

Collaboration of the 'Merah Putih' Village Cooperative Business Model and Public Kitchens in Supporting Local Food Security

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Abstract

Local food security is a strategic issue in sustainable development, especially amidst challenges in food distribution, unequal access, and increasing nutritional needs of the community. Strengthening community-based food systems has encouraged the emergence of the Merah Putih Village Cooperative (KDMP) as a village economic aggregator and the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) through public kitchens as food providers for vulnerable groups. The collaboration between these two institutions is seen as capable of shortening the supply chain, increasing the absorption of local products, and strengthening the people's economy. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, documentation studies, and focus group discussions, then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to obtain a comprehensive contextual understanding. The research findings indicate that collaboration between KDMP and public kitchens has significant potential to build a more organized food distribution chain, provide a stable market for village products, and create economic opportunities for local communities. However, institutional fragmentation, technological limitations, varying procurement mechanisms, and the lack of quality standards remain key obstacles. This study concludes that collaborative business models can be an effective strategy for building an inclusive and resilient local food ecosystem if supported by strengthened governance, supply chain digitalization, and cross-sector partnerships. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of collaborative governance and community-based business models by demonstrating that synergy between local organizations can increase food system resilience while expanding the role of cooperatives as community economic institutions. Consequently, local governments and program managers need to promote collaborative regulation, institutional capacity building, and investment in logistics infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of village-based food systems.

Keywords:

Collaborative business models; KDMP; Public kitchens; Local food security; Collaborative governance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Food security has become a strategic issue on the global development agenda, particularly amidst increasing pressures on food systems due to climate change, supply chain disruption, and unequal distribution of resources. Modern food security no longer focuses solely on production availability, but also on effective governance, institutional integration, and the food system's ability to adapt to uncertainty (Béné, 2023). In this context, strengthening community-based food systems is increasingly seen as an approach capable of increasing local economic resilience while expanding community access to sustainable food.

KDMP operates as a community economic institution that connects local producers with market needs through aggregation, distribution, and strengthening of member businesses. In rural communities, cooperatives serve not only as business entities but also as empowerment instruments that encourage collective participation and local economic stability. On the other hand, public kitchens fulfill a social function that goes beyond their operational capacity as food providers, acting as demand nodes that create markets for village products. The collaboration between the two forms a community-based food ecosystem that strengthens food security while improving community well-being.

Literature shows that collaborative organizations in the agri-food sector play a crucial role in improving supply chain efficiency, strengthening the position of small-scale producers, and creating added economic value at the local level (Ammirato et al., 2021). Agricultural cooperatives, for example, have been shown to improve market access, stabilize prices, and support the sustainability of farming businesses when supported by adaptive governance and strong partnership networks (Candemir et al., 2021). Furthermore, local economic diversification through the integration of the agricultural and community sectors also contributes to increasing regional food security and strengthening rural economic structures (Yusriadi, 2025). These findings emphasize that cross-actor collaboration is a key factor in building an inclusive and sustainable food system.

This research is based on the perspective of collaborative governance theory, which emphasizes the importance of involving various stakeholders in addressing complex public problems through coordination, resource sharing, and collective decision-making. Amirullah, (2024) Collaborative governance theory emphasizes the importance of the involvement of various actors across sectors in producing public value through a joint process. Public services are essentially interorganizational processes that require collaborative efforts between institutions, including community organizations and service users, to create sustainable outcomes (Amirullah, 2024; Thabit et al., 2024). In the context of this research, the collaboration between the KDMP and the public kitchen can be understood as a form of cross-border interaction that integrates village economic resources with community food services.

Sørensen & Torfing, (2021) explain that collaborative governance is an interaction between stakeholders that can occur through various institutional configurations and influence policy implementation. Furthermore, the effectiveness of collaboration is strongly influenced by collective leadership and social learning processes that strengthen coordination within the governance ecosystem (Kinder et al., 2021). Therefore, the implementation of collaborative governance in the synergy between KDMP and public kitchens serves as a strategic foundation for building a more integrated, adaptive, and sustainable food distribution system, thereby strengthening local food security while improving the welfare of village communities.

A collaborative governance approach enables synergy between organizations, enabling more effective implementation of policies and programs (Nugroho et al., 2025). In the context of food policy, collaborative governance has been shown to strengthen the implementation of nutrition programs through a multi-actor model that connects government, communities, and local economic institutions. Thus, institutional integration serves not only as a coordination mechanism but also as a strategy to enhance food system resilience.

