
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Collaborative Governance in the Implementation of Education in Rokan Hilir Regency, Riau Province

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| ABSTRACT

The study aims to analyse collaborative governance in the implementation of education in Rokan Hilir Regency and subsequently design a model for collaborative governance in education in Rokan Hilir. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, with primary data obtained through documentation studies, observation, and interviews with informants from the Rokan Hilir Regency Government, the Education Office, Education Supervisors, School Principals, the community, academics, and local media journalists. The data analysis technique uses descriptive analysis, which includes data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The research results indicate: 1) Collaborative governance in the implementation of education in Rokan Hilir Regency has not been optimally implemented based on the following perspectives: a) Principled engagement; lack of involvement from other actors outside the government, such as academics and the media, differences in identifying key problems in education management among stakeholders, lack of inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders, lack of joint decision-making, and a tendency to follow policies already set by the local and central governments; b) Shared motivation; lack of trust towards one of the parties, insufficient acceptance of the process and results of collaboration, and limited opportunities for direct dedication; c) Capacity for joint action; the absence of formal regulations as the foundation for collaborative governance in education, underutilization of digital technology as a communication channel, unequal distribution of knowledge, and limited human resources and budgets; 2) The researcher formulates a collaborative governance model for the implementation of education in Rokan Hilir Regency, namely the Hexa-Helix Collaborative governance Model for Education, developed from the model of Emerson et al. (2012), with an added novelty, which is the need for a hexa-helix approach in the actors or stakeholders involved in the collaboration by enhancing the role and capacity of religious figures, academics, and the media. This model is believed to improve the quality of education and can be applied in other regions with similar characteristics.

| KEYWORDS

Collaborative Governance, Religious Figure, Rokan Hilir Regency

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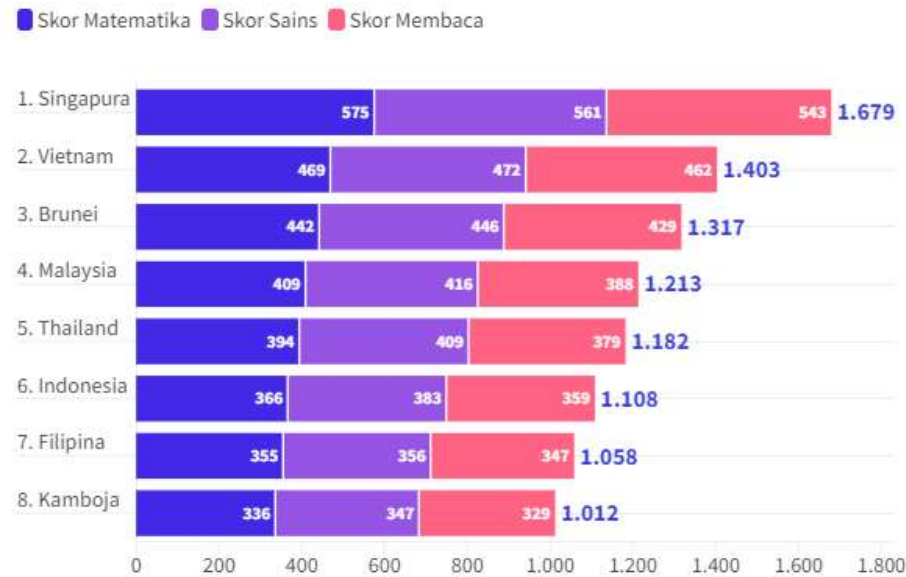
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1. Background

Education plays a crucial role in the social, economic, and cultural development of a country. As a fundamental pillar in shaping high-quality human resources, the education sector significantly contributes to addressing global challenges, enhancing competitiveness, and achieving sustainable development goals. Education not only serves as a key driver of economic growth but also functions as a vital element in tackling global issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability. Through education, societies can empower individuals and cultivate the skills necessary to navigate future challenges (UNESCO, 2017).

In Indonesia, efforts to improve education quality continue to face numerous obstacles. Based on the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings (figure 1), Indonesia ranked 69th with a total score of 1,108, placing it among the bottom twelve countries. In comparison, Singapore ranked first with a score of 1,679, followed by China with 1,605 points, and Taiwan and Japan in third place with 1,599 points each. This low ranking highlights the significant challenges within Indonesia's education sector.

Figure 1: Skor PISA Regional ASEAN 2022



Source: OECD, 2022

Several studies indicate that Indonesia's education policies still encounter serious challenges, including the quality of teaching (Mustafa, 2023), equitable access to education (Madhakomala et al., 2022; Setiawan et al., 2024), and community involvement in education management (Rofiki et al., 2023). Despite various policies and programs implemented by the central and regional governments, the effectiveness of the education sector is often hindered by coordination issues among stakeholders (Ananda et al., 2023; Khadija, 2022).

Although Indonesia has launched various policies to enhance education quality, the challenges faced by specific regions, particularly Rokan Hilir Regency, remain substantial. Key issues in this region include limited educational infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and a high dropout rate, especially in rural areas.

Figure 2: School Condition of SDN 06 Pekaitan Rokan Hilir Regency



Source: ANTARA/Ho-Polres Rokan Hilir, 2023

The image above illustrates the concerning conditions of schools in Rokan Hilir Regency. Several schools, such as SDN 006 Pekaitan, still rely on wooden structures with earthen floors. At this school, approximately 43 students and four PPPK teachers conduct learning activities in inadequate conditions. Poor road access further exacerbates the situation, forcing students to study on fragile desks and chairs within classrooms with broken wooden walls (Firdausi, 2023). This situation highlights the disparities between urban and rural education sectors.

Rokan Hilir Regency, where most areas are rural, struggles to ensure equal and high-quality education access. Limited school infrastructure, inadequate educational facilities, and low teacher welfare remain significant challenges. Additionally, social and economic factors, such as high poverty rates, contribute to lower school participation rates.

The high illiteracy rate in Rokan Hilir Regency, along with a significant number of individuals not attending school (Dani, 2015), is one of the major problems in the education sector. Educational barriers in this region also relate to gender disparities, where a lack of awareness regarding gender issues contributes to unequal access to education. Furthermore, the absence of gender-responsive policies weakens commitments to gender equality in education. Cultural and social factors also play a role, but they should not be solely blamed, as there is no fundamental conflict between local cultural values and gender justice in education (Hidir et al., 2016).

Based on data from BPS Rokan Hilir regarding the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) in 2023, the education sector in Rokan Hilir Regency faces two interrelated major issues. At the elementary school level (SD/equivalent), the GER reached 107.67%, significantly exceeding the ideal threshold (100%). This condition indicates that many children outside the 7–12 age range are enrolled in elementary schools. They may include children who started school late, repeated grades multiple times, or even students under the age of seven who entered elementary school too early. This phenomenon reflects inefficiencies in the basic education system, such as inaccurate school-age data collection, high repetition rates, or zoning policies that fail to ensure equitable access based on age.

On the other hand, participation in secondary education (junior high school and senior high school/equivalent) has significantly declined. The GER for junior high school is only 84.84%, and for senior high school, it is 85.88%, meaning that approximately 15–16% of school-age children are not enrolled in education. These figures reveal a harsh reality: many children in Rokan Hilir Regency are forced to drop out after completing elementary school, becoming trapped in informal work, or unable to continue their education due to economic constraints. The limited number of secondary schools in remote areas, high transportation costs, and a lack of parental awareness about the importance of education further exacerbate this situation. Although the GER for senior high school is slightly higher than for junior high school, the narrow gap (only 1.04%) indicates that the transition from junior high to senior high school remains highly vulnerable to socio-economic factors.

Figure 2: Angka Partisipasi Kasar (APK) Kabupaten Rokan Hilir 2022-2023

School Participation		Primary School/Equivalent	Junior High School/Equivalent	Senior High School/Equivalent
2022	Male	107,97	86,88	92,01
	Female	107,50	100,54	3,40
	Male and Female	107,73	92,75	86,78
2023	Male	107,77	90,44	74,66
	Female	107,58	79,71	98,61
	Male and Female	107,67	84,84	85,88

Source: BPS Rokan Hilir, 2023.

Moreover, the challenges in organizing education in Rokan Hilir Regency are also related to weak financial resources. This is evident from the fact that 678 honorary teachers in Rokan Hilir Regency, Riau, were laid off following the region's financial difficulties over the past two years. In 2016, the number of honorary teachers in this regency, with its capital in Bagan Siapi-api, reached 12,000, but only 2,128 teachers remain under a new contract status (Rangkuti, 2019).

Decentralization challenges, such as regulatory differences and budget allocation, can indirectly affect various sectors, including education. The primary focus has been on infrastructure development and the dominance of executive and legislative actors, which may limit the involvement of educational institutions in regional development planning and implementation, potentially impacting educational outcomes in Rokan Hilir Regency (Asfar et al., 2021).

The main issues in the education sector of Rokan Hilir Regency include the low quality of education, inadequate school facilities, a shortage of qualified teachers, and low student learning outcomes. Additionally, there is an inequality in access to education,

particularly in remote areas, and minimal community participation in supporting children's education. Equally important, the lack of integrated data encompassing educational needs, public opinions, and uncoordinated authorities further worsens the situation. Given the complexity of these issues, involving multiple stakeholders such as the government, schools, parents, communities, and NGOs, collaborative governance is crucial. In the context of limited resources available to the local government, a collaborative approach enables various actors to support each other and share responsibilities. This approach also enhances accountability and transparency in the use of educational resources while facilitating the creation of more inclusive and sustainable solutions tailored to local needs. The theory proposed by Emerson and Nabatchi is highly relevant, as it emphasizes the importance of inclusive participation, trust-building, and collective leadership—essential elements for long-term reforms in the education sector.

Collaboration becomes especially necessary when existing educational policies are ineffective or lack public acceptance. It is also needed in cases of conflicting interests among stakeholders, such as issues related to budget allocation for education, or when addressing education-related challenges that require cross-sectoral solutions, such as improving school facilities or teacher training.

Preliminary observations of researchers on collaborative governance in Rokan Hilir Regency suggest that the existing collaboration in education management primarily involves a limited number of parties. This includes local government cooperation with academia, such as the partnership between the Rokan Hilir Regency Government and Politeknik Caltex Riau in providing scholarships for high school students to continue their education at Politeknik Caltex Riau (pcr.ac.id, 2017). However, collaboration between the Rokan Hilir Regency Government and other stakeholders has not yet been significantly observed or optimally implemented in improving the quality of education in Rokan Hilir Regency.

