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The Administrative-Substantive Paradox in Collaborative Governance: A Case Study of University-Regional Government Collaboration in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the collaboration between the Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM) of Universitas Jenderal Soedirman and the Secretariat of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Cilacap Regency in developing Academic Manuscripts for Regional Regulation Drafts (Raperda) in 2024. Employing a descriptive-evaluative qualitative approach within a Collaborative Governance framework, this research analyzes the subst antive quality of outputs, the alignment of research team competencies, and the dynamics of collaborative processes through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. Findings reveal a paradox between high administrative efficiency and low substantive quality, whereby none of the three Academic Manuscripts produced advanced to the promulgation stage. Critical issues include the utilization of outdated regulations, competency gaps in teams not based on needs analysis, and collaborative processes that remain transactional rather than deliberative. Power asymmetries were reflected in partners' limited authority to determine team composition, while the absence of multi-layered quality assurance mechanisms and periodic evaluations resulted in problems remaining undetected until the final stages. The study recommends an ideal cooperation model founded on five pillars: paradigm transformation toward collaborative partnership, competency-based team formation with active partner participation, implementation of multi-layered quality assurance, strengthening of deliberative communication, and development of continuous learning systems. This transformation requires institutional commitment to positioning partnership, quality, participation, and continuous learning as core values in academic-local government collaborations, with success evaluation based not solely on administrative efficiency but also on output quality and tangible contributions to regional regulation improvement.

Keywords: Collaborative Governance, University-Government Cooperation, Academic Manuscript for Regional Regulation Draft, Quality Assurance, Research Team Competency

INTRODUCTION

Universities play a strategic role in supporting national development through the implementation of the tri dharma of higher education, which encompasses education, research, and community service. In the Indonesian context, universities function not only as educational institutions but also as centers of innovation and knowledge development that contribute directly to improving public policy quality and community welfare. The Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM) as a structural unit within universities serves as the spearhead in realizing these research and service functions. The existence of LPPM is crucial in facilitating collaboration between academics and various external stakeholders, including the business world, the industrial sector (DUDI), and regional government agencies. This collaboration is expected to produce quality outputs that will have tangible impacts on regional development and institutional capacity strengthening.

Collaboration between universities and regional governments has become a focal point in contemporary public governance literature. Ansell and Gash (2008a) assert that collaborative governance constitutes an approach involving various actors in decision-making processes to produce more responsive and sustainable policies. This collaborative model demands intensive communication, clear distribution of responsibilities, and mutual commitment to achieving agreed-upon objectives. In the Indonesian context, Nawawi et al. (2025) identify that





collaborative governance strategies in regional planning and development still face various challenges, including weak coordination and unclear role delineation among parties. Situmorang et al. (2018) also demonstrate that university-government cooperation models for teacher competency improvement in North Sumatra require institutional capacity strengthening and clarity in implementation mechanisms. These findings indicate that collaboration success depends not only on the good intentions of the parties involved but also on the quality of processes and substance generated from such cooperation.

Output quality constitutes one of the crucial indicators in assessing the effectiveness of collaboration between universities and regional governments. Cairney and Oliver (2017) argue that evidence-based policymaking cannot be equated with evidence-based medical practice, as policy involves higher levels of political, social, and economic complexity. Therefore, universities involved in formulating policy documents, such as Academic Manuscripts for Regional Regulation Drafts (Raperda), must ensure that studies conducted are based on current data and regulations and supported by researcher competencies aligned with the field of study. Anas et al. (2023) found that information system quality and financial information quality in Indonesian regional government organizations still require improvement to support better decision-making. This demonstrates that the substantive quality of every product generated through collaboration must be a top priority, not merely fulfilling administrative and procedural aspects.

Nevertheless, various studies indicate that collaboration between universities and external stakeholders frequently encounters obstacles regarding competency alignment and depth of analysis. Perkmann et al. (2021) in their literature review on academic engagement identify that the gap between external partners' expectations and academic capacity represents one of the primary inhibiting factors in collaboration. Nsanzumuhire and Groot (2020) also emphasize the importance of contextual understanding in university-industry collaboration processes, where misalignment of perspectives between practical needs and academic approaches can hinder the achievement of common goals. Islamiyah et al. (2024) add that university-industry collaboration strategies must be supported by conducive organizational culture and clear innovation programs, with moderating roles from government funding. In the context of university-regional government cooperation, similar challenges emerge when research teams lack expertise appropriate to the field of study being addressed, potentially resulting in outputs inadequate in substance.

The cooperation between LPPM Universitas Jenderal Soedirman (Unsoed) and regional government agencies, particularly the Secretariat of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Cilacap, represents one form of academic-government collaboration implementation in supporting regional regulation formulation. This cooperation focuses on developing Academic Manuscripts for Raperda that serve as the foundation for formulating Regional Regulations (Perda) responsive to community needs. Unsoed, as a state university with a solid reputation in the Central Java region, is expected to make significant contributions through quality academic studies based on current research. Fu et al. (2024) note that scientific production by Indonesian universities has experienced significant increases over the past three decades; however, the quality and impact of such scientific production still require critical evaluation. This indicates that universities are demanded not only to produce publications or academic outputs in large quantities but must also ensure that each output possesses high substantive quality and can be applied in practice.

Evaluation of the cooperation between LPPM Unsoed and the DPRD Secretariat of Cilacap becomes important for understanding the dynamics, challenges, and lessons that can be drawn from academic-government collaboration implementation. Yaxin and Adnan (2025) affirm that organizational structure and stakeholder engagement have a significant influence on organizational performance, thus a comprehensive evaluation of both aspects is essential. In the context of Academic Manuscript development for Raperda, evaluation encompasses not only administrative efficiency aspects but also the substantive quality of studies produced, alignment of research team competencies, and the impact of such cooperation on regional legislative processes. Yatun et al. (2021) demonstrate that Indonesian regional government commitment to education sector quality remains varied, indicating the need for strengthening accountability and transparency in all forms of cooperation with academic institutions. Natário et al. (2012) in their study on the triple helix model emphasize that innovation dynamics in collaboration among universities, industry, and government heavily depend on the quality of interaction and synchronization of interests among these three actors.