In Indonesia, strengthening local food security is increasingly relevant with the development of village-based institutional initiatives. The KDMP is designed as a community economic institution that manages food distribution, aggregates community production, and expands market access for village entrepreneurs. At the same time, the Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) serves as a social intervention to improve community nutritional quality by providing food for vulnerable groups. Both initiatives reflect a systemic approach to food development, with cooperatives playing a role in distribution and economic empowerment, while public kitchens serve as community food service providers.

Conceptually, collaboration between local economic institutions and community food service providers has been shown to shorten supply chains and improve market access for small producers. A study by (Ammirato et al., 2021). shows that collaborative organizational models in the agri-food sector can improve distribution efficiency while creating sustainable economic value through resource integration across actors. Furthermore, Béné, (2023) emphasize that strengthening institutional networks is a key factor in building a resilient and adaptive food system to social and economic pressures. Another study by Grashuis & SU, (2018) found that cooperatives supported by strong managerial capacity and governance tend to be more successful in expanding market access and improving member welfare. However, the success of collaboration depends heavily on institutional readiness, human resource competency, and the adoption of

technology to support cross-organizational coordination (Megasyara et al., 2026). These findings confirm that the effectiveness of community-based food ecosystems is determined not only by partnerships, but also by the quality of governance and organizational readiness to manage collaborations sustainably.

The novelty of this research lies in its study of food security and the evolving institutional structure of village economies. Most studies still adopt a partial approach, as does the integration of the KDMP business model with the MBG public kitchen in supporting local food security, an approach that has not been widely studied holistically. Previous studies tended to highlight the role of cooperatives in food distribution or economic empowerment separately, without linking them to community-based food provision systems (Made et al., 2025). Other research suggests that cooperative farming can improve household food security, but is limited to the production context and has not explored cross-institutional collaboration within the food distribution system (Suproni et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies on building village resilience through economic diversification have not explicitly addressed the integration of cooperatives and community food provision initiatives (Agusta, 2025).

From the perspective of agri-food collaboration, previous research confirms that inter-institutional partnerships can improve the sustainability of food systems. However, the focus of these studies has been dominated by producer networks, the private sector, or social innovation models in specific regions (Ammirato et al., 2021). Consequently, there are still limitations in explaining how community-based collaborative business models can be implemented through synergies between village economic institutions and public food providers. This conceptual gap highlights the need for research that can explain institutional integration as part of a strategy to strengthen local food security sustainably.

Gresik Regency is a relevant context for studying this phenomenon because it faces food security challenges influenced by urbanization, fluctuating staple food prices, and the transformation of the regional economic structure. The implementation of the KDMP and public kitchens in this area demonstrates the potential for collaboration in building a more organized local food system. However, institutional fragmentation, an unintegrated supply chain system, and limited technology and organizational capacity remain obstacles to optimizing the contributions of both institutions to food and economic stability in rural communities.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the collaborative business model between KDMP and MBG public kitchens, identify potential and obstacles to the partnership, and formulate collaborative strategies to support sustainable local food security. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of collaborative governance and community-based business model literature by presenting an integrative perspective on the role of institutional synergy in strengthening local food systems. Practically, the research findings are expected to form the basis for the formulation of more adaptive policies and institutional strategies to encourage inclusive and sustainable village economic development.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to obtain a comprehensive overview of the collaboration between the KDMP business model and public kitchens in supporting local food security. Specifically, it explores the dynamics of integration, potential synergies, and implementation barriers at the local level. This approach allows researchers to understand the phenomenon in greater depth and context, so that the descriptive nature of the research results also provides an analytical basis for formulating strategies to strengthen collaboration between village food institutions.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which is the deliberate selection of informants based on criteria of relevance to the research objectives. The research sample included KDMP administrators, public kitchen managers; consisting of KDMP Kedungpring, Sedapur Klagen, Dapet, Metatu, and Jatirembe, and the Jatirembe public kitchen and Kedamean public kitchen, the reason for selecting the location was focused on areas that have demonstrated collaboration initiatives or have high integration potential, so that the data obtained are able to represent real business model collaborative practices.

Research data was collected through four main techniques. First, in-depth interviews with cooperative administrators, public kitchen managers, and stakeholders to explore collaboration experiences, strategies, and challenges. Second, direct observation of operational activities, including raw material procurement, food distribution, and inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms. Third, documentation studies of institutional reports, memoranda of understanding, and food program documents served as verification materials. Fourth, focused group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to gain a collective understanding of integration opportunities. This combination of methods enabled the collection of rich, in-depth data relevant to the research context.

