

Islamic Education and Local Governance: A Collaborative Framework for Combating Child Marriage

Andi Utari Samsir¹, Ahmad Muktamar², Muhaemin Muchlis³, Fitriani⁴, Reski Amaliah⁵, Hasdi Anugrah⁶, Muh. Akmal Mubaraq⁷, Lailatil Qadriani⁸, Aulia Novita Handayani⁹
^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9} Universitas Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Early marriage in Welado Village, Indonesia, remains a persistent developmental challenge, driven by cultural resistance and superficial religious internalization. This study analyzes the educational collaboration between village government and the community in mitigating early marriage, examining the role of Islamic education in enhancing collaborative effectiveness. Utilizing a descriptive-qualitative approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation with key local stakeholders. Analysis followed data reduction, display, and verification stages, framed around five collaboration dimensions: common purpose, mutuality, enabling environment, trust, and specific personal characteristics. The findings reveal that while common purpose, mutuality, and enabling environments function optimally through shared educational visions, significant constraints persist within trust and specific personal characteristics due to negative public perception and weak cross-sectoral coordination. From an Islamic education perspective, these structural-cultural barriers occur because the core tenets of *maslahah* (public good), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *akhlaq* (character formation) remain unintegrated into the collaborative framework, rendering existing approaches merely administrative. Theoretically, this study pioneers a community-empowerment-based model of Islamic education. Practically, it underscores the necessity of embedding Islamic educational values as a moral-spiritual foundation within village policies to foster transformative collective awareness for early marriage eradication.

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Corresponding Author:

Andi Utari Samsir,
Universitas Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia
Email: andiutari@unisad.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Early marriage remains a complex phenomenon that impedes the achievement of human development targets across the globe, including in Indonesia (Judiasih et al., 2020; Purwanti & Natalis, 2026). As the government pursues the vision of a "Golden Indonesia 2045," child marriage in rural areas continues to represent a major stumbling block (Rozak & Aviana, 2024; Wahyuni & Sadasri, 2020). Welado Village in Bone

Regency, South Sulawesi, exemplifies this dynamic: an interplay of tradition, rigid religious interpretation, and weak legal literacy converges to hinder efforts to curb underage marriage. The primary concern of this study, however, is not merely the prevalence of early marriage as a statistic, but the extent to which collaboration between grassroots policy actors (village government) and social entities (the community) can be transformed into an integrated educational force grounded in Islamic values.

Globally, early marriage is regarded as a violation of human rights that deprives children of their right to education, health, and protection (Raj et al., 2017). A substantial body of research identifies education as a key determinant in delaying the age of marriage; yet education, in this sense, cannot be confined to formal schooling alone (Cummins, 2025; Lai et al., 2023). In rural areas, informal and nonformal education channelled through village social structures plays a far more strategic role (Zulkarnain et al., 2022). The urgency of collaboration stems from the fact that village government holds administrative authority while the community holds cultural authority; without synchronization between the two, policies to prevent early marriage risk become mere administrative documents that lack traction on the ground.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of a technocratic dimension (village government collaboration) with the axiological dimension of Islamic education as an instrument of behavioral change. Prior studies on early marriage have tended to focus on positive law or economic determinants (Amberi, 2023; Wahhaj, 2022). This study advances the concept of "educational collaboration," understood not merely as inter-agency cooperation but as a process of social learning in which Islamic values—such as *maslahah* (public good), *amanah* toward children, and parental responsibility—are internalized to reduce the practice of early marriage. In doing so, the study addresses a gap in the literature, which has rarely explored how the dimensions of trust and specific personal characteristics within local collaboration can be strengthened through a transformative Islamic-education approach (Rahmawati et al., 2024).