Based on the above exposition, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of cooperation between LPPM Unsoed and regional government agencies, particularly in the context of Academic Manuscript development for Raperda in Cilacap Regency. This research will analyze the substantive quality of outputs produced, the alignment of research team competencies with study requirements, as well as challenges and constraints encountered in the collaboration process. This evaluation is expected to provide valuable lessons for developing an ideal cooperation model between universities and regional governments in the future one that is not only administratively efficient but also of high quality in terms of substance. Thus, university contributions to regional development can be more optimal and have tangible impacts on improving public policy quality and community welfare.

LITERATURE REVIEW

University-Regional Government Cooperation

Cooperation between universities and regional governments represents a strategic synergy grounded in the spirit of knowledge-based development development that stands on knowledge, research, and innovation (Natsir et al., 2024). Universities, through the Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM), have a mandate to implement the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, particularly in applied research and community service. According to Khomsi et al. (2024), collaborative knowledge models can enhance collaboration between researchers and policymakers, leading to evidence-based policies that effectively meet community needs. Meanwhile, regional governments require scientific foundations in policy formulation to ensure that legal products and public policies produced possess academic legitimacy, empirical relevance, and implementation effectiveness. This aligns with research by Rideng et al. (2024), which states that collaboration between universities and regional governments in developing Academic Manuscripts for Raperda has proven to improve regulations and socioeconomic impact.

In this context, the cooperation between LPPM Unsoed and the Cilacap Regency Government reflects the practical implementation of the university-government partnership concept. Through this partnership, universities serve as think tanks providing research-based analysis and evidence-based solutions (evidence-based policy), while the government functions as a knowledge user that implements research results into actual policies (Budiman, 2021; Noor, 2010). This synergy not only enhances the substantive quality of regional policies such as Academic Manuscripts for Raperda but also strengthens institutional capacity in data-driven and scientific knowledge-based decision-making. Thus, this cooperation becomes a bridge between the academic world and the practical world of governance, oriented toward improving public policy quality and community welfare.

Inter-Organizational Collaboration

The concept of inter-organizational collaboration explains how two or more institutions with different interests work together to achieve common goals that cannot be accomplished individually (Hedges et al., 2021). Gray (1989) defines collaboration as an interactive process that demands active participation, open communication, and trust-building among parties (Gazley, 2017). In the context of the relationship between LPPM Unsoed and the Cilacap Regency Government, this collaboration involves the exchange of resources in the form of academic knowledge, empirical data, as well as administrative and policy support. Such cooperation requires good coordination, shared vision, and clear working mechanisms to ensure that the process of developing Academic Manuscripts for Raperda runs effectively and produces quality outputs.

Inter-organizational collaboration also emphasizes the importance of trust-building, transparency, and two-way communication to prevent expectation gaps between universities as research providers and governments as research users (Castañer & Oliveira, 2020). Challenges that frequently emerge in such collaborations include differences in organizational culture, bureaucratic patterns, and orientations toward work outcomes. However, when properly managed, inter-organizational collaboration can create social innovation and policies more adaptive to community needs (Abidin, 2021; Corley et al., 2006; Hedges et al., 2021). Thus, understanding the dynamics of inter-organizational collaboration becomes key to evaluating the effectiveness of LPPM-regional government cooperation and formulating an ideal partnership model for the future.

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Collaborative Governance Theory

The Collaborative Governance theory developed by Ansell and Gash (2008) provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding cooperation mechanisms between universities and regional governments in the context of public policy formulation. This theory views collaboration not merely as administrative cooperation but as a governance process involving various actors from the public, academic, and community sectors in participatory, deliberative, and consensus-based decision-making (Emerson et al., 2012). In this model, four important elements determine collaboration success: starting conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership, and collaborative process (Purdy, 2012).

Starting conditions encompass the level of trust, history of previous cooperation, and power balance among parties. In the context of LPPM Unsoed and the Cilacap Regency Government, this can be observed through research collaboration experience and the level of mutual trust between academics and bureaucrats. Institutional design includes clarity of roles, responsibilities, and formal communication mechanisms governing the cooperation. Facilitative leadership is important for maintaining commitment, resolving conflicts, and encouraging active participation from all parties. The collaborative process emphasizes the importance of continuous dialogue, mutual learning, and joint problem-solving (Ansell & Gash, 2008b; Saleh et al., 2021).

In the context of this research, Collaborative Governance theory can be used to analyze how the cooperation between LPPM and the Regency Government proceeded in developing Academic Manuscripts for Raperda, whether it fulfilled participatory, transparent, and substantive outcome-oriented principles. Furthermore, this theory also helps assess whether the collaborative mechanisms established have generated mutual benefits for both parties namely, academic quality improvement for the university and policy quality enhancement for the regional government (Sullivan et al., 2025). Thus, this theory not only explains collaboration dynamics but also provides an evaluative framework for assessing the effectiveness of collaborative governance in supporting knowledge-based regional development (Lahat et al., 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-evaluative design to analyze the cooperation between LPPM Unsoed and regional government agencies. The qualitative approach was selected because it is capable of extracting deep meaning from social phenomena, understanding participants' subjective perspectives holistically, and answering questions of "why" and "how" a phenomenon occurs (Busetto et al., 2020; Moleong, 2013). The descriptive-evaluative method enables researchers not only to describe the actual conditions of cooperation but also to comprehensively evaluate substantive quality, competency alignment, and policy impacts generated.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, namely the DPRD Secretariat of Cilacap as representatives of the regional government partner and lecturers directly involved in research cooperation with government agencies. In-depth interviews constitute a qualitative research technique used to conduct detailed interviews with a small number of participants, allowing researchers to invest significant time with each participant to comprehensively extract information (Busetto et al., 2020). This technique was chosen because it facilitates purposeful open conversations, enabling researchers to obtain deep insights into informants' subjective experiences, opinions, and motivations (Bungin, 2015; Pahleviannur, 2022).

