

Collaboration Process in Prevention of Child Marriage in Central Mamuju District

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Abstract. *Child marriage is a problem for the government area, especially in Central Mamuju Regency. It is a common problem that requires prevention based on collaboration with several stakeholders involved in it. Governance. Research This aims to analyze the collaboration process in the prevention of marriage-age children in Central Mamuju Regency. This study uses qualitative research methods. Data collection methods include observation, in-depth interviews, and study documentation. Data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Data analysis uses interactive data analysis. As for the informants in the study, they are actors involved directly in the collaboration process in the prevention of wedding-age children in Central Mamuju Regency. Research results show that the collaboration process in the prevention of wedding-age children in Central Mamuju Regency can it is said Still Not yet walk with good. This is a dialogue between face, commitment in the process of collaboration, and understanding together in the prevention of wedding-age children in Central Mamuju Regency is still Not yet effective, but there is trust built between the actors to prevent and suppress the number of wedding-age children. As for the impact of the results so far this is in the process of collaboration in the prevention of wedding-age children in Central Mamuju Regency which has still Not yet shown significant changes.*

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INTRODUCTION

Child marriage constitutes a significant issue that poses challenges for governmental authorities (Judiasih, 2023). According to Salsavira (2021), the prevalence of child marriage among individuals under the age of 20 remains a significant issue across nearly all regions of Indonesia. The phenomenon of early marriage in Indonesia has attained a concerning degree of prevalence. Data from the Ministry of Empowerment and Child Protection indicates that religious courts processed 55,000 applications for early marriage dispensation during the year 2022, representing nearly a twofold increase compared to the number of similar applications in the preceding year (Aini, 2024).

Up until the year 2022, females under the age of 16 constituted the demographic most significantly impacted by this case, accounting for 14.15%. The prevalence of this phenomenon experienced a significant increase during the COVID-19 pandemic, influenced by various factors including rising school dropout rates, deteriorating family economic conditions, adherence to religious and cultural customs, as well as the impact of peers who entered into early marriages. Align with research from Apriyanti (2021), this concerning trend persists notwithstanding the

government's amendment to the Marriage Law in 2019, which elevated the minimum age for marriage to 19 for both males and females.

According to Ningsi (2023), at present, Indonesia ranks as the nation with the seventh highest prevalence of child marriage globally and the second highest within Southeast Asia, with 0.56% of marriages involving individuals under 15 years of age and 11.21% involving those under 18 years of age. At the national level, West Sulawesi Province exhibits the highest prevalence of child marriage, recorded at 19.43%. Poverty constitutes the primary factor contributing to the prevalence of child marriage in rural areas. This phenomenon is observed with greater frequency among women, particularly in children who disengage from the educational system (Widayanti et al., 2024).

The institution of teenage marriage exerts significant influence on health outcomes, particularly for the bride, and may also have repercussions for the fetus she is expected to bear (Alviola et al., 2023). The analysis conducted by Agustian (2023) indicated that various risk factors, including young age, low income, and low socio-economic status, contribute to the vulnerability to intergenerational growth failure. Child marriage in Indonesia needs special attention from the government, based on data from the National Socio-Economic Survey (SUSENAS) shows that one of the provinces in Indonesia, namely West Sulawesi Province, is the province with the highest percentage of child marriage cases in Indonesia. This is shown in the following figure.



Figure 1. Child Marriage by Province and Regency in West Sulawesi

Source: Susenas, BPS, 2021

At the district level in West Sulawesi Province, the issue of child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency is a cross-sectoral problem that is the concern and responsibility of various stakeholders involving government elements from both Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) including the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection and Family Planning Service, Health Service, Ministry of Religion of Central Mamuju Regency, the community and local NGOs. This shows that the problem of child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency is shared and is based on collaboration so it is very relevant to be studied using a collaborative governance approach. Initial

data shows that the number of child marriages in Central Mamuju Regency in 2022 is quite high, which can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Number of Child Marriages Registered and Unregistered at the KUA of Central Mamuju Regency in 2020-2022

No	Subdistrict	Number of Marriage Cases Child Age		
		2020	2021	2022
1	Pangale	38	29	36
2	Budong Budong	63	67	72
3	Topoyo	33	31	36
4	Carousel	6	9	7
5	Tobacco	35	38	34
Amount		175 Case	174 Cases	185 Cases

Source: Office Affairs Religion and Government Village Regency Mamuju Middle, Year 2022.

