



## Problems of special education services for believers in Malang City

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### ABSTRACT

Over seven years, policy implementation faced challenges, including suboptimal synergy among involved parties, administrative confusion in education, and discrimination against non-religious groups by regional authorities. These challenges perpetuate negative stereotypes and hinder inclusive education access for believers. This research is then directed to analyze the collaborative governance model as a solution to unravel problems that occur in implementing educational services in faith groups. The collaborative governance model aims to elaborate and map the involvement and role of each actor to support the smooth implementation of policies. The principles carried out in it are deliberative, holistic, constructive, and formal, applicable as the basis for implementing inclusive policies. The Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) analysis reveals issues in fulfilling special education services (trust) at the Malang City Education and Culture Office. Problems include partial services, a conservative service acquisition model, and insufficient human resource competence. These findings underscore the need for systemic interventions to ensure inclusive and efficient service delivery.

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### ABSTRAK

Selama tujuh tahun, implementasi kebijakan menghadapi berbagai tantangan termasuk sinergi yang kurang optimal di antara para pihak yang terlibat, kerancuan administrasi pendidikan, dan diskriminasi terhadap kelompok non-religius oleh pemerintah daerah. Tantangan-tantangan ini mengganggu stereotip negatif dan menghambat akses pendidikan inklusif. Penelitian ini kemudian diarahkan untuk menganalisis model tata kelola kolaboratif sebagai solusi yang ditawarkan untuk mengurai permasalahan yang terjadi dalam proses penyelenggaraan layanan pendidikan pada kelompok. Model collaborative governance bertujuan untuk mengelaborasi dan memetakan keterlibatan dan peran masing-masing aktor untuk mendukung kelancaran implementasi kebijakan. Prinsip-prinsip yang diusung di dalamnya adalah deliberatif, holistik, konstruktif, dan formal yang berguna sebagai dasar dalam mengimplementasikan kebijakan yang inklusif. Analisis Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) mengungkap permasalahan dalam pemenuhan layanan pendidikan khusus (trust) di Dinas Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Kota Malang. Permasalahan tersebut antara lain layanan yang bersifat parsial, model akuisisi layanan yang konservatif, dan kompetensi sumber daya manusia yang kurang memadai. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi perlunya intervensi sistemik untuk memastikan layanan yang inklusif dan efisien.

**Kata Kunci:** penghayat kepercayaan; tata kelola kolaboratif; pendidikan inklusif; permendikbud nomor 27 tahun 2016

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## INTRODUCTION

Studies on communities of believers have been carried out in recent years, and most of them are dominated by problems of organizational history, ritual teachings, civil rights services, discrimination, and social exclusion (Adzkiya & Fadhilah, 2020; Hamudy, 2019; Maulana & Setyowati, 2019; Sukirno, 2019; Susetyo, 2017). These religions are known as "*Penghayat Kepercayaan*" (Viri & Febriany, 2020). There are at least several reasons why studies related to believers only focus on the following: First, although there have been many regulations on the inclusion of believers, the realization of the policy is still far from expectations (Sholakodin, 2021). Second, constructions related to believers are always associated with art groups and other cultural subjects, which has implications for partial services.

The implementation of services to believers has been initiated in existing regulations and regulations, such as in the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Education and Culture Number 41 and 43 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for Services to Believers, Joint Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Culture and Tourism Number 40-42 of 2009 concerning Guidelines for Cultural Preservation, Law Number 24 of 2013 concerning Amendments to Law Number 23 of 2006 concerning Administration Population, Permendikbud Number 77 of 2013 concerning Guidelines for the Development of Belief Institutions in God Almighty and Customary Institutions, Permendikbud Number 10 of 2014 concerning Guidelines for Tradition Preservation and Permendikbud Number 27 of 2016 concerning trust education services for believers. Referring to all the following service regulations for believers, there are still aspects of inequality in the implementation steps. This aspect is mainly found in access to educational services (social exclusion) for students from religious backgrounds (Adzkiya & Fadhilah, 2020; Mustolehudin & Muawanah, 2017).