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using an interview guide containing open-ended questions to maintain flexibility and responsiveness to contexts emerging during the interview process. The semi-structured approach allows broad areas that constitute the research focus to remain defined while providing space for informants to explore relevant issues in their own way (Busetto et al., 2020).

Data analysis employed a descriptive-evaluative approach with the following stages: (1) data reduction to select and focus on information relevant to research objectives; (2) data presentation in the form of descriptive narratives and theme categorization to facilitate understanding of patterns and relationships among data; (3) verification and conclusion drawing based on categorized findings (Abubakar, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2018).

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The analysis process was focused on identifying cooperation patterns, revealing challenges encountered in implementation, and formulating lessons learned from the ongoing cooperation as the foundation for future policy improvement recommendations. The entire data collection and analysis process was conducted iteratively, whereby initial analysis could inform subsequent data collection until data saturation was achieved (Busetto et al., 2020).

Research quality criteria were maintained through methodological transparency, researcher reflexivity regarding the influence of the researcher's position and background in the research process, and comprehensive documentation of all methodological decisions made throughout the research (Busetto et al., 2020).

In conducting this study, the researchers acknowledge their positionality within the context of the collaboration examined. All researchers are affiliated with the university involved in the partnership; however, none held formal administrative roles or direct decision-making authority within the project. This insider position provided access to key informants, institutional documents, and informal reflections that enriched the depth of understanding. At the same time, the researchers maintained a reflective stance throughout the process to minimize potential bias. Reflexive notes were kept during data collection and analysis to critically assess how the researchers' institutional affiliations and prior experiences might shape interpretation. This acknowledgment of positionality aims to enhance the transparency, credibility, and trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Gap between Administrative Efficiency and Substantive Quality of Corporate Output

The cooperation between LPPM Unsoed and the DPRD Secretariat of Cilacap in developing three Academic Manuscripts for Raperda in 2024 reveals an interesting paradox between administrative efficiency and the substantive quality of outputs produced. The three Academic Manuscripts that became the focus of the cooperation covered Raperda on Universal Health Coverage, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Zakat, Infaq, and Sedekah; however, by the time of evaluation, none of these documents had reached the promulgation stage and all remained under revision. Although technical aspects and financial accountability proceeded smoothly, the substantive quality of studies produced failed to meet partner expectations due to fundamental weaknesses related to the currency and accuracy of regulations serving as the foundation for development. This condition indicates that fulfillment of procedural aspects is not directly proportional to study content quality, such that outputs produced have not yet contributed directly to society through enacted regulations. The phenomenon of the gap between administrative efficiency and substantive quality aligns with Cairney and Oliver's (2017) argument emphasizing that evidence-based policymaking cannot be equated with evidence-based medical practice because it involves higher levels of political, social, and economic complexity.

The fundamental problem identified was the outdated regulations serving as the foundation for Academic Manuscript development, particularly in the Raperda on Corporate Social Responsibility which still referenced a Ministerial Social Regulation that had been revoked or was no longer valid. This outdated regulatory reference was not detected by the drafting team, thus impacting the validity and utility of the Academic Manuscript produced in the regional legislative process. Furthermore, there was no discussion of new regulations as replacements for the revoked regulations, rendering the legal basis used obsolete and preventing advancement to the policy harmonization stage. The harmonization process refers to efforts to synchronize central-level regulations with regional policies, and failure at this stage constitutes a critical finding given that the budget for these activities had already been expended. This finding reflects weak quality assurance processes in corporate management, where Rideng et al. (2024) assert that collaboration between universities and regional governments in developing Academic Manuscripts for Raperda has proven to improve regulatory quality and socioeconomic impact when conducted with strict academic standards.

Another problem identified was the Raperda on Zakat, Infaq, and Sedekah, which could not proceed because it was deemed to fall within central government authority and violated regional autonomy principles. Of the three Academic Manuscripts developed, only two remained under revision the Raperda on Corporate Social Responsibility and Universal Health Coverage, while one was rejected at the harmonization stage. This situation raises concerns from a state financial accountability perspective as it could be considered a detrimental finding,

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given that the budget had been expended but outputs produced could not be utilized in the legislative process. This condition indicates that problems are systemic and recurring in corporate management, thus requiring a comprehensive evaluation to prevent recurrence of similar issues in the future. Anas et al. (2023) found that information system quality and financial information quality in Indonesian regional government organizations still require improvement to support better decision-making, demonstrating that output quality problems occur not only in academic cooperation contexts but represent a systemic issue in regional governance.

The depth of study also came under scrutiny in evaluating the substantive quality of cooperation outputs, where studies conducted were not thoroughly discussed due to time constraints. The Academic Manuscript development process was more administrative in nature and lacked emphasis on academic rigor, whereas studies should conduct comprehensive review and field observations to ensure that analysis is based on valid empirical data. This criticism indicates that cooperation orientation still tends toward project completion and budget absorption rather than substantive quality produced. Khomsi et al. (2024) explain that collaborative knowledge models can enhance collaboration between researchers and policymakers leading to evidence-based policies when systematic data verification and validation mechanisms exist. The absence of such mechanisms in LPPM-DPRD cooperation caused fundamental problems to remain undetected until the policy harmonization stage, such that outputs produced did not optimally contribute to the regional legislative process.

