

## Collaboration Between Private Universities and the Government in Advancing Human Resources Based on the "Spirit of Maubereism" in Timor-Leste

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### Abstract:

This study examines the collaboration between the government and private universities in advancing human resource development (HRD) in Timor-Leste, grounded in the spirit of Maubereism. The study's background highlights Timor-Leste's challenges in HRD, as evidenced by its relatively low Human Development Index (HDI) compared to other ASEAN countries. Collaboration between the government and private universities is viewed as a pivotal strategy to address these challenges.

Employing a qualitative approach and case study method, the research aims to analyze the collaboration processes, identify enabling and constraining factors, and develop an effective collaboration model. The research adopts the collaborative governance framework proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007), encompassing four dimensions: initial conditions, collaborative process, facilitative leadership, and institutional design. This theoretical framework is integrated with the concept of Maubereism, which emphasizes local wisdom values such as the spirit of struggle, solidarity, and communal cooperation.

The findings reveal that the collaboration between the government and private universities in Timor-Leste has led to several innovative HRD programs. Key enabling factors include stakeholder commitment, supportive legal frameworks, and heightened awareness of HRD's importance. Conversely, challenges include limited resources, weak coordination, and differing priorities between the government and private universities. Based on these findings, this study proposes a Maubereism-based collaboration model integrated with the Ansell and Gash framework. The proposed model underscores the importance of incorporating local values at each stage of the collaboration process. The model's key elements include; (1) Strengthening initial conditions through trust-building and a shared understanding of Maubereism values. (2) A collaborative process emphasizing inclusive dialogue and consensus-based decision-making. (3) Facilitative leadership that prioritizes solidarity and communal cooperation. (4) Institutional design accommodating both traditional and modern structures.

This study contributes to the development of collaborative governance theory by integrating perspectives of local wisdom. Practically, the proposed model offers guidance for the government and private universities in Timor-Leste to design and implement more effective and sustainable HRD programs.

**Keywords:** Collaboration, Government, Private Universities, Human Resource Development, Maubereism.

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## 1. Introduction

Timor-Leste faces significant challenges in the education sector. The Ministry of Education classifies the history of education into four distinct periods. The number of students increased notably after the 1980s (Bank, 2004). During Indonesia's occupation (1975–1999), education in Timor-Leste witnessed rapid development under the concept of "Education for All." While the number of schools and students increased substantially, the majority of teachers were sourced from Indonesia. However, following the 1999 referendum, the education infrastructure was severely damaged. Timor-Leste, with support from international organizations, began rebuilding its education system in 2000 (Curt, 2002). From 2001 to 2008, there was a significant increase in the number of schools and students across all levels, including higher education, reflecting substantial progress in the post-independence era. The government has mandated nine years of compulsory education in accordance with the constitution. The 2020 development goals included fostering democracy, preserving traditional culture, promoting sustainable environmental practices, and ensuring active citizen participation in national development (KRDTL, 2002). Despite these efforts, education in Timor-Leste (Quinn & Buchanan, 2022) continues to face critical challenges, including poverty, inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, language barriers, and the absence of a dedicated education budget law. Nevertheless, the country has schools and universities with a significant number of students. However, Timor-Leste remains behind other nations in terms of educational advancement, has a low GDP, and struggles with inefficient natural resource management (*Tradingeconomics East Timor GDP*, n.d.).

This study examines the collaboration between the government and private universities in Timor-Leste to advance education and human resources development based on the principles of Maubereism. The aim is to address educational disparities and catch up with other nations in the Asia-Pacific region. For comparative purposes, this dissertation incorporates the latest Human Development Index (HDI) data for Asia-Pacific countries, as released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on September 8, 2022. The HDI measures well-being based on life expectancy, literacy, education, and living standards. Countries are categorized into four tiers: very high, high, medium, and low human development. Timor-Leste is classified as a medium human development country, ranking 155th in Asia and Oceania with an HDI score of 0.566 in 2021, which improved slightly to 0.574 in 2022 (UNDP, 2024). Other countries with similarly low HDI rankings include Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen. Timor-Leste's HDI ranking (157th globally in 2022) is influenced by factors such as illiteracy, low life expectancy, and poverty. This analysis adopts Ansell and Gash's 2007 collaborative governance theory, which encompasses four key dimensions: starting conditions, collaborative process, outcomes, institutional design, and facilitative leadership.

