

# The Dynamics of Community Social Construction in the Implementation of Public Policy for Child Protection

Nining Idyaningsih<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Rosyidi<sup>2\*</sup>, Fachrurrazy<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1, 2</sup>Politeknik Penerbangan Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom



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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the dynamics of community social construction in the implementation of child protection policies in Indonesia, focusing on public perceptions, participation, and social practices at the local level. Despite the existence of comprehensive child protection regulations, cases of violence against children remain high, indicating a persistent gap between normative policies and their practical implementation. This research employed a qualitative case study approach conducted in three major Indonesian cities: Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Makassar. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis involving community members, educators, government officials, and child protection stakeholders. The findings reveal that cultural norms, educational background, and access to information significantly influence community understanding of child protection policies. Although most participants were aware of child protection regulations, active involvement in violence prevention and reporting mechanisms remained limited. The study also found that violence-based parenting practices are still socially normalized in some communities, hindering effective policy implementation. The study concludes that strengthening community engagement, cross-sector collaboration, and public education is essential to improving the effectiveness of child protection policies and fostering a child-friendly social environment in Indonesia.

## INTRODUCTION

Public policy is a series of decisions made by the government to achieve certain goals in overcoming public problems. According to (Dunn, 2015), public policy is a dynamic process that involves formulation, implementation, and evaluation to bring about changes in people's lives. Thus, public policy is not limited to formal documents but also to actual practices that affect citizens' welfare. In the context of this research, the public policy in question is child protection, which is normatively regulated by Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection.

Child protection can be understood as any form of effort to guarantee and protect children from all forms of violence, discrimination, and exploitation. (UNICEF, 2022) emphasizes that child protection is a fundamental right that must be guaranteed by the state, society, and family so that children can grow optimally. However, data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA, 2023) shows that there are still more than 12,000 cases of child violence in Indonesia, indicating that there is a gap between policy and implementation in the field.

Meanwhile, the social construction of the community plays an important role in influencing the success of policy implementation. (Berger & Luckmann, 1996) explain that social reality is formed through a process of social construction, in which societal understandings, norms, and behaviors are formed and maintained through daily interactions. In the context of child protection, public perceptions of discipline, education, and parenting often differ from the principles of child protection set by the state. This

creates a dynamic between cultural values, social practices, and the formal rules that apply.

The implementation of public policy itself is influenced by various factors, such as bureaucratic structure, resources, and community support (Edwards, 1980). Without the community's understanding and active involvement, child protection policies are difficult to achieve optimal results. Therefore, research on the dynamics of social construction in the implementation of public policies for child protection is relevant to explore how the community interprets these policies and how social practices can support or hinder child protection in Indonesia.

Child protection in Indonesia still faces major challenges. Although regulations are adequate, policy implementation is often constrained by structural and cultural factors. Data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA, 2023) recorded 12,267 cases of violence against children throughout 2023, consisting of physical, psychological, sexual, and neglectful violence. This figure shows that despite the existence of protection policies and programs, the practice of violence against children is still rampant in the community. This fact shows a serious gap between legal norms and social reality.

The problem is not only related to weak law enforcement, but also rooted in a social culture that still understands violence against children as a form of "discipline". A study conducted by (Save the Children Indonesia, 2022) shows that more than 40% of parents in Indonesia still use physical violence as a method of educating children. This shows that the community's social construction of parenting is not aligned with the principle of child protection, which emphasizes respect for children's dignity and rights.

In addition, community participation remains low. According to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Child Protection Institute (LPAI, 2022), only about 35% of the public is aware of the existence of a child abuse complaint service, and less than 20% have reported similar cases to the authorities. This low participation shows the limited number of people accessing information and the existence of a culture of silence when witnessing cases of violence around them. This condition worsens the policy implementation process because the community, as the main actor, is not actively involved.

On the other hand, structural problems in the bureaucracy are also a serious obstacle. Research conducted by (Nugroho, 2020) on the implementation of public policies in Indonesia found that lack of coordination between institutions, budget limitations, and lack of human resources are the main factors that make policies not run effectively. In the context of child protection, these factors are reflected in the lack of counselors, social workers, and child companions in various regions. As a result, services for victims of child violence are often not optimal.

Based on these facts, it can be seen that the dynamics of social construction and bureaucratic structural problems are intertwined in shaping the implementation of child protection policies in Indonesia. The main challenge lies not only in formulating policies, but also in how they are understood, accepted, and implemented by the community. Therefore, studying the dynamics of social construction in the implementation of public policies on child protection is essential for identifying weak points and opportunities to strengthen child protection in Indonesia more comprehensively.