The table above shows the number of cases of child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency in 2020 175 cases, then in 2021 it decreased to 174 cases, then in 2022, it increased to 185 cases. Based on findings beginning, show various problems from stakeholders' interest from element government as a leading sector that the child marriage prevention program in Mamuju Regency Middle Not yet effective implemented. This is due to the political will government area Not yet showing commitment Which big in suppressing child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency. In addition the problem of limited budget and lack of budgeting special For to finance program prevention wedding child age.

The issue of child marriage is one of the problems that often occurs in various regions, therefore this problem is public, so this issue is the government's responsibility to resolve. The regional government as an organization that organizes the region and is also responsible for the success of regional development is very much needed in organizing public services and providing public goods (Cheng et al., 2020). In this organization, the government can't be the sole actor in providing all public needs as the role played in the era of the classical bureaucratic paradigm but requires the involvement of other non-governmental institutions or institutions including local non-governmental organizations, customary institutions, and others (Sander, 2023).

According to Rahimallah (2021), it is necessary to build synergy between the three domains of the state, namely the state (country or government), private sector (private or non-state business world), and civil society (community and community organizations). This approach is known as " Governance ". Collaborative governance has been developed through governance methods that bring together many stakeholders in a forum together with public institutions to engage in decision-making oriented towards in-depth scientific studies (Dema et al., 2021). Indriasari (2024), calls it collaborative governance as the governance of public administration and management. Another view states that collaborative governance is a study of management science (Bianchi et al., 2021).

Collaboration in solving the complexity of public problems is currently a trend in public management and public policy studies. Often, policies formulated by the government experience obstacles in the implementation of multi-sector policies where the implementation involves various stakeholders from government elements, as well as the private sector and the public. Obstacles often include limited resources owned by the actors involved so that the policy becomes ineffective and inefficient (Ulaan et al., 2022). Whereas collaboration studies emphasize the utilization of resources owned by stakeholders so that they can be implemented effectively and efficiently (Lestari et al., 2024). Policy implementation represents a critical phase within the policy process, transcending the notion of being merely the conclusion of the policy formulation stage.