From the perspective of Islamic education, a child is regarded as an *amanah* (trust) from God whose potential must be nurtured and safeguarded (Syahmil & Sa-U, 2024). Marriage is not merely the union of two individuals but a sacred covenant (*mitsaqan ghalizhan*) that demands mental, financial, and spiritual readiness (Samin et al., 2022). The lack of such readiness, commonly observed in early marriage, risks undermining the higher objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*), particularly the protection of lineage (*hifz an-nasl*) and the protection of life (*hifz an-nafs*) (Abidin & Shamsuddin, 2025). Islamic education should therefore stand at the forefront of instilling the understanding that delaying marriage for the sake of personal maturity constitutes an act of religious obedience rather than a deviation from human nature (*fitrah*) (Agustin et al., 2025).

As the *ulil amri* (local authority) at the grassroots level, village government bears an obligation to promote the welfare (*maslahah*) of its citizens. In practice, however, a disconnect frequently arises between village policy and the community's religious understanding (Ferricha, 2024). It is precisely here that educational collaboration becomes crucial: religious leaders, Qur'anic teachers, and parents must be engaged as

strategic partners of the village government in disseminating the religious rationale for preventing early marriage. Drawing on collaborative-governance theory, this collaboration is conceptualized across five dimensions: common purpose (shared vision), mutuality (reciprocity), enabling environment (a supportive climate), trust, and specific personal characteristics (leadership qualities) (Afad et al., 2025; Ridwan et al., 2023).

Empirically, Welado Village displays a dynamic yet paradoxical pattern of collaboration. On one hand, a shared purpose and a supportive enabling environment are already reasonably well established, reflected in the village's own prevention program. On the other hand, the dimension of trust between the community and policymakers remains fragile: segments of the community perceive the prohibition of early marriage as unwarranted government intervention in private affairs or even as a challenge to locally "legitimized" traditions. Weak cross-sectoral bureaucratic support compounds this condition, as the village government frequently operates in isolation, lacking robust district-level backing for data synchronization and capacity building. Personal characteristics of the stakeholders involved—particularly limited competence in persuasive educational communication—further complicate matters; without transformative leadership, collaboration risks becoming confined to formal meetings without translating into behavioral change at the family level (Amalya & Niswaty, 2024; Mustar, 2020).

Transformative Islamic education offers a way forward by emphasizing character formation (*akhlaq*) and critical awareness. Through educational collaboration, values such as *amanah* (responsibility toward children), *ra'iyah* (stewardship/leadership), and *maslahah* mursalah (public interest) should form the substantive core of community engagement (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Rahman, 2025). Parents must be educated to understand that compelling an unprepared child into marriage constitutes a neglect of children's rights within Islam (Barkah et al., 2022; Kohnno et al., 2020). Breaking the chain of early marriage is therefore not solely a matter of enforcing marriage law but a "battle of ideas" (*ghazwul fikri*) against traditions that have drifted from the essence of Islamic teaching. Robust educational collaboration is expected to cultivate a form of social immunity, in which every individual assumes moral responsibility for preventing child marriage (Goffar & Miftahussurur, 2025).

Building on this background, this study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) How does educational collaboration between the village government and the community operate across the five collaboration dimensions in efforts to break the chain of early marriage in Welado Village? and (2) How does an Islamic education perspective strengthen and explain the effectiveness of this collaboration?

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design to explore the phenomenon of collaboration between village government and community. A qualitative approach was selected because the researchers sought an in-depth understanding of the meanings underlying the actions, interactions, and social dynamics

involved in efforts to address early marriage. The analysis was directed at how the process of education, and the internalisation of Islamic values were integrated into local policy to shape collective awareness in Welado Village, Bone Regency.

The research was conducted in Welado Village on sociological grounds related to the high urgency of addressing early marriage in this locality. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, comprising key actors with authority and influence within the village's educational and policy ecosystem: the Village Head, representing administrative authority; the village Imam, representing moral authority; teachers and religious instructors, serving as educational agents; and parents and adolescents, as the primary targets of the educational collaboration. In total, nine informants were engaged across these five actor categories to ensure that both institutional (top-down) and community (bottom-up) perspectives were represented.

Data was collected through triangulation methods to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to elicit informants' perceptions and experiences regarding cross-sectoral collaboration. Second, participatory observation was carried out to examine the actual implementation of village programmes in the field. Third, documentary study was undertaken on village profiles, early-marriage statistics, and village policy or regulatory records relevant to the prevention of underage marriage.