The government, as the primary authority holder of public policy, needs to strengthen the child protection system as a whole. This can be done through increasing the capacity of law enforcement officials, support staff, and social workers to be able to

handle cases of violence responsively and appropriately. According to Nugroho (2017), public policies will be effective when accompanied by adequate resources and precise coordination mechanisms. In the context of child protection, the government also needs to intensify socialization programs at the village and sub-district levels so that the community understands children's rights and the available complaint mechanisms.

In addition, the community plays a central role in implementing child protection policies. (Berger & Luckmann, 1996) emphasized that social construction is formed through daily practice, so that changes in people's behavior will significantly determine the success of a policy. Therefore, the community needs to actively internalize child protection values in parenting, education, and social interaction patterns. A (UNICEF, 2022) confirms that the involvement of local communities in violence prevention programs can reduce the risk of violence by up to 30%. Thus, community participation is not only a recipient of policies but also a major actor in social change.

Collaborative efforts among the government, the community, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also urgently needed. (Edwards, 1980) explained that communication and coordination factors between stakeholders greatly determine the effectiveness of policy implementation. In this case, cross-sector synergy can strengthen protection mechanisms by integrating complaint services, community education, and psychosocial support for victims. If this collaboration runs optimally, child protection policies do not stop at the formal level but can be transformed into a social movement within the community.

However, if this problem is not seriously addressed, the impact can be very detrimental to the nation. Children who are victims of violence have the potential to experience long-term trauma, mental developmental disorders, and even obstacles in the educational process (Save the Children Indonesia, 2022). This condition not only harms individuals but also affects the quality of future human resources. (World Bank Group, 2020) shows that countries with high cases of violence against children tend to suffer economic losses of up to 3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to a decline in the productivity of the younger generation.

Thus, strengthening child protection should be viewed not only as a legal obligation but also as a strategic social and economic investment for Indonesia. Without concrete governmental action and active community engagement, child protection policies may remain normative and ineffective in practice. Conversely, effective implementation can create a safe, supportive, and child-friendly environment that promotes optimal child development. This commitment is also aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.2, which aims to end all forms of violence against children by 2030 (United Nation, 2015).

Despite the existence of various child protection policies and institutional efforts, a limited understanding persists of how social construction within communities influences policy implementation and shapes public responses to child protection practices. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the dynamics of social construction in the implementation of public policies on child protection in Indonesia, with particular attention to how societal values, perceptions, and social practices interact with structural and institutional mechanisms. Furthermore, this research seeks to identify the factors that support and hinder policy implementation and to provide recommendations for strengthening more participatory and effective child protection policies.

## METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study approach. The qualitative approach was selected because the research focuses on understanding community meanings, perceptions, and social constructions regarding the implementation of child protection policies. Qualitative research is considered appropriate for exploring complex social and cultural phenomena through participants' subjective interpretations and experiences (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Therefore, this approach was considered suitable for examining the dynamics of community interaction with public policy implementation.

The research sites were purposively selected in three major Indonesian cities: Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Makassar. These cities were chosen because they reported relatively high numbers of child violence cases and had actively implemented local child protection programs supported by regional governments. The participants included community members (parents, teachers, and community leaders), government officials from the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office, and representatives of non-governmental organizations involved in child protection initiatives.

Key informants for the in-depth interviews were selected purposively based on several criteria: (1) direct involvement in child protection activities or policy implementation, (2) experience in handling or responding to child-related issues within the community, (3) willingness to participate in the study, and (4) the ability to provide rich and relevant information related to community perceptions and practices concerning child protection policies. Data were collected through several techniques:

1. In-depth interviews with key informants to explore community perspectives, experiences, and practices related to child protection.
2. Participatory observation conducted in community settings, schools, and child protection service institutions to understand social interactions and policy practices directly.
3. Documentation analysis of regulations, official reports, case records, and statistical data obtained from KPPPA, LPAI, and relevant NGO publications.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña in (Miles et al., 2014), consisting of three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The analysis process was conducted continuously and interactively throughout data collection. First, data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, coding, and categorizing relevant information from interviews, observations, and documents. Second, data display was carried out by organizing findings into thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were conducted to identify patterns, relationships, and meanings while continuously checking the consistency and validity of the findings.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study employed source, method, and data triangulation. In addition, member checking was conducted with selected informants to confirm that the interpretations accurately reflected their perspectives and experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These procedures were intended to strengthen the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study findings

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Result*

This study extends beyond identifying the prevalence and distribution of violence against children by examining how community social construction influences the implementation of child protection policies. Consistent with (Berger & Luckmann, 1996) Social reality is understood as being continuously produced and reproduced through everyday interactions, meaning that public understanding and acceptance of child protection policies are shaped by prevailing cultural values, social norms, and local practices. Therefore, the presentation of findings focuses on explaining the relationship between formal child protection regulations and their implementation within community life.