Referring to previous studies, the phenomenon of social exclusion of students with a background of believers is rife. At least there is coercion of religious learning on students living in Tulungagung Regency (Sholakodin, 2021). In addition, a study mentioned that there was verbal violence against students who did not follow Christian subjects in Hubang Hasundutan Regency, North Sumatra (Situmorang & Zuska, 2023). The following reality shows that although education services have been regulated, implementation in the field has not been fully achieved. This also shows that the weakness of bureaucratic governance in service has not favored minority groups, so it requires follow-up and evaluation of systemic policy implementation of the regulation (Muhammaditya & Hardjosoekarto, 2021).

To fill this gap, this study focuses on the governance system of the implementation of Permendikbud Number 27 of 2016 concerning Education Services Belief in God Almighty in Education Units in Malang City. The following research locus was chosen in connection with the slogan proclaimed by the Mayor of Malang as a "Harmonious and Tolerant" city, Malang City Bakesbangpol in 2022 states that there are 23 organizations of believers active in Malang City with a population of 286 people. In addition, according to records from the Malang City Education Office, the following data becomes the initial basis for the importance of reviewing the governance system of educational services for students who believe in faith. Apart from being a step toward realizing harmony and tolerance in Malang City, it is also a form of description of the pilot of inclusive education services for justice and equality for all citizens in Malang City.

Departing from data and problems in the implementation stage of educational services for the following groups of believers, this study will use the soft-system methodology (SSM) approach developed by Peter Checkland as a guide for its analysis (Checkland & Poulter, 2016). SSM looks at a series of interconnected human activities that form a bond within the system. In addition, the characteristics of complex SSM problems caused by the interpretation of each stakeholder are different, causing complex realities (Muhammaditya et al., 2021; Permatasari et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, as a guide for analysis in terms of service governance, the concept of *collaborative governance* developed by Ansel and Gash will be used. *Collaborative governance* in this study is used to elaborate the mapping of state and non-state stakeholders involved in the delivery of education services, as well as to measure the extent of the effectiveness of the role of each of the following stakeholders (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Therefore, this study will offer a description of how the implementation of governance of inclusive education service delivery in faith groups.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Religious Education Services

Religious education services are crucial in developing spiritual and moral foundations within communities. These services offer structured programs and curricula that teach individuals about their faith traditions' core beliefs, practices, and historical contexts. Through classes, workshops, and activities, participants gain a deeper understanding of their religion, enabling them to live out their faith meaningfully. By providing a platform for dialogue and cooperation, these services help to bridge gaps between different religious groups, encouraging mutual respect and tolerance. Educational programs often include comparative religion studies, highlighting common values and ethical principles shared across faiths, thus contributing to a more harmonious and cohesive society (Amin, 2024; Lipiäinen et al., 2020).

Historically, Believers in Indonesia have experienced prejudice and marginalization (Sholakodin, 2021). Despite attempts to acknowledge their presence, adherents continue to encounter obstacles. Permendikbud No. 27/2016, which pertains to Belief Education Services, is a rule that aims to enhance this particular group's acceptance, acknowledgment, and inclusiveness. Before the implementation of Permendikbud Number 27 of 2016, the substitution of Religious Education subjects had been conducted in four distinct service models: constructivist, adaptive, participatory, and legal formal positivistic. Nevertheless, the execution of this Permendikbud has not been efficient, as indicated by the findings of (Amon & Bustami, 2021; Rosyid, 2018; Sulaiman, 2018).

It is crucial to adopt a more integrative and inclusive approach to address these ongoing challenges and enhance the effectiveness of religious education services for Believers in Indonesia. This involves revising current policies to ensure they not only recognize but also actively support the unique needs of Believers. Initiatives should focus on providing comprehensive training for educators to understand better and respect the diverse religious backgrounds of their students, fostering an environment of inclusivity and acceptance (Doucette et al., 2021; Eden et al., 2024). Additionally, the curriculum should be designed to be more flexible, allowing for incorporating various belief systems while still adhering to national educational standards. Community involvement should involve engaging local religious leaders and cultural groups in developing and implementing educational programs, and the services can be tailored to reflect the community's values and traditions better. Moreover, regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms should be established to monitor the effectiveness of these programs and make necessary adjustments.