To address these challenges, the implementation of collaborative governance, supported by the Emerson and Nabatchi framework, can help establish a more effective collaborative system. Additionally, capacity-building efforts for all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and local governments, will strengthen this collaboration to create sustainable educational solutions. This approach prioritizes cooperation among various stakeholders—government agencies, the private sector, educational institutions, and the community—to develop more effective and locally relevant education policies.

The concept of collaborative governance emerges as a potentially effective approach to improving the quality of education. Collaborative governance is a management model that involves cooperation among various stakeholders, including government, communities, the private sector, and civil society organizations, in designing and implementing public policies. This model differs from traditional, hierarchical, and centralized approaches by emphasizing communication, coordination, and participation from all involved parties (Emerson et al., 2012).

The application of collaborative governance in the education sector is seen as a solution to various challenges faced by this sector. One example is in the context of educational equity. Communities, especially in remote areas such as Rokan Hilir Regency, often experience disparities in access to quality education. Limited educational infrastructure, a lack of qualified teachers, and low community participation in decision-making related to education are some of the challenges that local governments and educational institutions must address.

In this context, the application of the collaborative governance concept in the education sector of Rokan Hilir Regency is highly relevant. Collaboration among various stakeholders can create synergies in solving educational problems and enhance the effectiveness of implemented policies. This research aims to analyze the extent to which the implementation of collaborative governance in education can contribute to improving the quality of education in Rokan Hilir Regency.

Previous studies have shown that the application of collaborative governance in education across various regions worldwide, such as in Australia (Innes & Booher, 2004), has yielded positive results in improving education quality, ensuring equitable access, and increasing community involvement in the education process. In Indonesia, several studies have also indicated that collaboration between local governments and communities can enhance the effectiveness of education policies, particularly in resource-limited regions such as Eastern Indonesia (Suryadarma & Sumarto, 2010). However, the implementation of collaborative governance in education in regions like Rokan Hilir Regency remains underexplored, making this research crucial to fill the gap in the existing literature.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze collaborative governance in the administration of education in Rokan Hilir Regency, Riau Province, and to examine and formulate a collaborative governance model for education management in Rokan Hilir Regency, Riau Province.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Collaborative Governance

The term collaborative governance refers to a governance approach that directly involves stakeholders outside the government or state, emphasizing consensus and deliberation in the collective decision-making process to create or implement public policies and programs (Astuti, R. S., Warsono, H., & Rachim, A., 2020). The primary focus of collaborative governance is on public policies and issues. While public institutions play a significant role in policy-making, the goal and process of collaboration are aimed at achieving a high degree of consensus among stakeholders. Collaborative governance seeks to realize social justice in fulfilling

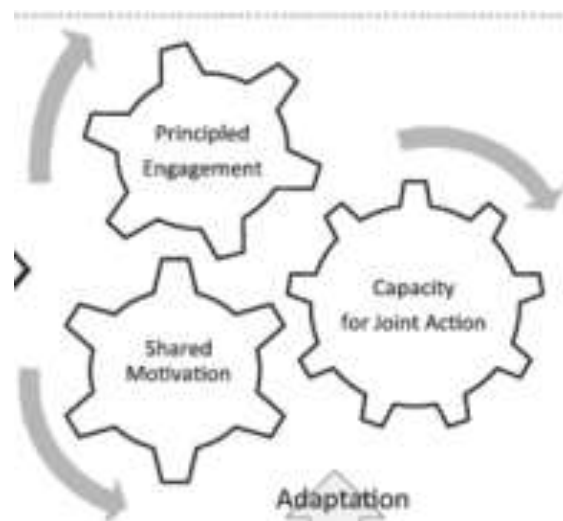
public interests. Collaboration itself is a concept that describes a facilitative process and implementation involving multiple organizations to solve problems that cannot or are not easily resolved by a single organization alone (Bingham & O'Leary, 2008).

The collaborative governance model emerged as a response to increasingly complex public problems, requiring multiple actors (multi-actor) to address these challenges. This means that collaborative governance can be understood as an effort to enhance public management effectiveness through cross-actor involvement within a governance framework. In general, governance structures consist of a state-dominated model, a government model, and a multi-actor model. Among these, the multi-actor model is considered the foundation of the collaborative governance approach.

The collaborative governance model developed by Emerson et al. (2012) is referred to as the integrative framework of collaborative governance. This model focuses on the concept of the Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR). In this model, a regime is understood as an effort to direct specific patterns, systems, or public policymaking through cross-sectoral collaboration, manifested in behaviors and activities. This model has also been used and tested by Crosby (2005) and Krasner (1983). According to them, the Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR) is a set of implicit and explicit principles, rules, norms, and decision-making procedures among actors, in which all stakeholders' interests can be accommodated within a single policy area.

Several scholars describe the collaborative process as a linear sequence of cognitive steps or stages occurring over time, beginning with problem definition and moving toward direction-setting and implementation (Daniels & Walker, 2001; Gray, 1989; Selin & Chavez, 1995). However, consistent with the views of Ansell and Gash (2008) as well as Thomson and Perry (2006), Emerson et al. (2012) conceptualize the stages within collaborative dynamics as cyclical or iterative interactions. They emphasize three interrelated components in collaborative dynamics: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action.

Figure 3: *Collaborative governance*. Emerson, Nabatchi dan Balogh (2012)



Source: Emerson et al., 2012

Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2012) developed the Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR) framework, a comprehensive model for understanding the dynamics of multi-stakeholder collaboration. This concept consists of three interrelated core dimensions: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action.

The first dimension, principled engagement, involves an iterative process of problem discovery, goal and role definition, inclusive deliberation, and collective decision-making. This process emphasizes the inclusion of relevant stakeholders, open communication, and consensus on "shared interests" informed by multisectoral perspectives (National Research Council, 2009).

The second dimension, shared motivation, is built through cycles of mutual trust, understanding of differences, internal legitimacy of the collaborative process, and sustained commitment to common goals—factors that Ansell and Gash (2007) consider crucial for reducing conflict and facilitating agreement.

The third dimension, capacity for joint action, includes institutional arrangements, facilitative leadership, knowledge sharing, and resource allocation (Agranoff, 2008), all of which collectively create the operational capacity to achieve concrete outcomes.

This framework is considered more holistic compared to other collaboration models such as Ansell and Gash's (which focuses on deliberative processes) or the Triple/Quadruple Helix model (which is limited to specific actors), as it accommodates the complexity of cross-sectoral issues like education policy or sustainable development (Bryson, 2015). However, CGR's weaknesses lie in the

difficulty of measuring qualitative elements such as trust and motivation, as well as the high coordination demands at a large scale. Overall, this theory offers an adaptive approach to collaboration, emphasizing continuous learning, inclusivity, and synergy among actors to achieve objectives that would be unattainable individually.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method, aiming to reach conclusions that cannot be derived through conventional statistical techniques or other measurable approaches. Through this method, a deeper understanding can be gained regarding the impact of various institutions and social groups on the lives of their members, as well as other social phenomena. As is common in qualitative research, this study requires diverse data sources, categorized into two main types: informants and documents. Informants are individuals who provide data through their speech and actions, making their words and behavior the primary pillar of data collection, while other elements serve as reinforcements or complementary sources.

In conducting this research, two main types of data are collected: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to information obtained directly from its source through direct interaction with research subjects. The collection of primary data can be conducted through interviews and direct observation. This type of data may take the form of audio recordings, video recordings, or photographs, which are directly produced by the researcher. Since primary data is collected firsthand, it is new and relevant to the latest developments in the research context.

On the other hand, secondary data refers to information that is not directly obtained from its original source but rather gathered through pre-existing documents or records. This type of data includes written manuscripts, archived photographs, and statistical data compiled by other institutions. The management of secondary data requires a collection method tailored to its unique characteristics, ensuring that the data can be optimally utilized as a supporting component for analysis in this research.

The method of determining informants in this study employs a **purposive sampling** approach to ensure that the selected informants are relevant to the research based on their authority, experience, or expertise in education policy in Rokan Hilir Regency. Meanwhile, **snowball sampling** is used to expand the scope of informants by relying on recommendations from previous informants, thereby obtaining richer and more in-depth data. The combination of these two techniques enables the study to obtain valid, comprehensive, and representative information on the issues being examined.

Table 3: List of Informan

No	Informant	Quantity	Sampling Technique
1	2	3	4
	I. Government		
1.	Regent of Rokan Hilir	1	Purposive
2	Head of the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Rokan Hilir Regency	1	Purposive
3	Head of the Education and Culture Office of Rokan Hilir Regency	1	Purposive
4	Regional Coordinator of the District Education Office in Rokan Hilir Regency	10	Snowball
	II. Civil Society		
5	Elementary School Principal/Teacher	10	Snowball
6	Parents of Students	10	Snowball
7	Community/Religious Leaders	2	Purposive
	III. Private Sector		
8	Private Sector	2	Purposive
	IV. Academics		
9	Academics	2	Purposive
	V. Media		
10	Local Journalist	2	Purposive

No	Informant	Quantity	Sampling Technique
1	2	3	4
	Total	41	

This study employs a combination of primary and secondary data collection techniques to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded approach in analyzing collaborative governance in food security implementation. The primary data collection relies on in-depth interviews, allowing informants to express their insights, arguments, and perspectives freely. A structured interview guide is used as a reference, but questions are further developed during the conversation to gather deeper insights. Informants include representatives from provincial and local governments, regional legislative councils (DPRD), community leaders, and academics. In addition to interviews, the study also applies non-participant observation, ensuring that the researcher does not interfere in the observed activities. This method is chosen to maintain objectivity and preserve the natural setting of the subjects, avoiding external influences. The observations are conducted on-site in food security program locations, with an observation guide used to ensure consistency in data collection. Furthermore, the documentary study is utilized to collect reports, news articles, official documents, and academic literature relevant to collaborative governance in achieving regional resilience through food security programs in West Java Province. By combining these three methods, this research ensures data validity and reliability, providing a comprehensive perspective on governance, policy implementation, and stakeholder engagement in food security efforts.

In this qualitative study, data collection and analysis are conducted interactively, following the framework outlined by Huberman and Miles (2009: 20). The analysis process consists of four key stages, beginning with data collection, where information is systematically gathered from the field while maintaining a clear research focus. Following this, data condensation is carried out, involving the selection, simplification, abstraction, and transformation of raw data, including field notes, interview transcripts, and documents, to enhance clarity and organization. The next stage, data display, structures and organizes information to facilitate interpretation, deduction, and decision-making, with visual representation aiding in further analysis or intervention. Finally, conclusion drawing involves identifying patterns, causal relationships, and hypotheses, ensuring that findings are well-supported by empirical evidence.