The findings reveal that although child protection policies have been formally established through legal and institutional frameworks, their implementation remains uneven at the community level. Across the three study locations—Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Makassar—differences emerged in how communities interpreted child protection and responded to violence-related issues. These locations were selected because they represent urban contexts with active child protection initiatives and documented concerns regarding child violence cases and reporting trends (KPPPA, 2023; LPAI, 2022).

Based on in-depth interviews with 30 participants consisting of parents, educators, and community leaders, 68% of respondents reported being aware of child protection policies. However, only 35% demonstrated an understanding of formal reporting mechanisms for violence cases. This finding suggests that policy awareness does not necessarily translate into practical engagement or effective implementation. Most participants associated child protection primarily with fulfilling material needs, such as food and education, while psychological well-being, emotional safety, and children's participation rights received less attention. In addition, approximately 40% of parents acknowledged using physical punishment as a disciplinary strategy despite recognizing that such practices conflict with child protection principles.

Observations conducted in schools and community settings further revealed limitations in translating policy into everyday educational practice. In several educational settings in Surabaya, academic performance was prioritized over child well-being and protection measures. Meanwhile, in Makassar, bullying incidents were frequently interpreted as normal peer interaction rather than forms of violence requiring institutional intervention. These findings indicate that child protection policies have often been implemented administratively rather than internalized as part of educational culture and social practice.

Supporting secondary data reinforces these findings. According to KPPPA (2023), Indonesia recorded 12,267 cases of violence against children during 2023, consisting of sexual violence, physical violence, and psychological violence or neglect. Furthermore, LPAI (2022) reported that only a limited proportion of cases proceeded through formal legal mechanisms, while many cases were resolved informally through family or community mediation. This pattern demonstrates that the effectiveness of child protection policy depends not only on regulatory frameworks but also on how communities interpret, accept, and enact protection principles in daily life. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening social awareness, institutional responsiveness,

and community participation to support more effective implementation of child protection policies.

**Table 1.** Trends in Cases of Violence Against Children in Indonesia (2018–2023)

| Year | Number of Cases of Violence (KPAI) | Physical Violence (%) | Sexual Violence (%) | Psychic Violence (%) | Other (%) |
|------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 2018 | 4.200                              | 35                    | 28                  | 22                   | 15        |
| 2019 | 4.315                              | 34                    | 29                  | 23                   | 14        |
| 2020 | 4.300                              | 32                    | 30                  | 25                   | 13        |
| 2021 | 4.700                              | 33                    | 31                  | 24                   | 12        |
| 2022 | 5.043                              | 31                    | 33                  | 25                   | 11        |
| 2023 | 5.201                              | 30                    | 34                  | 26                   | 10        |

*Source: Adapted from KPAI (2023)*

Table 1 presents descriptive national data illustrating trends in reported cases of violence against children in Indonesia from 2018 to 2023. The findings show that the total number of reported cases increased from 4,200 in 2018 to 5,201 in 2023, indicating that violence against children remains an ongoing public concern despite existing protection policies and intervention programs.

Regarding the distribution of violence types, physical violence showed a gradual decline from 35% in 2018 to 30% in 2023. In contrast, sexual violence increased from 28% to 34%, while psychological violence rose from 22% to 26% during the same period. These patterns suggest a changing profile of child violence, in which non-physical forms of abuse are becoming increasingly visible in reported cases. The increase in psychological violence may indicate greater recognition and reporting of emotional harm, while the growth in sexual violence highlights the continuing vulnerability of children and the need for stronger preventive and protective mechanisms.

From the perspective of child protection policy implementation, these findings suggest that legal frameworks alone are insufficient to reduce violence if they are not accompanied by changes in community norms, parenting practices, and institutional support systems. The observed shift from physical to non-physical forms of violence reinforces the importance of strengthening public awareness, preventive education, and community-based child protection initiatives.

