

(Research/Review) Article

Collaboration Between Local Government and Educational Institutions in Developing Educational Innovation Through The Sabernova Program in Sampang Regency

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Abstract: Educational innovation in the era of regional autonomy requires collaboration between local governments and educational institutions to create quality and adaptive educational services. Sampang Regency, through the SABERNOVA Program, strives to foster a culture of local innovation in education by collaboratively involving various educational actors. However, the implementation of collaboration in developing educational innovation still faces various obstacles, such as variations in school capacity, a lack of human resources, and an unbalanced culture of innovation in the education sector. This study focuses on analyzing collaboration between local governments and educational institutions, the implementation of educational innovation, and the factors that support and hinder the implementation of the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency. This research applies a qualitative approach through case studies. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the Education Office, Regional Development Planning, Research and Development Agency of Sampang Regency, school principals, and teachers as informants in the research. Data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The research findings indicate that collaboration is realized through coordination, support, communication involving participation, and providing space for schools to innovate in education. The implementation of SABERNOVA encourages innovation in learning, digitalization of school administration, and strengthening the culture of innovation in the education sector. Key supporting factors include local government commitment and school participation, while key barriers are limited human resources and capacity variations across schools. This research highlights that collaborative governance is a crucial element in the successful development of locally-based educational innovations.

Keywords: Collaborative Governance; Education Policy; Educational Innovation; Local Government; SABERNOVA Program.

1. Introduction

Education in the digital era and regional autonomy is not only seen as the responsibility of schools, but rather as a space for collaboration between various parties to produce educational services that are innovative, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of the community. (Sunarso et al., 2024). Local governments have an important position in designing policies and creating an educational innovation ecosystem by strengthening governance, providing regulatory support, and facilitating programs to improve the quality of education (Mahardhani, 2023). In this context, educational innovation is not simply understood as the application of technology in the teaching and learning process, but also encompasses improvements in management, public education services, teacher capacity building, and the development of a creative culture within educational institutions. According to Rogers (Oturakci & Yuregir, 2018), Innovation is a new idea or practice that is accepted and implemented to improve the effectiveness of a system. Meanwhile, the idea of collaborative governance highlights the significance of the participation of government, educational institutions, and the

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community in collectively addressing public problems (Widiawati et al., 2023). Therefore, the success of innovation in education is largely determined by the ability of local governments to establish sustainable partnerships with educational institutions as the primary providers of education services.

In Indonesia, the development of local innovation is increasing along with the government's push for public service innovation competitions and bureaucratic reforms focused on regional performance (Mustofa et al., 2026). In education, local innovation plays a crucial role in improving the quality of learning, expanding access to education, and strengthening school competitiveness amidst rapid social change. However, the implementation of educational innovation in various regions still faces challenges such as poor coordination between institutions, limited human resource capacity, and a weak culture of innovation within the education bureaucracy (Antoni et al., 2025). This situation indicates that the success of educational innovation depends not only on official regulations but also requires collaboration between local governments and educational institutions for the successful implementation of innovation programs. Therefore, many local governments have begun creating collaborative models based on local innovation to improve the quality of education in their respective regions.

One region that has begun developing regional innovation in the education sector is Sampang Regency through the SABERNOVA (Sampang Berkretivitas dan Inovasi) Program. This program is an element of the local government's strategy to foster a culture of innovation within regional government agencies, including the Education Office and educational institutions. SABERNOVA focuses not only on bureaucratic innovation competitions but also encourages schools to develop various innovative educational services tailored to the needs of the local community. This program is reinforced by Sampang Regent Regulation Number 150 of 2022, which regulates the Establishment of Regional Innovation within the Sampang Regency Government. In practice, SABERNOVA creates a collaborative network between local governments, schools, teachers, and education stakeholders to develop innovation in the regional education sector. This phenomenon is interesting to study because it demonstrates a shift in education management from an administrative model to a collaborative model focused on local innovation.

Several previous studies have discussed innovation in education and collaborative governance in the education sector. The study by Lestari & Sirozi (2025) explains that collaboration between education stakeholders can improve the effectiveness of local education program implementation. Another study conducted by Alief et al. (2025) and Mahardhani et al. (2025) states that local innovation in the education sector plays a role in improving the quality of public services in the education sector. However, many previous studies have focused on the implementation of general education policies and have not addressed collaboration between local governments and educational institutions in developing innovations based on regional innovation programs. Furthermore, research on SABERNOVA is still limited, with many viewing it as an innovation program within the bureaucracy, rather than as part of regional education management. Therefore, this study offers a novel analysis of collaboration between local governments and educational institutions in developing educational innovation through a locally focused regional innovation program in Sampang Regency.