This phase is characterized by its complexity, as it necessitates the involvement of multiple government agencies. Agencies that operate across various sectors, including those beyond the governmental domain. This indicates that the efficacy of policy implementation is significantly contingent upon the engagement of stakeholders across various sectors, as in such intricate circumstances, the government is unable to operate independently and necessitates collaborative efforts. Collaboration and concerted efforts with stakeholders are essential for addressing public issues and executing policies (Mutiarawati & Sudarmo, 2021). The present study aims to analyze the collaborative processes involved in the prevention of child marriage within the Central Mamuju Regency.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design to deeply explore the collaborative processes involved in the prevention of child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency. A qualitative approach was selected to allow for an in-depth understanding of complex social interactions, stakeholder relationships, and governance dynamics, aspects that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures alone. This flexible design enabled theories to emerge and evolve in response to insights gained during the research process. The research was conducted in Central Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi Province, a region purposively selected due to its high incidence of child marriage, making it a critical site for studying collaborative prevention efforts. The purposive sampling strategy ensured that data were collected from a context where the problem is prominent, allowing for the capture of rich, relevant, and meaningful information. The primary data sources comprised key stakeholders directly engaged in collaborative efforts to prevent child marriage. Informants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Initial informants were identified based on their direct involvement in collaboration initiatives, including representatives from the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control and Family Planning Service (P3AP2KB), the Community and Village Empowerment Service (PMD), the Health Service, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Village Governments, and local NGOs. Additional informants were identified through referrals from initial participants to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the network of actors involved.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: in-depth semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation review. Interview guides were developed to explore participants' experiences and perspectives on key elements of collaboration, such as trust-building, joint commitment, shared objectives, and perceived outcomes. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim for accuracy. Observations focused on meetings, coordination activities, and socialization sessions aimed at preventing child marriage. Field notes captured both the formal and informal dynamics observed during these activities. Documentation analysis involved reviewing official reports, memoranda of understanding, meeting minutes, regulatory documents, and media publications related to child marriage prevention initiatives. Secondary data were collected to complement the primary data and provide broader contextual insights. These included government reports, academic journal articles, statistical data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, and previous research studies addressing child marriage and collaborative governance in Indonesia.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model (as elaborated by Wau, 2022), consisting of four concurrent activities: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data were systematically coded, categorized into themes aligned with collaborative governance theory, and displayed through matrices and conceptual diagrams. Triangulation was employed to ensure validity by cross-checking information from different sources and methods. Additionally, member checking was conducted with selected informants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations and preliminary findings. To maintain research integrity and uphold ethical standards, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to interviews and observations. Participants were assured of the

confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. They were also informed of their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any time without repercussions. All data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ineffective Dialogue and Fragmented Communication

The first major theme identified was the lack of effective dialogue and fragmented communication among stakeholders. Although there were actors formally responsible for preventing child marriage, coordinated communication remained weak and largely incidental.

One informant explained:

"We only talk about child marriage prevention if there happens to be a related topic in other meetings. There is no special meeting for this issue." (Informant 3, Village Officer)

This quote illustrates how child marriage prevention is not positioned as a priority agenda. It suggests that the absence of dedicated forums signals low institutional urgency, which diminishes the effectiveness of cross-sectoral coordination.

Another participant reflected:

"Every department handles their own programs. We haven't had a real sit-down to map out responsibilities together for preventing early marriage." (Informant 5, Health Service Staff)

Here, the fragmentation of efforts becomes clear. The lack of joint program planning leads to isolated initiatives rather than an integrated strategy, weakening the collective impact of the collaboration.

A related sentiment was shared:

"When we meet at the OPD forums, child marriage might be mentioned, but it's not the focus. No one is coordinating a specific action plan." (Informant 1, P3AP2KB Officer)

This statement highlights the peripheral treatment of child marriage issues within broader governmental discussions. Without a dedicated agenda, meaningful deliberation and resource mobilization cannot occur effectively.

Furthermore, an official remarked:

"Sometimes we are not even informed when another agency conducts outreach about early marriage in the villages." (Informant 6, Ministry of Religion Officer)

This indicates operational silos between stakeholders. The absence of information sharing not only leads to redundant activities but also undermines trust and mutual support among institutions.

Finally, a representative from a local NGO noted:

"We feel isolated; there is no continuous communication or monitoring about what has been done and what should be improved." (Informant 8, NGO Representative)

This quote brings to the surface the experience of marginalization felt by non-governmental actors. The lack of monitoring and evaluation frameworks inhibits the learning cycle necessary for improving intervention strategies.

The evidence demonstrates that communication among stakeholders in Central Mamuju's child marriage prevention initiatives remains fragmented, incidental, and poorly institutionalized. Each stakeholder largely operates within their own mandates without strategic alignment. The lack of dedicated dialogue spaces not only prevents the emergence of shared goals but also impairs trust-building and coordinated action. The absence of information flow, joint

planning, and collective monitoring processes significantly weakens the potential effectiveness of collaborative governance in addressing child marriage.