The Human Development Index (HDI) evaluates human resource quality across dimensions of education, health, and income. Introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the *Human Development Report* (1990), the HDI measures three key dimensions: longevity and health, knowledge, and a decent standard of living, using a scale from 0 to 1, where values closer to 1 indicate better human development (Fajar & Azhar, 2018); (Mirza, 2011). Human development aims to enhance societal quality of life through strategic policymaking (Azzaki, 2021). The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), established on August 8, 1967, fosters economic, political, and regional security cooperation (ASEAN, 1967). Initially comprising five founding members, ASEAN has evolved significantly, now hosting over 700 annual meetings. Timor-Leste, after being proposed as the 11th member in 2022, will officially join in 2025, contributing to an economic bloc of 650 million people and a combined GDP of \$2.8 trillion (Comini, 2022). In 2021, ASEAN's HDI rankings revealed Singapore as the highest (0.943) and Myanmar as the lowest (0.585), illustrating significant disparities in human welfare. Nations like Timor-Leste continue to face challenges in education and health sectors (UNDP, 2024).

Disparities in human welfare and development are often hindered by corruption, including bribery, public resource mismanagement, nepotism, and intellectual crimes (Pavarala, 1962); (Hanafi, 2011); (Blackburn et al., 2006). Corruption impedes human development by degrading human resource quality and disrupting resource allocation, adversely affecting future generations (Waluyo, 2014). Most ASEAN countries, being developing nations, exhibit high corruption levels, whereas developed nations generally report lower rates. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), established in 1993 by Peter Eigen, measures corruption perceptions based on expert and business feedback. In ASEAN, Singapore ranks highest (CPI score: 85), while Myanmar and Cambodia rank lowest (28 and 23, respectively), classifying them as highly corrupt nations (Statistia, 2023). Timor-Leste, with a CPI score of 41, aligns more closely with Malaysia, though challenges persist (Suparyati, 2014)

Economic freedom significantly influences human development by enhancing societal empowerment in work and trade while improving living standards (Feldmann, 2021); (Georgiou, 2012). It promotes legal stability, safeguards private property, and elevates welfare through education and health. Measured by the Economic Freedom Index (EFI) from the Heritage Foundation, ASEAN's 2021 rankings positioned Singapore at the top (EFI score: 89.7), attributed to free trade policies and reduced bureaucracy, while Timor-Leste ranked lowest (EFI score: 44.7), burdened by bureaucratic complexities. Interactions among CPI, EFI, and labour force participation rate (LFPR) collectively impact HDI indicators, including health and income distribution (Sukirno, 2006); (Aaronson et al., 2014). LFPR measures the non-institutional working-age population engaged in employment (Mantra, 2003). These factors collectively shape human development and welfare in ASEAN nations (ILO, 2024).

The Timor-Leste government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has initiated policies to enhance higher education quality by offering scholarships to students and faculty. The primary focus lies on undergraduate programs, fostering collaboration between public and private universities to advance human resources. Data indicates a rise in high school graduates pursuing tertiary education, although challenges in public-private collaboration persist. The *Maubereisme* approach is proposed to strengthen this synergy, encouraging private sector investment in education and ensuring equitable access for the population (MESCC, 2021).

The term *Maubere*, denoting Timorese identity, originates from the words "*Mau*" (brother) and "*Bere*" (human), symbolizing cultural unity. Initially a pejorative term, it evolved into a national pride emblem, reflecting Timorese cultural values and solidarity (Canas Mendes, 2018); (Kamisuna, 2023). Historically employed as resistance against Portuguese domination, *Maubere* became a unifying symbol of Timor-Leste's struggle for independence, widely adopted by FRETILIN (Kammen, 2010). Drawing parallels with Weber's Protestant ethic, *Maubereisme* emphasizes labor as a noble calling. Despite limited resources and facilities, collaboration between private universities and the government aims to foster human development grounded in *Maubereisme*. Addressing obstacles like inadequate infrastructure, scholarships, and regulatory challenges requires enhanced partnerships.

This study explores the collaboration between private universities and the government in advancing human resources based on *Maubereisme*. It seeks to:

1. Analyze the collaboration process to promote *Maubereisme*-based human development.
2. Identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the collaboration process.

The findings aim to provide academic contributions and practical references for stakeholders in Timor-Leste, supporting future human development initiatives.

## 2. Literature Review

### A. Theories of Collaboration

Collaboration in public administration originates from the term "co-labour," meaning working together. It encompasses a spectrum ranging from basic coordination to high-level collaboration (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003). According to (Thomson & Perry, 2006), the distinction between coordination, cooperation, and collaboration lies in the depth of interaction, integration, commitment, and complexity. Cooperation represents the lowest level, while collaboration is the highest.

Studies by (Wood & Gray, 1991), (Waugh & Streib, 2006), and (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003) highlight that collaboration involves interactions among autonomous parties through formal or informal negotiations. Collaboration is more resilient and functional in addressing changes compared to mere adaptation. (Wardhani, 2018) emphasizes the significance of multicultural education in managing societal diversity, preventing conflicts, and fostering human resource (HR) development. However, as (Riyadi, 2011) notes, multicultural education and HR development face challenges, including a lack of practical implementation, minimal contextual approaches, neglect of social dynamics, a tendency to generalize, insufficient focus on concrete solutions, and an overemphasis on conflicts without actionable resolutions.