In line with this situation, this study focuses on the form of collaboration between local governments and educational institutions in developing educational innovation through the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency. This study also examines the form of collaboration, implementation in the field, and factors that support and hinder program implementation. This research is necessary because developing innovation in education requires collaborative management that is not only administrative, but also participatory and sustainable. The research findings are expected to contribute academically to the development of education policy and collaborative governance studies, as well as provide practical advice for local governments to strengthen collaboration-based educational innovation at the local level.

2. Theory

Collaboration in public administration emerged as a response to the complexity of public issues that governments can no longer address alone. The evolving governance paradigm positions the government not as the primary actor but as a facilitator collaborating with various stakeholders to achieve public service goals. Ansell & Gash (2008) Collaborative governance is a decision-making process and public policy implementation involving government agencies and non-governmental actors in a formal, consensus-focused, collective forum aimed at solving shared problems. In the field of educational administration, collaboration is

crucial because the implementation of education involves various parties such as local governments, schools, teachers, communities, and social organizations. Collaboration not only strengthens coordination between institutions but also increases the effectiveness of educational policy implementation through the distribution of resources, knowledge, and responsibility. Emerson et al. (2012) states that collaborative governance is formed through participatory interactions, collective motivation, and the capacity for collective action, which can result in more responsive and inclusive public management.

In the field of educational administration, collaboration theory is applied to explain how relationships between educational actors are formed to improve the quality of educational services. Schools, as educational institutions, cannot operate in isolation because educational success is greatly influenced by support from the external environment, including local government and the community (Håkansson & Adolfsson, 2021). Bryson et al. (2015) Public sector collaboration is needed when an organization faces limited resources and requires inter-agency support to achieve shared goals. Therefore, collaboration in education is not only related to formal collaboration but also involves communication, coordination, information exchange, and collective decision-making. In the context of regional education policy, a collaborative approach enables local governments and educational institutions to produce innovations that are more suited to local needs (Aprilianty, 2025). This approach aligns with the implementation of the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency because it involves local governments and educational institutions as actors who collaboratively create a culture of innovation in education.

In addition to collaboration theory, this study also applies educational innovation theory from an educational administration perspective. Rogers states that innovation is an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual or group and applied to improve the efficiency of a system (Fernández-Portillo et al., 2022). In the world of education, innovation encompasses more than just learning technology, but includes shifts in governance, approaches to educational services, learning techniques, and the culture of educational institutions (Benwari & Dambo, 2014). Buhlai et al. (2025) states that educational innovation is a transformation process aimed at improving the quality of education through improvements in systems, organizational behavior, and learning practices. Thus, innovation in education, in the field of educational administration, is understood as a planned effort to improve the quality of educational services through policies, programs, and the development of educational organizations that are more responsive to social change. In the context of local government, innovation in the education sector is a crucial element of bureaucratic reform and improving the quality of public services in education.

Educational innovation theory also emphasizes the crucial role of an organizational environment that supports creativity, participation, and the development of human resource capacity. Alzouebi et al. (2025) explains that innovation in education will progress if there is support from leadership, an organizational culture that is receptive to change, and collaboration among educational stakeholders. In educational management, innovation is usually influenced by the capacity of local governments to create management systems that are adaptive and responsive to community needs. Therefore, the development of innovation in education cannot be separated from the practice of collaborative governance because innovation requires the participation of various parties to produce sustainable change. The relationship between the theory of collaboration and educational innovation is the basis of the analysis of the SABERNOVA Program research in Sampang Regency, especially in observing how local governments and educational institutions collaborate to produce educational innovations that are appropriate to local needs.

3. Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study approach to gain a deeper understanding of the collaboration between local governments and educational institutions in developing educational innovation through the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency. The qualitative method was chosen because it focuses on the process, interactions between actors, coordination patterns, and dynamics in implementing the educational innovation program. (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). This research was conducted in the Sampang Regency Government, specifically in the Education Office and four educational institutions that play an active role in the SABERNOVA Program. Informants were selected purposively, taking into account the direct involvement of informants in program implementation, includ-

ing officials from the Education Office, the Regional Development Planning Agency, Sampang Regency Research and Development, school principals, teachers, and the school innovation development team. Data collection was conducted using observation, in-depth interviews, and document collection methods. Observations were conducted to examine collaboration practices and the implementation of educational innovation in the field, while in-depth interviews aimed to obtain information on the types of collaboration, the roles of the parties involved, communication patterns, supporting factors, and obstacles in implementing the SABERNOVA program. Documentation was used to supplement information in the form of regional regulations, program reports, activity archives, and educational innovation documents. Data validity was checked using source triangulation and technical triangulation methods to ensure the data obtained had a high level of reliability. Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing as explained by Huberman & Miles (2012), so that this research can provide a comprehensive picture of the collaborative practices between local governments and educational units in developing educational innovations based on the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency.