Data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising three concurrent activity streams: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Raw field data were sorted, coded thematically, and organised into a systematic narrative; this process was iterated to ensure that the resulting interpretation faithfully represented the objective reality observed in the field. To assess the effectiveness of collaboration, the data were further analysed using a five-dimension collaboration framework—common purpose, mutuality, enabling environment, trust, and specific personal characteristics—which was then synthesised with an Islamic-education perspective, particularly the concepts of *maslahah* mursalah and educational responsibility (*tarbiyah*), to examine the extent to which the observed collaboration achieved transformative effects on community behaviour.

The trustworthiness of the data was established through prolonged engagement and member checking to ensure that the analysis accurately reflected informants' accounts, together with source triangulation, in which information from one party was cross-checked against another to minimize subjective bias. All informants provided informed consent prior to participation, and their identities are represented in this paper using role-based initials (village head [K], religious leader [T], teacher [G], community/traditional figure [TM], resident [W], dusun head [KD]) to protect confidentiality. These procedures were undertaken to produce robust conclusions regarding a model of educational collaboration that may be replicated in other rural contexts confronting early marriage.

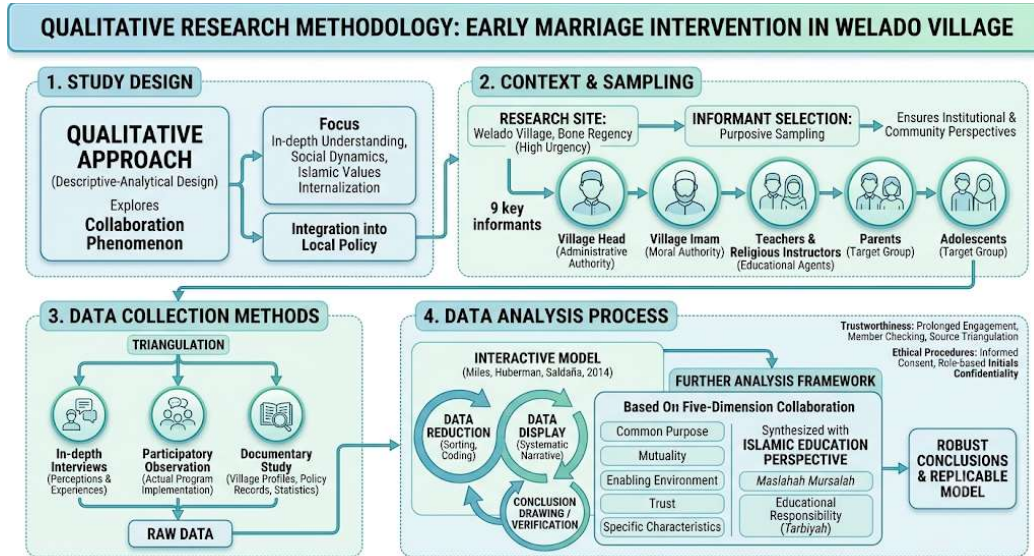


Figure 1. Research Flowchart

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The phenomenon of early marriage in Welado Village, Bone Regency, reflects a considerably complex condition requiring serious attention. According to data from Statistics Indonesia, the national child-marriage rate stood at approximately 7.85%, a slight decrease from 8.06% in 2023. At the provincial level, South Sulawesi's prevalence of child marriage remained in the range of 9–10% over the past two years, indicating that the province continues to face serious challenges in addressing early marriage. Meanwhile, data from the Watampone Religious Court 2024 recorded more than 300 applications for marriage-age dispensation in Bone Regency within a single year, signalling a persistently high incidence of early marriage in the area.

From an Islamic-education perspective, this condition reflects not only a social problem but also a gap between the normative values of Islamic teaching and social practice. Marriage in Islam requires mature readiness to realise *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah* (tranquillity, love, and compassion). The findings indicate, however, that couples who marry early tend to exhibit weaker household resilience and, in several cases, experience divorce shortly after marriage—an outcome that runs counter to the principle of *maslahah*, namely the pursuit of benefit and the avoidance of harm in human life. Table 1 summarises the key empirical observations regarding the handling of early marriage in Welado Village.