Despite various substantial weaknesses, the technical and administrative aspects of the cooperation outputs were deemed to have met procedural standards with proper writing systematics and formal document completeness. Nevertheless, content aspects and reference currency became the primary weaknesses causing the gap between administrative efficiency and academic substantive quality. Orientation toward budget absorption and project completion without attention to substantive quality reflects a shift in academic mission toward service commercialization, where concerns exist that cooperation tends to focus on quantitative aspects such as the number of completed projects and absorbed budgets. Perkmann et al. (2021) in their literature review on academic engagement identify that the gap between external partner expectations and academic capacity constitutes one of the primary inhibiting factors in collaboration, often triggered by institutional orientation toward quantitative performance metrics such as project numbers and contract values. Islamiyah et al. (2024) add that university-industry collaboration strategies must be supported by conducive organizational culture and clear innovation programs, with moderating roles from government funding focusing not only on financial aspects but also on quality assurance.

The gap between academic language and practical needs also presents challenges in bridging partner expectations with outputs produced, where perspective differences exist between practitioners' needs that are more applicative and academic analysis that must be theoretically grounded. Nsanzumuhire and Groot (2020) emphasize the importance of contextual understanding in university-industry collaboration processes, where misalignment of perspectives between practical needs and academic approaches can hinder achievement of common goals. In the context of LPPM-DPRD cooperation, this gap is not merely linguistic but also epistemological—differences in ways of viewing and approaching policy problems. Budiman (2021) explains that the Regional Regulation formulation according to Law Number 12 of 2011 demands a balance between academic legitimacy and responsiveness to community needs. When academic outputs cannot be translated into applicable policy language, the added value of collaboration becomes minimal and fails to deliver expected impacts.

The implication of this gap is the need to redefine quality standards that integrate academic rigor with practical relevance in every form of cooperation between universities and regional governments. Yatun et al. (2021) found that Indonesian regional government commitment to public sector quality remains varied, indicating the need to strengthen accountability and transparency in all forms of cooperation with academic institutions. In the case of studies, accountability encompasses not only administrative-financial aspects but also academic accountability ensuring that every output possesses scientific validity and practical utility. Noor (2010) asserts that university research and community service must be oriented toward solving real problems faced by society, not merely fulfilling administrative tri dharma obligations. Therefore, an ideal cooperation model must include multilayered quality control mechanisms involving academic peer review and policy practitioner validation to ensure that outputs meet dual standards: academic rigor and practical relevance, thus contributing tangibly to improving regional regulation quality and community welfare.





Research Team Competency Gaps and Their Implications for Knowledge Currency

Analysis of research team competency alignment reveals significant gaps between possessed expertise and study requirements that must be completed in the cooperation between LPPM Unsoed and the DPRD Secretariat of Cilacap. Team composition that tends to remain fixed without considering expertise alignment with study themes constitutes a structural problem in cooperation management, where teams formed do not always possess educational backgrounds relevant to the study objects addressed. Particularly in developing Academic Manuscripts related to law, the absence of legal experts on teams becomes a fundamental weakness impacting the inability to detect basic problems such as use of regulations no longer in force. This finding of competency misalignment confirms Perkmann et al.'s (2021) argument that the gap between external partner expectations and academic capacity constitutes a structural barrier to academic engagement. Situmorang et al. (2018) in their study on university-government cooperation models for teacher competency improvement in North Sumatra found that collaboration success heavily depends on team expertise alignment with specific program needs.

Competency misalignment directly impacts the inability to detect fundamental study problems, as seen in the case of the Raperda on Corporate Social Responsibility which used an expired Ministerial Social Regulation that was not identified by the team. The absence of legal experts on regulatory study teams resulted in failure to identify legal basis currency issues that constitute the foundation of Academic Manuscripts, such that documents produced lacked adequate juridical validity. This condition demonstrates that competency alignment is not merely about academic formalities but has direct implications for the quality and utility of outputs produced in regional legislative processes. Corley et al. (2006) add that multi-institutional collaboration design and management requires systematic competency mapping from the planning phase to ensure that each team member has clear and relevant contributions. When this alignment is not met, outputs produced tend to be generic and unable to address the technical problems faced by partners.

The research team recruitment process not based on competency alignment becomes the root problem in cooperation management, where recruitment of relevant experts occurs belatedly and not from initial planning. A team formation system that tends to repeatedly use the same names reflects weak adjustment mechanisms between project needs and expertise available at the institution. Team formation mechanisms remain top-down and do not involve systematic competency needs analysis, such that the principle of placing the right people in the right place has not been fully implemented. Nsanzumuhire and Groot (2020) assert that university-industry collaboration often fails due to lack of contextual understanding and partners' specific needs. Yaxin and Adnan (2025) add that organizational structure and stakeholder engagement have a significant influence on organizational performance, thus recruitment mechanisms and human resource allocation must be responsive to external needs dynamics.

Limitations in team diversification and the tendency to repeatedly use the same names constitute obstacles in ensuring cooperation output quality. Team determination is largely conducted by top leadership or based on established decisions without considering input from partners who have direct interests in study results. Considerations of cost efficiency and communication ease often override competency alignment aspects, such that teams formed are not optimal in handling the study complexities required. Partners' limited authority in determining research team composition reflects power relations imbalances in the collaboration, where existing collaborative mechanisms remain asymmetric and not fully participatory. Ansell and Gash (2008) in Collaborative Governance theory emphasize the importance of power balance as one of the starting conditions determining collaboration success. Purdy (2012) explains that power imbalances in collaborative governance processes can be overcome through institutional design providing space for all parties to participate in key decisions.

The impact of competency misalignment is not only technical but also affects institutional credibility and collaboration effectiveness in producing evidence-based policies. Flexibility and responsiveness in team formation according to the specific needs of each study become urgent requirements for improving cooperation quality. Transparency regarding team profiles and expertise becomes important for building trust and ensuring that partners can assess competency alignment from initial planning. Hedges et al. (2021) explain that strengthening and sustaining inter-institutional research collaborations requires clear governance mechanisms,

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including competency-based team selection procedures and continuous performance evaluation. Competency-based team formation mechanisms involving partners' active participation become urgent needs to improve cooperation quality and ensure that outputs produced possess academic validity and practical utility.