Data validity was maintained through several strategies. First, source triangulation by comparing information from cooperative administrators, kitchen managers, and policymakers. Second, method triangulation by combining interviews, observation, and documentation to ensure consistency of findings. Third, member checking, which involves confirming preliminary results with informants to ensure the researcher's interpretation aligns with field conditions. Fourth, peer debriefing through discussions with

fellow researchers or academics to reduce subjective bias. With these procedures, the research results are expected to have a high level of credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to identify patterns of business model collaborative and factors supporting and inhibiting integration. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively to illustrate the level of institutional readiness, production capacity, and potential for collaboration. Next, a thematic analysis was conducted to formulate key categories explaining the relationship between cooperatives and soup kitchens in the local food system. The results were then interpreted integratively to generate applicable, evidence-based strategic recommendations.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research underwent a data validity test to ensure the credibility of the findings. Validation was conducted through source and method triangulation, member checking with key informants, and peer review to minimize bias. Furthermore, data consistency was verified through comparisons of interview results, observations, and documentation, enhancing the research's reliability and confirmability.

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Analysis of Business Model Collaboration between KDMP and Public Kitchen

The research findings indicate that business model collaboration between the KDMP and the public kitchen has begun to take shape, particularly through potential collaboration within the food supply chain. Public kitchens require large-volume supplies, opening up opportunities for KDMP to act as suppliers or aggregators for members' products. However, the evolving integration patterns remain diverse. Jatirembe Kitchen tends to be more flexible and allows for direct collaboration with KDMP, while Kedamaian Kitchen implements a supply mechanism through a designated supplier, necessitating a more structured collaboration system. The kitchen's production capacity of over 3,000 portions per day demonstrates the need for a sustainable supply chain that the village cooperative can absorb. Overall, business model collaborative has the potential to create a more organized food distribution chain, increase the uptake of local products, and strengthen the community-based economic ecosystem if supported by quality standards, supply continuity, and clear institutional agreements.

3.1.2. Identification of Potential and Barriers to Integration

The study found that the integration of KDMP and public kitchens has significant potential to support local food security. Both kitchens demonstrated a readiness to collaborate and have relatively adequate facilities to support large-scale operations. Furthermore, this collaboration has the potential to strengthen the local economy through job creation and increased community income, as evidenced by Dapur Kedamaian, which has recruited approximately 50 local workers. However, significant barriers to integration remain. Institutional disintegration has resulted in ineffective village food supply chains, while technological limitations and a lack of synergy in resource management slow down the collaboration process. Other challenges stem from the quality of human resources, raw material quality standards, and differences in procurement mechanisms between flexible and more structured public kitchens. Therefore, successful integration depends heavily on strengthening governance, increasing human resource capacity, and harmonizing food distribution systems.

3.1.3. Collaborative Strategies to Support Local Food Security

Collaborative strategies that can be developed focus on institutional strengthening and supply chain integration between KDMP and public kitchens. One strategic step is to establish a village aggregation system through partnerships with Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) to standardize product quality and ensure supply. Furthermore, the development of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and distribution standard operating procedures (SOPs) is necessary to establish clear work patterns and strengthen the cooperative's logistics function. Strengthening infrastructure such as warehouses, operational vehicles, and digital inventory systems is also a priority, as limited facilities have been shown to limit market access and supply stability. Furthermore, training cooperative administrators and improving the competency of human resources in the food supply chain are needed to improve accountability and service quality. With an integrated strategy, collaboration between KDMP and public kitchens has the potential to create a fair and sustainable food ecosystem that can significantly improve the welfare of village communities.

The results of this research are simplified in table 1, so that the key themes become important points in this research.

Table 1: Data reduction results and final themes

No	Research Focus	Key Indicators	Strategic Meaning	Main Theme
1.	Collaboration of KDMP–Public Kitchen business models	KDMP has the potential to be a supplier/aggregator; kitchen needs are high (>3,000 portions/day); direct and aggregator integration pattern Flexible kitchen vs structured kitchen via supplier	Opening up opportunities for absorption of local products and shortening village food distribution channels Requires standards of cooperation and institutional agreements	Food Supply Chain Integration Collaboration Mechanism Variations
2.	Potential and obstacles to integration	Job creation, increasing residents' income, readiness of kitchen facilities Institutional fragmentation, low synergy, limited digitalization Diverse HR competencies, need for quality control	Collaboration can strengthen the people's economy and community welfare Integration is not optimal without strengthening governance Standardization is a prerequisite for sustainable supply	Local Economic Potential Institutional and Technological Barriers Human Resources Capacity and Quality Standards
3.	Collaborative strategy	MoU, distribution SOP, partnership with BUMDes Warehouse, operational vehicles, digital inventory system Supply chain management and management training Cooperative–kitchen–local partner integration	Provide certainty of work patterns and increase accountability Ensuring continuity of supply and expanding market access Encouraging professionalism and adaptability of cooperatives Supporting long-term local food security	Institutional Strengthening Strengthening Logistics Infrastructure Human Resource Capacity Building Sustainable Food Ecosystem

Source: 2025 Research Results processed by researchers

Based on the description of the research results and the themes generated by the research, a conceptual model of "Collaborative Community Food Governance" can be created which can be useful theoretically and practically, as in Figure 1.