(Haryono et al., 2022) underscore the importance of collaboration between universities, professional organizations, industries, and the government in defense industry HR development. This collaboration aims to balance theoretical and practical knowledge, enhance productive partnerships, and engage stakeholders. The Maubereism approach highlights real-world experiences, methodological flexibility, and continuous evaluation to produce competent and relevant defense HR capable of addressing field challenges.

(Hidayat & Bayudhirgantara, 2023) explore the influence of human resource management in the *Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi* (the tri-duties of higher education: education, research, and community service) on improving the quality of lecturers at private universities. Their findings reveal that the implementation of the *Tridharma* has been effective, as evidenced by the lecturers' qualifications, positions, certifications, and teaching engagement. Collaboration between universities and governments, utilizing the Maubereism approach, advances HR quality, *Tridharma* application, resource support, teaching innovations, and curriculum relevance. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges limitations in sample size, methodology, and data analysis.

The Collaboration Culture Model, as discussed by (Djumura, 2008), (Keban, 2008), and (Bleeke & Ernst, 1993), emphasizes fundamental values in collaboration, such as transparency, accountability, participation, efficiency, effectiveness, consensus, and mutual benefits. Collaboration entails voluntary support between public sectors or between public and private sectors. In the business realm, collaboration is viewed as an optimal mechanism to achieve shared goals. Despite its benefits, challenges include building trust and fostering effective communication. The Maubereism approach in university-government collaborations for HR development offers advantages such as alignment with local values, inclusive participation, and program sustainability.

(Limerick & Cunnington, 1993) describe the evolution from independent operations to collaborative strategies, from hierarchical to networked structures, and from participation to a collaborative culture. This transformation involves new organizational designs, network capacity building, and partner competency development. The Maubereism approach in university-government collaborations emphasizes synergy, flexibility, and innovation, fostering effective and adaptive HR development.

The Collaborative Governance Model has evolved since the 1960s, particularly following global administrative reforms. In the United Kingdom, "collaborative governance" replaced managerial

decision-making. However, as (Ansell & Gash, 2007) observe, this model has shortcomings, such as generalized frameworks that lack contextual relevance and Western-centric biases. Solutions include adapting to local cultures, such as Maubereism, leveraging indigenous wisdom, and community-based HR development.

Collaborative governance involves the active engagement of various stakeholders, including private entities and citizens, to achieve shared objectives. It refers to the cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors in public policymaking (Connick & Innes, 2003); (Holzer et al., 2012); (Donahue & Zeckhauser, 2012). In the context of human resource development (HRD) based on Maubereism, the collaboration between universities and governments can integrate the principles of collaborative governance to achieve more effective outcomes.

Administrative dimensions are critical for ensuring coordination, communication, and relationship management within collaborative efforts (Thomson & Perry, 2006). Mutuality emphasizes interdependent and mutually beneficial relationships between organizations (Powell, 1990). Trust, as a cornerstone of collaboration, involves willingness to negotiate, avoid exploitation, and maintain mutual respect (Bromiley, 1996).

Adapting (Thomson & Perry, 2006) model of collaboration, five key dimensions can be applied to enhance Maubereism-based HRD: governance, administration, autonomy, mutuality, and trust. Integrating these dimensions into a government-university collaborative model allows the promotion of human resources informed by local cultural values. This approach seeks to optimize the synergy between governance structures and Maubereism principles.

The Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR) framework provides a comprehensive lens to analyze the collaborative policymaking process. This model encompasses five key components: system context, drivers, collaborative dynamics, outputs, and outcomes. Collaborative dynamics involve fostering shared principles, mutual motivation, and capacity for collective action (Emerson et al., 2012).

Knowledge, defined as a blend of information, understanding, and capability, serves as a foundation for guiding actions. In collaborative governance, effective actions necessitate well-defined goals to achieve desired outcomes (Groff & Jones, 2003); (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003); (Connick & Innes, 2003); (Emerson et al., 2012); (Donahue & Zeckhauser, 2012). Collaborative actions encompass a variety of initiatives, including community empowerment and innovative management practices, with outcomes ranging from positive to negative. Continuous adaptation to feedback is essential for sustainability. The government-university collaboration model aims to advance HRD grounded in Maubereism through inclusive and participatory processes.

Collaborative governance emerges from partnerships between public institutions and stakeholders to facilitate consensus-based and deliberative decision-making (Ansell & Gash, 2007); (Amsler & O'leary, 2008); (Cooper et al., 2006); (Fung, 2006); (Sirianni, 2009). Governance itself refers to the processes by which governments, markets, or hybrid networks manage public affairs (Pierre, 2000); (Hill & Hupe, 2002). Modern governance objectives focus on efficiency in public goods provision, signalling a shift from hierarchical to network-based approaches. Effective governance requires robust partnerships between government, private, and public sectors (Osborne, 2006).