It should be noted that Table 1 provides descriptive trend analysis at the national level and is not intended to test statistical significance or compare differences across regions or cities. Therefore, no inferential statistical values or cross-tabulation analyses are presented. Further studies using disaggregated regional data and comparative statistical analysis are recommended to examine whether variations across locations are statistically meaningful.

The trend of cases of violence against children in Indonesia from year to year shows a fairly worrying dynamic. Based on (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI), 2022) data, the number of cases from 4,200 in 2018 to 5,201 in 2023. Although there was a decrease in physical violence from 35% to 30%, sexual and psychological violence actually showed a significant upward trend, rising from 28% to 34% and from 22% to 26%, respectively. This fact indicates that the pattern of violence against children is shifting, where non-physical forms of violence are increasingly prominent, including in the domestic and digital realms. This condition confirms that although child protection regulations are being strengthened, their implementation in the field has not been fully

effective in reducing the number of violent incidents, so more systematic intervention is needed from both the government and the community.

These findings confirm the gap between formally formulated policies and social realities. This will be discussed further in the next chapter by focusing on three main points: first, an analysis of the factors that make child protection policies difficult to internalize by the community; second, the dynamics of the social construction of the community which often reproduce violent practices; and third, strategies that can be carried out by the government, society, and non-governmental institutions in strengthening policy effectiveness. Thus, the discussion not only describes the facts on the ground, but also connects them with public policy theory, social construction, and child protection, resulting in recommendations that are applicable and contextual

## **Discussion**

### **Analysis of the gap between regulation and policy implementation**

The gap between regulation and implementation refers to the real difference between legal norms or policies formulated at the formal level and practices, behaviors, and outcomes that occur on the ground. In the context of child protection, Indonesia already has a strong normative framework—for example, the Child Protection Law—but in practice these rules have not been fully realized in terms of effective access to services, prevention, and law enforcement.

Edwards, (1980) Conceptually, this gap can be read as the failure of policy communication channels, of resource distribution, and of the internalization of new norms into everyday social practice, so that policies cease to be normative texts without fundamental social transformation.

The empirical evidence of this gap is reflected in practical indicators: the high number of child abuse cases reported each year, the low percentage of cases processed to a legal decision, and surveys showing low public knowledge of reporting mechanisms (e.g., KPPPA 2023 data: 12,267 cases). Concrete cases show a recurring pattern: families opt for informal settlements, enforcement officials are not always gender-sensitive or child-centric, and psychosocial services are often not available at the district/city level. These indicators are not just statistics; they describe how structural barriers (budget, human resources, coordination) and cultural barriers (parenting norms, reporting stigma) interact, preventing policies from achieving the expected protection goals (Save the Children Indonesia, 2022).

Various solution efforts have been implemented to reduce the gap: national socialization programs, the establishment of integrated services such as the Integrated Service Center for Women's and Children's Empowerment (P2TP2A), the initiation of child-friendly schools, online hotlines/complaint services, and capacity training for social workers and law enforcement officials. Community-based interventions, e.g., parent forums, school-based prevention programs, and NGO engagement, have also been implemented to transform social constructs at the local level (UNICEF, 2022). Technological innovations for online reporting are beginning to show the potential to increase access, especially in urban areas.

However, many of these programs have not closed the gap for several reasons: first, the scale and continuity of programs are often hampered by regional budgets and politics so that initiatives are not sustainable; second, socialization is often top-down and has not been designed to change embedded cultural norms, so normative knowledge does not

automatically turn into everyday practice; Third, cross-sector coordination is still weak – e.g. between the education office, the health office, the police, and the social service – so that the handling of cases is fragmented (Nugroho, 2020). In other words, existing solutions tend to improve one aspect (e.g., legal services or hotlines) without comprehensively aligning aspects of prevention, local culture, and victim rehabilitation.

To reduce systemic disparities, an integrated strategy is needed: (1) strengthening the capacity and distribution of resources (counselors, social workers, regional budgets), (2) designing participatory norm change interventions—involving community leaders, religious leaders, and parent groups—so that cultural change can take place from within the community, (3) building a precise cross-sectoral coordination mechanism with shared performance indicators, and (4) ensure accountability through periodic public reporting and independent evaluation mechanisms. This approach demands a shift from policy as an administrative instrument to policy as a socio-cultural process that requires long-term investment in social and institutional capital (Berger & Luckmann, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **The social construction of a society that still internalizes violence as a form of education**

