

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) IN THE CITY OF PALEMBANG

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Abstract

Study This aim For analyzing Collaborative Governance in management of Light Rail Transit (LRT) in Palembang City. The presence of LRT as transportation modern mass is expected capable reduce congestion, increasing mobility society, and create system transportation sustainable urban development. However, Thus, the management of the Palembang LRT is still face various challenges, such as low level occupation passengers, height cost operational, not yet optimally integration between fashion transportation, as well as weakness coordination between stakeholder interests. Research This use method study qualitative approach descriptive. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, documentation, and studies literature. Research results show that Collaborative Governance in Palembang LRT management has not yet walk optimally. Coordination between government area, LRT operator, sector private sector and community Still face various obstacles, especially in aspect communication, integration service transportation, and participation society. In addition, sustainability LRT operations are still very dependent on subsidies government Because low income operational. Research This conclude that strengthening collaboration between stakeholders, increasing integration transportation, as well as involvement public in a way active become factor important in increase effectiveness and sustainability LRT management in Palembang City.

Keywords: collaborative governance, sustainability, light rail transit, service public, transportation urban

INTRODUCTION

Efficient, modern, and environmentally friendly urban transportation is a primary need in many major cities in Indonesia, including Palembang. Population growth, urbanization, and increased economic activity have led to increasing public mobility year after year. This has resulted in increased use of private vehicles, which triggers traffic congestion, air pollution, energy waste, and a decline in urban environmental quality. Therefore, the government is required to provide an effective, efficient, and sustainable public transportation system. Palembang, one of Indonesia's metropolitan cities, faces serious challenges in managing urban transportation. The high use of private vehicles has led to traffic congestion on various major city roads. To address this issue, the government introduced a Light Rail Transit (LRT) system, which began operating in 2018 as part of preparations for the 2018 Asian Games. The LRT is expected to provide a mass transportation solution that can reduce congestion, increase public mobility, and support sustainable transportation development.

The Palembang LRT, a 23.4-kilometer line connecting Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II Airport and Jakabaring Sport City, offers new hope for improving the quality of public transportation services in Palembang. However, LRT management still faces various challenges, including operational challenges, financing challenges, and public participation. One of the main challenges is the low passenger occupancy rate. Despite an increase in ridership following the COVID-19 pandemic, LRT usage has yet to reach the government's target. Low public interest in using the LRT indicates that this transportation system has not yet been fully accepted as a primary mode of transportation.

Furthermore, the extremely high operational costs of the LRT pose a serious challenge to its sustainable management. The Palembang LRT's annual revenue is estimated at only around Rp 21–24 billion, while operating costs reach Rp 160–180 billion per year. This situation means that the LRT's operation remains heavily dependent on government subsidies. This indicates that the transportation system is not yet capable of operating independently and sustainably from an economic perspective.

Another problem is the suboptimal integration between transportation modes. Access to LRT stations is still lacking effective feeder transportation connectivity, making it difficult for residents to access LRT services. As a result, people prefer to use private vehicles over public transportation. In this context, collaborative governance is a highly relevant approach to managing the Palembang LRT. Collaborative governance is a governance concept that involves various stakeholders, including the government, the private sector, academics, the community, and transportation operators, in the decision-making process and implementation of public policies. Ansell and Gash (2007) explain that collaborative governance is a collective decision-making process involving public and non-public actors in a formal, consensus-oriented manner. Meanwhile, Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) emphasize that successful collaboration is influenced by shared motivation, stakeholder involvement, facilitative leadership, effective communication, and collaborative capacity among the parties involved.

Various previous studies have shown that the application of collaborative governance in public transportation management can improve service quality and system effectiveness. However, in the context of the Palembang LRT, the implementation of collaborative governance still faces various obstacles, such as weak inter-agency coordination, limited resources, and low public participation. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze how Collaborative Governance is implemented in the management of Light Rail Transit (LRT) in Palembang City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

• Collaborative Governance

The concept of *Collaborative Governance* has evolved as a modern public governance approach that emphasizes the importance of multi-stakeholder involvement in decision-making and public policy implementation. This approach emerged because the government is no longer capable of solving public problems alone, particularly when facing complex issues such as urban transportation, sustainable development, environmental management, and public services. Therefore, collaboration between the government, the private sector, academia, communities, and the public is needed to ensure public policies are implemented more effectively, participatory, and sustainably.