Table 1. Observational Findings on the Handling of Early Marriage in Welado Village

No.	Observed Aspect	Empirical Findings	Interpretation of Impact
1	Case trend	Significant decrease from 18 cases (2023) to 7 cases (2024).	Policy intervention is beginning to permanently break the chain of early-marriage practice.

No.	Observed Aspect	Empirical Findings	Interpretation of Impact
2	Policy instrument	Imposition of an administrative fine of IDR 15,000,000.	A deterrent effect achieved through firm village-level regulation.
3	Educational activity	Increased frequency of periodic community outreach.	Strengthening of the enabling environment dimension through mass dissemination of information.
4	Relational pattern	Synergy between village government and community in monitoring.	Collaboration is beginning to effectively align actors around a common purpose.
5	Remaining barriers	Economic pressure, social pressure, and entrenched local customs.	Deeper internalisation of Islamic educational values is required to shift underlying mentalities.

Findings show that the incidence of early marriage in Welado Village declined over the two most recent years following village-level policy intervention: from 18 recorded cases in 2023 to approximately 7 cases in 2024, coinciding with the imposition of a fine of IDR 15,000,000 and an intensification of community outreach. This decline suggests that the collaborative approach between village government and community has begun to yield positive effects, although early marriage continues to occur owing to entrenched social, economic, and cultural factors.

Field data further indicate that early marriage is associated with weak household resilience: the average duration of marriages contracted at an early age was under three years, with some cases of divorce occurring within one month of marriage. This suggests that couples who marry early generally lack the requisite mental and emotional readiness, underscoring the importance of prevention efforts. For couples who have already entered early marriage, the village government and stakeholders continue to provide guidance through PUSPAGA (the Family Development Centre), which involves religious leaders, educators, and the community in mentoring young couples, and through the "Lisu Massikolah" ("Return to School") programme, which provides educational assistance so that married adolescents can continue their schooling.

Common Purpose

With respect to common purpose, the findings reveal a shared objective between the village government and the community in addressing early marriage, namely, to reduce and ultimately eliminate the practice in Welado Village. This shared purpose is reflected in a sustained joint commitment to outreach and educational activities, which has lent collaboration among actors a clearer sense of direction.

Village Head: "From the outset, we in village government emphasised that this is not merely an administrative matter or a regulation handed down from the district. We share one great mission with the community: to safeguard the future of our children and free Welado Village from child marriage. When we conveyed this, the community, especially local leaders, agreed that the practice must be broken because its harm far outweighs its benefits."

Religious Leader: "What the Village Head said is correct. In the mosque and religious study circles, we consistently convey that keeping children in school is an amanah."

Our purpose is unified: for the collective good (maslahah) of the community. We no longer act in isolation; when the village holds an outreach event, we mobilise residents accordingly."

In the perspective of Islamic education, this shared purpose can be understood as a form of collective consciousness in realising social *maslahah*. The goal of preventing early marriage is not merely administrative but also reflects an effort to safeguard the quality of the next generation as part of humanity's responsibility as *khalifah fil ardh* (steward of the earth). The common-purpose dimension thus functions not only as the foundation of collaboration but also as a manifestation of Islamic values within social life.

Mutuality

Regarding mutuality, collaboration between the village government and the community is evident in the complementary contributions of each actor. The village government formulates policy and provides supporting facilities such as educational scholarships; religious leaders provide moral and spiritual education through sermons and religious activities; teachers instil understanding among students of the importance of education and the adverse effects of early marriage; and parents serve as the primary channel for conveying a positive understanding of the negative effects of underage marriage to their children.

Village Head: "We in village government realise we cannot act alone. Our role lies in regulation and the provision of facilities—we draft village policy and prepare material support such as scholarships. But that policy would remain an empty document without the help of religious leaders and teachers in reaching the hearts of the community."