Despite its potential, collaborative governance faces challenges, including the complexity of stakeholder engagement, lack of formal accountability, and gaps between theory and practice. Effective implementation requires strong leadership and the management of conflicting interests. (Ansell & Gash, 2007) Collaborative Governance Model identify four key stages: Starting Conditions, Facilitative Leadership, Institutional Design, and Collaborative Process. This model is particularly

relevant for collaborations between the Ministry of Higher Education and private universities in Timor-Leste, aiming to develop human resources aligned with the "Spirit of Maubereism." The process underscores the importance of dialogue, trust-building, commitment, and shared understanding to achieve effective collaborative outcomes.

## **B. Theoretical Foundations of the Maubereism Concept**

Anthony D. Smith's Historic Ethno-Symbolism Theory (Smith, 2009) integrates historical and symbolic approaches to explain the roots and evolution of national identity. Bridging modernism and primordialism, the theory posits that modern nations have their foundations in pre-modern ethnic communities ("ethnie"). Smith underscores the significance of collective myths, historical memory, cultural symbols, and ancestral territories in shaping national identity. Key concepts include ethnie as the foundational unit, the role of myths and memory, symbols and rituals, and the importance of territory. Smith illustrates his theory's applicability through examples such as Jewish nationalism, European nations, and post-colonial nationalism. While the theory is widely appreciated, it faces criticisms for overestimating ethnic continuity, neglecting economic dynamics, and its normative orientation. Nonetheless, it remains relevant in the study of nationalism, particularly in contexts where ethnic identity and symbolism play crucial roles in politics and culture.

Social capital, a pivotal concept in sociology, economics, and politics, refers to social relationships as a resource (Bourdieu, 1986). Pierre Bourdieu defines it as one of three forms of capital explaining societal power structures. Key elements include social networks, trust, norms, and the capitalization of relationships. The unequal distribution of social capital reflects broader social disparities. This theory is particularly pertinent in understanding modern social dynamics, including digital economies and globalization.

Developed by (P. Hersey & Blanchard, 1969), Situational Leadership Theory emphasizes the importance of leadership flexibility in adapting styles to the readiness and competence of followers (P. H. Hersey et al., 2013). It asserts that no single leadership style is universally optimal; instead, leaders must tailor their approach based on followers' levels of competence and commitment. Readiness is categorized into four levels, combining competence and commitment, while leadership styles range from S1 (Directing) to S4 (Delegating). In the context of fostering collaboration between the government and private universities in Timor-Leste to advance human resource development through the Spirit of Maubereism, this theory provides valuable insights. Participative leadership (S3) aligns with Maubereism's values of solidarity and mutual cooperation. Effective leaders must facilitate dialogue, build trust, and resolve conflicts among stakeholders with varying levels of readiness and priorities. By applying Situational Leadership Theory, leaders can better manage collaborative processes, overcome barriers, and create more successful and sustainable human resource programs in Timor-Leste.

Institutional theory emphasizes the role of institutions in shaping individual and group behaviour within society (Faundez, 2016). Institutions, defined as formal and informal rules governing human interactions, address diverse aspects of life. Developed in response to rationalist theories, institutionalism highlights the influence of institutional norms and rules on individual behaviour. Classical institutionalism focuses on formal institutions such as constitutions and legal systems, while new institutionalism expands to include informal institutions like culture and traditions (March & Olsen, 1984); (Faundez, 2016). Contemporary variants include sociological institutionalism, which views institutions as social constructions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) normative institutionalism, emphasizing the role of norms in regulating behaviour (Scott, 2008); and economic institutionalism, linking institutions to economic performance (North, 1990). Key dimensions include distinctions between formal and informal institutions, path dependency, isomorphism, and embeddedness.

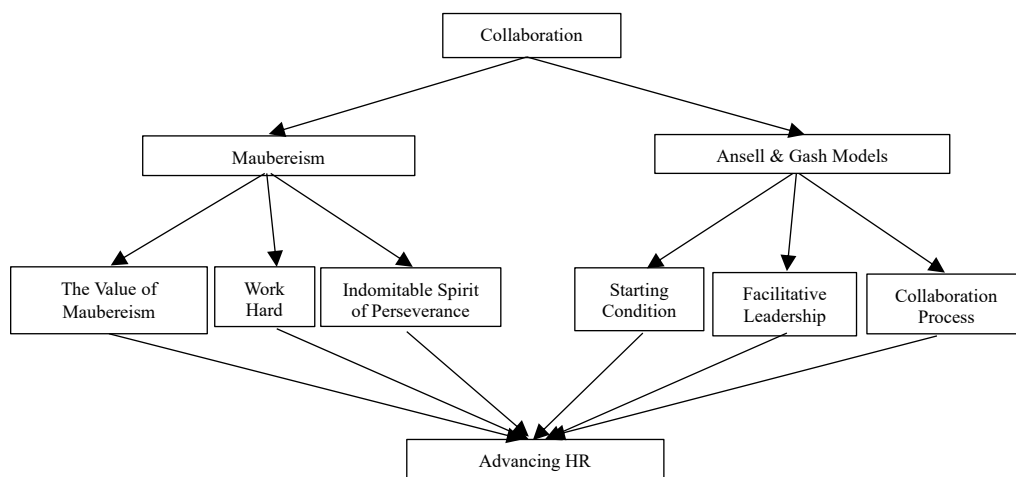
Although insightful, institutionalism has been critiqued for its focus on stability and insufficient attention to power dynamics in institutional processes. Institutional theory complements institutional design in understanding collaborative structures. While institutionalism examines the influence of norms and rules on actor behaviour, institutional design focuses on crafting institutions for effective collaboration. Both approaches incorporate formal and informal elements and consider the local context, such as Maubereism, in designing collaborations between the government and private universities in Timor-Leste