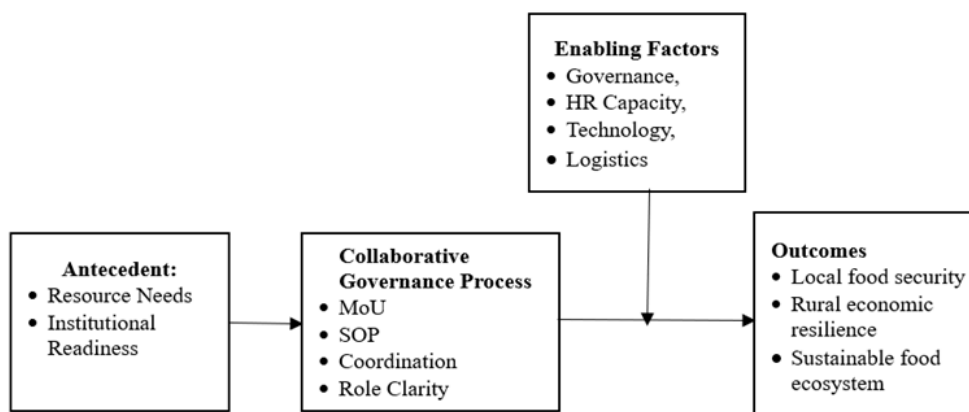


Figure 1.: Collaborative Community Food Governance Model

3.2. Discussion

The research findings indicate that the initial business model collaboration between the KDMP and the public kitchen, particularly through the food supply chain, has been established, although the integration patterns vary. Jatiremba Kitchen is more flexible for direct collaboration, while Kedamaian Kitchen requires

a formal supplier structure. A production capacity of 3,000 portions/day opens up opportunities for KDMP to act as an aggregator of local products, potentially forming an organized distribution chain that strengthens the people's economy with the support of quality standards and institutional agreements (Elcopra, 2025). This finding aligns with a study Danse et al., (2020) which emphasized the importance of inclusive business models in improving food security through collaboration between the private sector and local communities. In the context of KDMP, the business model integration of the KDMP with the public kitchen of the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) has significant potential in strengthening local food security. The integration of KDMP business model with the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) has the potential to strengthen local food security through the development of a community-based supply chain. Cooperatives have been shown to improve market access, strengthen the bargaining position of small producers, and support more efficient food distribution (Candemir et al., 2021). Furthermore, community-based food programs can improve consumption stability and nutritional quality while boosting demand for local products (Béné, 2023). National studies also show that village institutional partnerships contribute to strengthening the local economy and the sustainability of food systems (Agusta, 2025; Suryani et al., 2022). Therefore, the KDMP-MBG synergy can create a more inclusive and sustainable food ecosystem.

Research identifies the potential for integrating KDMP and public kitchens into local food security, supported by collaborative readiness, adequate facilities, and economic impacts such as the creation of 50 jobs at the Peace Kitchen. However, obstacles such as institutional fragmentation and technological limitations remain key challenges. Ammirato et al., (2021) identified that the success of collaborative networks in the agri-food sector is highly dependent on a clear organizational structure and the use of adequate supporting technology. The barriers to integration between KDMP and the Free Nutritional Meal Program (MBG) public kitchen demonstrate the complexity of the challenges in building a coordinated local food system. One major obstacle is institutional fragmentation, where weak coordination between organizations can reduce the effectiveness of collaboration and slow decision-making within the local food network (Nathan, 2025). Suryani et al., (2022) found that many village cooperatives still face limitations in managerial competency and production standardization, potentially hindering strategic partnerships. Therefore, without institutional strengthening, technology investment, and human resource competency improvement, the local economic potential of the KDMP and public kitchen integration risks being underutilized.