Teacher: "At school we focus on helping students understand the future consequences of early marriage from an academic standpoint. We were greatly assisted when the village government launched the 'Lisu Massikolah' programme; the village's contribution of bags, uniforms, and bicycles strongly motivated children who were nearly dropping out to return to class."

The "Lisu Massikolah" programme exemplifies this reciprocal relationship in concrete terms: assistance in the form of bags, uniforms, and bicycles is provided to encourage children to continue their education, reflecting both the role of village government and the supporting participation of the community. Given this pattern of mutually reinforcing contributions, the mutuality dimension is judged to have functioned optimally consistent with the Islamic principle of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance in goodness).

Enabling Environment

On the enabling-environment dimension, the village government has cultivated a supportive climate through the imposition of sanctions on early-marriage offenders. The first sanction is administrative: village officials withhold administrative services from residents who violate the regulation. A financial penalty of IDR 15,000,000 has also proven effective in reducing the incidence of early marriage, with the resulting funds

reallocated to support an educational scholarship programme. A supportive environment is further reflected in strong coordination among actors in implementing the prevention programme.

Village Head: "We realised that outreach alone is often insufficient, so we created a concrete enabling environment through village regulation. Residents who force an underage marriage without legally recognised justification are denied administrative services at the village office. We also apply a fine of IDR 15,000,000; the money is not directed to any personal account but is fully channelled into a permanent education-scholarship fund for high-achieving but economically disadvantaged village children."

Community Leader: "Our coordination is very solid. At the sub-village level, we constantly communicate with the Village Head and religious leaders; no one turns a blind eye to the regulation. Open communication has made the village environment far more controlled, and residents think twice, knowing that village officials act in unison."

This combination of firm sanctions and the reallocation of penalty funds toward scholarships is regarded by informants as the key to the optimal functioning of the enabling-environment dimension, transforming a punitive measure into an instrument of educational reward.

Trust

With respect to trust, the level of confidence among collaborating actors is relatively favourable, reflected in active community participation in outreach activities and programmes, and reinforced by Welado Village's designation as a model village in early-marriage prevention. Nonetheless, a challenge has emerged in sustaining public trust: negative perceptions have surfaced regarding the IDR 15,000,000 fine, which some residents characterise as an informal levy disguised as village regulation.

Resident: "Honestly, at the grassroots level whispers have begun to circulate. Some regard the fine as an 'illegal levy' dressed up as village regulation. We believe the intention is good, but 15 million rupiah is a large sum; if it is not made clear where the money goes, the village government's image could suffer. Some residents have grown suspicious, which has slightly disturbed the harmony that had been built."

Village Head: "This is indeed a major challenge for us. We acknowledge that the trust dimension is not yet optimal because of this misperception. We need to be more transparent; going forward we will openly announce every rupiah collected from the fine and how it is channelled into scholarships."

This tension indicates that, despite formal recognition as a model village, the trust dimension has not yet functioned optimally, owing to a persistent gap in transparency and communication. In Islamic terms, trust corresponds closely to the concept of amanah, a form of confidence that every individual and institution is obliged to safeguard; the emergence of negative perceptions toward the fine policy signals a latent erosion of amanah that must be redressed through more transparent governance.

Specific Personal Characteristics

On the dimension of specific personal characteristics, collaboration continues to face constraints related to individual and institutional attributes. A lack of openness and the absence of follow-up from the district government constitute major inhibiting factors. The case of Dusun Bettaru illustrates that, despite the provision of education and sanctions, some residents continue to conduct early marriages, a situation compounded by the absence of further intervention from the district level.

Village Head: "Our main constraint lies in the level of support from government above us. We at the village level have done our utmost within our institutional limitations, yet we feel we are working alone. To date, the district-level regulation (Perda) on early marriage has not been enacted, leaving us without a strong legal umbrella; the slow bureaucratic character at the higher level makes us hesitant to pursue further legal action."

Sub-Village Head: "In Dusun Bettaru the situation is quite difficult. We have provided education and even threatened village-level sanctions, yet some residents still insist on conducting early, unregistered (siri) marriages. When we report this and request district-level follow-up, there is almost no further intervention—no relevant agency that comes to reinforce our efforts. This apparent indifference on the part of the district government leads residents to believe that village regulation can be circumvented, since there is no sanction from a higher authority."