To guarantee data validity and reliability, a rigorous verification process is applied through data representation and classification. This study employs triangulation, a technique that cross-checks findings using multiple sources and analytical methods to strengthen the credibility of the conclusions. Source triangulation is conducted by verifying data obtained from various stakeholders involved in Collaborative Governance of Education Implementation in Rokan Hilir Regency. By incorporating multiple validation techniques, this study ensures that data integrity is maintained, reinforcing the accuracy and trustworthiness of the research findings.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Collaborative Governance of Education Implementation in Rokan Hilir Regency

4.1.1 Principle Engagement

4.1.1.1 Discovery

According to informants, the administration of education in Rokan Hilir Regency involves multi-stakeholder collaboration, including the local government, schools, the community, the business sector, and educational institutions. The local government plays a central role in policy formulation and facility provision, while the private sector's participation through CSR programs and the community's involvement via school committees also serve as supporting pillars. The Regional Secretary of Rokan Hilir Regency emphasized that this collaboration involves key stakeholders such as schools, the education office, parents, and business actors, although the intensity of their involvement varies. At the school level, for instance, interactions between principals, teachers, staff, and parents through school committees appear quite dynamic, but synergy with the education office or other external institutions remains limited.

However, community participation in educational policy decision-making is still restricted to attending formal meetings without substantive involvement in planning. Academics, who possess scientific expertise, have also not been optimally utilized—their studies are rarely used as a basis for policy due to minimal communication between researchers and stakeholders. Similarly, local mass media primarily function as policy information channels rather than collaborative partners in education discussions. This indicates that while collaboration involves many parties, the local government's dominance in the process remains prominent, whereas the roles of other stakeholders such as academics, media, and the general public have not yet been fully integrated.

Another emerging challenge is the disparity in access to and quality of education between urban and remote areas. Schools in remote regions often lack basic facilities such as proper classrooms, libraries, and learning tools. Educational access is also hindered by long travel distances of up to 20 km, damaged roads, and seasonal flooding that isolates settlements. As a result, students in these areas frequently miss school or arrive exhausted, disrupting the learning process. This issue is further exacerbated by budget

constraints: BOS funds are only sufficient to cover school operational needs, while transportation and school supply costs remain a burden for low-income families, despite the provision of free primary education.

Efforts to address these challenges require more inclusive and evidence-based collaboration. For instance, the construction of boarding schools or the implementation of distance learning (e-learning) systems could serve as solutions to overcome geographical barriers. However, the realization of these ideas is still hindered by insufficient budget allocation and the lack of private sector involvement in funding. On the other hand, the engagement of local communities and the private sector in supporting infrastructure development—such as road improvements, the provision of subsidized school transportation, or the establishment of private schools in isolated areas—needs to be optimized.

Field findings also confirm that human resource issues in education are equally critical. The quality of educators in remote areas remains low due to a lack of training and the uneven distribution of teachers. Studies by UNESCO (2015) and the World Bank (2018) emphasize that equal access to facilities and teacher capacity building are key to improving education quality. Unfortunately, coordination between the government, academics, and education practitioners in designing solutions remains weak, leading to policies that often fail to address the root causes of the problems.

From a collaborative governance perspective, these findings indicate that collaboration in Rokan Hilir Regency has not yet fully achieved the principles of equity and sustainability. The government remains the dominant actor, while the participation of other stakeholders tends to be symbolic. Therefore, systematic efforts are needed to strengthen cross-sector communication, increase budget transparency, and develop more substantive participation mechanisms—such as involving academics in policy planning or engaging the media as partners in program outreach. Only through such measures can this multi-stakeholder collaboration effectively address the complex challenges of education in a holistic and inclusive manner.

4.1.1.2 Definition

The process of collaborative governance in the administration of education in Rokan Hilir Regency refers to the model by Emerson et al. (2012), which emphasizes the sustainability of collaborative efforts to agree on common goals, formulate achievement strategies, and clarify the rights and responsibilities of each party. According to informants, this approach is implemented through multi-stakeholder collaboration between the government, educational institutions, the community, and the private sector, with the goal of creating a transparent, participatory, and high-quality education system. The primary objective is to improve access to and equity in education, especially in remote areas, while ensuring that policies are responsive to community needs.

As the main actor, the local government is responsible for formulating policies, allocating budgets, and overseeing the quality of education. However, policy implementation in the field remains uneven—schools in remote areas often lack basic facilities, teacher distribution is unequal, and accessibility is hindered by geographical conditions. On the other hand, the private sector, through educational foundations, provides alternative services in hard-to-reach areas, although its focus remains limited to affluent communities. This creates social disparities, as private schools tend to maintain higher standards but are less accessible to low-income families.

Although multi-stakeholder collaboration is deemed crucial, structural barriers such as complex bureaucracy and weak coordination often hinder synergy. For instance, corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs from the private sector frequently encounter inefficient administrative procedures, while the participation of academics in policy formulation remains minimal due to a lack of communication between researchers and policymakers. Yet, data-driven scientific studies can provide concrete recommendations to improve education quality (Davies & Nutley, 2000). Local media have also not been fully utilized—they often serve as passive information channels rather than active partners in policy discussions.

The imbalance in stakeholder roles is reflected in the dominance of the government and the private sector, while communities, academics, and media remain underrepresented. Although school committees serve as a platform for parental participation, their involvement in strategic decision-making—such as budget allocation or curriculum planning—remains largely symbolic. At the macro level, the absence of an inclusive participation mechanism results in education policies that often fail to address root issues, such as unequal infrastructure distribution and additional financial burdens (transportation, school supplies) that continue to weigh on low-income families.

To address these challenges, systemic reforms are necessary. First, the government needs to simplify bureaucracy and establish a cross-sectoral coordination platform to accelerate the implementation of collaborative programs. Second, academic involvement in policy planning must be intensified to ensure that proposed solutions are evidence-based and relevant to field conditions. Third, the private sector should be encouraged to focus not only on profit but also on expanding scholarship or subsidy programs for underprivileged students, particularly in isolated areas. Fourth, the media must be empowered as strategic partners in policy dissemination and education advocacy.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration in education in Rokan Hilir Regency has shown progress but remains far from the principles of equity and sustainability as mandated by Emerson et al. (2012). The dominance of the government and private sector, minimal community participation, and bureaucratic obstacles are the primary barriers to achieving an inclusive education system. By strengthening communication, transparency, and substantial participation mechanisms, this collaboration can serve as a catalyst for an equitable and high-quality education transformation for all societal groups.

4.1.1.3 Deliberation

The emphasis is not only on the formation of deliberation but more on the quality of deliberation, as collaboration often involves differences in thoughts, perspectives, and interests that emerge at any time. Building high-quality deliberation requires advocacy skills, though not necessarily among all individuals—having some advocates is sufficient. This advocacy is internal, meaning it aims to guide collaboration and actors to stay aligned with collaborative goals, strategically and effectively resolving conflicts (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012).

Implicitly, deliberation seeks to answer questions regarding actors' courage to act freely within collaboration—whether there is government pressure that limits collaborative actions or coercion to act in a certain way. The presence of a deliberative democracy process allows collaboration to serve as a platform for developing innovation and creativity, both in generating ideas and in addressing practical challenges in the field. When unexpected problems arise, actors should not fear taking creative action, as there is no pressure to act strictly as instructed (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012).

Based on information from informants, inclusive dialogue serves as the foundation of collaborative governance in education management in Rokan Hilir Regency. This process involves the active participation of the government, schools, the community, the private sector, and academics to identify issues and formulate comprehensive solutions. For example, in addressing education accessibility in remote areas, directly hearing the voices of the community and schools enables policies to be more responsive. The government has initiated multi-stakeholder discussion forums, but the quality of dialogue still needs improvement, particularly in coordination and facilitation, to ensure that all stakeholders' aspirations are accommodated.

At the school level, inclusive dialogue functions relatively well through school committees involving parents in discussions about facilities and extracurricular activities. However, their participation in macro-policy planning—such as curriculum development or regional budget allocation—remains minimal. Meanwhile, private-sector entities, such as educational foundations, often feel sidelined. Although they possess resources and innovative ideas, obstacles such as lack of coordination and access to information limit their contributions. In fact, government-private sector collaboration could be a solution to issues of facilities and education access, provided that structured dialogue and mutual commitment support it (Rondinelli & London, 2003).

The main weakness lies in the *Musrenbang* (Development Planning Deliberation) forum, where education issues are often not prioritized. Academics, community leaders, and representatives from remote areas are rarely substantively involved, even though their voices are crucial for understanding real conditions in the field. For instance, issues such as damaged roads that hinder students' access to schools or teacher shortages in rural areas rarely appear on the discussion agenda. As a result, the policies produced tend to overlook the root causes of problems. This contradicts UNESCO's (2020) principle, which emphasizes that inclusive education must involve the active participation of all stakeholders to ensure equal access.

Academic involvement in policy planning remains limited, even though their research can provide data-driven recommendations. The lack of communication between researchers and policymakers results in proposed solutions often failing to be implemented. Meanwhile, the general public—especially in remote areas—still struggles to voice their specific needs, such as requests for boarding schools or subsidized transportation. Active community participation in *Musrenbang* could enrich policy planners' perspectives (Ikmal et al., 2022).

The author argues that to ensure inclusive dialogue is not merely a formality, concrete steps are necessary. First, the government needs to prioritize education issues in *Musrenbang* by allocating dedicated time and space for in-depth discussions. Second, a cross-sectoral coordination platform should be established, involving representatives from foundations, academics, and local communities to design collaborative programs. Third, transparency in information regarding education budgets and policies must be improved so that all stakeholders can contribute effectively. Lastly, a continuous feedback mechanism should be adopted to ensure that collected aspirations are genuinely integrated into policies.

Ultimately, it can be said that inclusive dialogue in education management in Rokan Hilir Regency has shown progress, especially at the micro-level, such as in school committees. However, the main challenge remains the imbalance in participation within strategic forums like *Musrenbang*. By strengthening the involvement of the private sector, academics, and marginalized communities, and by making education a priority in development planning, this multi-stakeholder collaboration can serve as a catalyst for the creation of an education system that is truly inclusive, responsive, and sustainable.