Social construction is the process by which society creates a shared meaning for an action or phenomenon through repeated interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1996). In the context of childcare in Indonesia, some people still interpret physical violence, such as pinching, light punching, or loud shouting, as a form of discipline and education. This pattern is considered hereditary inheritance from previous parents, so violence is legitimized as a legitimate "way of educating." This reality shows that the value of violence has been internalized in parenting mindsets and practices, even though, legally such acts are categorized as violations of children's rights

The main problem arises because of the strong patriarchal culture, family hierarchy, and lack of literacy in non-violent parenting. Most parents are unaware that violence can cause long-term trauma to children, both from psychological and social developmental aspects. (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI), 2022) noted that 31% of children who were victims of violence reported that the perpetrators were biological parents, while 24% came from the school environment. This fact shows that family and educational institutions, which are supposed to be safe spaces for children, are actually the main source of the reproduction of violence that is legitimized as "education."

The internalization of violence as a form of education has a serious impact. Children tend to grow up with fear and low self-esteem and have the potential to reproduce the same patterns of violence as adults. This phenomenon is known as the cycle of violence, where the victim has the potential to become the perpetrator later in life. In addition, legitimized violence in parenting reinforces a permissive culture in society: when violence is considered normal, reporting or intervention efforts become hampered because it is seen as a "family affair". Thus, violence against children not only has an impact on individuals, but also on the formation of a culture of society that is tolerant of violations of children's rights.

The leading solution lies in changing the parenting paradigm through family and community education. The government and civil society organizations can encourage parenting education programs that emphasize positive discipline methods, empathetic communication, and non-violent character-building strategies. Mass media also play an

important role in spreading the narrative of child-friendly parenting through educational content, inspirational stories, and public campaigns. In addition, schools can be agents of change by integrating character education curricula and teacher training on how to discipline children without resorting to violence.

To ensure that the solution runs effectively, the government needs to strengthen regulations and implementation mechanisms with three steps. First, expanding the reach of the Child-Friendly School and Child-Friendly City/Regency programs so that they become national standards, not just optional programs. Second, increasing the capacity of village/sub-district officials and accompanying personnel in detecting and handling cases of family-based violence. Third, build a transparent, data-driven monitoring and evaluation system so the public can periodically assess the program's success. With this follow-up, the social construct that legitimizes violence can slowly be transformed into a new norm that upholds child-friendly parenting.

**Table 2.** Comparison of Violence-Based Parenting vs Positive Parenting

| Aspects                   | Violence-based Parenting                                                                    | Positive Parenting                                                    |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Educational Objectives    | Disciplining children by scaring or punishing                                               | Guiding children by instilling values, empathy, and independence      |
| Method                    | Punches, pinches, splatters, physical/psychological punishment                              | Dialogue, exemplary examples, consistent rules, positive appreciation |
| Child Response            | Fear, temporary obedience, tendency to hide mistakes                                        | Feel safe, open, consciously responsible                              |
| Long-Term Impact          | Trauma, low self-esteem, aggressiveness, reproduction of patterns of violence in the future | Confident, able to control emotions, and have social skills           |
| Parent-Child Relationship | Cold, full of distance, rigid hierarchy-based                                               | Warm, mutually respectful, two-way communication based                |

Table 2 illustrates two contrasting social constructions of parenting practices that shape how children are educated and disciplined within society. Violence-based parenting reflects a socially inherited belief that discipline can be achieved through fear, punishment, and authoritarian control. According to Berger and Luckmann (1996), such practices become normalized through repeated social interactions and are gradually accepted as legitimate educational methods. Parents who experienced violence during childhood may internalize these approaches and later reproduce them in raising their own children. Consequently, violence becomes socially objectified as a “normal” form of discipline despite conflicting with child protection principles and children’s rights.

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that violence-based parenting may generate immediate compliance; however, such obedience is primarily driven by fear rather than internal understanding, emotional growth, or responsible behavior. Children raised in violent environments are more likely to become withdrawn, anxious, and hesitant to communicate openly. In the long term, these experiences may contribute to psychological trauma, low self-esteem, emotional instability, and aggressive behavior. These findings support the argument that violence should not be viewed merely as individual behavior but as a socially reproduced practice that sustains intergenerational cycles of violence.

Beyond the family context, these parenting patterns have important implications for educational management and school environments. Children exposed to violence-based parenting often carry authoritarian interaction patterns into educational settings, which may affect classroom participation, peer relationships, and trust toward teachers. Schools

may unintentionally reinforce these experiences when disciplinary practices emphasize punishment, rigid control, and hierarchical communication. In contrast, positive parenting values align with child-friendly school management approaches that prioritize dialogue, emotional safety, participation, and restorative educational practices.