The absence of an enacted district regulation on early marriage leaves the village government without sufficient legal authority to act firmly against violations, a condition that has, in turn, reduced the intensity of previously vigorous outreach efforts, reflecting a degree of institutional fatigue among village officials. From an Islamic-education perspective, this condition reflects the as-yet incomplete formation of character (akhlaq) within the broader social and institutional context, given that the success of collaboration depends heavily on values such as commitment, honesty, and responsibility across all levels of government.

Discussion

The findings indicate that early marriage in Welado Village, Bone Regency, constitutes a systemic challenge requiring a multidimensional approach. Although national and provincial child-marriage rates show a declining trend, the persistently high number of marriage-age dispensation applications in Bone Regency—exceeding 300 cases annually—suggests that the practice remains deeply entrenched at the local level.

Manifestation of *Maslahah* through Common Purpose

Collaboration in Welado Village has succeeded in establishing a robust common purpose in which village government and community agree to break the chain of early marriage to safeguard the future of the younger generation. From an Islamic-education perspective, this shared understanding is not merely an administrative target but a manifestation of the pursuit of social *maslahah* (Muniri et al., 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2026). Through what informants described as an "educational jihad," religious leaders

have positioned the protection of children's rights as a fundamental spiritual amanah, thereby reinforcing the educational dimension of cross-sectoral collaboration. This collective commitment aligns with the substantial reduction in early-marriage cases from 18 in 2023 to 7 in 2024, demonstrating that sustained communication of shared goals can align the focus of diverse actors toward broad-reaching social change.

Mutuality Synergy and the Implementation of *Ta'awun*

The principle of mutuality in Welado Village is evident in a complementary division of roles that reflects the Islamic value of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance in goodness). Synergy between the village government—acting as regulator and provider of facilities such as scholarships—and teachers and religious leaders addressing the moral-spiritual dimension has established a firm foundation for the success of family-strengthening programs. This collaboration finds concrete expression in the "*Lisu Massikolah*" program, in which the provision of physical assistance (bicycles, uniforms, bags) by the village government is fully supported by the active role of parents at home. This interlocking pattern of contributions among stakeholders both secures continuity of children's education and constitutes a key factor in strengthening family resilience (Chazan-Cohen et al., 2023; Eden et al., 2024).

Enabling Environment: Between Regulatory Firmness and Education

The village government has cultivated a supportive environment through an innovative sanctions policy, functioning optimally owing to solid communication and coordination among village officials. The imposition of an IDR 15,000,000 fine has proven to generate a significant deterrent effect while simultaneously fostering a transformative paradigm within the community. The educational dimension of this policy is reinforced by the full reallocation of penalty funds to educational scholarships, effectively converting a punitive measure into an instrument of reward. Through this approach, sanctions are no longer perceived merely as a financial burden but as a mechanism supporting residents who prioritise their children's educational future (Hwami, 2022; Tanuri, 2025).

Challenges to Trust and the Value of Amanah in Governance

Although Welado Village has been designated a model village, the trust dimension in its governance continues to face serious challenges, particularly regarding transparency. Cultural resistance manifests in negative perceptions among some residents who regard the fine as an "illegal levy," indicating a significant communication gap between the village government and the community. Absent an effective communication strategy, public misunderstanding of the policy's objectives risks undermining program effectiveness and widening the distance between policymakers and residents. From an Islamic-education perspective, this challenge is closely tied to the value of amanah, which demands full accountability in every act of leadership (Hartati et al., 2025). Transparency in the management and allocation of fine revenues is therefore a prerequisite for safeguarding the integrity of village government; by

upholding the principles of amanah and openness, the government can not only dispel negative stigma but also ensure sustained community support for the village's credibility as a model for other localities (Bakhtiar, 2021; Sulthoni & Amirya, 2024).