4.1.1.4 Determination

It is a series of determinations, namely the act of establishing desired objectives, which are then categorized into primary determination, carried out through several procedural decisions (e.g., setting a collaboration agenda, scheduling discussions, forming working groups), and substantive determination, achieved through the outcomes of collaboration (e.g., reaching a mutual agreement, finalizing collaborative action recommendations).

In ongoing collaboration, substantive determinations are made continuously as they are more essential. From a practical perspective, determination can be realized through the formation of consensus as a fundamental method in establishing joint determinations.

In conclusion, the activation of shared principles is formed and maintained through the interactive process of expression, deliberation, and determination. The effectiveness of activating shared principles is determined by the quality of each element and the interactive process among the three.

Based on informants' accounts, decision-making in the implementation of education within the collaborative governance framework in Rokan Hilir Regency involves multiple stakeholders, though their roles remain imbalanced. The district government has taken strategic steps, such as improving teacher quality, developing educational facilities, and expanding access to remote areas. Programs like the *Indonesia Pintar* (Smart Indonesia) scholarship scheme, the construction of schools in underserved regions, and inclusive education initiatives have also been prioritized. However, while efforts have been made to incorporate deliberation and data-driven analysis, the participation of other actors—such as schools and local communities—remains limited. Many decisions are still implemented through a top-down approach, particularly at the district and central government levels, leaving schools and communities feeling excluded from policy planning. Moving forward, more intensive collaboration between the government, schools, communities, and the private sector is critical to ensure policies are inclusive and aligned with on-the-ground realities. By broadening stakeholder engagement in decision-making, educational policies in Rokan Hilir can become more targeted and ultimately enhance overall education quality.

This aligns with the growing consensus on the necessity of balanced, multi-stakeholder collaboration. A more equitable decision-making process—where all stakeholders have meaningful input—is essential for developing effective and contextually relevant educational policies. Studies on collaborative governance, such as those focusing on community accountability in remote schools (Hwa, 2023; Riggs et al., 2018), emphasize that inclusive participation and balanced power dynamics are prerequisites for sustainable outcomes.

The core purpose of collaboration is to achieve shared goals unattainable through individual efforts, necessitating continuous communication among stakeholders. As Bichler and Lösch (2019) argue, stakeholders must engage in ongoing dialogue to integrate critical feedback. Fragmented communication outside unified forums can hinder cross-sector partnerships, as seen in tourism development initiatives (Kurtsal et al., 2020). These scholars highlight that building consensus on shared objectives and devising methods to meaningfully involve stakeholders remain persistent challenges in collaborative endeavors. The case of Rokan Hilir underscores both progress and gaps in collaborative governance. While the government has demonstrated commitment through concrete programs, the limited involvement of schools, communities, and the private sector risks perpetuating policy misalignment. To address this, adopting structured platforms for dialogue—such as regular multi-stakeholder forums—could foster transparency and shared ownership. Integrating insights from academia and civil society would further strengthen evidence-based policymaking. Ultimately, as emphasized by global studies, the success of collaborative governance hinges on transforming top-down frameworks into inclusive, participatory systems where all voices shape the future of education.

4.1.2. Shared Motivation

4.1.2.1 Mutual Trust

Mutual trust is the cornerstone of collaborative governance, serving as the first and most critical element of shared motivation. As Fisher and Brown, cited by Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh, emphasize, mutual trust evolves through sustained engagement, where stakeholders gradually build familiarity, demonstrate reliability, and prove their accountability. This trust is not merely symbolic—it reduces transaction costs, enhances investment value, stabilizes partnerships, and fosters shared learning, knowledge exchange, and innovation. Conceptually, trust acts as a mechanism to cultivate mutual understanding among stakeholders, which ultimately leads to shared legitimacy and collective commitment. It enables individuals and groups to prioritize shared interests, needs, values, and goals over narrow individual or organizational agendas.

In the context of education governance in Rokan Hilir Regency, informants underscored that building mutual trust is foundational to effective collaboration. Education, as a strategic sector, involves diverse stakeholders, including the government, schools, parents, communities, and the private sector. Strong inter-stakeholder trust is seen as pivotal for crafting targeted policies and ensuring positive impacts. The local government has actively engaged stakeholders in decision-making processes—from planning to evaluation—to align policies with on-the-ground needs and community aspirations. Transparent and frequent communication has strengthened trust between the government, schools, parents, and private actors, fostering harmonious collaboration.

Regular and open communication through multi-stakeholder meetings, including media engagement, has proven effective in sustaining trust. These interactions allow parties to share ideas and address concerns, leading to more inclusive policies. However, challenges persist in maintaining consistent communication and transparency, particularly in areas with information gaps. To bridge this, the government has leveraged digital platforms like social media while remaining open to feedback and criticism. Transparent and inclusive communication is vital: when communities feel heard and valued, they are more likely to support policies.

At the local level, trust between the government and communities is relatively strong, bolstered by transparent information-sharing and regular meetings with parents and school principals. Yet, challenges remain. For instance, parents in Kubu District highlighted systemic issues in the *Student New Admission System (PPDB)*, which often marginalizes low-income families lacking

internet access. They urge the government to reform enrollment processes to ensure fairness and accessibility for all socioeconomic groups.

Despite the government's good intentions in policy design, implementation gaps—such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism (*KKN*) in educational aid distribution—have eroded public trust. Strengthening oversight, enhancing transparency, and involving communities in policy evaluation are critical to addressing these issues. Public education campaigns could also raise awareness about the importance of civic participation in monitoring policies. By fostering two-way communication, trust in government and educational policies can be reinforced, solidifying collaboration and amplifying positive outcomes for youth.

These findings align with collaborative governance theory, where trust is built through transparency, consistency, and inclusive decision-making (Emerson et al., 2012). However, as Honig (2006) notes, low trust and poor coordination between stakeholders can undermine policy effectiveness. McNamara (2012) stresses that trust is essential to sustain partnerships, while Bodin (2017) cautions that stakeholders often prioritize self-interest over negotiated solutions to shared problems. To counter this, collaborative actors must believe in their partners' commitment to shared goals, adherence to agreed rules, and integrity in negotiations.

Rebuilding trust is particularly challenging in contexts with historical conflicts between the government and communities. In Rokan Hilir, past betrayals by bureaucrats require tailored approaches, such as leveraging respected community leaders, religious figures, or nonprofit mediators to bridge divides. As Burgos and Mertens (2022) argue, inclusive and equitable cooperation is key to successful governance.

4.1.2.2 Mutual Understanding

Mutual understanding, distinct from the concept of *shared understanding* proposed by Ansell and Gash, plays a pivotal role in collaborative governance. While *shared understanding* refers to stakeholders agreeing on common goals and values, mutual understanding emphasizes the ability to acknowledge and respect differing positions and interests, even in the absence of full alignment. This concept hinges on the quality of interpersonal and interorganizational interactions, often nurtured through trust built during collaborative processes.

In the context of education governance in Rokan Hilir Regency, informants highlighted that respecting differing opinions among stakeholders is critical to fostering mutual trust. Differences in perspectives are natural and, when managed constructively, can enhance decision-making rather than hinder it. Strategies such as active listening, adopting multiple viewpoints, avoiding judgment, refraining from imposing agendas, and cultivating empathy and openness were identified as key to transforming disagreements into opportunities for growth. Maintaining a solution-oriented mindset and prioritizing collective goals over individual egos were also emphasized as vital for keeping discussions productive.

Open dialogue emerged as a cornerstone of effective collaboration. By engaging diverse stakeholders—including government, schools, communities, and parents—policies can become more inclusive and responsive to local needs. Data-driven approaches were noted as essential for ensuring objectivity, while public participation through forums and digital platforms was praised for empowering communities to shape policies that directly affect them.

However, managing differences without sacrificing shared objectives remains a challenge, particularly when stakeholders hold conflicting agendas. To address this, informants stressed the importance of mediation skills, diplomatic communication, and neutral facilitators to maintain fairness and productivity in discussions. Consensus-building techniques and transparent evaluation systems were also recommended to minimize conflict risks.

Ultimately, embracing differences can strengthen collaboration. When stakeholders feel valued and heard, they are more motivated to contribute meaningfully. Differences, rather than obstacles, become catalysts for innovative, inclusive, and sustainable solutions. For Rokan Hilir, prioritizing these principles could lead to education policies that better serve all communities.

These findings align with Gray's (1999) assertion that differences, when managed well, drive innovation. Innes and Booher (2010) similarly emphasize the need to listen to and integrate diverse perspectives for effective collaboration. Fung (2006) adds that inclusive dialogue enhances policy legitimacy, while Ainscow and Sandill (2010) underscore how participatory decision-making in education reduces resistance to change and builds program sustainability.

4.1.2.3 Internal Legitimacy

Internal legitimacy refers to recognition that comes from within the collaboration itself. In this context, collaborative actors are required to be trustworthy and credible in upholding shared interests. They must recognize the interdependence among actors, which fosters sustainable collaboration (Emerson et al., 2012).

Based on information from informants, internal legitimacy in the process and outcomes of collaboration in education management in Rokan Hilir Regency indicates a generally positive level of acceptance, though some challenges and areas for improvement remain. The success of this collaboration is reflected in various achievements involving the government, community, schools, academics, and the private sector. However, to further strengthen internal legitimacy, additional efforts are needed to ensure that all parties feel valued and involved in every decision-making process. The main challenges include differences in priorities among

stakeholders, coordination issues, and resource limitations, which can be addressed through improved communication, open dialogue, and enhanced mutual trust.

Although public acceptance is already positive, broader and deeper socialization efforts are still necessary. These efforts include openly communicating policies, conducting regular evaluations involving stakeholders, and improving transparency and accountability in education management. This approach is expected to foster a sense of ownership toward implemented policies. Meanwhile, collaboration between the government, community, and schools has contributed to improving education quality in the region, though increased active public participation is still needed to maximize the benefits of this collaboration.

At the school level, principals acknowledge that the collaboration has helped in understanding educational needs and finding joint solutions. However, wider policy dissemination and a clearer understanding of each party's role must be further improved. On the other hand, parents express that while this collaboration is essential, its implementation in practice has not yet had a significant impact. Issues such as unclear procedures, complex bureaucracy, and slow distribution of educational assistance contribute to public dissatisfaction. Academics also criticize the implementation of policies, which often fall short of expectations. They emphasize the importance of regular evaluations and improvements in policy implementation to ensure that policies genuinely benefit the community.