Social constructivism posits that knowledge and the meaning of the social world are created through social interaction. Reality is understood as a social construct shaped by language, symbols, and human interaction (Berger & Luckman, 1966); (Blanchard, 1988). This theory finds relevance in diverse fields such as education, psychology, and sociology, with philosophical roots in Kant and Hegel. (Berger & Luckman, 1966) elaborated on social constructivism through three stages: externalization, objectification, and internalization. In education, Lev Vygotsky introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development. Key concepts include knowledge as a social product, the role of language and symbols, social interaction, and identity, as well as social relativity. While offering profound insights, social constructivism faces critiques such as extreme relativism, the diminished role of individuals, and limited predictability. The theory aligns with local wisdom by emphasizing reality as a social construct. The Spirit of Maubereism, reflecting solidarity and mutual cooperation, serves as a foundation for collaboration between private universities and the government in Timor-Leste.

### C. Conceptual Framework

The collaboration between the government and private higher education institutions in Timor-Leste integrates Maubereism with Ansell and Gash's Collaborative Governance Model to advance human resource development. Maubereism emphasizes solidarity, hard work, a spirit of struggle, and nationalism. The collaborative governance model encompasses initial conditions, facilitative influences, the collaborative process, and final outcomes. This integration aims to develop high-quality human resources through a culturally grounded approach to national development.

**Figure Conceptual Framework**



### 3. Research Methodology

The research paradigm serves as the philosophical foundation underpinning researchers' perspectives on social facts and theories (Lincoln, 1985). It shapes the understanding of problems, evaluation criteria, and the researcher's approach. As a fundamental framework, paradigms guide research across

various disciplines (Liliweri, 2018); (Anand et al., 2020). Research paradigms encompass ontology, epistemology, and methodology, providing a foundation for understanding the nature and types of knowledge generated (Laudan, 1977), in (Liliweri, 2018).

Governance represents a new paradigm in governmental management, characterized by the interaction of three pillars: government, private sector, and society. Unlike traditional government, governance emphasizes equitable collaboration aimed at achieving good governance. Governance entails the relationship among governments, private sectors, and communities, fostering cooperation between organizations and non-state actors (Rhodes, 1996); (Kooiman, 2002); (Limerick & Cunnington, 1993). This descriptive qualitative study explores the collaboration between private higher education institutions and the government to enhance human resource development in Timor-Leste, grounded in the “Spirit of Maubereism,” using the governance paradigm.

This study employs the interpretive paradigm to uncover social meanings (Liliweri, 2018); (Reeve & Hedberg, 2003); (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005). The interpretive paradigm emphasizes contextual analysis, subjective experiences, meaning-oriented methodologies, and the complexities of human emotions in research (Ezzy, 2002); (Blanche & Durrheim, 1999), in (Liliweri, 2018). It highlights the interpretation and meaning-making processes in research. Within this framework, the study focuses on the collaboration between private higher education institutions and the government to advance human resource development in Timor-Leste, guided by the principles of the “Spirit of Maubereism.”

This research examines the collaboration between private higher education institutions and the Timor-Leste government in enhancing human resource development based on the Spirit of Maubereism. The primary focus includes the collaboration processes, the roles of private higher education institutions, governmental support, and the integration of Maubereism values. The study was conducted at six camPUes and relevant government institutions in Dili, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources. The study adoPU a descriptive-analytical method to investigate the collaboration between private higher education institutions and the government in advancing human resources through Maubereism in Timor-Leste. Data analysis follows the Creswell & Guetterman approach (Creswell & Guetterman, 2016), encompassing data preparation, comprehensive reading, coding, description, thematic presentation, and interpretation. Cross-site analysis was conducted to compare findings across research locations. The credibility of the data is ensured through adherence to criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