Ansell and Gash (2007) explain that *collaborative governance* is a governance arrangement in which one or more public institutions directly involve non-governmental actors in a formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative collective decision-making process. This approach emphasizes the importance of communication, stakeholder involvement, transparency, and a collaborative deliberation process in resolving public issues. In the context of public transportation, *collaborative governance* is an important approach because transportation management requires synergy between various parties, from the government as regulator, transportation operators as service implementers, the private sector as investment supporters, to the public as users of transportation services.

According to Emerson and Nabatchi (2015), the success of *collaborative governance* is influenced by three main elements: *principled engagement*, *shared motivation*, and *capacity for joint action*. *Principled engagement* relates to the active involvement of stakeholders in the discussion and decision-making process. *Shared motivation* emphasizes the importance of trust, shared commitment, and mutual understanding among stakeholders. Meanwhile, *capacity for joint action* relates to the ability of stakeholders to work together through the support of adequate resources, leadership, and institutions. These three elements are essential foundations for building effective and sustainable collaboration in public service management.

In research on *Collaborative Governance*, bibliometric visualizations show that this concept is closely related to various issues such as *sustainability*, *urban planning*, *stakeholder participation*, *policy implementation*, and *innovation*. Collaborative governance is seen as a strategy capable of addressing global challenges such as climate change, resource management, and sustainable urban development (Mentis & Moonsammy, 2022; Ong et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2024). Furthermore, collaboration is also related to a participatory approach that involves various parties in the decision-making process (Bakti et al., 2023; Halioui & Schmidt, 2017; Sandover, 2020).

Furthermore, *collaborative governance* is closely linked to the concept of *stakeholder engagement*. Caputi et al. (2021), Jansen and Kalas (2020), Pereira et al. (2020), Siddiki and Goel (2015), and Teixeira and Koryakina (2016) explain that the success of collaborative governance is strongly influenced by the involvement of various stakeholders in the public policy implementation process. In the context of public transportation, stakeholder involvement is crucial because transportation management is not only related to the physical development of infrastructure but also concerns public services, public accessibility, and the sustainability of the transportation system itself.

Furthermore, Chaiya and Ahmad (2021), Nair et al. (2023), and Putera et al. (2022) explain that effective public policy implementation requires good coordination and communication between stakeholders. Public transportation policies will struggle to succeed without synergy between the government, transportation operators, and the public. Therefore, *collaborative governance* is a relevant approach to improving the effectiveness of public transportation policy implementation, particularly in the management of mass transportation systems such as LRT.

- **Light Rail Transit (LRT)**

Light Rail Transit (LRT) is a light rail-based transportation system designed to support urban mobility. LRT is a modern mass transportation mode widely implemented in various countries due to its ability to reduce congestion, increase transportation efficiency, and support sustainable urban development. This transportation system has a greater capacity than conventional public transportation and is able to provide faster, safer, more comfortable, and more environmentally friendly transportation services. In Indonesia, LRT has begun to be developed as part of the government's efforts to improve the quality of public transportation in major cities. The Palembang LRT is the first LRT in Indonesia, which began operating in 2018 as part of preparations for the 2018 Asian Games. The Palembang LRT line is approximately 23.4 kilometers long, connecting Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II Airport with Jakabaring Sport City. The presence of the LRT is expected to be a mass transportation solution that can reduce congestion, increase community mobility, and encourage urban economic development.