The collaborative strategies proposed in this study, such as institutional strengthening through partnerships with Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) and human resource capacity building, are supported by findings (Nugroho et al., 2025), which emphasize the importance of collaborative governance in nutritious food policies in Indonesia. Collaborative strategies through institutional strengthening and human resource capacity building are key factors in ensuring the sustainable integration of cooperatives and local food systems. Partnerships with Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) enable the creation of community-based economic synergies, particularly in strengthening supply chains, accessing financing, and expanding markets for local products. Research shows that collaboration between village institutions can increase economic resilience and improve food distribution coordination when supported by clear governance and structured role allocation (Vercher, 2022). Furthermore, increasing human resource capacity through managerial training, digital literacy, and strengthening entrepreneurial competencies has been shown to contribute to organizational performance and institutional adaptability in the face of environmental changes (Haug et al., 2024). However, the effectiveness of this strategy also depends on the quality of the collaborative network and the level of trust between actors. Recent studies confirm that community-based organizations that develop collaborative governance are more likely to generate social innovation and improve the sustainability of local food systems (Béné, 2023). Therefore, strengthening institutions and human resources not only improves operational capacity but also builds the foundation of a resilient and inclusive village economic ecosystem.

Institutional fragmentation is reflected in the lack of integration of the roles of cooperatives, public kitchens, village governments, and suppliers within a single, clear coordination mechanism. This situation creates obstacles in the form of duplication of distribution functions, uncertainty about quality standards, and poor information exchange regarding supply needs and capacity. Furthermore, differences in organizational orientation—between the cooperative's economic goals and the public kitchen's social mandate—often slow decision-making. Consequently, supply chain efficiency declines and collaboration potential remains unfulfilled.

In terms of practical implications for local governments, they need to act as orchestrators of collaboration by establishing a regulatory framework that governs the division of roles, operational standards, and mechanisms for evaluating partnership performance. Establishing a regional food coordination forum can be a strategic step to align public kitchen needs with cooperative production capacity. Furthermore, investing in logistics infrastructure and digital distribution platforms will increase the transparency and accuracy of supply data, making policies more responsive to local food dynamics. Similarly, practical implications for cooperative managers include adopting a collaborative management approach by strengthening demand-based supply planning and ensuring the continuity and quality of members' products. Developing a digital recording system, medium-term supply contracts, and training on quality standards are crucial steps to

enhance the cooperative's credibility as a strategic partner. Furthermore, managers need to establish regular communication with public kitchen managers to reduce information asymmetry, enabling the cooperative to transform from a mere aggregator into a more competitive village value chain coordinator.

4. CONCLUSION

The collaborative business model between KDMP and the MBG public kitchen demonstrates strategic potential in strengthening local food security while simultaneously promoting community economic growth. This institutional integration contributes to the formation of a shorter, more stable, and locally-based food supply chain, thereby increasing the absorption of village products and expanding community economic opportunities. However, the effectiveness of the collaboration is still influenced by institutional readiness, human resource capacity, product quality standardization, and logistical and digital infrastructure support. This confirms that the success of the collaborative model depends not only on program initiation but also on consistent governance and clear partnership mechanisms between organizations. Practically, this study emphasizes the importance of more operational and measurable policies. Local governments need to establish a collaborative regulatory framework that includes operational standards for cooperation between cooperatives and public kitchens, supply chain performance indicators (e.g., distribution timeliness, local product absorption volume, and price stability), and a data-driven monitoring and evaluation scheme. Furthermore, strengthening integration can be achieved through the provision of a digital platform for inventory and distribution management, the development of village logistics centers, and structured training programs for cooperative administrators and public kitchen managers to improve managerial competency and technology adaptation. Incentive policies for cooperatives that are able to meet quality standards and supply continuity can also be a strategic instrument to maintain the sustainability of collaboration.

Theoretically, the findings of this study broaden the perspective of collaborative governance by demonstrating that collaboration is not only relevant in the context of public policymaking but also effectively applied to the integration of community-based business models. This research indicates that the success of collaborative governance in local food systems depends on three main dimensions: institutional capacity, alignment of goals between actors, and adaptive coordination mechanisms. Thus, this study contributes to the development of collaborative governance literature by presenting a community-based collaborative governance framework as an alternative approach to strengthening food system resilience while simultaneously creating social and economic value. This study is limited by its relatively limited regional coverage, which does not fully represent the conditions of other regions with different socio-economic characteristics. Furthermore, the predominantly qualitative-descriptive approach does not quantitatively measure the impact of collaboration on increasing community incomes or food stability. Therefore, further research is recommended to develop a quantitative or longitudinal approach to examine the causal relationship between institutional integration and food security. Comparative studies between regions are also important to produce more adaptive, measurable, and replicable collaboration models to support sustainable village economic development. Ultimately, the collaboration between village cooperatives and community food providers reflects a transformation in governance towards a collaborative governance approach that places the integration of local actors as the primary foundation for building economic and food resilience at the village level.

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