### Cooperative Governance

The collaborative governance theory is an approach to governance that incorporates several stakeholders working together to make collective decisions (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This paradigm has been effectively utilized in different scenarios. The use of collaborative governance principles in the health governance system in the UK shows significant implications for increasing the positive response of local stakeholders to the implementation of health innovations organized by the State Health Center (NHS) (Ijiga et al., 2024;

[Lopes & Farias, 2022](#)). This shows the validity of the health collaboration system initiated by the systemic cooperation of the NHS and the State Health Innovation Agencies (HIECs).

In other literature, river water resource governance cooperation between the Torres River Basin Government and Aboriginal Tribes in Australia ([Jackson et al., 2019](#)). The findings in this study then lead to the process of empowering indigenous peoples who live around the river area; this includes empowerment in the economic, social, political, and river management sectors. The following study is on corruption culture and e-government in ASEAN. The direction of this study then shows the proliferation of e-government instruments that improve governance within ASEAN membership. The findings also showed a positive impact on reducing the corruption culture in Malaysia and Vietnam, although the impact is insignificant in each government sector ([Rubasundram & Rasiah, 2019](#)).

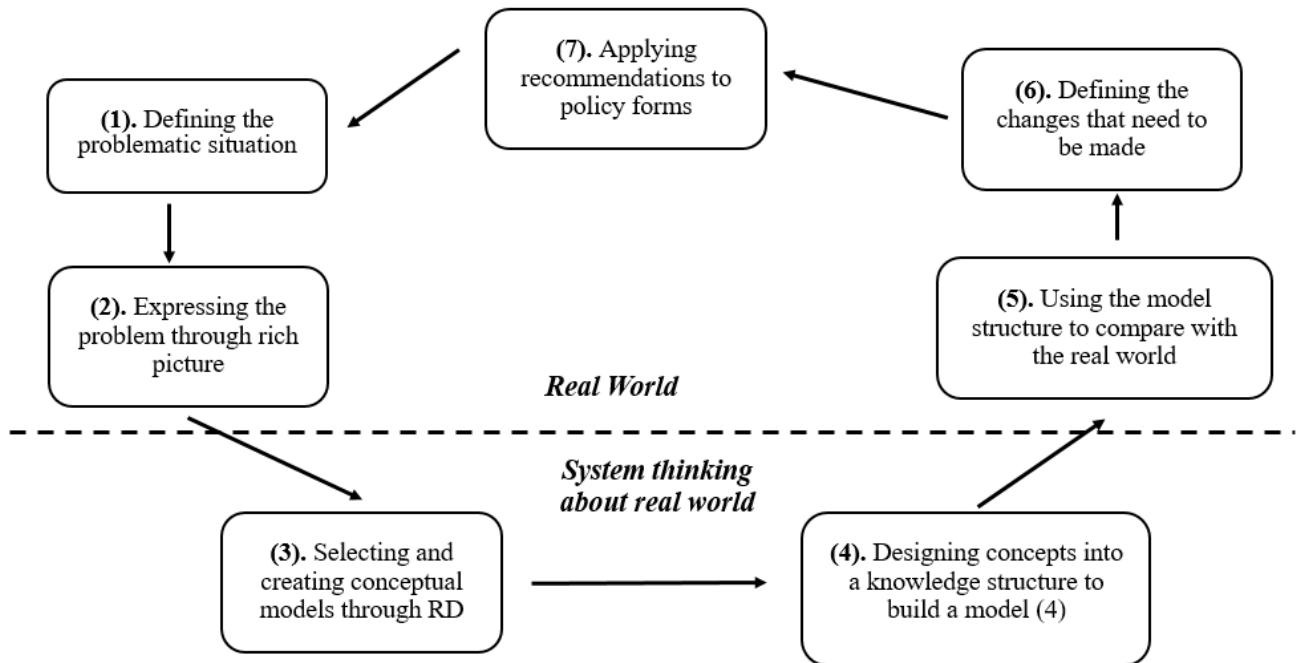
The implementation of this collaborative governance approach is anticipated to serve as a remedy for the obstacles faced in education management ([Ulibarri et al., 2020](#); [Waardenburg et al., 2020](#); [Wisnumurti et al., 2020](#)), particularly in providing trustworthy education services for indigenous faith students in Malang City. Through the engagement of multiple stakeholders, this model aims to optimize educational services and ensure equitable access for all individuals. Furthermore, this model is anticipated to facilitate communication and coordination among the legislative, the community, and policy implementation, particularly about Permendikbud Number 27 of 2016.

## METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a Soft System Methodology (SSM) perspective. A holistic approach to seeing the reality of problems as a whole is not separate from a system ([Checkland & Poulter, 2016](#); [Wheeler & Checkland, 2000](#)). This research is categorized as a type of systems thinking research. The advantage of SSM is that it can be applied to complex problems by looking at cultural, social, and political aspects at the stage of Rich Picture development and CATWOE analysis. SSM consists of seven useful stages in exploring how actors think, act, and speak.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out using four ways, namely 1) In-depth interviews with predetermined informants to obtain the information needed; 2) Observation, to observe activities and in-depth observation activities on the readiness of local governments, especially the Education Office, in providing access to trust education services to students with faith backgrounds; 3) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of implementing trust education services by Permendikbud Number 27 of 2016 from figures/individuals/institutions that considered to have the capacity to elaborate problems; 4) documentation, to photograph and capture every process of activities that have been carried out.

Following **Figure 1**, to map the problems that occur and provide recommendations for a more efficient policy model, the data analysis process will be carried out according to the following model.



**Figure 1.** Data Analysis Process  
Source: [Permatasari et al., \(2020\)](#)

1. In this first stage, researchers identify the problem and assess its urgency. This initial identification is done through literature studies and short interviews, resulting in this research proposal.
2. In stage two, the problem is explored and expressed in a rich picture. A rich picture is built based on an analysis of beneficiaries, problem solvers, and problem owners, as well as an analysis of rules, norms, and values in the social system problem owner and the power dimensions in the system. To fulfill this second stage, data collection will be carried out using in-depth interview techniques.
3. In stage three, root definition is formulated as an effort to explore the roots from which everything grows by looking at the results of a relationship and enriched with CATWOE analysis (Customers, Actors, Transformation, World View, Owner, Environmental), which aims to explore the potential for transformation in problematic systems. Therefore, at this stage, the Education Office began to be included, where previously in-depth interviews were conducted with the Education Office to obtain the context and mechanism of the education service program for believers. To fulfill this stage three, an FGD will be carried out involving key stakeholders to extract *root definitions* and CATWOE.
4. Based on the results of stage three, stage four creates a conceptual model of system transformation embodied in system actors' activities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Process of Providing Special Service Education in Malang City

The implementation of Trust Education in Malang City has been managed directly by Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan Indonesia (MLKI) Malang City since 2017. The implementation of trust education activities in Malang City was attended by students in Malang City and students from Batu City and Northern Malang Regency, namely Pujon District. The total number of students who participated in the Trust Education activity was 16. This is not comparable to the number of devotees in Malang City, which amounts to around 400 people.

According to some informants, the number of students is minimal because some parents from families of believers do not direct their children to participate in this activity; instead, they direct their children to participate in learning activities of one of the religions at school. This is done because parents still have concerns about their children being discriminated against by their peers if they participate in Trust Education activities outside of school. **Table 1** shows a list of schools in Malang City, Batu City, and Malang Regency participating in trust education at MLKI Malang City.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the Number of Students Attending Trust Education

School Location	School Name	Number of Students
Malang City	PKBM Abdi Pratama	1
	SDN Mergosono 4	1
	SDN Sawojajar 5	1
	SMK 3 Kota Malang	1
	SMK Tunas Bangsa	1
	SMPN 15 Kota Malang	1
Malang Sub District	SDN Bedali 1	1
	SDN Ngroto 02	2
	SDN Pakis Jajar 2	1
	SMKN 1 Pujon	1
	SMPN 1 Kasembon	1
	SMPN 1 Pujon	2
Batu City	SDN Tulungrejo Arjuno 02	1
	SMA Negeri 03 Batu	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>

*Source: MLKI Malang City, 2023*

When it comes to education, the functions of educators must be taken into account. Educators have a crucial role in providing direction and guidance to pupils to help them reach their maximum potential (Zahroh et al., 2023). Implementing trust education in Malang City is still not optimal due to the lack of extension workers and the comprehensive coverage of areas where students live. Many schools do not yet provide this subject for various reasons, such as lacking supporting tools such as curriculum and guides (Zakiyah, 2018).