From a public policy perspective, educational institutions function as strategic spaces for translating child protection policies into everyday practice. Effective school management should therefore integrate child protection principles through teacher training, positive discipline policies, counseling services, reporting mechanisms, and stronger collaboration between schools and families. Educational leaders play an important role in creating organizational cultures that discourage violence and encourage respectful interaction. This supports Edwards' (1980) argument that policy implementation is strongly influenced by communication, institutional support, and stakeholder involvement. Accordingly, strengthening positive parenting should not remain a family responsibility alone but should become part of broader educational governance and school-based child protection strategies.

The findings presented in the table demonstrate that violence-based parenting may produce immediate obedience, yet this compliance is largely rooted in fear rather than genuine understanding or emotional development. Children raised under violent disciplinary approaches tend to become withdrawn, anxious, and reluctant to express their thoughts openly. In the long term, these experiences may contribute to psychological trauma, low self-esteem, emotional instability, and aggressive behavior. This condition supports the argument that violence is not merely an individual action but also a socially reproduced practice that can perpetuate the cycle of violence across generations. Therefore, the persistence of violence-based parenting reflects the strong influence of cultural norms and collective beliefs that continue to legitimize harsh disciplinary methods.

In contrast, positive parenting represents an alternative social construction that emphasizes empathy, dialogue, mutual respect, and emotional support. This parenting model reconstructs the parent-child relationship from a rigid hierarchical structure into a more collaborative and communicative interaction. Through positive parenting, children are encouraged to develop responsibility, emotional regulation, self-confidence, and social competence in a supportive environment. The findings indicate that children who experience positive parenting tend to feel safer, more valued, and more capable of expressing themselves openly, which contributes to healthier psychological and social development.

The comparison in Table 2 also highlights that transforming parenting practices requires more than legal regulation alone. According to Berger and Luckmann's theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1996), social reality changes only when new meanings and norms are continuously institutionalized through social interaction and collective acceptance. Consequently, efforts to promote positive parenting must involve broader social reconstruction through educational programs, parenting workshops, media campaigns, school-based interventions, and community participation. Without changing the cultural beliefs that normalize violence as a form of discipline, child protection policies may remain normative and difficult to implement effectively at the community level.

Furthermore, the findings imply that educational institutions, local governments, and child protection agencies play a crucial role in reshaping public understanding of parenting practices. Schools and community organizations can serve as agents of

socialization by promoting child-friendly educational values and non-violent disciplinary approaches. At the same time, government policies should not only focus on punishment for perpetrators of violence but also emphasize preventive and transformative strategies aimed at changing social perceptions regarding child discipline. Therefore, strengthening positive parenting practices can significantly help build a child-friendly social environment and improve the effectiveness of child protection policies in Indonesia.

### **The role of the community and government in overcoming obstacles to implementation**

The role of the community and the government is the two main pillars in bridging the gap between regulation and implementation of child protection policies. The government is responsible for creating adequate regulations, infrastructure, and services, while the community serves as a social actor that implements, supervises, and internalizes policies in daily life. According to (Edwards, 1980) the success of public policy implementation is influenced by communication, resources, executive disposition, and bureaucratic structure. In the context of child protection, society serves as the foundation on which parenting norms are formed, while the government ensures the availability of rules, resources, and enforcement mechanisms.

In practice, many social cases show serious obstacles in the implementation of child protection. For example, cases of child violence in the family environment are often not reported because they are considered "domestic affairs", while in schools, there is a lot of bullying that is considered part of the dynamics between children. (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI), 2022) noted that more than 24% of cases of violence against children occurred in the educational environment, while 31% occurred at home. This shows the weak role of the community in rejecting the practice of violence and the lack of effective social supervision mechanisms. As a result, the government's regulations do not receive full support from the community's culture.

Data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) shows that in 2023, there were more than 12,000 reported cases of child violence, with the majority of perpetrators coming from the victim's immediate environment. However, only some cases have been processed legally to completion. (UNICEF, 2022) emphasized that one of the biggest obstacles to the implementation of child protection policies in Indonesia is limited public access to legal and psychosocial assistance services. This data shows that without community involvement in early detection and active participation in reporting, policy implementation will always be uneven.

Society actually has great potential as an agent of social change. By building awareness that violence is not part of education, the community can become reporters, supporters, and supervisors of the implementation of child protection policies. Meanwhile, the government must provide a system that is responsive, transparent, and easily accessible to the public. According to Nugroho (2017), cross-sector coordination between the central government, regions, schools, and civil society organizations is a key factor in the success of policy implementation. Without this synergy, each party will work only partially, so policies fail to reach the root of the problem at the local level.