However, the management of the Palembang LRT still faces various challenges. One of the main challenges is the low level of public use of the LRT. Despite the availability of transportation infrastructure, people still prefer private vehicles to public transportation. Furthermore, high operational costs and suboptimal integration between modes of transportation also hinder the development of this transportation system. According to Sussman (2000), the success of a mass transportation system is greatly influenced by integration between modes. This integration includes service connectivity, ease of access, and synchronization between public transportation systems. In the context of the Palembang LRT, integration with public transportation, buses, and other feeder transportation is a crucial factor in increasing public interest in using public transportation. Furthermore, Yen et al.'s (2018) research on the Gold Coast LRT in Australia showed that LRT development not only improves transportation connectivity but also impacts property values and economic development around transit areas. These findings indicate that LRT has significant potential to support transit-oriented urban *development*.

- **Stakeholders in LRT Management**

LRT management involves various stakeholders, each with its own roles and interests. These stakeholders include the central government, local governments, transportation operators, the private sector, academics, and the public. In the context of Palembang LRT management, the central government plays a role in providing policy and funding support, the local government is responsible for urban transportation development, PT KAI, as the operator, is responsible for operational services, and the public is the primary user of public transportation services.

Asteriniah et al.'s (2025) research explains that the management of the Palembang LRT still faces challenges in collaboration between stakeholders, particularly related to limited shared motivation and coordination between actors. Meanwhile, Hairi (2020) stated that inter-agency coordination and resource management are the main challenges in managing the Palembang LRT project. Furthermore, research by Riza et al. (2021) shows that the success of public transportation governance depends heavily on the ability of stakeholders to collaborate effectively and in a structured manner. Open and participatory collaboration will improve the quality of public transportation services and create a more sustainable transportation system.

- **Previous Research**

Research on *collaborative governance* in public transportation management has been extensively conducted in various countries, including Indonesia. Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) explain that collaborative governance requires the active involvement of the government, the private sector, and the community at every stage of decision-making and policy implementation. Principles such as effective communication, conflict management, and stakeholder engagement are crucial for successful collaboration. Ibrahim et al. (2021), in their study of the Kuala Lumpur LRT, found that effective collaboration between the government, the private sector, and the public can improve the quality of transportation services and passenger satisfaction. The study demonstrates that a collaborative approach can increase the effectiveness of public transportation management and create a more integrated transportation system.

Riza et al.'s (2019) research on mass transportation governance in Thailand shows that the main obstacle to LRT management is weak coordination between stakeholders. Therefore, better communication and stronger collaboration between parties involved in public transportation management are needed. Furthermore, Gülçimen et al. (2021) emphasize that the sustainability of mass transportation systems is greatly influenced by collaboration between the government and the private sector. Public transportation management must consider social, economic, and environmental aspects to ensure the system operates sustainably. Based on various previous studies, it is clear that the implementation of *collaborative governance* in the management of the Palembang LRT is crucial for creating an effective, efficient, integrated, and sustainable public transportation system. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing how collaborative governance is implemented in the management of the LRT in Palembang City and the various factors that influence the effectiveness of collaboration between stakeholders.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand in depth the phenomenon of *Collaborative Governance* in the management of *Light Rail Transit* (LRT) in Palembang City through interactions between stakeholders involved in the public transportation management process. Qualitative research allows researchers to dig up more comprehensive information regarding the process of collaboration, communication, coordination, and various obstacles faced in the implementation of collaborative governance in the mass transportation system. According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research is a research method used to understand the meaning of individuals or groups towards a particular social problem or phenomenon in depth. A descriptive approach was used because this study seeks to systematically describe the actual conditions regarding the implementation of *collaborative governance* in the management of the Palembang LRT. The main focus of the study is directed at the relationships between stakeholders, the decision-making process, forms of coordination between institutions, and community participation in supporting the success of public transportation management. With this approach, researchers can provide a clearer picture of the empirical conditions occurring in the field regarding the effectiveness of collaborative governance in LRT management.