Extension is a term for teachers of Trust Education in Indonesia. The number of education extension workers in Malang City is only one person, so if the extension workers cannot teach, the class will be closed because no one can replace it. Implementing trust education learning in Malang City is centered in MLKI's studio in Kelurahan Kidul Dalem, Klojen District, Malang City. However, extension workers eventually also have to go to the Batu City area and Pujon District, Malang Regency, to teach students there. Extension workers do this because they feel sorry if students have to go to a studio far from where they live.

Extension workers are the spearhead for the successful implementation of Trust Education. The selection of extension workers for faith education in Indonesia, including Malang City, is carried out directly by the Directorate of KMA (Trust in God and Indigenous Peoples). According to the statement of the MLKI chairman, the selection of extension workers in the first batch is easier because anyone with a bachelor's

degree from both education and non-education can register, even though the religion column on his KTP still follows one of the six recognized religions in Indonesia. Then, the selection of extension workers in the second batch has begun to be shared, and prospective extension workers must have an ID card with a statement of believers in the religion column. Before registering as an extension worker, prospective extension workers must also request a recommendation letter from the local Education and Culture Office to complete the administrative requirements. After qualifying as an extension worker, KMA organizes BIMTEK (Technical Guidance) training so that selected extension workers can improve their competence as trust education teachers. In the following selection of extension workers, the government plans to come from trust education graduates pioneered by UNTAG Semarang since 2021.

Extension workers in Malang City are still not prosperous because they are not registered in Dapodik (Basic Education Data). This impacts their salaries, which are lower than teachers' because they cannot get teacher certifications. Their salaries are only sourced from KMA, and the nominal, according to them, is still very small, which is RP. 300,000 and a 5% tax deduction of Rp. 15,000. In several discussions with the Malang City Education and Culture Office, extension workers in Malang City hoped to become honorary teachers. However, this could not be done due to administrative requirements constraints. Extension workers cannot be used as honorary teachers because they do not come from education study programs. Trust Education Extension Counselors in Malang City who are currently serving are graduates of economics graduates. The extension worker was named Hari Nugroho. In addition to being an extension worker, Pak Hari also works as an online car driver. Pak Hari usually turns on his application when he comes home from teaching to get additional income.

In addition to the above problems, **Table 2** provides some general descriptions of other problems in the implementation of trust education in Malang City:

**Table 1.** Problems in the Implementation of Trust Education

Problems	
Problems in implementing trust education programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilities for implementing trust education in Malang City are still minimal. The facilities obtained are only textbooks. The KMA directorate gives these textbooks free of charge, and there is also a PDF version that students can access through devices. Currently, students only learn by <i>lesehan</i> in the studio because there are no facilities such as chairs and benches like in schools in general.</li> <li>2. Students of Faith in Malang City still often experience <i>bullying</i> from school friends. This bullying is in the form of ridicule, such as having no religion.</li> <li>3. There are only one extension worker in Malang City, so it is a heavy burden because they have to teach in several places that are also quite far away. Unfortunately, this is not balanced with a decent salary.</li> </ol>
Children's participation in the implementation of trust education programs	The participation of children living in Malang City in the trust education program is still meager, with only six students.
The role of the stakeholders involved	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The role of parents of children who live in faith in Malang City is still not optimal. Some parents' direct children to follow specific religious lessons at school. This main obstacle causes the number of students participating in Trust Education activities in Malang City to be deficient and even stagnant every year.</li> <li>2. No other parties outside MLKI and the Education Office have participated in supporting the implementation of trust education programs in Malang City.</li> </ol>

## Problems

### Government Attention

1. The central government has given considerable attention through the Directorate of Trust in God and Indigenous Peoples (KMA). This attention is focused on providing free textbooks and training for extension workers.
2. The Organization of Believers in Malang City before 2020 was under the Department of Culture and Tourism auspices. Then, on January 1, 2020, due to changes in SOTK, Malang City finally switched under the auspices of the Malang City Education and Culture Office. This change is considered to significantly impact the organization of Penghayat Kepercayaan or MLKI Malang City. They argue that Disbudpar is more active in paying attention to them than Education and Culture, which is currently responsible. According to the head of MLKI, this is understandable because those on duty are new people, so they must start learning first.
3. The Malang City Education and Culture Office lacks support in implementing trust education programs in Malang City. This can be seen from the lack of monitoring and the absence of regulations from the Malang City Education Office regarding the implementation of trust education.
4. The Malang City Education and Culture Office has never conducted training for Trust Education extension workers. The Education Office only conducts institutional training related to institutional administration procedures.
5. MLKI has applied for grant funds from the Malang City Government to procure educational facilities such as LCD projectors, laptops, and computers. The Malang City Government has approved and dispositioned the procurement to the Malang City Education and Culture Office. However, the Education and Culture Office has not realized the grant proposed by MLKI because the procurement activities have not been included in the office's work plan and budget.