*Maubereisme* originates from the term "*Maubere*" initially used by Portuguese colonizers to refer to the indigenous population of Timor-Leste, whom they deemed backward and uncivilized. However, the term was later reclaimed and reinterpreted by the Timorese nationalist movement as a symbol of national identity and resistance. Drawing from Anderson's theory of "imagined communities" 2006, *Maubere* is seen as a construct representing a group with shared identity and history, even though its members may not physically interact. The identity of *Maubere* was forged through collective struggles against oppression and colonization, the use of historical narratives and myths to unify its members, and its assertion as a sovereign nation with the right to self-determination, serving as both a geographical and imaginative boundary that distinguished it from the colonizers. *Maubereisme* evolved from a colonial derogatory term into a nationalist ideology that unified the people of Timor-Leste in their fight for independence. This concept played a crucial role in shaping national identity and the spirit of resistance, particularly during Indonesia's occupation. It illustrates how a community can reclaim and transform an oppressive label into a source of strength and collective identity.

The collaboration between the government and private universities in Timor-Leste to advance human resources based on *Maubereisme* reflects the implementation of the New Public Services paradigm in

public administration. The legal basis for this collaboration is enshrined in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and the Ministerial Decree on Higher Education and Culture for 2020–2024. Governance, as defined by (Rhodes, 1996) and (Kooiman, 2002), involves interdependence between organizations, including non-state actors. (Limerick & Cunningham, 1993) refer to this as a "networked organization" centered on collaboration. In the Timorese context, private universities work with the government to overcome challenges such as institutional establishment processes, faculty resources, facilities, and financial constraints. A concrete example of this collaboration is the establishment of the University of Peace (*Universidade da Paz*, UNPAZ) on March 9, 2004, which subsequently received institutional accreditation through Decision No. 01/I/CD/2022. Additionally, partnerships between the Timor-Leste Association of Private Universities (KIESPTL) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Culture exemplify collaborative governance. (Ansell & Gash, 2007) model of collaborative governance, comprising four key dimensions of collaboration, provides a framework for analyzing the cooperation between private universities and the government in advancing human resources guided by *Maubereisme* values.

The collaboration between the government and private universities (PU) in Timor-Leste plays a vital role in operational evaluation and licensing. Despite the asymmetry in power and resources between PU and public universities, this collaboration remains productive and beneficial. PU such as UNPAZ, DIT, UNITAL, and UNDIL actively engage with the government through joint research, seminars, and community service programs. The government supports these institutions by providing academic facilities, accreditation training, and scholarships for faculty and students. Through curricula that include courses on national struggles and transitional justice, PU integrate the values of *Maubereisme*. Nevertheless, challenges such as limited quality resources and inadequate facilities persist. However, the spirit of nationalism and *Maubereisme*-driven hard work serves as inspiration for advancing human resource development in Timor-Leste.

Incentives are a crucial component in fostering participation and productivity in the collaboration between private universities and the government to advance human resources in Timor-Leste. According to (Chrislip et al., 1994), understanding incentives is essential, as much of the work performed by faculty and administrative staff is voluntary or exceeds set targets. The benefits of incentives include increased motivation, a positive correlation between participation and outcomes, and strengthened cooperation among stakeholders. However, potential drawbacks include the risk of unequal distribution, dependency on external incentives, and the influence of power imbalances (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Within the cultural context of *Maubereisme* in Timor-Leste, incentives extend beyond material rewards to include recognition and opportunities to contribute to community development. For instance, the Institute of Business (IOB) provides scholarships to ten individuals from each district as an implementation of *Maubereisme* values. The collaboration between private universities under KIESPTL and the government of Timor-Leste has yielded support in the form of financial subsidies, infrastructure development, and scholarships. However, challenges remain, such as financial disparities among private universities, which affect the distribution of incentives and the quality of services provided. A *Maubereisme*-based cultural approach can help address these challenges by enhancing community engagement, fostering flexibility in collaboration, and strengthening internal organizational solidarity. This approach is critical for balancing educational accessibility with the operational sustainability of higher education institutions in Timor-Leste.

Collaboration among stakeholders holds the potential to either facilitate or hinder cooperative efforts, depending on their backgrounds and historical relationships. While high levels of conflict do not necessarily impede progress, a history of successful collaboration can foster trust and create a positive cycle of cooperation. (Ansell & Gash, 2007) emphasize that collaborative governance thrives only when stakeholders recognize their interdependence. The advantages of collaboration include enhanced

innovation, resource-sharing, trust-building, and the capacity to address complex challenges. However, drawbacks such as potential conflicts of interest, time and resource costs, and risks of stereotyping and suspicion also exist. In the Timor-Leste context, the Maubereism cultural approach offers unique strengths in collaboration, such as reinforcing shared identity, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and facilitating open dialogue. Dr. Manuel Vong, former Rector of Dili Institute of Technology (DIT), highlights Maubereism's current focus on youth development and holistic human resource preparation, emphasizing openness in education and dialogue. Similarly, Dr. Nilton Diamantino Paiva, Director-General of the National Accreditation Agency for Academic Assessment (ANAAA), underscores the importance of collaboration inspired by Maubereism to advance education in Timor-Leste. This collaboration, rooted in collective effort, mutual support, and hard work, can help address power and resource imbalances that often hinder partnerships between private higher education institutions (HEIs) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Culture in Timor-Leste.