The concept of knowledge currency or knowledge value becomes relevant in understanding competency gap implications for the value of the collaboration established between LPPM and the regional government. Knowledge currency refers to the value and currency of knowledge transferred in collaboration, determining whether outputs produced possess competitive advantage and can be applied in practical contexts. The finding that teams used regulations no longer in force demonstrates that knowledge currency in this cooperation was low because knowledge transferred was not up-to-date and not relevant to current developments in law and policy fields. Natário et al. (2012), in their study on the triple helix model, emphasize that innovation dynamics in collaboration among universities, industry, and government heavily depend on interaction quality and interest synchronization of these three actors, including academics' ability to provide current knowledge that can be applied. Fu et al. (2024) note that although scientific production by Indonesian universities has increased significantly, the quality and impact of such scientific production still require critical evaluation, indicating that quantity does not guarantee quality and relevance.

The implications of competency gaps and low knowledge currency are the need for human resource management system transformation in academic-government collaboration toward a more integrative and participatory model. Castañer and Oliveira (2020) distinguish between collaboration, coordination, and cooperation, where collaboration demands higher levels of integration and interdependence compared to coordination which is administrative in nature. In the context of this research, existing cooperation remains at the coordination level emphasizing administrative aspects, not yet achieving true collaboration requiring competency integration and intensive knowledge sharing. Gazley (2017) emphasizes that effective inter-organizational collaboration requires trust-building, transparency, and two-way communication to overcome expectation gaps. Therefore, team competency profile transparency mechanisms, expertise-based selection procedures, and partner involvement in strategic decision-making become important steps to increase knowledge currency and ensure that collaboration produces high-quality outputs with tangible impacts on improving regional regulation quality.

Collaboration Process Dynamics within the Collaborative Governance Framework

Analysis of starting conditions indicates that cooperation between LPPM Unsoed and the DPRD Secretariat of Cilacap was built on a fairly solid foundation regarding trust and cooperation history aspects, but still faces challenges in power balance and expectation clarity. The selection of LPPM Unsoed as a partner was based on the institution's reputation as a state university with a good brand and already quite well-known in the Purwokerto region. Geographic proximity also became an important factor facilitating communication intensity and face-to-face meetings necessary in collaboration, such that coordination did not consume excessive time. The ongoing cooperative relationship indicates a history of positive cooperation serving as the foundation for trust-building between both institutions. Ansell and Gash (2008b) identify that starting conditions including trust levels, previous cooperation history, and power balance among parties as predictors of collaboration success. Lahat et al. (2021) explain that trust in collaborative governance is fragile and requires performance consistency to be maintained over the long term.

Despite a positive initial trust foundation, negative experiences with poor-quality outputs can rapidly erode that trust and impact future cooperation sustainability. Power imbalances reflected in partners' limited authority to determine research team composition become factors hindering creation of collaborative advantage. Good institutional reputation provides initial trust capital, but this trust is more interpersonal in nature and has not yet been institutionalized into formal mechanisms that can consistently guarantee output quality. This condition indicates that although starting conditions are fairly good, they need to be strengthened with more participatory and balanced governance mechanisms. Emerson et al. (2012) in their integrative collaborative governance framework emphasize the importance of institutional design including role clarity, ground rules, and shared accountability mechanisms to ensure collaboration sustainability.

Institutional design in this cooperation demonstrates clarity from administrative aspects but remains weak in

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substantive aspects and coordination mechanisms. Administrative efficiency is reflected in responsiveness in correspondence processing and time flexibility in service delivery, as well as good and non-rigid communication in administrative contexts. Nevertheless, clarity of roles and responsibilities in studying substance aspects still requires strengthening because formal communication mechanisms have not fully accommodated partner involvement in technical processes of study development. The work handover process that is directly submitted to third parties without coordination with DPRD as a partner demonstrates weak horizontal coordination mechanisms that should involve all interested parties. Purdy (2012) explains that good institutional design must include checks and balances mechanisms to ensure that no party dominates the process and that all stakeholders have a voice in important decisions. Sullivan et al. (2025) assert that government roles in collaborative governance can be lead, link, or leverage, and in this case the regional government's role is more passive as service recipients rather than active partners in knowledge co-production.

Facilitative leadership in this cooperation demonstrates roles not yet optimal in managing expectations and ensuring quality of outputs produced. Leadership orientation focuses more on administrative efficiency and quantitative target achievement rather than substantive quality, where criticism exists toward approaches that merely ensure projects proceed and funds are absorbed without attention to output quality. Criticism of leadership is also evident from strategic decision-making that has not fully involved partners' active participation, thus reducing responsiveness to specific needs of each study. Ansell and Gash (2008a) explain that facilitative leadership plays roles in maintaining collaboration momentum, overcoming conflicts, and ensuring all parties remain engaged in processes. Saleh et al. (2021) assert that collaborative leadership requires the ability to facilitate dialogue, build consensus, and encourage joint learning. The absence of substantive dialogue forums between research teams and partners during the study development phases indicates weak leadership roles in facilitating deliberative and participatory collaborative processes.

The collaborative process demonstrates good communication at operational levels but weak substantive dialogue aspects regarding study content and methodology. Administrative staff responsiveness indicates efforts to build positive working relationships in administrative coordination contexts and correspondence processing. However, in academic dialogue aspects and study substance discussion, significant gaps still exist because studies were not thoroughly discussed and lacked deliberative processes in the Academic Manuscript development phases. Partners' limited involvement from the beginning of the study development process caused outputs produced to not be fully responsive to practical needs in the field. Ansell and Gash (2008b) identify that collaborative processes include several key elements: face-to-face dialogue enabling trust-building and mutual respect; shared understanding regarding goals and means to achieve them; commitment to processes showing willingness to cooperate despite differences; and intermediate outcomes providing small successes to maintain collaboration momentum. Nawawi et al. (2025) found that collaborative governance strategies in regional planning and development in Indonesia still face challenges of weak coordination and unclear roles.