Local media observe that, despite the goodwill of various parties, the reality on the ground still falls short of expectations. A lack of coordination and ineffective communication between the government, schools, and the community remains a major issue. To address this, it is necessary to strengthen inter-agency collaboration, enhance communication platforms, and provide training for policy implementers to ensure a better understanding of policies and improve problem-solving efficiency.

Overall, while collaboration in education management in Rokan Hilir Regency has made progress, further efforts are required to enhance internal legitimacy through more effective socialization, transparency, accountability, and active community participation. By improving communication and coordination among stakeholders and ensuring the targeted implementation of policies, this collaboration is expected to have a more significant impact and be directly felt by the community.

This aligns with the principle that internal legitimacy in collaborative governance is built through the involvement of all parties in the decision-making process. Trust and transparency are key to increasing acceptance of the collaboration process and its outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Similarly, it is argued that public participation in policymaking, including education policies, can enhance internal legitimacy when accompanied by transparency and accountability (Yang & Pandey, 2011). Therefore, regular evaluations and accountability measures are essential for strengthening internal legitimacy in collaborative governance. Community participation in evaluations can foster a sense of ownership over policies (Sørensen & Torfing, 2011).

4.1.2.4 Commitment to Common Goals

The presence of commitment in the collaboration process can eliminate obstacles that often arise due to differences in characteristics and interests among actors. Commitment enables actors to interact across organizations, leading to the formation of a shared commitment. The quality of commitment formation in each collaborative actor can be analyzed based on their reasons for joining the collaboration—whether there is a shared interest that has been met, which influences their level of participation. Additionally, an optimistic attitude toward achieving the collaboration's goals and enthusiasm for engaging in collaborative activities with other actors also contribute to commitment formation. The presence of interim positive outcomes from the collaboration, or "small wins," along with good incentives, also frequently influences changes in the commitment of collaborative actors (Emerson et al., 2012).

Based on information from the informants, collaboration in education management in Rokan Hilir Regency demonstrates a relatively high level of commitment and dedication from various stakeholders, including the local government, schools, the community, and the private sector. This commitment is reflected in joint efforts to improve the quality of education, despite challenges such as complex bureaucracy, a lack of understanding at the implementation level, and uneven policy dissemination that still need to be addressed. The government seeks to facilitate inter-agency collaboration and promote open communication to ensure that education policies are implemented effectively and provide maximum benefits to the community.

Stakeholders' commitment is evident in their active participation in education deliberation forums and collaboration with the private sector through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs to enhance educational infrastructure and quality. However, challenges such as limited resources—both budgetary and human resources—and program sustainability due to policy or leadership changes remain concerns. To address these issues, efforts such as seeking alternative funding sources, strengthening partnerships with the central government, and conducting regular evaluations are continuously pursued.

At the regional level, the important role of the community and private sector in supporting educational programs is emphasized. The community actively participates in activities such as mutual cooperation to build educational facilities, while the private sector contributes through CSR programs. However, community leaders note that public participation in policy planning remains limited. They suggest the establishment of more inclusive discussion forums and greater transparency in decision-making so that the community can better understand and support the policies being implemented.

Academics reveal that despite their expertise in education, they are often not involved in policy planning processes. They emphasize the importance of transparency and their participation in discussion forums to provide research- and data-based input, ensuring that policies are of higher quality and more sustainable. Meanwhile, local media report that their role in advancing

education remains limited due to a lack of transparent access to information. The media hope to be more involved in covering education policies and facilitating public dialogue between the government, the community, and other stakeholders.

Overall, collaboration in education management in Rokan Hilir Regency has shown progress, but further efforts are needed to strengthen long-term commitment through transparency, active public participation, and the involvement of academics and the media. By enhancing communication and coordination among stakeholders and ensuring the targeted implementation of policies, this collaboration is expected to have a greater impact and be directly felt by the community.

This aligns with the idea that shared commitment from all parties is key to the success of collaborative governance. This commitment is built through trust, open communication, and active participation in decision-making processes (Ansell & Gash, 2007). It also aligns with the view that the goal of collaboration, according to Emerson et al. (2012), is to achieve shared outcomes that cannot be attained independently by each actor. This requires the commitment of all actors until the desired outcomes are realized. In the perspective of Ansell and Gash (2008), commitment is closely related to the initial motivation for participating in a joint activity. However, stakeholders may wish to participate to ensure their perspectives are not ignored, to legitimize their position, or simply to fulfill legal obligations.

Similarly, it is emphasized that collaboration between the government, the community, and the private sector is crucial in improving education quality. A shared commitment from all parties can lead to more effective and sustainable programs (Wohlstetter et al., 2005).

4.1.3 Capacity for Joint Action

4.1.3.1 Procedural and Institutional Arrangements

Various procedures, protocols, and collaborative structures are required in managing interactions among actors. The dimensions of mutual agreement include general rules (ground rules), protocols for activities (operating protocols), decision-making rules (decision rules), and other possible agreements. Often, initial agreements in collaboration are informal, but over time, formality becomes necessary, such as the establishment of legal frameworks or regulations that serve as the legal foundation for collaboration. For larger, more complex, and long-term collaborations, a clear institutional structure is needed, along with protocols for administration and collaborative activity management. Institutional arrangements exist both within organizations (how actors govern and manage their own organizations within the collaboration initiative) and between organizations (how the collaborative group manages the process and integrates with external decision-makers).

A well-structured collaboration is flexible and non-hierarchical. It operates as a network with various configurations, with the most common option being a "self-managing system" led by government actors or the creation of an entirely new structure. While collaboration is designed to be flexible and non-hierarchical, rules remain an essential element.

Based on the information from informants, it can be stated that collaboration in education governance in Rokan Hilir Regency is based on a set of formal regulations that serve as guidelines for all involved parties. Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 10 of 2016 on Education Governance in Rokan Hilir Regency is the primary legal foundation governing principles of fairness, quality, and equity in education within the region. Compliance with this regulation is relatively high, though challenges such as budget limitations for educational infrastructure development and uneven distribution of educators, particularly in remote areas, remain obstacles. Efforts to improve access to education through distance learning programs and homeschooling continue, although technological infrastructure support still needs to be enhanced.

Despite high compliance levels, especially among government agencies and public schools, challenges remain, such as inconsistent reporting from private schools, suboptimal community participation, and difficulties in uniformly enforcing regulations in remote areas. Academics criticize the lack of specific and detailed formal rules regulating inter-party collaboration. They emphasize the importance of a clear framework defining roles, responsibilities, and accountability for each party. Without detailed regulations, collaboration may become uncoordinated and directionless, reducing the effectiveness of education policies. Academics also suggest that formal regulations should include evaluation mechanisms and transparency measures to ensure the sustainability and success of programs.

At the district level, communication between the government, schools, and the private sector has been relatively effective through coordination meetings and education forums. However, the use of technology in communication remains limited, with most meetings still relying on face-to-face interactions. This reduces time and resource efficiency and restricts accessibility for parties unable to attend in person. District coordinators recommend the use of digital platforms, such as video conferencing and online documentation systems, to enhance transparency and participation.

A solution to improving communication is integrating technology into every aspect of communication. A training plan for school principals, teachers, and education department staff to become more familiar with technology has been developed, alongside pilot trials of online meetings via video conferencing and live streaming platforms. This initiative is expected to enhance communication efficiency and ensure broader participation from various stakeholders.

Overall, collaboration in education governance in Rokan Hilir Regency has been supported by formal regulations and established communication channels. However, challenges such as budget constraints, educator distribution, and limited use of technology in communication must still be addressed. By strengthening more specific formal regulations, increasing transparency, and leveraging

technology for more efficient communication, this collaboration is expected to be more effective and have a greater impact on the quality of education in the region.

This aligns with the principle that formal regulations are essential in building an effective collaboration framework. Clear and detailed regulations help define roles, responsibilities, and accountability, reducing conflicts and improving coordination (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Inclusive and transparent formal regulations are key to enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of collaboration. These regulations should include evaluation and adjustment mechanisms to ensure sustainability (Emerson et al., 2012).

Similarly, it is noted that integrating technology into communication and coordination among parties can enhance collaboration effectiveness. However, training and infrastructure support are needed to ensure successful implementation (Zhao & Frank, 2003). Technology can increase public participation in decision-making through digital platforms that allow broader access and information transparency (Fung, 2006).

4.1.3.2 Leadership

Leadership plays an essential and absolute role in collaboration. Various roles of leaders during the collaboration process include: (1) securing support for collaboration, (2) initiating meetings, (3) acting as facilitators and mediators, (4) representing actors and the collaboration as a whole, (5) distributing knowledge, (6) promoting the use of technology in collaboration, and (7) advocating to the public. Another key role of leaders is how they encourage deliberation, manage conflicts, and enhance the determination of actors toward collaborative goals throughout the process. Often, collaborative leaders fail to perform their roles effectively due to a lack of knowledge about the skills and competencies they must possess or because they are unaware that leadership in collaboration differs from leadership in general organizational settings (Emerson et al., 2012).

Based on information from several informants, leadership in the collaboration for educational governance in Rokan Hilir Regency plays a crucial role in both facilitative and distributive aspects. Stakeholder leaders, including local government, schools, the private sector, and the community, are responsible for creating a conducive environment and fostering a strong social spirit. The facilitative role of leaders includes mediating conflict resolution, building consensus, and providing effective communication channels through regular meetings and educational forums. On the other hand, the distributive role of leaders involves the fair and equitable allocation of resources, such as teacher training, school facilities, and educational assistance, especially for remote areas. This ensures that educational policies can be optimally implemented and reach all segments of society.

Stakeholder leaders serve as facilitators in designing inclusive policies, involving all parties to provide constructive input. Additionally, they act as distributors by delegating roles and responsibilities to schools, education committees, and communities. Leaders also function as mediators in resolving conflicts among stakeholders and as innovators in developing education programs based on collaboration and regional needs. For example, involving the private sector in school infrastructure development and teacher training in remote areas.

At the school level, principals appreciate the role of the Regent of Rokan Hilir, who directly engages in the field to provide moral support and encouragement to educators and students. The Regent also provides educational facilities, such as classroom renovations and the procurement of learning equipment, although budget constraints remain a challenge. School principals hope for more intensive cooperation among stakeholders, including local government, the community, and the private sector, to support more equitable and quality education.