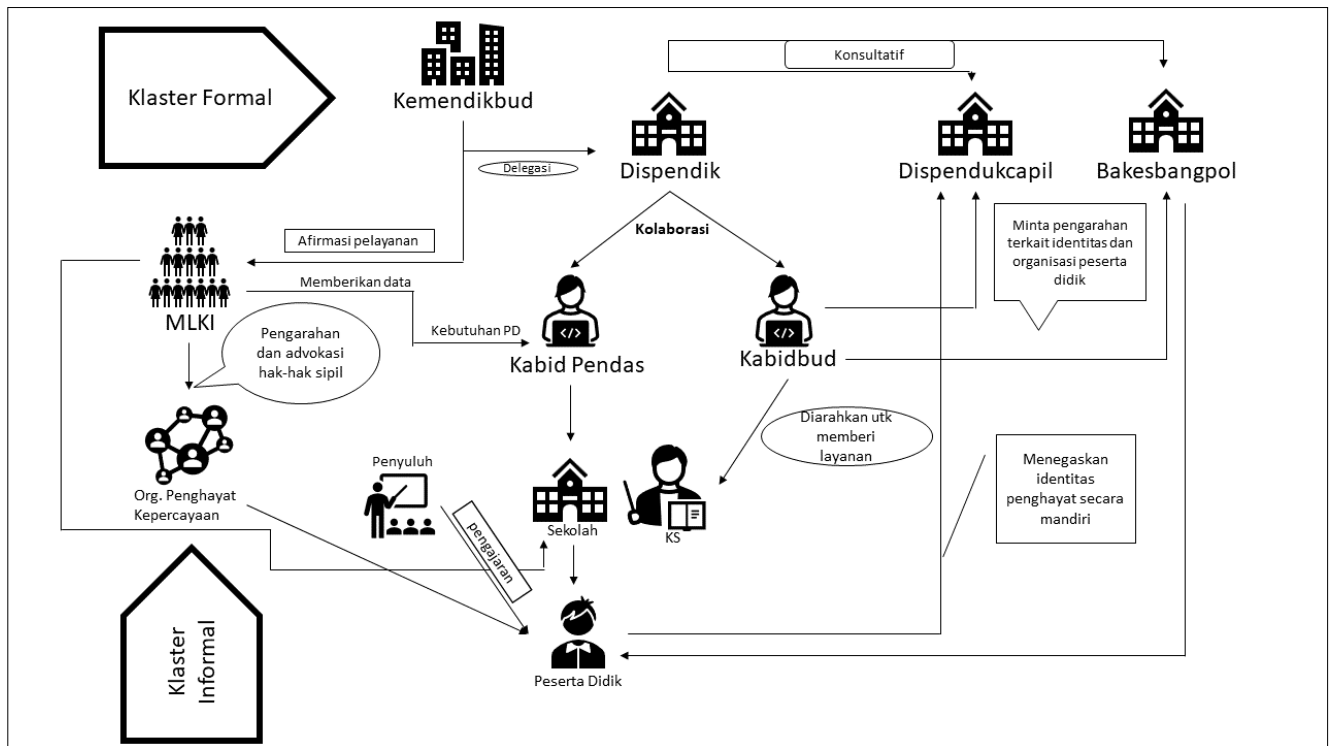
Source: Research, 2024

## Discussion

### Mapping the Flow of Special Education Service Problems in Malang City

The second stage in SSM analysis is to translate unstructured and efficient problem situations into information links between images or conceptual systemic problems referred to as rich pictures. In making rich pictures, informal information obtained from interviews is transformed into a structured network that processes continuously to understand problems and their potential (Ranjan & Foropon, 2021). An essential point in mapping and making rich pictures is the involvement of the informal sector in the intervention process and the creation of a more efficient system framework that contains the delegation of tasks, interests, and affirmations to the implementation of the following special service education (Dixon et al., 2021). *Kebutuhan Pendidikan Dasar* (KPD) does not adequately cover cultural literacy. KPD mainly focuses on filling positions based on class level and structural positions based on individual performance. Similar issues are encountered in *Bimbingan dan Konseling* (BK) assignments, but cultural narratives are more widely shared as they stem from the functions of the State Civil Service. However, this leads to new problems, such as increased performance burdens on the BK and other external actors. As a result, services may not be as efficient or effectively delivered.