Barriers in Specific Personal Characteristics and Institutional Integrity

The dimension of specific personal characteristics represents the weakest link in this collaboration. This constraint originates largely beyond the village's own authority, stemming from weak hierarchical support. The absence of a strong legal umbrella—owing to the district's failure to enact a regulation (Perda) on early marriage—creates a significant regulatory gap, depriving the village government of the juridical foundation required to act firmly against violations. This condition is exacerbated by minimal intervention and follow-up from the district government, as illustrated by the case of Dusun Bettaru, which has bred demotivation and psychological fatigue among village officials tasked with conducting outreach. Substantively, this dynamic reflects the incomplete formation of character (akhlaq) with respect to commitment and responsibility across levels of government—qualities that are crucial for sustaining policy consistency and institutional integrity in child protection.

Taken together, the educational collaboration observed in Welado Village has successfully integrated administrative policy intervention with Islamic educational values—particularly *masalah* and *ta'awun*—to reduce the incidence of early marriage. However, the long-term effectiveness of this collaboration depends critically on two factors: the village government's transparency in sustaining community trust, and the district government's political commitment to providing a robust legal foundation (*Perda*). Without a comprehensive strengthening of character and Islamic values across all levels of governance, efforts to break the chain of early marriage will continue to confront persistent cultural barriers (Barkah et al., 2022; Musthofa & Lutfiah, 2024).

These findings extend prior work that has generally treated legal enforcement and community collaboration as separate strands of intervention (Hasan, 2025; Sharkey, P., & Ittner, 2025) by demonstrating that religiously grounded educational values can function as a bridge that renders administrative sanctions socially legitimate. At the same time, the persistence of distrust around fine transparency and the absence of district-level regulatory backing echo earlier findings on the fragility of trust in village-level fiscal governance and on the limits of village autonomy absent higher-level institutional support, suggesting that educational collaboration, however well designed at the village level, cannot substitute for accountable multi-level governance.

This study is not without limitations. As a single-site qualitative case study, its findings are context-bound and may not be directly generalisable to villages with different socio-cultural or regulatory conditions; the relatively small number of informants, while appropriate for an in-depth qualitative inquiry, also limits the breadth of perspectives captured. Future research employing comparative multi-site designs or mixed-methods approaches would help to test the transferability of the educational-collaboration model proposed here.

4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of educational collaboration between village government and community has proven effective in significantly reducing the incidence of early marriage, from 18 cases in 2023 to 7 cases in 2024, driven by the synergy of administrative sanctions, financial penalties, and intensified outreach. Structurally, the dimensions of common purpose, mutuality, and enabling environment have functioned optimally through a shared vision of child protection and a complementary division of roles within the "*Lisu Massikolah*" program. The dimensions of trust and specific personal characteristics, however, continue to face challenges in the form of cultural resistance to fine-related transparency and insufficient regulatory support from the district government. Although this effort is normatively aligned with the Islamic principles of *maslahah*, *amanah*, and *ta'awun*, the practical internalisation of these values remains constrained by deep-rooted cultural norms and economic pressures, underscoring the need for strengthened cross-level commitment and greater governance transparency to secure the sustainability of policy outcomes.

As a strategic step forward, the village government is encouraged to enhance transparency and accountability in the management of fine revenues through periodic publication of scholarship allocations, so as to restore public trust, while simultaneously deepening a transformative Islamic-education approach to cultivate community moral awareness regarding children's futures. In parallel, the district government should expeditiously enact a regional regulation on early-marriage prevention to provide a robust legal umbrella, together with consistent mentoring support for model villages in addressing dynamics at the sub-village level. Active participation of the community and parents in family-resilience programmes such as PUSPAGA remains crucial, while future researchers are encouraged to examine, in greater depth, the effectiveness of informal Islamic-education curricula in shaping adolescent character to sustainably delay the age of marriage. The implications of this study underscore the importance of strengthening synergy among village government, community, and religious leaders in developing more contextual and transformative educational strategies, alongside stronger policy support from regional government to reinforce the legitimacy and sustainability of collaboration-based, Islamic-values-informed programmes for the prevention of early marriage.

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