Collaboration dynamics also demonstrate limitations in building shared understanding regarding quality standards and output expectations between universities and regional governments. Perspective differences between practitioners' needs that tend to be applicative and academic analysis that must be theoretically grounded require intermediation processes not yet adequately facilitated in existing collaboration mechanisms. This understanding gap reflects the importance of honesty and openness in collaboration, where academic institutions must be transparent regarding capacities and limitations possessed. The absence of intermediate outcomes that can be monitored and evaluated periodically caused problems to remain undetected until the final project stages. Emerson et al. (2012) explain that effective collaborative processes require monitoring mechanisms and feedback loops enabling adaptive management when deviations from targets are found. Lahat et al. (2021) assert that collaborative governance is not an event but a process requiring iteration, learning, and continuous adaptation to achieve common goals and produce quality outputs.

Multidimensional Challenges in Academic-Government Cooperation

Technical challenges faced in cooperation primarily relate to data and regulatory currency serving as study foundations, as well as limited work time not allowing in-depth studies. The main problem is outdated regulatory references impacting the validity and utility of Academic Manuscripts produced in regional legislative processes.





Time limitations caused research processes to be suboptimal, including failure to conduct field observations that should be part of comprehensive research methods to ensure studies are based on valid empirical data. Study processes that should thoroughly review and conduct observations were not well implemented due to orientation more toward administrative completion than substantive quality. Cairney and Oliver (2017) emphasize that evidence-based policymaking requires adequate time for comprehensive research processes, including the collection and analysis of valid empirical data. Khomsi et al. (2024) add that observations and research must be conducted seriously to ensure studies possess scientific validity that can be accounted for.

Institutional challenges arise from orientation and expectation differences between academic institutions and regional governments possessing different organizational cultures. Tendencies toward project completion orientation and budget absorption without attention to output quality create significant expectation gaps. Organizational culture differences between universities oriented toward academic rigor and government bureaucracy oriented toward administrative efficiency create challenges in aligning perceptions of research data findings. Cross-unit coordination also becomes a challenge when work handover processes are conducted without adequate coordination with parties having direct interests in study results. Nsanzumuhire and Groot (2020) emphasize the importance of contextual understanding in university-industry collaboration processes, where misalignment of perspectives between practical needs and academic approaches can hinder achievement of common goals. Perkmann et al. (2021) add that gaps between external partner expectations and academic capacity constitute one of the primary inhibiting factors in collaboration, often triggered by organizational culture differences and value systems adopted by respective institutions.

Competency challenges have become fundamental obstacles impacting substantive output quality and juridical validity of documents produced. The absence of legal experts on regulatory study teams resulted in failure to identify the legal basis of currency issues constituting the Academic Manuscript Foundation. Human resource limitations with specific expertise are caused by team formation systems that tend to remain fixed without considering competency alignment with study needs. Partners' limited authority in determining team composition causes suboptimal configuration of available expertise to handle study complexities. Other challenges include high faculty workloads and insufficient incentives to work on collaborative projects with high quality, where cost efficiency considerations often become the basis for team selection. Corley et al. (2006) assert that multi-institutional collaboration design and management require systematic competency mapping from the planning phases to ensure each team member has clear and relevant contributions to achieving collaboration goals.

Communication challenges emerge in the forms of academic and practical language gaps and insufficient substantive dialogue intensity during critical study development phases. Although administrative communication proceeds smoothly, communication in study substance discussion contexts remains limited because partners are not involved from the beginning of development processes. This limited involvement causes outputs produced to not be fully responsive to partner needs and may not align with expectations established at the outset. Frequency and intensity of communication was not yet optimal during critical study development phases caused fundamental problems such as the use of expired regulations to remain undetected until the final stages. Ansell and Gash (2008a) emphasize the importance of intensive face-to-face dialogue in collaborative processes to build shared understanding and trust. Gazley (2017) adds that effective inter-organizational collaboration requires trust-building, transparency, and two-way communication to overcome expectation gaps and ensure all parties possess the same understanding regarding goals and deliverables that must be achieved.

The complexity of the challenges faced in this cooperation reflects the need for holistic approaches in overcoming multidimensional barriers. Technical challenges related to data currency require strengthening quality assurance systems, including continuous verification and validation mechanisms. Institutional challenges require redefinition of more participatory cooperative designs accommodating organizational culture differences. Competency challenges require human resource management system transformation based on expertise alignment with study needs. Communication challenges require strengthening substantive dialogue mechanisms and partner involvement from initial planning stages through final evaluation. Emerson et al. (2012) assert that effective collaborative governance requires integration among conducive starting conditions, clear institutional design, strong facilitative leadership, and deliberative collaborative processes to overcome various challenges

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and produce optimal outcomes for all involved parties.

Cooperation's Impact on Legislative Processes and Institutional Capacity Development

The impact of cooperation on regional legislative processes has not yet demonstrated optimal results because outputs produced have not reached implementation stages and have not yet contributed tangibly. The three Academic Manuscripts developed have not reached promulgation stages and remain under revision due to various substantial weaknesses discovered. The Raperda on Zakat, Infaq, and Sedekah could not proceed because it was deemed to fall within central government domain and violated regional autonomy principles, while its harmonization process could not continue. The two other Academic Manuscripts—Raperda on Corporate Social Responsibility and Universal Health Coverage—remain under revision due to substantial weaknesses discovered related to the legal bases used. This condition demonstrates that direct contributions to strengthening regional regulatory foundations have not materialized, such that benefits to society through enacted policies also have not been realized. Rideng et al. (2024) assert that collaboration between universities and regional governments in developing Academic Manuscripts for Raperda has proven to improve regulatory quality and socioeconomic impact when conducted with strict academic standards, but in the studied case these standards were not met.