Community leaders also highlight the Regent's inclusive and education-oriented leadership. The Regent does not only lead from behind but also visits schools to ensure that education programs run effectively. The Regent's initiative in involving various parties, including the community and private sector, in supporting education programs demonstrates a strong commitment to improving education quality in the region.

Overall, leadership in the collaboration for educational governance in Rokan Hilir Regency has made significant efforts to create a conducive environment, distribute resources equitably, and engage various stakeholders. However, challenges such as budget constraints and inadequate facilities still need to be addressed. By strengthening the facilitative and distributive roles of leaders and enhancing collaboration among stakeholders, the quality of education in Rokan Hilir Regency can continue to improve and benefit all community members.

Leadership plays a vital role in enabling collaborative governance processes in the tourism sector (Bichler & Lösch, 2019), particularly regarding the existence of a leader who can initiate and provide the necessary resources and support for partnerships. Depending on their position, leaders may come from members or activists of political parties or be part of a cross-organizational structure with credibility (Emerson et al., 2012). However, they must be committed to collaborative problem-solving, willing to refrain from advocating specific solutions, and remain impartial to participants' preferences (Bryson et al., 2006). The presence of a leader with influence can also help cover operational costs when initiating cooperation, such as providing personnel, mobilizing facilities, technology, and other resources (Schneider et al., 2003). Selin (2017) states that complex regional development initiatives require dynamic leaders to unify diverse stakeholders, encourage participation, leverage external resources, and achieve collective impact.

Facilitative leaders can create space for active participation by all parties, ensure that shared interests are prioritized, and promote innovation in public policy implementation (Bryson et al., 2014). Thus, collaborative leadership, including facilitative and distributive roles, can enhance school capacity and student learning outcomes. Effective leaders can mobilize resources and engage various

stakeholders in the education improvement process (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Distributive leadership allows school principals and teachers to share responsibilities in improving education quality. This fosters innovation and active participation from all parties (Harris, 2011).

4.1.3.3 Knowledges

According to Groff & Jones in Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh (2012), knowledge is described as: *"Knowledge is information combined with understanding and capability: it lives in the minds of people... Knowledge guides action, whereas information and data can merely inform or confuse."* Knowledge is a combination of information with an understanding of that information and an enhancement of capability. Knowledge leads to action, but it can also inform or confuse. More importantly, it is crucial to distribute knowledge and ensure that actors can utilize it effectively in the collaboration process.

Based on the statements from informants, it can be said that the distribution of knowledge among actors involved in the collaboration for educational governance in Rokan Hilir Regency has shown progress, although some challenges remain. The knowledge level of stakeholders, including local government, the Education Office, schools, communities, and the private sector, is relatively good. Each party understands their roles and responsibilities within the education system and has effective communication channels for sharing information. Educational deliberation forums and regular meetings between the Education Office and schools serve as essential platforms to ensure a shared understanding of education policies and programs.

Although the knowledge level is adequate, certain aspects still need improvement, such as understanding national and regional education policies, managerial skills in school administration, and the use of technology in learning. To enhance knowledge distribution, training and workshops for teachers, discussion forums and educational seminars, collaborations with universities for research, and policy dissemination through social media and local media should be organized. These efforts aim to ensure that all stakeholders have sufficient understanding of their tasks and roles in supporting education policies.

However, community leaders and academics have criticized that knowledge distribution remains uneven, particularly at the grassroots level. The general public, including parents, often lacks adequate information about educational policies or programs. This results in them feeling isolated and less involved in the education process. Academics suggest that socialization and education efforts should be more active and targeted, including direct meetings at the village or sub-district level and utilizing technology such as social media and digital platforms. They also emphasize the importance of openness in listening to public input so that people feel valued and can actively participate in supporting education policies.

Parents of students have expressed concerns that they often receive information about educational programs or policies too late, making it difficult for them to support their children effectively. They suggest that communication between schools, the government, and the community should be more open and proactive, ensuring that information is easily accessible and timely. This way, parents can be more involved in their children's education and support the existing programs.

Overall, knowledge distribution in the collaboration for education governance in Rokan Hilir Regency has shown progress, but efforts are still needed to improve public outreach and engagement, especially at the grassroots level. Strengthening communication, leveraging technology, and actively involving the community are expected to ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding and can contribute effectively to improving the quality of education in the region.

This aligns with the view that knowledge distribution is essential in organizations and collaboration. The process of knowledge sharing through social interaction and effective communication can enhance innovation and organizational performance (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2019). Communities of practice facilitate knowledge distribution through interaction and collaboration among individuals, which is crucial for building shared understanding and increasing collective capacity (Wenger, 1999).

Collaborative governance consists of participants with different skills, interests, and intentions (Bodin, 2017), emphasizing open and frequent communication to foster a shared knowledge base and mutual understanding among collaboration participants (Imperial & Kauneckis, 2003). This diversity of participants allows different perspectives and opinions to be acknowledged and discussed within the partnership (Burgos & Mertens, 2022). Face-to-face dialogue forums, both formal and informal, serve as arenas for identifying public issues that require government intervention through policy solutions. The public and business actors can express their expectations and ideal conditions to the government. These then become indicators for measuring policy performance during the monitoring and evaluation stages—determining whether they meet the expected standards or not.

4.1.3.4 Resources

The exchange and integration of resources is one of the benefits of collaboration. Resources include financial funding, time and role distribution, technical and administrative support for activity implementation, mutual assistance, expertise in collaborative analysis, field implementers, and expert needs. In collaboration, there are always significant resource disparities among actors.

The effectiveness of resource utilization is measured by how well the collaborative elements (leaders, actors, and individuals) manage resources despite these differences. In practice, this process is complex and challenging, as it is influenced by other factors, such as institutional procedures and agreements that may or may not accommodate these aspects. Furthermore, the role of leadership and knowledge distribution plays a crucial part in facilitating resource exchange and determining whether collaboration can establish an effective resource management mechanism.

Based on information from informants, resource availability—including budget, human resources (HR), equipment, and authority—is a key factor in supporting collaborative education governance in Rokan Hilir Regency. These resources have been well allocated, although adjustments are still necessary to meet field requirements. The Regency Government is committed to ensuring budget availability through coordination with the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), enhancing human resource capacity through training, and improving educational infrastructure, particularly in remote areas. Additionally, the decentralization of authority is being carried out to enhance the effectiveness of education policies.

Although the education budget is generally available, its optimal utilization still needs improvement. The main challenges include uneven teacher distribution, especially in remote areas, and a lack of facilities in some schools. To address these issues, the Department of Education (Disdik) has undertaken various initiatives, such as proposing budget increases to the central government, leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds from the private sector, enhancing teacher training programs, and collaborating with universities and international organizations. Cross-sectoral coordination has also been strengthened to ensure that all stakeholders contribute effectively.

The biggest challenges remain budget limitations and inadequate educational facilities. Although School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds have been allocated, their amount is often insufficient to cover classroom facilities, learning equipment, and books. This issue is particularly felt in remote areas, where educational infrastructure remains very limited. While certified teachers are available, their numbers are still insufficient, and non-permanent (honorary) teachers often face salary delays and a lack of certification opportunities. These issues affect the quality of teaching and student learning experiences. School principals hope for increased education funding and greater attention to the welfare of honorary teachers.

Parents appreciate the free school policy, but they highlight that additional costs for transportation, school supplies, and extracurricular activities remain a burden. They hope for additional government assistance to cover these costs, especially for low-income families. Similarly, academics suggest that private sector involvement and engagement with community leaders should be increased to address resource limitations. CSR programs from companies can be utilized to provide educational facilities, while community and religious leaders can help in fundraising and establishing affordable education programs. Collaboration among the government, private sector, and society is expected to reduce educational disparities and improve learning quality.

Overall, although efforts have been made to ensure resource availability for education governance in Rokan Hilir Regency, challenges such as budget constraints, uneven human resource distribution, and facility shortages still need to be addressed. Strengthening collaboration among stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and society, is expected to enhance the effectiveness and equitable allocation of resources, thereby continuously improving the quality of education in the region.

This aligns with the notion that resource availability—including budget, human resources, and educational facilities—is a key factor in improving education quality and economic growth. Resource constraints can hinder the achievement of educational goals (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007). Limited budgets, uneven teacher distribution, and insufficient educational facilities remain major challenges in achieving inclusive and high-quality education (Benavot et al., 2015). Human resource capacity also poses challenges for the tourism industry, particularly in regions where tourism is a key sector. Without adequate skills, human resources and business actors cannot enter or sustain themselves in the travel and tourism industry (Evans, 2019).

4.2 Collaborative Governance Model for Education Implementation in Rokan Hilir Regency

The collaborative governance model for education management in Rokan Hilir Regency was developed by researchers based on the observation that the current education system has not been effectively implemented using a robust collaborative governance approach. When evaluated through the framework of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh (2018), the existing collaborative governance model in Rokan Hilir's education sector reveals shortcomings in the three core dimensions: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action, as discussed in previous sections.

Furthermore, interviews with key informants and observational data highlight that challenges outweigh facilitators in the current collaborative processes. Below are the primary supporting factors identified as critical to fostering collaboration:

1. **Facilitative Leadership and Commitment of Leaders:**

Facilitative leadership, particularly demonstrated by regional heads and education department leaders, plays a pivotal role in driving collaboration among stakeholders. Strong commitment from local leaders to improve education quality—evidenced by adequate budget allocation and policies supporting cross-sector collaboration—enhances collective goal attainment. Leaders who prioritize participatory decision-making foster a conducive environment for effective collaboration.

2. **Institutional Design:**

Clear and well-organized institutional structures are essential for successful collaboration. Establishing discussion forums, such as educational consultative bodies involving government, schools, communities, and the private sector, strengthens stakeholder relationships. Policies that enable multi-actor participation in education planning and evaluation further accelerate the achievement of educational objectives.

3. Collaborative Processes:

Collaborative processes rooted in open dialogue and deliberation among stakeholders significantly support education management. District-level policy discussions and active roles of school committees in providing feedback ensure inclusivity and alignment with local needs. Data-driven discussions involving academics, private sectors, and communities form the foundation for equitable and context-responsive decision-making.

4. Diverse Communication and Information Channels:

Effective communication channels between the government, schools, communities, and the private sector are vital. Leveraging information technology—such as online communication platforms and social media for policy dissemination—helps overcome geographical barriers and enhances public engagement. Diverse communication tools ensure timely information access, expediting decision-making and policy implementation.