While communication and coordination were weak, another theme that emerged was the relatively high level of mutual trust among government stakeholders. Trust was described as existing mainly at the interpersonal level and within the limits of each agency's duties, but it was not sufficient to build deep institutional collaboration.

One official stated:

"We trust that each agency is doing what they can according to their own tasks. No one doubts the sincerity of the others." (Informant 2, PMD Officer)

This highlights that while there is goodwill among actors, the trust is passive rather than active. It implies respect for others' efforts but does not automatically translate into active synergy or shared responsibility.

Another participant shared:

"When the Health Service holds socialization activities about reproductive health, we support it even if we are not directly involved." (Informant 4, P3AP2KB Officer)

This demonstrates that trust manifests as non-interference and informal support rather than structured collaboration. Stakeholders are willing to encourage each other's work but do not systematically engage in joint activities.

Further, a village leader explained:

"We believe the Ministry of Religion is serious in counseling young couples, but our village has never been included directly in the planning." (Informant 7, Village Head)

This quote suggests that trust in the credibility of other actors exists, yet the absence of integration at the planning level weakens the potential for coherent local action.

An NGO representative remarked:

"We know government agencies mean well, but sometimes their programs don't reach the community because there is no partnership with us who work in the field." (Informant 9, NGO Representative)

Here, the limitation of trust becomes evident while intentions are respected, the lack of operational collaboration, especially with non-governmental actors, curtails the reach and effectiveness of initiatives.

Finally, another informant reflected:

"Each of us trusts that the others will handle their part. But sometimes, without real coordination, efforts become overlapping or disconnected." (Informant 1, P3AP2KB Officer)

This demonstrates that trust alone, without structured mechanisms for coordination, can actually reinforce silos rather than foster real synergy.

Weak Commitment and Lack of Joint Programs

Another major theme that surfaced was the weak collective commitment among stakeholders, reflected in the absence of joint programs specifically dedicated to preventing child marriage. While each institution implemented activities related to their own mandates, there was no integrated or unified action plan across agencies.

One government officer admitted:

"Until now, there is no special collaboration program; each agency only works based on their own main tasks and functions." (Informant 5, Health Service Staff)

This statement reveals that commitment exists only at the level of institutional duty fulfillment, not at the level of building collective strategies. The fragmented structure results in isolated actions rather than systemic change.

Similarly, another official commented:

"If P3AP2KB runs an awareness event, it's their program. We may come as guests but not as part of the planning or implementation." (Informant 3, Village Officer)

This reflects passive participation by other stakeholders rather than active co-ownership of initiatives. Without shared ownership, sustainability and impact of efforts are seriously compromised.

An officer from the Ministry of Religion also shared:

"We focus on premarital counseling, but we don't coordinate our calendar or materials with other agencies working on early marriage prevention." (Informant 6, Ministry of Religion Officer)

This highlights operational fragmentation: even when interventions aim at similar objectives (e.g., educating potential brides and grooms), lack of coordination prevents the formation of reinforcing synergies between programs.

An NGO worker emphasized:

"We often run parallel campaigns about early marriage with local schools, but the government offices don't involve us formally or build joint efforts." (Informant 8, NGO Representative)

This suggests a missed opportunity for broader impact through collaboration with civil society actors who could extend the outreach and sustainability of governmental programs.

Lastly, one stakeholder reflected:

"Everyone is working, but in different directions. We don't have a unified roadmap that binds us together." (Informant 1, P3AP2KB Officer)

This quotation captures the essence of weak commitment: despite individual efforts, the absence of a shared strategic plan means that efforts remain scattered and less effective.

The data clearly show that while individual institutions are active, their actions are not harmonized into a comprehensive, joint approach to child marriage prevention. Stakeholders demonstrate commitment to their respective mandates but lack commitment to collective, integrated action. Without a shared roadmap, defined roles, and coordinated activities, collaboration remains superficial. This weak commitment significantly reduces the potential impact of initiatives and perpetuates inefficiencies in addressing the complex problem of child marriage.