4. Results and Discussion

Form Of Collaboration Between Local Government And Educational Units In The Sabernova Program

Research findings reveal that the collaboration between the local government and educational institutions under the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency was designed through the active participation of various educational actors in creating local innovations. Observations within the Education Office and several schools implementing the program indicate that the local government serves not only as a policymaker but also as a facilitator, providing space for schools to develop innovations tailored to their needs. This collaboration can be seen through educational innovation mentoring activities, training in innovative program development, coordination forums between educational institutions, and awards for schools that successfully create innovations in education. An interview with an Education Office official revealed that SABERNOVA was developed to foster a culture of innovation in the education sector so that schools not only carry out administrative tasks but also design creative programs that contribute to improving the quality of educational services. The principals who participated in the research also stated that through SABERNOVA, schools have greater opportunities to express ideas, develop flagship programs, and foster more intensive communication with the local government.

Another type of collaboration is evident in the ongoing coordination patterns between the local government, the Education Office, and educational institutions. Based on observations, coordination is carried out not only through formal meetings, but also through direct mentoring at schools and informal, participatory communication. The local government, through the Education Office and the Sampang Regency Regional Development Planning, Research, and Development Agency, provides guidance on developing educational innovations, while schools are given the freedom to determine the types of innovations to be developed according to the characteristics of their respective environments. Interviews with teachers and the school innovation development team revealed that school participation in SABERNOVA encourages teachers to be more motivated in creating innovations in learning and educational services. Furthermore, the existence of an innovation presentation forum between schools encourages the exchange of ideas and experiences among educational institutions. This condition indicates that SABERNOVA is not merely an administrative program of the local government, but has also developed into a collaborative platform that unites various parties in education for regional innovation.

The research findings are in line with the collaborative governance theory put forward by Ansell and Gash, which states that public cooperation is built through the participation of various stakeholders in the decision-making process and policy implementation together (Turwelis et al., 2022). In the context of the SABERNOVA Program, local governments do not unilaterally dominate program implementation but instead provide opportunities for educational units to play an active role in the process of developing educational innovations. The resulting collaboration also reflects a process of dialogue, communication, and division of tasks among educational actors. Based on observations and interviews, the effectiveness of program coordination is significantly influenced by the frequency of communication between local governments and schools. This indicates that collaborative governance practices

in education require not only formal regulations but also participatory and mutually supportive working interactions. The SABERNOVA Program can be defined as a collaborative education management model involving local governments and educational institutions to create educational innovations tailored to local needs.

In addition to the theory of collaboration, the research findings also indicate a relationship with Rogers' theory of educational innovation, which states that innovation is a new idea or practice implemented to increase the effectiveness of a system (Oturakci & Yuregir, 2018). The SABERNOVA program encourages educational institutions to produce various innovations in teaching, school management, and student services. Interviews revealed that several schools have created innovations through digitalization of school administration, literacy programs rooted in local culture, creative, environmentally-oriented learning, and strengthening students' religious character. These innovations emerged thanks to the support of local governments, which provided opportunities for schools to be creative. These findings indicate that innovation in education does not always have to take the form of cutting-edge technology; it can also involve improvements in management and educational service approaches that better align with local community demands. From an educational administration perspective, this situation demonstrates the crucial role of local governments in fostering a culture of innovation through policies and support systems that strengthen school creativity.

However, the research also identified several obstacles in the collaborative implementation of the SABERNOVA program. Interviews with school principals and teachers revealed that not all educational units have the same human resource capacity to develop educational innovation. Some schools still experience limited understanding of the concept of innovation, limited supporting facilities, and limited experience in developing innovative programs. Furthermore, coordination between institutions sometimes encounters obstacles due to differences in the level of participation and readiness of each school. Nevertheless, local governments continue to provide support and capacity building through training and regular program evaluations. From a collaborative governance perspective, these obstacles are part of the dynamics of collaboration, requiring a continuous process of adaptation and capacity building for actors (Chiari et al., 2023). Therefore, the success of the SABERNOVA Program is not only determined by the existence of regulations, but also by the ability of local governments and educational units to build collaborative relationships that are consistent, participatory, and oriented towards developing long-term educational innovation.