Building trust is a cornerstone of effective collaboration between private HEIs and the government in Timor-Leste. This trust is founded on shared patriotism and a commitment to hard work, inspiring both parties. Private HEIs play a vital role in providing educational access to diverse communities, including marginalized groups. The government regards these institutions as strategic partners in fostering human resource development aligned with the aspirations of national heroes. According to the Director-General of ANAAA, the government supports 17 private HEIs through initiatives such as the *Fundo Desenvolvimento do Capital Humano* (FDCH), joint research projects, and accreditation policies. This collaborative framework underscores the principle of "Maubere oan tenke hamrik iha ain rasik" (Maubere people must stand on their own feet), embodying self-reliance and resilience. The establishment of the UNPAZ by Prof. Dr. Lucas da Costa exemplifies the strong Maubereism ethos, initiated even before formal regulations were in place. This reflects the high level of trust among pro-independence intellectuals in developing higher education in Timor-Leste. Effective collaboration between the government and private HEIs is crucial for producing high-quality human resources capable of competing in global and national markets.

Facilitative leadership is a critical element in stakeholder collaboration. Researchers such as (Lasker & Weiss, 2003), (Margerum, 2002), and (Murdock et al., 2005) emphasize the role of leadership in guiding discussions and steering the collaborative process. (Pine et al., 1998) and (Susskind & Cruikshank Jeffrey, 1987) argue that facilitative leadership is essential for fostering a collaborative spirit among stakeholders. (Vangen & Huxham, 2003) highlight the need for targeted interventions by leaders to resolve conflicts and shape forward-looking agendas. (Ansell & Gash, 2007) further stress leadership's role in trust-building, dialogue facilitation, and exploring mutual benefits. However, reliance on leadership has limitations, such as excessive dependency, inflexibility, and potential conflicts of leadership styles. To address these challenges, the Maubereism cultural approach in Timor-Leste offers a solution by emphasizing collectivity, equality, flexibility in conflict resolution, and positive interdependence. Institutions such as *Instituto Superior Cristal* (ISC), UNITAL, and UNPAZ incorporate inclusive and humanistic approaches to higher education, focusing on dialogue, coordination, and commitment to equitable educational access.

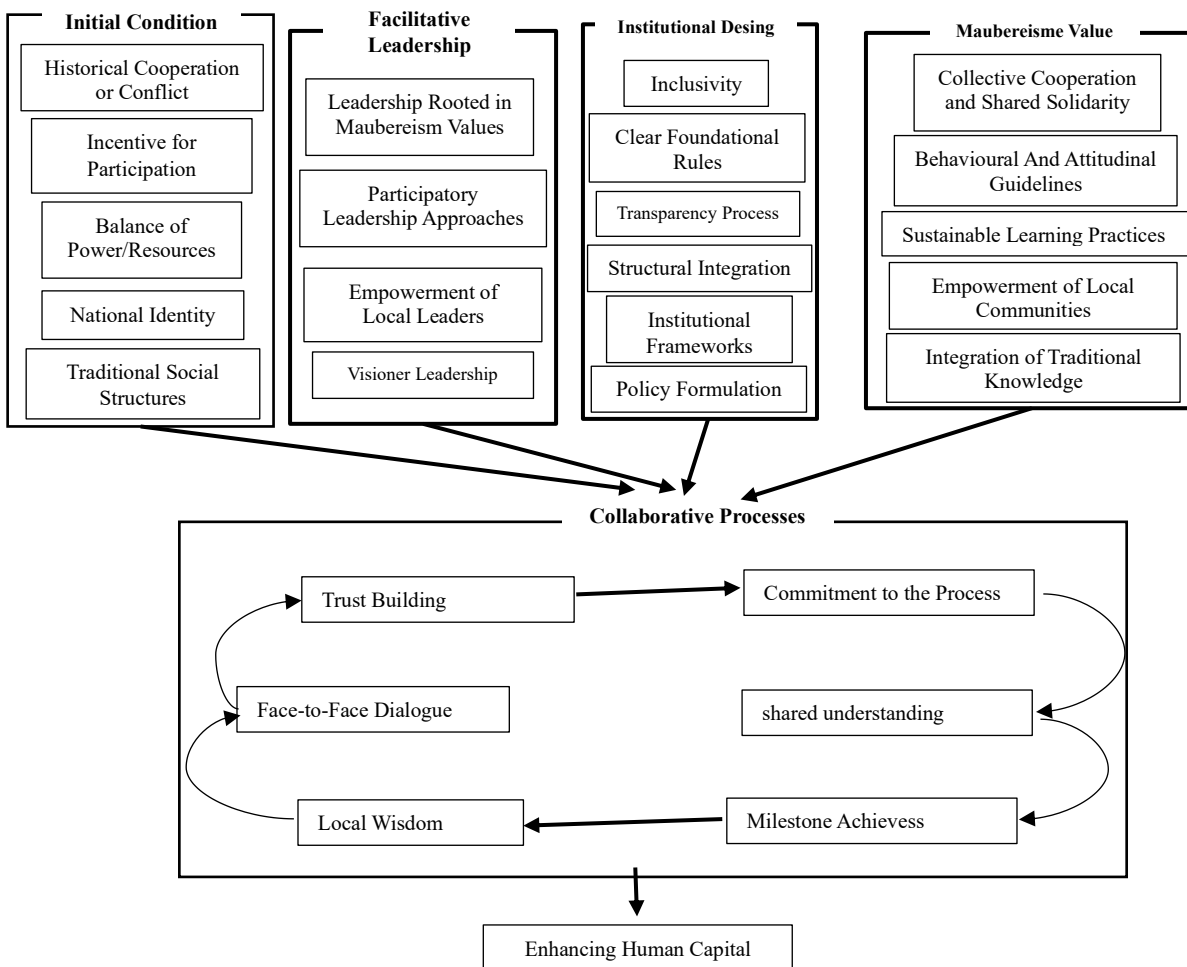
Institutional design in collaboration involves establishing protocols and fundamental rules to govern cooperative processes. Scholars such as (Busenberg, 1999), (Avoyan, 2023), (Murdock et al., 2005), and (Ansell & Gash, 2007) highlight the importance of clear rules and transparency as essential components of institutional design. (Glasbergen & Driessen, 2005) also underscore the need for deadlines to prevent protracted discussions. Nevertheless, institutional design may face challenges such as inflexibility, resistance to change, and restrictions on participation. The Maubereism cultural approach can mitigate these issues by promoting flexibility, stakeholder empowerment, transparency, and constructive conflict resolution. Collaboration between private HEIs and the Ministry of Higher