Negative impacts from cooperation not producing quality outputs are potential state financial losses and declining partner trust in academic institutions. Budgets expended for Academic Manuscript development did not produce outputs usable in legislative processes, thus potentially categorized as public budget waste. Conditions where budgets have been expended, time and energy invested yet results cannot be used create financial and reputational losses for both parties. Problems that are systemic and recurring in one Perda program indicate that this failure is not incidental but reflects structural weaknesses in cooperation management. Yatun et al. (2021) found that Indonesian regional government commitment to public sector quality remains varied, indicating the need to strengthen accountability and transparency in all forms of cooperation with academic institutions. Anas et al. (2023) add that information system quality and financial information quality in Indonesian regional government organizations still require improvement to support better decision-making and prevent financial losses due to poor-quality outputs.

From an institutional capacity development perspective, this cooperation provides important lessons although not producing directly optimal outputs. Collaboration with universities is considered very important particularly because DPRD members come from various backgrounds and not all possess expertise in law or specific technical substances required in regulation formulation. LPPM's existence as a partner is expected to assist in formulating quality regulations through provision of academic studies based on research and scientific methods. Although outputs produced are not yet optimal, collaboration processes provide learning regarding the importance of quality standards, control mechanisms, and partners' active involvement at every stage of study development. This experience becomes valuable evaluation to prevent recurrence of similar problems in the future and encourage continuous system improvement. Situmorang et al. (2018) found that university-government cooperation models for competency improvement can provide positive impacts when designed considering specific needs and involving systematic monitoring-evaluation mechanisms.

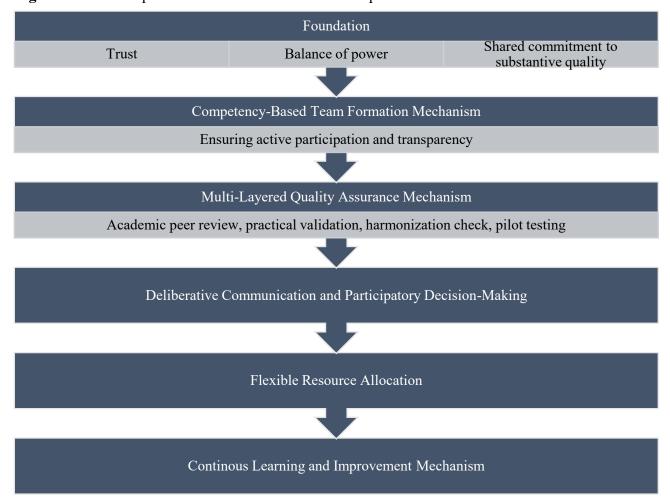
The impact on universities from this cooperation is the urgent need to improve cooperation management systems and output quality control produced. Criticism regarding the importance of maintaining quality and institutional reputation demonstrates concerns that orientation toward project quantity and budget absorption can erode academic institution credibility in partners' and broader society's eyes. Academic institutions need to be more proactive in demonstrating competencies of teams that will be involved and transparent regarding capacities possessed to build partner trust. Lessons from this cooperation also become momentum to strengthen quality assurance mechanisms and continuous monitoring-evaluation conducted not only at project ends but periodically from initial stages. The importance of periodic evaluation enables identification and problem resolution early before impacting final output quality. Perkmann et al. (2021) assert that sustainable academic engagement requires institutional commitment to maintaining quality and reputation through strict quality control mechanisms responsive to partner feedback. Noor (2010) adds that university research and community service must be oriented toward solving real problems faced by society and providing tangible impacts, not merely fulfilling administrative tri dharma obligations of universities.



An Ideal Cooperation Model Based on Collaborative Governance for Output Quality Improvement

Synthesis of lessons from LPPM Unsoed's cooperation with the DPRD Secretariat of Cilacap produces a conceptual framework regarding ideal cooperation models based on Collaborative Governance principles (Figure 1). The first lesson is the importance of paradigm shifts from transactional partnerships characterized by service provision to collaborative partnerships emphasizing mutual value creation and mutual learning. Concerns regarding academic engagement commercialization demonstrate the need for academic institutions to return to their primary mission of developing and disseminating knowledge beneficial to society. Ideal cooperation models must be built on foundations of institutionalized trust, fair power balance, and mutual commitment to substantive quality. Perkmann et al. (2021) distinguish between academic engagement oriented toward knowledge exchange and research commercialization oriented toward economic profit, where the former is more conducive to long-term collaboration and mutual learning. Natsir et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of village government and university collaboration oriented toward knowledge-based development and capacity building, not merely transactional and unsustainable project completion.

Figure 1. Ideal Cooperation Model Based on the Principles of Collaborative Governance



Ideal cooperative models must include competency-based team formation mechanisms involving partners' active participation in research team selection and composition processes. Transparency regarding the profiles and expertise of the teams to be involved becomes an important prerequisite for building trust and ensuring partners can assess competency alignment from the initial planning. This mechanism can be realized through the formation of steering committees consisting of LPPM and DPRD representatives to make strategic decisions regarding human resource allocation and team composition according to specific needs of each study. Flexibility in team formation, allowing involvement of experts from outside LPPM when necessary, becomes important to ensure the required expertise is available on teams. Situmorang et al. (2018) found that successful university-government cooperation models in North Sumatra implement strict team selection mechanisms involving government validation regarding competency alignment. Hedges et al. (2021) recommend that inter-institutional





research collaborations must have clear governance structures, including steering committees involving representation from all parties to make strategic decisions and ensure mutual accountability.

