



## Network management activation in the implementation of policies to protect vulnerable groups from violence in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of network management activation in the implementation of child protection policies against violence in Makassar City. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders and document analysis to gather data. The results indicate that activation in network management is crucial for the effective implementation of child protection policies. Regional Regulation No. 5 of 2018 plays a significant role in providing legal protection for children, with the Women Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A) serving as the primary provider of child protection services. Collaboration with various parties, including the police, non-governmental organizations, and the community, is crucial in handling child violence cases. Complaints can be filed through formal and informal channels, with citizen shelters established to provide accessible protection services and eliminate social barriers to reporting violence. The study recommends that the Makassar City Government enhance coordination and communication among network actors, strengthen human resource capacity, optimize the allocated budget, intensify socialization of the Regional Regulation, and strengthen cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the community.

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### 1. Introduction

Violence against children is a serious problem in Makassar City, with a significant number of cases. To address this issue, the Makassar City Government has passed Local Regulation (Perda) No. 5/2018 on Child Protection. This regulation aims to provide strong legal protection for children from all forms of violations (Katz et al., 2021; Nurjanah et al., 2022; Petrowski et al., 2021).

The implementation of child protection regulations requires coordination and collaboration between various parties, both government agencies and non-governmental organizations (Hallett, 2023; Johnson & Sloth-Nielsen, 2020; Laajasalo et al., 2023). The Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) through the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) plays an important role in providing specialized child protection services. In addition, cooperation with the police is also needed in handling cases of violence against children (Katz et al., 2022; Nikolova et al., 2021; Nikupeteri, 2024).

Reporting cases of child abuse can be done through various channels, both formal and informal. Some victims or families choose to report cases directly to the police, especially if there is strong enough evidence for criminal proceedings. However, not all victims have the mental readiness to report directly (Da Thi Tran et al., 2022; Islam et al., 2024; Mason & Shankar, 2024; Reeping et al., 2024). Therefore, DP3A provides online complaint services and community shelters as an alternative for victims or families who feel more comfortable reporting through a safer and less confrontational system.

Several factors influence the success or barriers in reporting cases of violence against children in Makassar City. These factors include public awareness to report, availability of easily accessible reporting mechanisms, protection for whistleblowers, and prompt response and adequate handling from relevant institutions. Public awareness to report cases of violence remains a challenge due to social stigma, shame, and concerns about the consequences of reporting. Therefore, the presence of community shelters providing online complaint services and victim assistance is expected to reduce these reporting barriers.

The community shelter is an initiative created by DP3A with the aim of bringing protection services closer to women and children who experience violence. The existence of community shelters aims to remove social barriers that previously made victims afraid or hesitant to report the violence experienced (Dhawan & Bhasin, 2024; Khan et al., 2024; Leslie & Wilson, 2020; MacRae et al., 2024; Mitcheltree & Sunikka-Blank, 2023). With the existence of community shelters, reports of violence increase significantly, as victims feel more courageous and comfortable to report (Jacobsen et al., 2024; Vallejo-Janeta et al., 2021).

The principle of handling children in community shelters is fast handling because service agencies must be close to residents. Community shelters also provide temporary shelter or safe houses for victims, before victims are referred to appropriate service institutions (Campbell, 2021; Li et al., 2024; Wilson et al., 2024). The presence of community shelters is a form of community involvement in the prevention and handling of cases of violence against children in Makassar City.

Based on the data from (P2TP2A) Makassar City, from January 2020 - December 2020, the number of cases of violence experienced by children handled by P2TP2A South Sulawesi and Shelter residents of Makassar City was 479 cases. The most cases of violence handled in March were 52 cases (38 cases handled by P2TP2A and 14 cases handled by Shelter residents), followed by 71 cases in December (52 cases handled by P2TP2A and 19 cases handled by Shelter residents). While the lowest violence experienced by children in April was 19 cases (17 cases handled by P2TP2A and 2 cases handled by Shelter residents).