This research was conducted in Palembang City, South Sumatra Province, which is the operational location of the first *Light Rail Transit* (LRT) in Indonesia. The selection of the research location was based on the consideration that the Palembang LRT is one of the national strategic transportation projects involving various stakeholders, such as the central government, local governments, PT Kereta Api Indonesia (PT KAI) as the operator, the private sector, and the public as users of public transportation services. In addition, Palembang City also faces various urban transportation problems such as congestion, low integration of transportation modes, and high use of private vehicles, making it a relevant context for studying the application of *Collaborative Governance* in public transportation management.

The research subjects in this study consisted of various parties involved directly or indirectly in the management of the Palembang LRT. Research informants were selected using a *purposive sampling technique*, namely a technique for determining informants based on certain considerations according to research needs. Informants in this study included local government officials, LRT managers from PT KAI, transportation agencies, academics, and the community using the Palembang LRT. The selection of informants aimed to obtain more in-depth data regarding collaboration patterns between stakeholders in the management of the Palembang LRT. Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through several methods, namely observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review. Observations were conducted directly at the Palembang LRT operational site to assess transportation service conditions, LRT user activity, integration between transportation modes, and the forms of coordination occurring in the field. These observations are crucial for obtaining an empirical picture of the implementation of public transportation management directly.

Furthermore, in *-depth interviews were conducted* with research informants to obtain more detailed information regarding the implementation of *Collaborative Governance* in the management of the Palembang LRT. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner so that researchers could dig deeper into communication between stakeholders, the decision-making process, coordination obstacles, and strategies for increasing the effectiveness of LRT management. The in-depth interview technique was chosen because it was able to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the informants' experiences, views, and perceptions regarding LRT management in Palembang City. In addition to observations and interviews, this study also utilized documentation techniques to support the completeness of the research data. Documentation was conducted by collecting various supporting documents, such as LRT operational reports, passenger data, government policies related to public transportation, activity photos, scientific journals, and other documents relevant to the research. Documentation data was used to strengthen the results of observations and interviews, ensuring greater validity and scientific accountability.

This research also utilizes literature as a secondary data source. The literature study was conducted by reviewing various scientific journals, books, previous research results, articles, and policy documents related to *collaborative governance*, public transportation, and LRT management. Previous research indicates that the success of mass transportation management is greatly influenced by the effectiveness of collaboration between stakeholders (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Asteriniah et al., 2025). Furthermore, research by Ibrahim et al. (2021) explains that collaboration between the government, transportation operators, and the public can improve the quality of public transportation services.

The data analysis technique in this study uses the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman (2014), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data reduction stage is carried out by selecting, simplifying, and focusing data relevant to the research objectives. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation are then classified based on research themes such as stakeholder coordination, collaborative communication, transportation integration, community participation, and sustainable LRT

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) IN THE CITY OF PALEMBANG

M. Yoga Jusri Pratama et al

management. The next stage is data display, which systematically organizes the data in a descriptive narrative to facilitate researchers in understanding the relationships between data and drawing research conclusions. Data presentation is carried out by describing the research results based on *Collaborative Governance indicators* such as *principled engagement*, *shared motivation*, and *capacity for joint action* as proposed by Emerson and Nabatchi (2015). The final stage is drawing conclusions and verifying the data. At this stage, researchers interpret the research data to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the implementation of *Collaborative Governance* in the management of the Palembang LRT. The research conclusions were obtained through a continuous analysis process from the beginning of data collection until the research was completed.

To maintain data validity, this study employed source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from various research informants, while method triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The use of triangulation aims to increase the accuracy and credibility of research results, ensuring that the data obtained is reliable and reflects the conditions in the field. By using a descriptive qualitative research approach, this research is expected to be able to provide an in-depth description of the implementation of *Collaborative Governance* in the management of the Palembang LRT as well as various factors that influence the success and obstacles in managing public transportation in the City of Palembang.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

• Collaborative Governance in the Management of the Palembang LRT

The management of the Light Rail Transit (LRT) in Palembang City involves various stakeholders, each with its own roles and responsibilities. In its implementation, Collaborative Governance is the approach used to strengthen coordination between the central government, local governments, LRT operators, the private sector, and the community. This collaboration aims to create an effective, efficient, and sustainable mass transportation system to support urban mobility.