5. Community Awareness and Support:

Community support, particularly from parents, is crucial. High public awareness of education's importance, coupled with active participation in school development initiatives (e.g., communal school-building efforts or educational outreach programs), maximizes outcomes. This reflects a shared understanding that education is a collective responsibility, not solely the government's or schools' duty.

6. Local Government Commitment:

The local government's role in facilitating collaboration is indispensable. High commitment to allocating sufficient budgets and designing policies responsive to community needs—such as constructing schools in remote areas and implementing educational social assistance programs—exemplifies how inclusive, collaborative approaches strengthen education.

7. Active Private Sector Participation:

The private sector contributes significantly through establishing private schools, scholarships, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. Such participation reflects public-private synergy in advancing equitable, quality education.

8. Technological Advancements:

Progress in information technology, including e-learning platforms and online communication tools, supports education management in geographically challenging areas. Technology bridges gaps between urban and remote regions, expanding access and reducing disparities.

Despite the presence of supporting factors, several barriers hinder the implementation of collaborative governance in education management in Rokan Hilir Regency. These challenges include:

1. Lack of Stakeholder Commitment:

Some stakeholders, particularly at the school and community levels, exhibit insufficient commitment to improving education quality. Without shared vision and dedication across all actors, collaboration remains ineffective, impeding the achievement of educational goals.

2. Information Asymmetry:

Uneven distribution of information, especially to communities and parents, creates gaps in understanding educational policies. This undermines active public participation, thereby reducing program effectiveness.

3. Hierarchical Organizational Structures:

Overly bureaucratic structures in government, schools, and the private sector obstruct information flow and coordination. Top-down policymaking often neglects input from grassroots stakeholders, such as schools and communities.

4. Insufficient Financial Resources:

Limited budgetary allocations for education, particularly in remote areas, constrain efforts to enhance quality. Adequate funding is critical for policy implementation, yet financial shortages persist.

5. Lack of External Transparency:

Opaque decision-making processes—such as in student admissions or management of school operational funds (BOS)—erode public trust. Transparency is vital to ensure inclusivity and fairness in decisions aligned with community needs.

6. Low Community Awareness:

While some community support exists, many remain unaware of the importance of active participation in education. Passivity in initiatives like communal projects or policy feedback stifles progress.

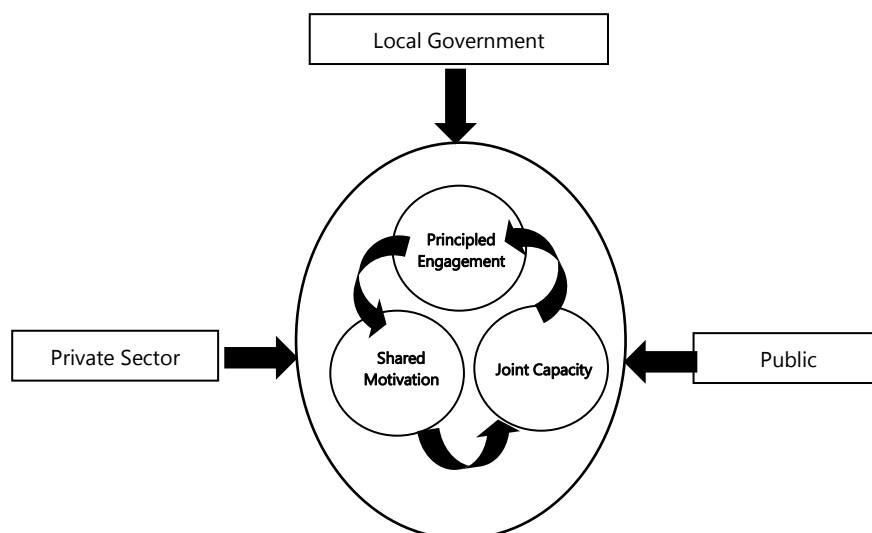
7. Sectoral Egoism Among Stakeholders:

Divergent priorities and sectoral interests dominate over collective goals, fragmenting collaboration and hindering educational improvements.

8. **Distrust and Lack of Mutual Respect:**
Mutual distrust between actors (e.g., government and communities, schools and private sectors) and insufficient respect for roles weaken cooperative dynamics.
9. **Personal Conflicts and Competing Agendas:**
Clashes arising from differing individual or organizational objectives disrupt collaborative efforts and impede progress.
10. **Silo Mentality:**
Isolated workflows among stakeholders, with minimal integration or support for shared systems, prevent effective collaboration in education governance.
11. **Budget and Infrastructure Gaps in Remote Areas:**
Scarce funding for educational infrastructure in remote regions, compounded by geographical challenges, exacerbates disparities in access to quality education.

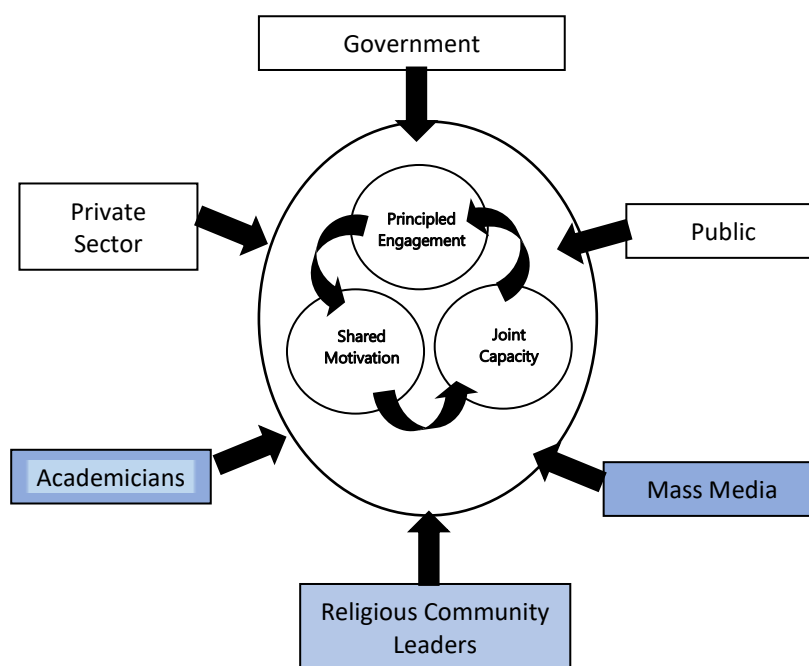
Based on the perspective of the collaborative governance model by Emerson et al. (2012), the existing model implemented in Rokan Hilir Regency can be illustrated as shown in the following figure:

Figure 4: Existing Collaborative Governance Model for Education Administration in Rokan Hilir Regency



As illustrated in the existing model, it can be stated that the actors involved in the collaborative governance of education administration in Rokan Hilir Regency only include the local government, the private sector, and the community. Meanwhile, other stakeholders, such as academics and mass media, have insignificant involvement. Furthermore, in the context of collaborative governance, this concept is similar to the Triple Helix approach. Considering the issues outlined in the previous section and the numerous challenges faced, it is deemed necessary to formulate a collaborative governance model for education administration in Rokan Hilir Regency to maximize the performance of collaborative governance and ultimately enhance the quality of education, as illustrated in the following model:

Figure 5: Collaborative Governance Model for Education Administration in Rokan Hilir Regency (Hexa Helix Collaborative Governance Model for Education Administration)



The figure illustrates that the Hexa Helix Collaborative Governance Model for Education Management in Rokan Hilir Regency, formulated by researchers, is adapted from Emerson et al.'s (2012) collaborative governance framework. This adaptation addresses the complex challenges and unique contextual conditions faced in the regency's education sector, necessitating a more comprehensive collaborative approach supported by the involvement of multiple stakeholders.

The model introduces additional collaborative stakeholders—specifically religious leaders, academics, and media—to complement the roles of government, private sector, and communities in education governance. The inclusion of religious leaders as a primary innovation is particularly critical. Their inclusion is justified by their influence as role models and sources of moral and intellectual guidance (Ronald, 2014). Religious leaders, defined as prominent figures in Islamic communities who serve as advisors and moral exemplars without formal appointment (Kartono, 2016), hold significant sociopsychological sway over groups and broader society. As outlined by An-Nabhani (2012), religious leaders act as *guides* and *directors* for their communities. In the context of collaborative governance, their role extends to mobilizing government, private entities, and communities to optimize cooperation. They address resource limitations—such as human capital and funding gaps—by leveraging their capacity to:

1. Develop Human Resources: Train Islamic students (*santri*) and followers to contribute meaningfully to education.
2. Mobilize Resources: Facilitate fundraising and infrastructure development through their networks.
3. Promote Ethical Practices: Encourage adherence to Islamic teachings on communal welfare and education (Taqiuddin, 2016).

Religious leaders also serve as motivators and mediators, bridging gaps between stakeholders and fostering harmony in collaborative efforts. Their moral authority enables them to advocate for hard work, ethical governance, and equitable resource allocation (Gandi Cahyoto, 2019). By mediating conflicts and aligning diverse interests, they ensure collaborative processes remain inclusive and goal-oriented.

Building on the Hexa Helix Model's emphasis on religious leaders as pivotal actors, their roles in collaborative governance for education management in Rokan Hilir Regency can be further elaborated as follows:

1. As Guides and Directors of the Community:
Religious leaders bear the responsibility of guiding their communities in adhering to religious teachings, including educational practices. As An-Nabhani (2012) asserts, they act as *regulators* and *directors*, helping communities recognize education as a form of virtuous action (*amal kebajikan*). They emphasize that education transcends academic processes, serving as a means to cultivate moral character aligned with religious values. By framing education as both a spiritual and societal obligation, religious leaders galvanize community support for government or institutional educational programs.
2. As Motivators:
Religious leaders function as motivators, inspiring active community participation in educational development. Gandi Cahyoto (2019) highlights their unique ability to mobilize congregations through sermons and public addresses, urging support for initiatives such as school construction, teacher training, or infrastructure improvement. For instance, they

encourage parents to prioritize both formal and non-formal education for their children, fostering a culture of academic commitment.

3. As Mediators:
Acting as mediators, religious leaders bridge divergent interests among stakeholders. Their respected status enables them to facilitate dialogue between the government, schools, communities, and the private sector, harmonizing collaboration (Gandi Cahyoto, 2019). For example, they mediate discussions on challenges like budget constraints, uneven teacher distribution, or infrastructure gaps, leveraging their moral authority to build consensus and mitigate conflicts.
4. As Moral Guides and Advisors:
Religious leaders provide critical ethical and spiritual direction, particularly in integrating religious knowledge with educational goals. Taqiyuddin (2016) underscores their role in advocating education as a collective responsibility and a long-term investment for youth. By framing education as a communal duty, they mobilize resources—such as donations, volunteer labor, or innovative ideas—to advance educational initiatives.