The implementation of Makassar City Regional Regulation No. 5/2018 concerning Child Protection has enhanced the protection of children from various forms of violence. Several indicators used to measure the improvement in child protection include: (1) an increase in the number of reported and handled cases of violence against children, (2) an increase in the number of victims receiving rehabilitation and social reintegration services, and (3) increased public awareness and participation in reporting and preventing acts of violence against children. Data from the Makassar City Integrated Service Center for Women and Children Empowerment (P2TP2A) indicates an increase in the number of reported violence cases

handled following the implementation of this Regional Regulation; however, further evaluation is needed to assess the long-term effectiveness of this policy.

Network management in the implementation of policies to protect violence against children in Makassar City is the key to success in reducing the number of violence and protecting children's rights. Network management involves activation, which is how organizations interact in networks to achieve common goals (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; Turrini et al., 2010). This activation includes coordination, collaboration, and synergy between various parties, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the community.

However, in practice, the activation of network management in the implementation of violence against children protection policies in Makassar City still faces various challenges. Lack of coordination between stakeholders, limited resources, and socio-cultural barriers are some of the factors that affect the effectiveness of the policy implementation. Therefore, further studies are needed to analyze the activation of network management in the implementation of violence against children protection policies in Makassar City, to identify problems and formulate appropriate strategies to improve the effectiveness of these policies.

This research aims to analyze the activation of network management in the implementation of policies to protect violence against children in Makassar City. By understanding the dynamics of interaction between stakeholders, this research is expected to provide recommendations to improve coordination, collaboration, and synergy in addressing the problem of violence against children in Makassar City. The results of this study are also expected to provide input for policy makers in formulating more effective strategies to protect children's rights and create a safe environment for their growth and development.

## **2. Method**

This study adopts a qualitative research design, employing a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals involved in the network management of child protection policies in Makassar City. The phenomenological approach enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex interactions and dynamics within the network.

Purposive sampling will be utilized to select participants who have direct involvement and knowledge of the child protection network in Makassar City. The participants will include representatives from various organizations, such as the Women Empowerment and Child Protection Agency (DP3A), Makassar City Council (DPRD), Public Policy Study Institute (LSKP), Family Learning Center (PUSPAGA), Makassar City Police (Polrestabes), Shelter for residents in Manggala Sub-district, and Makassar Children's Forum. The targeted sample size is 15-20 participants, or until data saturation is achieved. This sample size is considered sufficient for achieving data saturation in the context of Makassar's child protection policy network, as it includes representatives from key organizations involved in the network. These organizations play central roles in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of child protection policies, and their perspectives are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the network's dynamics. While the sample may not represent all stakeholders in the network, it is expected to capture the core experiences and insights relevant to the research questions.

The primary method of data collection will be semi-structured in-depth interviews, conducted face-to-face and lasting approximately 60-90 minutes each. The interview guide will be developed based on the research questions and the network management framework by (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003), focusing on activation aspects. All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Additionally, document analysis will be conducted to supplement the data, with relevant documents such as policy guidelines, meeting minutes, and reports collected from the participating organizations.

Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the data, following the six-phase approach outlined by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process will involve familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. NVivo qualitative data analysis software will be employed to assist in the coding and organization of the data. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, strategies such as member checking, peer debriefing, and maintaining an audit trail will be implemented.

Prior to commencing the study, ethical approval will be obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and the secure storage of data. Participants will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

### 3. Analysis and Results

Activation in network management refers to how organizations interact within the network to achieve common goals. In this context, it looks at the extent to which actors in the network are interconnected and interact. Good interactions between network members facilitate the exchange of information and resources needed to achieve common goals.

In the context of network management in the implementation of policies on protection against child abuse in Makassar City, activation is the key to the network between institutions providing services for children who need special protection. The results of interviews with the network provide an overview of how their activation between stakeholders. This can be seen from the results of interviews that have been carried out data reduction based on the indicator/variable "Activation" as follows.

**Table 1.** Data reduction activation interview description

Indicator	Results of Data Reduction	Description	
		Yes	No
Activation	Coordination of the implementation of Regional Regulation No.5/2018 on Child Protection facilitated by Makassar City Council	✓	
	The performance of the network in implementing the policy as measured by the success of reducing the number of child abuse cases.	✓	
	Coordination on reporting child abuse cases in each collaborating network	✓	
	Sub-district level case reporting "Citizen Shelters" shows that there are still some citizen shelters in the sub-district that are not active.	✓	
	In terms of field implementation, the parties in the network have never routinely collaborated but only carried out their own violence case handling activities.	✓	

*Source: processed by researchers, 2024*

From the results of interviews related to efforts to reduce violence against children, comprehensive and structured planning is needed. Planning includes several main components, namely prevention programs, education, case management, and support for victims of child abuse. Prevention and education programs include socialization and education activities to increase public awareness about the importance of child protection. Case handling is carried out through coordination with the police, protection agencies, and hospitals as well as support to victims to help the physical and mental recovery process. In terms of financing, a budget of Rp 3,533,632,100 has been allocated to support the implementation of these programs. The budget covers operational costs for various activities.

Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 5/2018 on Child Protection in Makassar City plays an important role in tackling cases of violence against children, which are quite significant in Makassar City. In the interview, DPRD members explained that the regulation has been passed and socialized to the community through the Council members. The purpose of this regulation is to provide strong legal protection for children from all forms of violence and violations of children's rights in Makassar.

DPRD's main tasks and functions include making regulations such as this regulation, as well as ensuring its legitimacy and implementation in the field. After the local regulation is passed, its implementation is handed over to the relevant agencies in charge of implementing the regulation. Implementation includes assistance to child victims of violence so that similar cases do not continue to develop in the community. One of the prioritized points is that the budget for child protection should not be a burden for children or their families but should be borne by the government. The government needs to ensure that there is fairness in the allocation of resources to run this protection program.

The importance of mentoring is also a concern in this regulation. Children who are victims of violence must receive appropriate assistance, both psychologically, legally, and medically, to reduce the impact of the trauma they experience. The goal is to create a safe environment for children in the city of Makassar while preventing repeated violence. This local regulation is expected to reduce the amount of violence against children through several intervention programs run by related agencies.

In the context of child protection, there are two main aspects of concern, namely the fulfillment of rights and the protection of children. Rights fulfillment includes the basic rights of children, which are the responsibility of the state. This right is included in the category of basic needs that must be guaranteed. In this case, the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) through the Regional Technical Implementation Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) is providing special services for child protection. Collaboration with various parties is needed, because in handling cases of violence against children, the legal aspect must also be considered. Handling cases of child abuse requires assistance from the police until the legal process in court. This network involves not only government agencies, but also the community and non-governmental organizations, which play an important role in aiding and support for victims of violence.

Handling cases of violence against children can be done through several channels, both formal and informal, which aim to provide wider access for victims or families to report cases of violence. Although some victims or families have the courage to directly report their case to the police, not all victims are mentally prepared to do this. The process of reporting violence directly to the police is generally done if there is strong enough evidence for criminal proceedings. Cases reported directly to the police often involve physical violence or abuse that requires immediate legal intervention.

In recent years, data shows that cases of child abuse reported to the police have increased significantly, which can be interpreted as an increase in public awareness about the importance of reporting cases of violence against children, as well as increased trust in law enforcement institutions to handle these cases. However, some victims or families choose to use other channels to report cases, such as through community shelters or online complaint services provided by the Department of Women's and Children's Empowerment and Protection (DP3A). The reasons why victims or families choose alternative channels are because they feel more comfortable reporting through a system that is safer and less confrontational than going directly to the police station. Online complaint services or community shelters are more convenient options for those who feel intimidated or afraid of facing the legal process.

An initiative created by the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) with a Decree (SK) issued by the local Kelurahan is Shelter Warga. The establishment of community shelters aims to bring protection services closer to women and children who experience violence, especially because many women are trapped in a patriarchal culture and feel worried about social stigma if they report the violence they experience. Many of them are reluctant to report for fear of spreading shame, both to themselves and their families. However, after the existence of the community shelter, reports of violence increased significantly, this is due to the easier access and comfort felt by victims when coming to the shelter, victims, even though they are in poor physical or mental condition, feel more courageous to report, even if

they come in a less organized state. The community shelter is not just a place to report, but also creates a sense of security and support that victims need.

DP3A's main objective by presenting 85 community shelters in 85 urban villages from 15 sub-districts of Makassar City in the community is to ensure that every woman and child who is a victim of violence has quick and easy access to assistance and protection services. The existence of community shelters removes social barriers that previously made them afraid or hesitant to report the violence experienced.