Implementation Of Educational Innovation Through The Sabernova Program In Sampang Regency

The implementation of educational innovation through the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency reflects the local government's commitment to creating a more structured culture of innovation in education. Observations at various educational institutions show that the program's implementation is not limited to innovative competitions, but also includes school coaching, mentoring in developing creative programs, and strengthening teacher involvement in fostering creative learning processes. The local government, through the Education Office and the Sampang Regency Regional Development Planning, Research, and Development Agency, provides opportunities for schools to enhance innovation according to their respective characteristics and needs. Interviews with school principals revealed that SABERNOVA has inspired schools to actively develop flagship programs that were previously unavailable. Schools are now focusing not only on administrative matters but also on developing more responsive and creative educational services. This is evident in the various school programs that focus on literacy, administrative digitization, contextual learning, and strengthening student character, rooted in local culture and the religiosity of the Madurese community.

Research findings indicate that the implementation of educational innovation through SABERNOVA has increased teacher active participation in the learning development process. Based on classroom observations and school activities, teachers have begun to implement more innovative and student-engaging teaching methods than before. Some teachers created simple teaching materials using digital technology, while others incorporated the surrounding environment as a contextual learning resource for students. Interviews with teachers revealed that the SABERNOVA Program provided psychological and institutional support to teachers, encouraging them to be more confident in implementing new learning strategies. Teachers felt that their innovations received attention and support from the local government, motivating them to continue enhancing their creativity in the learning process. The school also began forming an internal innovation team tasked with managing the development of creative programs within the school.

The implementation of SABERNOVA is also evident in the strengthening of school management, making it more responsive to change and new innovations. Observations show that several schools have begun using basic digital administration systems for student data management, learning reports, and communication with parents. Furthermore, schools have begun developing educational service programs tailored to the needs of the surrounding community. Interviews with school officials revealed that the innovations implemented are not always large-scale or technologically advanced, but rather tailored to the resources available at the school. Some schools utilize local cultural potential as part of their educational innovations, such as increasing Madurese cultural literacy and implementing religious values in school activities. The results of this study indicate that the implementation of educational innovation through SABERNOVA tends to evolve contextually based on the needs and characteristics of different educational environments.

These findings align with the explanation that innovation is the process of adopting new ideas or practices to improve the efficiency of a system (Darsan et al., 2025). Within the SABERNOVA Program, schools are not only subjects of local government policy but also key actors in realizing educational innovation. Observation and interview findings indicate that innovation in schools develops through the dissemination of ideas and support from an organizational environment that embraces change. Rogers stated that the success of innovation is influenced by communication, time, and a social system that supports the innovation's acceptance process (García-Avilés, 2020). This situation is evident in the implementation of SABERNOVA, as the local government maintains intense communication with schools through mentoring and educational innovation forums. Thus, the implementation of educational innovation in Sampang Regency demonstrates that the success of innovation programs depends not only on regulations but also on the ability of educational institutions to accept and develop change.

Research results indicate that educational innovation occurring in schools does not emerge in isolation but is created through collaboration between the local government, principals, teachers, and other educational stakeholders. The local government creates policies, provides mentoring, and creates spaces for participation, while schools play a key role in implementing innovations on the ground. Interview findings indicate that strong interaction between schools and the local government is crucial for maintaining the program's sustainability. This collaboration results in a more participatory relationship compared to the previous top-down educational bureaucracy (Pambudi et al., 2025). From a collaborative governance perspective, this situation reflects the distribution of roles and responsibilities among educational actors to produce educational changes that better align with the needs of the local Sampang community.

Although the implementation of educational innovation through the SABERNOVA Program has shown positive progress, this study also identified several obstacles to its implementation. Interviews with teachers and principals indicate that limited human resources and supporting facilities remain major challenges in developing educational innovation. Not all schools have the same capabilities to utilize technology or develop innovative programs sustainably. Furthermore, some teachers still view innovation as an additional administrative burden that hinders optimal participation. Nevertheless, the local government continues to address these obstacles by providing training, mentoring, and awards for innovative schools. From an educational administration perspective, these challenges demonstrate that implementing innovation requires a continuous process of organizational adjustment and strengthening human resource capabilities (Pradana & Arijanto, 2024). Therefore, the sustainability of the SABERNOVA Program is highly dependent on the consistency of the local government in creating a culture of educational innovation that is participatory, collaborative, and in accordance with the needs of the local community of Sampang Regency.