Based on the research results, the government plays a primary role in the planning, development, and operational oversight of the Palembang LRT. The central government, through the Ministry of Transportation, plays a role in providing policies, funding, and developing LRT infrastructure, while local governments play a role in supporting transportation integration and providing accessibility for the public. Furthermore, the LRT operator, PT KAI, is responsible for managing service operations, maintaining facilities, and improving the quality of service to public transportation users.

However, research results indicate that coordination between stakeholders is still not optimal. Several informants stated that communication between institutions remains sectoral, resulting in frequent delays in decision-making and policy implementation. This condition aligns with research by Asteriniah et al. (2025), which states that weak coordination and limited capacity among stakeholders are among the main obstacles in managing the Palembang LRT.

• Stakeholder Involvement in LRT Management

In the concept of Collaborative Governance, the involvement of all stakeholders is a crucial factor in achieving shared goals. Research shows that government and LRT operators are quite involved in transportation management, but public participation remains relatively low. The public primarily acts as service users without actively participating in the planning and evaluation of transportation policies. Lack of public participation has resulted in some transportation policies not meeting the needs of service users. One example is the limited integration between transportation modes leading to LRT stations, making public access to the stations less effective. This situation has resulted in low LRT usage as a primary mode of transportation for urban residents. In addition to the public, the private sector is also considered to have not been fully involved in the development of the LRT-based transportation system in Palembang. Yet, private sector involvement is crucial to assist the government in financing, developing facilities, and improving the quality of public transportation services. Research by Putra et al. (2020) suggests that collaboration between the public and private sectors can improve the effectiveness of mass transportation infrastructure development and management.

• Obstacles in the Management of the Palembang LRT

Based on the research results, there are several major obstacles to the implementation of Collaborative Governance in the management of the Palembang LRT. The first obstacle is the low passenger occupancy rate. Although the LRT provides modern and comfortable transportation facilities, people still prefer using private vehicles over public transportation. This low public interest in using the LRT is influenced by accessibility factors, limited transportation integration, and a lack of public awareness about the benefits of using mass transportation.

The second obstacle is the high operational costs of the LRT, which are not yet commensurate with revenue from passenger tickets. This situation means that LRT operations remain heavily dependent on government subsidies. These high operational costs include infrastructure maintenance, electricity, and the management of service facilities. Therefore, a more effective management strategy is needed to ensure the LRT system operates independently and sustainably. Another obstacle is weak inter-agency coordination in the transportation management process. The lack of policy synchronization between the central government, regional governments, and transportation operators has resulted in several transportation development programs not running optimally. Furthermore, limited communication between stakeholders also hampers the decision-making process in resolving various LRT operational issues.

- **Efforts to Increase the Effectiveness of Collaborative Governance**

To improve the effectiveness of collaborative governance in the management of the Palembang LRT, coordination between stakeholders through more open and integrated communication is needed. The government needs to establish a collaborative forum that actively involves all stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public transportation policies. Furthermore, improving integration between transportation modes is also a crucial step in increasing public use of the LRT. Integrating the LRT with other forms of public transportation, such as buses, public transportation, and online ride-hailing, can facilitate people's mobility to LRT stations. With effective transportation integration, people will be more attracted to using public transportation over private vehicles.

The government and LRT operators also need to increase public awareness of the benefits of mass transit. Education about the importance of environmentally friendly transportation and efficient use of public transportation can help raise public awareness in supporting the sustainability of urban transportation systems. Overall, the research results show that collaborative governance plays a crucial role in the management of the LRT in Palembang City. Effective collaboration between the government, transportation operators, the private sector, and the community will improve the quality of public transportation services, strengthen the sustainability of LRT operations, and support the development of more modern and integrated urban transportation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the implementation of *Collaborative Governance* in the management of *Light Rail Transit* (LRT) in Palembang City is still not running optimally. Although the Palembang LRT is a form of modern public transportation innovation that is expected to be able to overcome various urban transportation problems such as congestion, high use of private vehicles, and low quality public transportation, in its implementation there are still various obstacles that affect the effectiveness of the transportation system management. These obstacles include low passenger occupancy rates, high operational costs, weak integration between transportation modes, and less than optimal coordination between stakeholders involved in LRT management (Asteriniah et al., 2025; Hairi, 2020).