To overcome implementation barriers, collaborative solutions are needed. The government needs to strengthen community-based services such as P2TP2A (Integrated Service Center for Women's and Children's Empowerment) and increase the number of

child assistants at the village/sub-district level. On the other hand, the community can be encouraged through family education, child-friendly school programs, and citizen forums to build collective awareness. (UNICEF, 2022) found that community involvement in child protection programs can reduce the risk of violence by up to 30%. With the active role of the community and the full support of the government, obstacles to implementation can be minimized so that child protection policies are truly realized in daily social life

### **A cross-sectoral collaborative strategy to strengthen the effectiveness of child protection policies in Indonesia**

A cross-sectoral collaborative strategy is a joint effort involving various actors—central government, local governments, schools, social institutions, law enforcement, health institutions, and communities, to effectively achieve public policy goals. In the context of child protection, this strategy means integrating programs and services across sectors to complement one another. As (Agranoff & Michael, 2003) emphasize, cross-sectoral collaboration creates stronger synergies than partial efforts, as it brings together resources, expertise, and social networks.

There are three main collaborative strategies relevant to child protection in Indonesia. First, structural collaboration, namely strengthening institutions such as the Integrated Service Center for Women's and Children's Empowerment (P2TP2A) by involving social, educational, and health services. Second, cultural collaboration, which involves working with religious leaders, traditional leaders, and local communities to change norms that still consider violence part of education. Third, digital collaboration, by utilizing online reporting platforms, social media, and mobile applications, to expand access to services and accelerate case response. This strategy not only prevents cases but also provides a comprehensive psychological, social, and legal rehabilitation pathway.

Although ideal, implementing a collaborative strategy faces several challenges. First, bureaucratic fragmentation often hampers interagency coordination, as sectoral egos do. Second, budget constraints often lead to collaborative programs operating temporarily or being limited to large cities. Third, the unevenness of digital literacy makes online platforms less effective in reaching rural areas. In addition, the community still faces cultural constraints—the stigma against child abuse reporters often goes undetected. (UNICEF, 2022) emphasizes that without strong local community participation, cross-sectoral strategies will only stop at the administrative level.

To strengthen the effectiveness of child protection policies, cross-sectoral collaboration must be grounded in a clear, shared vision and measurable indicators of success. The central government can act as a policy coordinator, while the regions adapt the program to the local context. Educational and health institutions should be at the forefront of early detection, while NGOs and communities serve as social bridges. With this strategy, child protection can move from mere normative regulation to comprehensive real-world implementation. If done consistently, cross-sector collaboration not only strengthens policies but also builds a truly child-friendly social ecosystem.

**Table 3. Cross-Sectoral Collaborative Strategies in Child Protection**

| Actor                     | Role                                                                                    | Expected Output                                                                               |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Central Government        | Drafting regulations, national policies, and budget allocations.                        | Integrated policies, national standards for child protection, and sustainable budget support. |
| Local Government          | Implement policies in the local context and provide services.                           | P2TP2A is active, child rehabilitation services are available, rapid reporting mechanism.     |
| Law Enforcement Officers  | Crack down on cases, protect victims, and provide legal certainty.                      | Fair law enforcement, legal protection for children, and a deterrent effect on perpetrators.  |
| Institution               | Violence prevention education, early case detection, and student counseling.            | Child-friendly schools, early detection systems, psychosocial assistance.                     |
| Health Institutions       | Provide medical and psychological services to victims of violence.                      | Recovery of the physical and mental health of child victims of violence.                      |
| NGOs/Local Communities    | Advocacy, social campaigns, and assistance to victims and families.                     | Public awareness increased, and victims received social support.                              |
| Media & Digital Platforms | Information dissemination, online reporting channels, and public educational campaigns. | Easy access to reports, increased public literacy, and social pressure to stop violence.      |

The table above shows that child protection requires synergy from various actors with complementary roles. The central and regional governments are responsible for ensuring that regulations are enforced and services are available, while law enforcement agencies ensure the rule of law. Schools and health workers are at the forefront of early detection and recovery for victims, with support from local communities and NGOs through social assistance. Digital media and platforms also play an important role in expanding the reach of information and reporting. If this cross-sectoral collaborative strategy runs optimally, then the effectiveness of child protection policies in Indonesia can be further strengthened.