Efforts Religious Leaders Can Undertake in Collaborative Governance of Education:

1. Promoting Public Awareness on the Importance of Education:
Religious leaders can leverage platforms such as sermons, Friday prayers (*khutbah*), or religious study sessions (*pengajian*) to emphasize education's significance from a religious perspective. By framing education as a cornerstone for improving quality of life and nurturing morally upright generations, they can motivate communities to actively support educational programs.
2. Facilitating Inter-Stakeholder Collaboration:
Religious leaders can organize dialogues or meetings between the government, schools, communities, and the private sector to address educational challenges and co-create solutions. Their mediation skills help forge mutually beneficial agreements and partnerships.
3. Mobilizing Resources:
Utilizing their networks and influence, religious leaders can mobilize funds or resources from communities and the private sector. For instance, they can encourage congregations to donate to school construction, educational equipment procurement, or scholarships for underprivileged students.
4. Encouraging Community Participation in Educational Programs:
Religious leaders can advocate for community involvement in educational initiatives, such as volunteering, providing training, or monitoring policy implementation. They can also urge parents to prioritize their children's education by ensuring school attendance and supporting home-based learning.

Practical Examples of Religious Leaders' Roles in Education:

1. Establishing Faith-Based Schools:
Many religious leaders found faith-based schools, such as *madrasahs* or Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), offering formal and non-formal education. These institutions often serve as alternatives for families unable to afford mainstream schools.
2. Scholarship and Educational Aid Programs:
Religious leaders can initiate scholarship programs or educational assistance for disadvantaged students, partnering with charities or the private sector to fundraise and distribute resources equitably.
3. Teacher Training and Development:
Religious leaders can facilitate teacher training programs, particularly in remote areas, collaborating with educational institutions or universities to enhance pedagogical competencies.

Religious leaders play a critical role in raising public awareness about education's importance, motivating communities through sermons and religious platforms (Botchwey, 2007; Fry & Nisiewicz, 2020). As informal leaders, their influence shapes societal attitudes and behaviors, making them catalysts for increased participation in educational programs (Bafandeh & Oskuie, 2017). Decentralizing educational authority can address local challenges, with religious leaders contributing to regional policy discussions as members of educational councils (Welsh & McGinn, 1999).

Positioned as respected figures with broad influence, religious leaders act as motivators, directors, and mediators in fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration. Through advocacy, fundraising, and conflict resolution, they address challenges like budget constraints, uneven teacher distribution, and low community engagement. Thus, they transcend their spiritual roles to become agents of change in educational advancement.

Religious leaders embody social capital, defined by Woolcock (1998) as the networks, norms, and trust that enable cooperative action within communities. This concept underscores interactions that build mutual benefits, though practical measurements often overlook these dynamics (Suharto, 2016). In governance, social capital fosters trust and collaboration between governments and communities, enhancing policy effectiveness.

In Rokan Hilir, social capital strengthens partnerships between the government, private sector, and civil society. Trust-based interactions rooted in social capital enhance collaborative efforts to improve education quality, demonstrating its pivotal role in bridging institutional and communal goals.

Subsequently, Academics play a pivotal role in the collaborative governance of education in Rokan Hilir Regency, particularly in evidence-based policymaking, enhancing educational quality, and strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration. As holders of specialized knowledge and expertise, academics contribute significantly through research, policy analysis, training, and advocacy. Below are the key functions and roles of academics in collaborative education governance:

1. **Providing Evidence-Based Data and Policy Analysis:**
Academics conduct rigorous research to generate accurate data and analyses, which are critical for formulating effective, contextually relevant education policies. Their evidence-based approach supports governments and stakeholders in decision-making. For example, they may study factors affecting education quality (e.g., infrastructure gaps, teacher distribution, or community participation) and recommend policies such as increased funding, curriculum reforms, or teacher training programs.
2. **Curriculum and Instructional Method Development:**
Academics innovate curricula and teaching methods aligned with modern needs, integrating theory and practice. Examples include designing 21st-century skill-based curricula (e.g., critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication) or developing project-based learning and e-learning models for schools.
3. **Teacher Training and Capacity Building:**
Academics enhance teacher quality through professional development programs, workshops, and certifications. For instance, they train teachers in active learning strategies, competency-based assessments, or creative teaching material development.
4. **Policy Advocacy and Socialization:**
Academics advocate for inclusive and equitable education policies while raising public awareness. They serve as experts in forums or media discussions on policies like free schooling or inclusive education and write articles to educate communities on quality education.
5. **Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:**
Academics act as mediators, fostering dialogue and cooperation between governments, schools, communities, and the private sector. They organize roundtable discussions to address educational challenges or design collaborative programs, such as school-corporate partnerships for infrastructure development.
6. **Education Program Evaluation and Monitoring:**
Using rigorous methodologies, academics assess program effectiveness (e.g., inclusive education or scholarships) and recommend improvements, such as optimizing aid distribution or enhancing teacher training.
7. **Developing Local Wisdom-Based Education Models:**
Academics design education models rooted in local culture and wisdom to ensure relevance and community acceptance. Examples include integrating traditional values into curricula or creating programs for environmental conservation and local economic development.
8. **Research and Educational Innovation:**
Academics drive innovation through R&D, such as developing e-learning platforms for remote areas or automated assessment tools to streamline teacher evaluations.
9. **Mentoring and Consultation for Schools and Governments:**
Academics provide guidance to schools and governments in program design and implementation. For example, they advise local governments on improving education in underserved areas or support schools in adopting new curricula.
10. **Strengthening Networks and International Collaboration:**
Academics leverage global partnerships to enhance education quality, such as initiating teacher/student exchanges or collaborating with foreign universities on joint research or scholarships.

Evidence-based data from academics are vital for effective policymaking, helping governments identify factors influencing education quality (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007). As advocates, academics ensure policies are inclusive and publicly supported (Fung, 2006; Yang & Pandey, 2011). Their mentorship aids schools and governments in program implementation (Honig, 2006), while their strategic partnership addresses policy challenges (O'Leary & Bingham, 2009). International collaborations further elevate education standards (Marginson, 2010). Academics serve as multifaceted partners in collaborative education governance, bridging research, policy, and practice. Their expertise in data analysis, curriculum design, teacher training, and stakeholder facilitation fosters inclusive, sustainable education systems. Strong collaboration between academics, governments, and other stakeholders is essential for advancing education at local, national, and global levels.

Mass media plays a vital role in collaborative governance of education by acting as a bridge between governments, communities, and other stakeholders. Collaborative governance refers to the process of cooperation among diverse actors—including government, private sectors, civil society organizations, and the public—to achieve shared goals. In education, mass media serves

strategic functions in fostering participation, transparency, accountability, and innovation. Below are its key roles in collaborative education governance:

1. Information and Education Platform:

Mass media provides credible and reliable information on educational policies, government programs, and collaborative initiatives. By disseminating accurate information, media can:

- a. Raise public awareness about the importance of education.
- b. Educate citizens on educational rights and collective responsibilities.
- c. Highlight innovations and best practices in education. *Example:* Media coverage of inclusive schooling, scholarships, or new curricula involving community participation.

2. Promoting Public Participation:

Media serves as a platform to encourage active public engagement in educational decision-making through:

- a. Public discussions, talk shows, or online forums involving stakeholders.
- b. Publishing opinion pieces, surveys, or polls to gather public input.
- c. Providing space for communities to critique or suggest improvements to policies.

Example: Media programs inviting parents, teachers, and students to discuss local educational challenges.

3. Enhancing Transparency and Accountability:

Media acts as a *watchdog*, ensuring transparent and accountable education systems by:

- a. Exposing corruption, budget misuse, or inefficiencies in education.
- b. Monitoring policy implementation and reporting outcomes to the public.
- c. Recognizing institutions or individuals excelling in education.

Example: Investigative reports on misallocated School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds prompting systemic reforms.

4. Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:

Media mediates collaboration among government, private sectors, NGOs, and communities by:

- a. Campaigning for collaborative education programs.
- b. Creating communication platforms to resolve educational issues.
- c. Connecting private companies with schools for CSR initiatives.

Example: Promoting partnerships between tech firms and schools to provide digital infrastructure.

5. Driving Innovation and Change:

Media catalyzes innovation by showcasing successful models, such as:

- a. Inspiring adoption of best practices in schools.
- b. Introducing new technologies (e.g., e-learning, blended learning).
- c. Advocating policy changes through public pressure.

Example: Highlighting technology-driven solutions for remote areas.

6. Fostering Critical Public Awareness:

Media cultivates public consciousness about education quality and societal roles through:

- a. In-depth reporting on systemic challenges (e.g., urban-rural education gaps).
- b. Social campaigns urging parental involvement in children's education.
- c. Expert analyses and policy recommendations.

Example: Spotlighting teacher quality disparities in rural regions.

7. Advocating Inclusive and Equitable Policies:

Media ensures policies address marginalized groups (e.g., children with disabilities, Indigenous communities) by:

- a. Exposing discrimination or inequities in education.
- b. Pressuring governments to prioritize underserved populations.
- c. Amplifying voices of all societal groups in decision-making.

Example: Featuring success stories of marginalized students overcoming barriers.

8. Strengthening Government-Community Synergy:

Media bridges governments and communities to align policies with on-the-ground needs by:

- a. Reporting public feedback on education policies.
- b. Facilitating dialogues to resolve shared challenges.
- c. Promoting government programs requiring community support.

Example: Publicizing the national *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom in Learning) initiative to enhance public understanding.

Mass media's role aligns with McCombs and Shaw's (1972) *agenda-setting theory*, which emphasizes media's power to shape public discourse on issues like education. As a *watchdog*, media ensures transparency and accountability in governance (Strömbäck, 2005). Its facilitation of government-community collaboration reflects Bovaird's (2007) emphasis on participatory public service delivery. Mass media is integral to the Hexa Helix collaborative governance model in Rokan Hilir's education sector. By informing,

engaging, and holding stakeholders accountable, media fosters inclusive, transparent, and innovative education systems. Its dual role as an informer and mediator strengthens multi-stakeholder partnerships, ensuring policies are equitable, context-driven, and aligned with community needs.

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