**Figure 2.** Rich Picture Special Education Service System  
 Source: Cluster interviews and observations, 2024

The rich picture in **Figure 2** depicts the locus of authority of the system divided into formal and informal sub-systems. The formal sub-system is represented by formal actors in the Education and Culture Office as intervening consent for special service education services (Edgar et al., 2023; Nistotskaya, 2020). Other formal actors do not interact directly with education services, such as Dispendukcapil and Bakesbangpol, as organizations that inventory organizations of believers and registrars of civil identity administration. Within the scope of the non-formal section, there is MLKI as the parent organization of believers appointed by the government but does not have full authority on technical trust education services and the organization of believers as a cultural association of believers.

It is crucial to consider the dynamics of collaboration and communication among the participants in both the formal and informal sub-systems shown in the rich picture (Shahabi et al., 2020). Although the Education and Culture Office is vital in decision-making and policy execution, efficient delivery of special education services relies heavily on effective collaboration with informal actors such as MLKI and cultural groups of believers. Nevertheless, the existing system structure may not enable such collaboration, resulting in inefficiencies and deficiencies in the supply of services. Hence, it is imperative to build mechanisms that provide regular communication, coordination, and mutual understanding between formal and informal players to address the difficulties effectively and ensure the efficacy of special education services in Malang City.

The challenge of integrating formal and informal actors in the unique education services system in Malang City lies in the inherent differences in their operational frameworks and objectives. The formal subsystem, primarily represented by the Education and Culture Office, operates within a structured and bureaucratic framework emphasizing regulatory compliance and standardized procedures. This subsystem's authority extends to policy-making and execution, ensuring educational services adhere to national standards and guidelines. However, the rigid nature of this formal framework often limits its flexibility in addressing the

unique and dynamic needs of special education services, which require a more personalized and adaptive approach.

The informal subsystem, consisting of MLKI and cultural groups of believers, operates within a more flexible and community-oriented framework. These are deeply embedded in the local cultural and social fabric, allowing them to understand and respond to the community's specific needs more effectively. The disconnect between the formal and informal subsystems results in inefficiencies and gaps in service delivery, undermining the overall effectiveness of special education services in Malang City. To bridge this gap, it is essential to establish mechanisms that facilitate regular communication, coordination, and mutual understanding between the formal and informal subsystems. By fostering a collaborative environment where both subsystems can share their insights and resources, it is possible to create a more responsive approach to special education services (DeMatthews, 2021; Suh et al., 2024). This can be achieved by developing integrated policies that recognize the value of informal actors and provide them with the necessary support and authority to contribute effectively.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the four stages in the following SSM show the problems in implementing the fulfillment of special service education (trust) at the Malang City Education and Culture Office. These problematic elements can be seen from the still partial service and the conservative model shown from the bottom-up of service acquisition, so this is a representation of a system that is not optimal and inefficient. The challenges identified in implementing special education services for believers in Malang City include partial service provision, a conservative service acquisition model, and inadequate human resource competence. These issues stem from a perspective that views services as isolated cases rather than part of a broader system, leading to compartmentalization and exclusion of certain groups. Organizational limitations, particularly cultural human resources, hinder effective service delivery. This seems to compartmentalize certain groups and shows the exclusion of civil services to which the whole society is entitled without exception. On the one hand, the service organization also has limitations on aspects of cultural human resources that are not qualified and replaced because of the position of the personnel position. This then becomes the subject matter holistically and needs system intervention as a step to solve it. In conclusion, the study suggests that addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that considers the involvement of all stakeholders and adopts principles of collaborative governance. By doing so, Malang City can overcome the identified obstacles and ensure that special education services are provided efficiently and inclusively to all members of society, regardless of their religious beliefs.

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