The findings of this study indicate that strengthening child protection policies in Indonesia requires not only regulatory enforcement but also broader socio-cultural transformation at the community level. The persistence of violence-based parenting practices and the low level of community participation demonstrate that child protection policies have not yet been fully internalized in everyday social life. From a social constructionist perspective, these practices continue to be reproduced through cultural norms and intergenerational parenting patterns, making policy implementation difficult despite the existence of formal legal frameworks.

Therefore, the government must strengthen both structural and community-based approaches to child protection. At the national level, stronger regulations, measurable performance indicators, and sustainable budget allocation are necessary to improve the effectiveness of policy implementation. At the local level, improving the capacity of child protection services through the strengthening of P2TP2A, the provision of psychologists and counselors, and accessible reporting systems at village and sub-district levels would help communities respond more effectively to cases of violence against children.

The findings also emphasize the importance of transforming parenting paradigms through continuous education and socialization programs. Families and communities need to be encouraged to adopt positive parenting approaches that prioritize empathy, dialogue, and non-violent discipline. Schools and educational institutions can further contribute by integrating child protection values, tolerance, and non-violence into

curricular and extracurricular activities. In addition, stronger cross-sector collaboration involving government institutions, NGOs, schools, health sectors, media, and digital platforms is essential to expand public awareness, strengthen reporting mechanisms, and promote child-friendly social norms. Through these integrated efforts, child protection policies can move beyond normative regulation and become more effectively embedded within social practices and community life.

## CONCLUSION

### Fundamental Finding

This study reveals that the implementation of child protection policies in Indonesia is strongly influenced by the social construction of parenting practices and community perceptions regarding violence against children. Although child protection has been formally regulated through national policies, there remains a significant gap between normative regulations and social realities. The findings indicate that violence-based parenting is still socially normalized in many communities and is often perceived as a legitimate disciplinary method. Through the perspective of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (Berger & Luckmann, 1996), these practices are continuously reproduced through social interaction and cultural inheritance, making violence deeply embedded in everyday parenting behavior. In addition, weak cross-sector coordination, limited institutional resources, and low community participation further hinder the effective implementation of child protection policies. The study also identifies that collaborative strategies involving government institutions, schools, health sectors, NGOs, communities, and digital media are essential to strengthening policy effectiveness and creating a child-friendly social ecosystem.

### Implication

The findings imply that child protection policies cannot rely solely on legal frameworks and punitive mechanisms but must also address socio-cultural dimensions within society. Strengthening public awareness, promoting positive parenting practices, and reshaping social norms around child discipline are crucial to improving policy implementation. Educational institutions, local governments, and community organizations should function as agents of social transformation by encouraging non-violent parenting and enhancing community participation in child protection initiatives. Furthermore, stronger cross-sector collaboration and accessible support services are necessary to bridge the gap between policy formulation and practical implementation at the local level.

### Limitation

This study is limited by its qualitative case study design and its focus on three urban areas in Indonesia, namely Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Makassar. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the socio-cultural dynamics of rural or geographically isolated communities. In addition, the study relied primarily on interviews, observations, and document analysis, which may contain subjective interpretations from participants and researchers.

### Future Research

Future studies are recommended to employ mixed-method or longitudinal approaches to provide broader and more comprehensive insights into the implementation of child

protection policies across different regions and socio-cultural contexts in Indonesia. Further research may also explore the role of digital technology, social media, and community-based educational programs in transforming parenting norms and increasing public participation in child protection efforts. In addition, comparative studies between urban and rural communities would deepen understanding of how social construction influences the effectiveness of child protection policies across diverse settings.

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**Nining Idyaningsih**

Politeknik Penerbangan Makassar  
Jl. Salodong Nomor 1 Kelurahan Untia Kecamatan Biringkanaya,  
Sulawesi Selatan, 90241  
Email: [nining.idyaningsih@poltekbangmakassar.ac.id](mailto:nining.idyaningsih@poltekbangmakassar.ac.id)

**\*Ahmad Rossydi (Corresponding Author)**

Politeknik Penerbangan Makassar  
Jl. Salodong Nomor 1 Kelurahan Untia Kecamatan Biringkanaya,  
Sulawesi Selatan, 90241  
Email: [ahmad.rossydi@poltekbangmakassar.ac.id](mailto:ahmad.rossydi@poltekbangmakassar.ac.id)

**Fachrurrazy**

Beacon House, Queens Rd, Bristol BS8 1QU, United Kingdom  
Email: [f.burhanuddin@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:f.burhanuddin@bristol.ac.uk)

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