This research shows that the management of the Palembang LRT involves various key actors, including the central government, local governments, PT Kereta Api Indonesia (PT KAI) as the operator, the private sector, academics, and the public as users of public transportation services. However, the collaborative relationship between these stakeholders still faces various challenges, particularly in communication, coordination, and aligning common goals. Each actor still has different interests and priorities, resulting in ineffective and integrated decision-making and policy implementation. This condition aligns with research by Riza et al. (2021), which states that the success of public transportation management depends heavily on the ability of actors to collaborate effectively and in a structured manner.

In terms of *principled engagement*, stakeholder involvement in the LRT management process has been implemented, but it has not yet fully created open, participatory, and sustainable communication. Coordination between institutions remains sectoral, hampering synergy in the development of an integrated public transportation system. Furthermore, public participation in the evaluation and development of LRT services remains relatively low. Public involvement is crucial for creating transportation policies that meet the needs of service users. This is reinforced by research by Yulia et al. (2022), which explains that public participation in the development of the Palembang LRT is still suboptimal, thus affecting the effectiveness of public transportation policies.

Regarding *shared motivation*, this study found that shared motivation among stakeholders has not yet been optimally developed. Low collective commitment and limited mutual trust among actors have prevented the collaboration process from producing optimal solutions to various LRT management issues. Asteriniah et al. (2025) explained that the main challenges in collaborative management of the Palembang LRT are limited incentives and weak shared motivation among the actors involved. These conditions indicate that the success of *Collaborative Governance* depends not only on stakeholder involvement but also requires shared commitment, transparency, and

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) IN THE CITY OF PALEMBANG

M. Yoga Jusri Pratama et al

trust among the parties involved in public transportation governance. Furthermore, in terms of *capacity for joint action*, collaborative capacity among stakeholders still faces limitations, both in terms of resources, policy integration, and transportation infrastructure support. One major problem is the suboptimal integration between transportation modes to LRT stations. Limited accessibility makes it difficult for people to use LRT as their primary mode of transportation. As a result, people still prefer to use private vehicles over public transportation. This condition aligns with Sussman's (2000) opinion, which states that transportation mode integration is highly dependent on cooperation between parties in the management of the mass transportation system.

Furthermore, this study also shows that the operational sustainability of the Palembang LRT remains heavily dependent on government subsidies. High operational costs, disproportionate to passenger ticket revenues, indicate that LRT management is not yet able to operate independently and sustainably from an economic perspective. This issue is further reinforced by research by Gülçimen et al. (2021), which emphasizes that the sustainability of the LRT system depends heavily on close collaboration between the government and the private sector in supporting the financing and management of public transportation. Therefore, more innovative and collaborative management strategies are needed to increase passenger numbers, strengthen transportation integration, and develop the economic potential around the LRT transit area.

Overall, this study confirms that the success of Palembang's LRT management is highly dependent on the effective implementation of *Collaborative Governance*. Strengthening coordination between stakeholders, increasing open communication, active community involvement, and developing integrated public transportation are key factors that must be considered in creating an efficient, inclusive, and sustainable mass transportation system. Furthermore, the government and relevant stakeholders need to increase innovation in public transportation services so that the LRT can become the community's primary choice for daily mobility.

Thus, a more effective implementation of *Collaborative Governance* is expected to not only improve the quality of Palembang LRT services but also support the development of modern, environmentally friendly, and community-oriented urban transportation. This research is also expected to serve as a reference for the government, academics, and other stakeholders in developing more integrated and sustainable public transportation policies in the future.

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COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) IN THE CITY OF PALEMBANG

M. Yoga Jusri Pratama et al

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