Multi-layered quality assurance mechanisms become crucial elements in ideal cooperation models to ensure outputs meet academic and practical standards simultaneously. Ideal models must include four verification layers: first, academic peer review by relevant experts to ensure methodological rigor and reference currency; second, practical validation by partner parties to ensure output relevance and applicability; third, harmonization checks with central and regional level regulations to ensure legal consistency; and fourth, pilot testing or focus group discussions to obtain feedback from broader stakeholders before finalization. Multi-layered verification mechanisms require adequate time allocation in project timelines to ensure each verification stage can be optimally conducted. Khomsi et al. (2024) explain that bridging research-policy gaps requires integrated approaches that include quality control mechanisms at every collaboration stage, from problem definition, research design, data collection, through dissemination. Anas et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of information system quality and information quality in Indonesian regional government organizations to support evidence-based decision-making that is valid and trustworthy.

Deliberative communication and participatory decision-making must become the modus operandi in ideal cooperation models, replacing communication that is merely administrative and transactional. Regular dialogue mechanisms can be realized through: first, inception meetings at project beginnings to align expectations, agree on deliverables, and establish quality standards to be used; second, progress review meetings at key milestones for monitoring, feedback, and adaptive management when necessary; third, validation workshops to obtain substantive input from broader stakeholders and ensure outputs are responsive to needs; and fourth, final presentations before handover to ensure outputs have met expectations and are ready for use in legislative processes. Partner involvement from the initial processes enables early problem identification and prevention of errors impacting final output quality. Ansell and Gash (2008a) emphasize that effective collaborative processes require intensive face-to-face dialogue to build shared understanding and trust forming collaboration foundations. Castañer and Oliveira (2020) explain that communication in collaboration is not only about sharing information but also creating joint knowledge through deep dialogue and reflection.

Ideal collaboration models also require flexible resource allocation and incentive structures that support quality rather than merely quantity of completed projects. Ideal funding models must include: first, adequate budget allocation to recruit experts with appropriate competencies, not based solely on cost efficiency considerations; second, incentive structures rewarding output quality, not just timely delivery, thus encouraging teams to work with high academic rigor; third, funding for quality assurance activities such as peer review, validation workshops, and pilot testing requiring additional resources; and fourth, budgets for dissemination and follow-up activities to ensure outputs are truly implemented and deliver expected impacts. Budget limitations should not become reasons to sacrifice team competency, quality and comprehensive study processes. Islamiyah et al. (2024) found that moderating roles of government funding is very important in university-industry collaboration, where funding schemes must support not only project completion but also quality assurance and capacity building. Corley et al. (2006) explain that multi-institutional collaboration design and management require significant resource commitments for coordination, communication, and conflict resolution that may emerge in collaboration processes.

Ideal cooperation models must include continuous learning and improvement mechanisms through systematic monitoring, evaluation, and feedback to encourage adaptive management. Learning mechanisms can be realized through: first, systematic documentation of lessons learned from each cooperation project archived and accessible for future project references; second, post-project reviews involving all stakeholders to identify what worked and what did not and formulate improvement recommendations; third, knowledge repositories archiving best practices and common pitfalls to prevent recurrence of identical errors; and fourth, capacity building programs for faculty and LPPM staff regarding best practices in academic engagement and collaborative research with regional governments. Periodic evaluations conducted not only at project ends but from initial stages enable proactive problem identification and resolution. Emerson et al. (2012) emphasize that collaborative governance is an iterative process requiring continuous reflection and adaptation based on learning from experience to achieve continuous improvement. Rideng et al. (2024) demonstrate that continuous mentoring in developing





Academic Manuscripts for Raperda has proven to improve regulatory quality and socioeconomic impact, confirming the importance of systematic monitoring and learning mechanisms.

Transformation from current cooperation models toward ideal models based on Collaborative Governance requires institutional commitment to adopt new paradigms emphasizing partnership, quality, participation, and continuous learning as core values in academic engagement. This ideal model positions universities and regional governments as equal partners with shared responsibility to produce high-quality evidence-based policies with tangible impacts. Principles of power balance, transparency, mutual accountability, and deliberative dialogue become foundations for building sustainable and productive collaboration. Budiman (2021) asserts that Regional Regulation formulation according to Law Number 12 of 2011 demands balance between academic legitimacy and responsiveness to community needs, achievable only through genuine collaboration between academics and practitioners. Thus, implementation of ideal cooperation models based on Collaborative Governance can become solutions to overcome existing gaps and improve cooperation output quality between universities and regional governments in formulating public policies based on scientific evidence and responsive to community needs.

CONCLUSION

Evaluation of the cooperation between LPPM Unsoed and the DPRD Secretariat of Cilacap in developing Academic Manuscripts for Raperda in 2024 reveals significant gaps between administrative efficiency and the substantive quality of outputs produced. Although technical aspects and financial accountability proceeded smoothly, the three Academic Manuscripts developed could not be implemented due to fundamental weaknesses related to regulatory currency, team competency misalignment, and weak quality assurance processes. Critical problems include the use of outdated legal foundations, the absence of legal experts on regulatory study teams, and minimal substantive dialogue between research teams and partners, resulting in outputs that could not advance to harmonization stages and potentially causing state financial losses.

Analysis within the Collaborative Governance framework demonstrates that cooperation remains at the coordination level emphasizing administrative aspects, not yet achieving true collaboration requiring competency integration and intensive knowledge sharing. Power imbalances in determining team composition, orientation toward budget absorption without attention to substantive quality, and the absence of continuous monitoring-evaluation mechanisms constitute primary inhibiting factors. The negative impacts of cooperation are not only financial in nature but also erode partner trust and academic institutional credibility in producing evidence-based policies.

The recommended ideal cooperation model must be built on Collaborative Governance principles encompassing: competency-based team formation with partners' active participation, multi-layered quality assurance mechanisms through academic peer review and practical validation, deliberative communication with partner involvement from initial stages, adequate resource allocation with quality-based incentive structures, and continuous learning mechanisms through systematic monitoring-evaluation. Transformation from transactional models toward true collaborative models requires institutional commitment to adopt paradigms of partnership, quality, participation, and continuous learning as core values in academic engagement, enabling cooperation to produce high-quality public policies based on scientific evidence and responsive to community needs.

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