the extension intensity variable (X2) increases by 1%, then the quality of family planning extension services increases by 0.624. The magnitude of the regression coefficient of extension intensity (X2) has a regression in a positive direction and it can be stated that the variable of the quality of extension services for family planning (Y) will have the potential to increase every change in the variable of extension intensity (X2) assuming that other variables remain or equal to zero. Thus, the more often family planning extension workers carry out counseling activities, the better the quality of family planning extension services felt by respondents in assisting target families at risk of stunting. So that the public's understanding of stunting increases, and they are more aware of the importance of stunting prevention. This will also have an impact on reducing the prevalence of stunting in North Padang Lawas Regency.

The results of this study are also in line with previous research conducted by Pratiwi et al. (2023) which concludes that counseling that is carried out regularly and often will help mothers who have toddlers get more complete and up-to-date information about stunting prevention. The knowledge gained from repeated counseling will be easier to remember and understand, so that it will affect the behavior of mothers to prevent stunting in their children. As well as in line with previous research conducted by Zuyyina & Fakhruddin (2020) which concluded that the increase in family productive economy in the UPPKS group was also influenced by the intensity of counseling. High intensity of counseling can create a more effective and supportive learning environment so that UPPKS groups are ready to adopt the information needed to improve the productive economy of families.

Previous research conducted by Anggreni et al. (2022) entitled Implementation of prevention programs stunting at the Dolok Sigompulon Health Center, North Padang Lawas Regency also explained that in carrying out the stunting for toddlers in North Padang Lawas Regency, officers first provide counseling on what the prevention program is stunting. Socialization or counseling activities in the villages where the stunting has been carried out but focuses more on counseling by providing material on causes, ways to prevent, assist, and others. By having good communication skills, officers can be more effective in carrying out prevention programs stunting, increasing public awareness, and encouraging the behavioural changes needed to lower the prevalence of stunting.

Analysis of the Influence of Extension Worker Communication Competence and Intensity of Extension on the Quality of Family Planning Extension Services in an Effort to Reduce Stunting

The quality of Family Planning (KB) extension services in an effort to reduce stunting refers to the extent to which family planning extension workers can provide effective, efficient, and satisfactory services to the community in the context of stunting prevention. The high quality of service from family planning extension workers plays an important role in conveying the right information, building trust, and motivating the behavioral changes needed to prevent stunting. Efforts to reduce stunting have been carried out through various types of services that include education, counseling, and interventions that focus on reproductive health, nutrition, and child care.

In the context of service quality, the communication competence possessed by extension workers has a significant impact on the quality of services provided. Extension workers with good communication competence can convey information about stunting prevention clearly and accurately. This is important to ensure that the message conveyed is easily understood by respondents with various educational backgrounds. High communication competence allows extension workers to identify and correct common misconceptions about stunting as well as reduce stigma that may be associated with the use of family planning services. The ability of family planning extension workers to address sensitive topics in a culturally appropriate manner also helps reduce barriers to receiving information and services.

In line with research conducted Sebayang (2016) revealed that the strategy that can be done in increasing the work motivation of extension workers is by improving communication competence. This is because by increasing the communication competence of extension workers, being able to provide good information and services to farmers, and motivating extension workers to achieve the best achievements in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. However, previous research did not relate to the quality of services provided by extension workers to farmers, so this research is a novelty of previous research that has been carried out.

Based on multiple linear regression analysis, the results were obtained through a determination coefficient test which showed that the influence of the communication competence of extension workers and the intensity of extension on service quality was 80.9%. The results also show that the strength of the influence of the variables of extension communication competence and the intensity of extension on service quality is in the strong category. Linear regression analysis also showed positive results indicating that the better the communication competence of family planning extension workers and the intensity of counseling, the better the quality of service. Thus, high communication competence and intensive counseling significantly improve the quality of family planning extension services, which in turn supports efforts to reduce stunting through increased knowledge, behavior change, and active community participation.

The contribution of the influence of the extension communication competency variable on the quality of service, as well as the contribution of the influence of the extension intensity variable on the quality of service, can be known by the effective contribution value of each independent variable to the bound variable. The communication competency variable has an influence of 38.6% on service quality. Meanwhile, the influence of the extension intensity variable had an influence of 42.3% on the quality of service. This shows that between the two independent variables, the extension intensity variable has a greater influence than the communication competence of the extension worker. This means that even though family planning extension workers have good communication competence, they will not have a great influence in changing people's behavior if they do not carry out counseling activities frequently. Likewise, if family planning extension workers are not equipped with qualified communication competencies, it will affect the information conveyed. So that these two variables must go hand in hand to be able to influence the quality of service. With these findings, the researcher believes that this is a

novelty in this study, because there is no previous study examining the correlation between the two independent variables on the quality of family planning extension services.

CONCLUSION

The study found that communication competence of extension workers significantly impacted the quality of family planning extension services in North Padang Lawas Regency by 38.6%. The intensity of counseling also affected the quality by 42.3%, with indicators such as duration, motivation, frequency, presentation, attitude, and interest. Communication competence and extension intensity had a significant impact on service quality by 80.9%. Factors such as regional difficulties and distance of extension workers also influenced the results. The study suggests further research on family planning and stunting extension workers, cultural perspectives, and communication technology. Practically, the findings can be used by extension workers to improve service quality and ensure adequate competence in stunting prevention programs.

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