Larsson J & Larsson L (2020), argue that in collaboration there are components that form a cycle and influence each other, where components are an integral part that influences successful collaboration. The components that become indicators of success in Collaborative Governance by Wang & Ran (2023) include condition beginning, design organization, leadership facilitative, collaborative process, and outcome (impact). Indriastuti (2023), explain that the collaboration process is part important in collaborative governance. A collaborative process covers several stages which consist of the interface dialogue, building trust, commitment to the collaborative process, understanding together, and impact temporarily.

Interface Dialogue

The dialogue that occurs through interfaces serves as a crucial mode of communication in collaborative efforts, primarily due to its role in the process of consensus formation (Sorensen et

al., 2020). Direct communication, particularly in face-to-face interactions, serves as an endeavor to mitigate stereotypes, specifically the negative perceptions that individuals may hold regarding others, while simultaneously fostering mutual respect among participants. In the context of preventing child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency, the dialogue interface conducted by stakeholders or Village Apparatus Organizations, specifically the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control and Family Planning Service (P3AP2KB), Community and Village Empowerment Service (PMD), Health Service, Ministry of Religion, and Village Government, can be characterized as largely ineffective.

The infrequency of dialogue or discussion pertaining to the prevention of child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency, as conducted by these stakeholders, is noteworthy. No dialogue meeting has been conducted by stakeholders specifically aimed at discussing the prevention of child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency. In the interim, the prevention of child marriage will be addressed solely during the annual OPD Forum meeting convened by the OPDs in Central Mamuju Regency. Additionally, should an opportunity arise within a discussion forum that pertains to other programs related to child marriage, such discussions may occur in the context of forums or meetings focused on the Child-Friendly City (KLA) initiative and the Stunting Acceleration Reduction Team (TPPS).

The absence of a collaborative child marriage prevention program in Central Mamuju Regency has resulted in fragmented efforts to address this issue. Consequently, initiatives are primarily reliant on the core responsibilities of individual stakeholder institutions, leading to a lack of regular meetings for monitoring and evaluation specifically aimed at preventing child marriage. Furthermore, it can be asserted that community engagement in dialogues or forums pertaining to discussions on initiatives aimed at preventing child marriage remains insufficient.

Building Trust

It is indeed common for a lack of trust to exist among stakeholders at the onset of the collaboration process. Collaboration extends beyond mere negotiation among stakeholders; it fundamentally involves the endeavor to cultivate mutual trust among the parties involved. Establishing trust should be prioritized at the outset of the initial collaborative process. This measure is implemented to prevent stakeholders from encountering egocentrism among institutions. Consequently, the establishment of this trust necessitates the presence of a leader who recognizes the significance of collaboration.

The collaborative efforts undertaken by stakeholders to prevent child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency demonstrate that each entity, including the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control and Family Planning Service (P3AP2KB), Community and Village Empowerment Service (PMD), Health Service, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Village Government, has established mutual trust in the commitment of each agency to mitigate child marriage in the region. This observation is evident in the manner in which each stakeholder executes the primary tasks and functions of their respective agency to prevent and mitigate the incidence of child marriages. This phenomenon is further illustrated by the engagement of various stakeholders in a continuous activity program addressing child marriage (More & Kurniawati, 2022).

This includes the participation of the P3AP2KB Service, PMD Service, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Health Service, which serve as resource persons. These entities are responsible for providing socialization and education to target groups, specifically teenagers and prospective brides and grooms, as well as to all segments of society, including both rural communities and educational institutions, in relation to the issue of child marriage. Furthermore, a method to establish trust among the stakeholders engaged in the prevention of child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency involves the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) and the P3AP2KB Service, in collaboration with the Village Head

and Sub-district Head. This agreement stipulates that in the event of a child marriage, the marriage may be annulled.