Supporting And Inhibiting Factors Of Collaboration In The Development Of Educational Innovation

The study results indicate that one of the key elements driving collaboration in educational innovation through the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency is the local government's commitment to creating a culture of innovation in the education sector. Observations within the Education Office and schools implementing the program indicate that the local government proactively provides support through policies, guidance, training, and opportunities for schools to participate in creating educational innovations. This support is reflected in the local government's active participation in innovation forums, program assessments, and awards for schools that successfully produce educational innovations. Interviews

with school principals indicate that SABERNOVA makes schools feel more cared for and motivated to develop creatively. Teachers and school leaders also stated that support from the local government boosts their enthusiasm for designing more creative learning programs and educational services. The success of this collaboration demonstrates the importance of local government leadership, which can create an organizational environment that supports innovation in education.

In addition to local government support, another contributing factor is adequate communication and coordination between the local government and educational institutions. Observations indicate that communication occurs not only in formal forums but also through direct guidance and more flexible informal coordination. Schools were given the opportunity to express their needs, challenges, and innovation ideas to the local government without overly strict bureaucratic procedures. Interviews with teachers indicated that more open communication made schools feel involved in program development, rather than simply implementing policies. In the schools studied, collaboration among teachers began to grow, with the formation of innovation teams aimed at collectively developing creative programs. The results of this study indicate that successful collaboration is determined by the level of trust and active involvement among educational stakeholders in the SABERNOVA Program.

This finding aligns with Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance theory, which explains that the success of public collaboration is influenced by direct communication, shared commitment, mutual trust between actors, and a continuous participatory process (Dewi, 2019). In the implementation of SABERNOVA, the relationship between the local government and educational institutions reflects a collaborative governance process, as schools not only receive direction but also participate in the development of educational innovation. Observations and interviews indicate that school participation and open communication are key factors in building a shared commitment to developing a culture of educational innovation in Sampang Regency. Furthermore, policy support from the local government enhances the capacity for collaboration between educational institutions. From a public administration perspective, this situation demonstrates that collaborative educational management can produce more adaptive working relationships that are responsive to local educational needs.

However, this study also identified several obstacles to implementing collaboration to develop educational innovation through the SABERNOVA Program. Interviews with school principals and teachers revealed that the main obstacles lie in a lack of human resources and differences in ability between schools to advance educational innovation. Not all educators possess the same skills in designing innovative programs or using educational technology. Furthermore, some schools still face limited supporting facilities and a lack of experience participating in regional innovation programs. Based on observations, some schools still view innovation as an additional activity outside the core teaching task, resulting in suboptimal participation. On the other hand, coordination between institutions is sometimes hampered by differences in the level of readiness and commitment of each school. These obstacles result in the implementation of educational innovation not being implemented uniformly across all educational institutions.

These shortcomings actually indicate that the innovation adoption process is influenced by individual readiness, the organizational environment, and the social systems that support change. Schools with an open organizational culture are more likely to adopt and develop innovations than those that remain administrative and traditional (Bodén et al., 2023). Therefore, the success of the SABERNOVA Program is determined not only by the existence of an innovation program, but also by the ability of local governments and schools to develop human resource capacity sustainably. The results of this study indicate that collaboration in creating educational innovation requires strengthening competencies, mentoring, and the formation of an organizational culture that supports creativity and change. Therefore, the development of educational innovation through SABERNOVA must be continuously strengthened by improving communication quality, strengthening teacher capacity, and developing a more inclusive collaboration system so that educational innovation can grow sustainably in Sampang Regency.

5. Conclusions

The research results show that collaboration between local governments and educational institutions through the SABERNOVA Program in Sampang Regency has played a significant role in the development of local educational innovation. This collaboration is realized through

coordination, mentoring, participatory communication, and the provision of creative spaces for schools to create innovations tailored to local needs. The implementation of the SABER-NOVA Program not only stimulates the emergence of innovations in learning and school management, but also strengthens the culture of innovation in education through the active participation of local governments, principals, and teachers. Key factors supporting the program's implementation include commitment from local governments, transparent communication, and school involvement in educational innovation. However, the implementation of this collaboration still faces obstacles such as limited human resources, variations in capacity among schools, and unequal understanding of educational innovation. Therefore, the sustainability of the SABERNOVA Program requires increasing the capacity of educational actors, improving the quality of coordination, and developing a more participatory collaboration system so that educational innovation can grow sustainably and influence the improvement of education quality in Sampang Regency.

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