However, there are several community shelters in Makassar City that are inactive due to several factors that affect their function in serving the community. One of the causes is the lack of coordination between the responsible parties at the urban village level, limited trained human resources also resulted in difficulties in running its operations effectively. The community shelter works closely with the children's forum and Integrated Community-Based Child Protection (PATBM) to ensure that each reported case of violence is handled appropriately. Community shelters are also trained to sort out lighter cases, such as family conflicts or communication problems, which can be resolved through mediation at the local level. However, when there is a more serious case, it must be immediately reported to the authorities for further processing with the shelter still playing a role in assisting the victim during the legal process.

The results of this study strengthen the argument of the importance of coordination between stakeholders in implementing child protection policies, as emphasized by (Amon et al., 2024), who explained that coordination is one of the key factors in the successful implementation of public policies. Meanwhile, (Wismayanti et al., 2021) in their research on the implementation of child protection policies also emphasized the importance of coordination between relevant institutions to achieve effective child protection goals.

However, the findings also revealed challenges in network activation, such as the inactivity of some community shelters and the lack of regular collaboration between parties. This is in line with (Borrás et al., 2024) perspective that network effectiveness is influenced by factors such as network structure, member commitment, and administrative capacity. The inactivity of community shelters may reflect weak network structure and member commitment, while the lack of regular collaboration indicates the need for increased administrative capacity in organizing joint activities.

This research also emphasizes the importance of a multi-sectoral approach that involves various actors, both government and non-government, in child protection efforts. This finding is in line with (Wessells, 2015) perspective on the "ecosystem of child protection" which emphasizes the need for partnerships and synergies between actors to provide comprehensive protection for children. This approach recognizes that child protection cannot be achieved by one sector alone but requires collaboration and coordination from various parties.

The community shelter initiative initiated by the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) in this study reflects an effort to bring protection services closer to the community. This community-based approach is in line with the principle of "community-based child protection" proposed by (Trail, 2024). (Gabriel Løvlie, 2023), emphasizes the importance of community participation and empowerment in protecting children, by placing children, families, and communities at the center of protection efforts. The existence of community shelters can be seen as a manifestation of this principle, where communities are empowered to be actively involved in protecting children in their own environment.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The results show that activation in network management is key in implementing policies to protect against child abuse in Makassar City. Although there is coordination in the implementation of Regional Regulation No.5/2018 on Child Protection facilitated by the

Makassar City DPRD, there are still some obstacles faced, such as inactive community shelters and lack of regular collaboration between parties in the network. Efforts to tackle violence against children require comprehensive planning that includes prevention programs, education, case handling, and support for victims, with adequate budget allocations. Regional Regulation No. 5/2018 plays an important role in providing legal protection for children, with the Office of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (DP3A) as a specialized child protection service provider. Collaboration with various parties, including the police, non-governmental organizations, and the community, is necessary in handling cases of child abuse. Complaint handling can be done through formal and informal channels, with community shelters as an effort to bring protection services closer and remove social barriers in reporting cases of violence.

Recommendations that can be taken by the Makassar City Government in overcoming the obstacles faced include: (1) Improve coordination and communication between parties in the network to ensure effective collaboration in handling child abuse cases. A concrete strategy to improve inter-agency communication is to establish a regular multi-stakeholder forum, where representatives from key agencies such as DP3A, the police, social services, health services, and NGOs can meet to discuss cases, share information, and coordinate their efforts. This forum can be facilitated by the Makassar City DPRD and held on a monthly or bi-monthly basis; (2) strengthen the capacity of human resources, especially in community shelters, through structured training and mentoring; (3) optimize the utilization of the budget that has been allocated for child protection programs, with an emphasis on prevention and education programs. A specific budget allocation model could involve earmarking a certain percentage of the child protection budget for prevention and education programs, ensuring that these critical areas receive consistent funding; (4) increase the socialization of Regional Regulation No. 5/2018 to the community to increase awareness and participation in child protection; and (5) strengthen cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the community in handling cases of child abuse and victim assistance.

Future research can complement the shortcomings of this study by examining in more depth the effectiveness of prevention and education programs in reducing the number of child abuse in Makassar City. In addition, future research can also explore the factors that influence community participation in child protection efforts, as well as identify best practices in handling child abuse cases that can be used as models to be implemented in Makassar City.

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