Commitment to the Collaborative Process

The concept of commitment undeniably plays a significant role in the process of collaboration. Commitment serves as a motivating factor for engagement and participation in collaborative governance. A robust commitment from each stakeholder is essential to mitigate risks associated with the collaboration process. Commitment is, indeed, a complex aspect of collaboration. The obligation of stakeholders is to perceive the relationship as a novel entity, and this obligation necessitates further development.

The collaborative efforts aimed at preventing child marriage in Mamuju Tengah Regency demonstrate a deficiency in commitment. This is due to the absence of a joint program specifically focused on the prevention of child marriage in Mamuju Tengah Regency that is based on collaborative efforts. The programs and activities implemented concerning the prevention of child marriage remain incomplete, reflecting the primary responsibilities and functions of each agency involved. Furthermore, the marriage dispensation policy issued by the Ministry of Religion represents a significant loophole, thereby facilitating the continued occurrence of child marriage in Mamuju Tengah Regency.

Nevertheless, each stakeholder, specifically the P3AP2KB Service, PMD Service, Health Service, and Ministry of Religion, demonstrated a commitment and exerted efforts to prevent and mitigate the incidence of child marriages through activity programs implemented within each agency. These initiatives included socialization and educational efforts conducted in villages and schools, particularly targeting adolescents and prospective brides and grooms (Agustian et al., 2024)

Shared Understanding

At this stage of the collaboration process, it is imperative that the stakeholders involved possess a shared understanding of the potential outcomes they can attain through their collaborative efforts. This collective comprehension may be characterized as a unified mission, common goals, shared objectives, collective vision, and shared ideology, among other aspects (Bolin & Jungar, 2024). The dissemination of understanding may yield significant consequences for the establishment of a mutual agreement regarding the interpretation and definition of a problem. The collaborative process aimed at preventing child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency demonstrates a notable deficiency in shared understanding among the involved parties.

The absence of a dedicated collaboration program aimed at preventing child marriage results in a lack of clearly defined regulations governing the division of labor and coordination mechanisms among the various agencies engaged in this endeavor. Nevertheless, all stakeholders engaged in the prevention of child marriage, including the Women's Empowerment, Child Protection, Population Control and Family Planning Service (P3AP2KB), Community and Village Empowerment Service (PMD), Health Service, Ministry of Religion, and Village Government, possess an understanding and knowledge of the significance of preventing child marriage. They recognize the potential impacts or risks associated with the occurrence of child marriage, which may include extreme poverty, elevated maternal and child mortality rates, and stunting.

Temporary Impact

The ongoing outcomes of the collaborative process are evidenced by tangible results or outputs. This process is both critical and essential, as it facilitates the development of momentum that can significantly influence the success of a collaboration (Amani, 2023). Intermediate level These outcomes emerge when the potential objectives and advantages of collaboration are relatively well-defined and when the attainment of "small wins" through collaboration is feasible. The outputs derived from the collaboration are classified as temporary impacts. The temporary

impacts on the prevention of child marriage in Central Mamuju Regency can currently be characterized as lacking significant change.

The initiatives aimed at socialization and education concerning child marriage have not effectively permeated all areas of Central Mamuju Regency or all societal strata. Presently, the most significant impact arises from the efforts of the Genre Forum (Planned Generation Forum) and PIK R (Youth Information and Counseling Center), which are implemented in junior high and high schools under the auspices of the P3AP2KB Service. These organizations directly engage with the target demographic, specifically adolescents both within and outside the school environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, the conclusion study shows that the collaboration process in the prevention of wedding-age children in Central Mamuju Regency can it is said Still Not yet walk with good. This is a dialogue between faces, commitment in the process of collaboration, and understanding together in the prevention of wedding-age children in Central Mamuju Regency is still Not yet effective, but there is trust built between the actors to prevent and suppress several wedding-age children. As for the impact of the resulting so far this is in the process of collaboration in the prevention of wedding age children in Central Mamuju Regency are still Not yet shown significant changes.

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