Education, Science, and Culture in Timor-Leste is guided by foundational protocols rooted in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (Article 59) and the Basic Education Law. Institutional accreditation processes, overseen by ANAAA since its establishment in 2010, exemplify the application of institutional design in advancing human resource development.

The integration of Maubereism principles, facilitative leadership, and robust institutional design offers a promising pathway for fostering effective collaboration among stakeholders in Timor-Leste's education sector. This approach not only addresses existing challenges but also sets the foundation for a resilient, self-reliant, and globally competitive human resource base.

Shared understanding is a critical element in collaboration, encompassing concepts such as a shared mission, goals, and vision (Alexander & Weiner, 1998); (Ansell & Gash, 2007). However, this process often encounters challenges, including differences in interpretation, diverse priorities, ineffective communication, and power imbalances (Bentrup, 2001); (Heikkila & Gerlak, 2005). To address these obstacles, the Maubereism cultural approach in Timor-Leste offers solutions grounded in local values such as collectivism, solidarity, and open dialogue. This approach has proven effective in fostering collaboration between private universities and the government to advance human resource development. For instance, the National Academic Evaluation & Accreditation Agency (ANAAA) implements 10 accreditation standards to ensure the quality of higher education through training and partnerships with international stakeholders. Similarly, the Instituto Off Binnenses (IOB) prioritizes cooperation with the government and both national and international universities via the *Klibur Instituisaun Ensino Superior Pribado* (KIESPTL), an organization that unites private higher education institutions under a common platform. Additionally, Instituto Superior Cristal (ISC) applies inclusive policies, such as flexible tuition payment systems, to enhance access to education for underserved communities. The Maubereism approach, emphasizing trust, dialogue, and inclusive leadership, has strengthened synergies among stakeholders in Timor-Leste in pursuing sustainable shared goals (Ansell & Gash, 2007); (Canas Mendes, 2018).

Case studies suggest that collaboration is more likely to succeed when goals and relative benefits are tangible, and "win-win" solutions are achievable (Chrislip et al., 1994); (Tsai Roussos & Fawcett, 2000); (Warner, 2006); (Weech-Maldonado & Merrill, 2000). Intermediate outcomes play a crucial role in building momentum toward successful collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Small victories provide positive feedback, fostering a cycle of trust-building and commitment (Weech-Maldonado & Merrill, 2000); (Vangen & Huxham, 2003). In the context of Timor-Leste, collaboration between private universities and the government has demonstrated positive impacts. For example, UNPAZ has collaborated with the government on joint research, seminars, and programs addressing issues like reforestation and COVID-19 management. The government supports these initiatives through subsidies and scholarships via the FDCH. UNPAZ itself has increased its scholarship offerings from 436 recipients in 2023 to 466 in 2024. Additionally, approximately 2,500 UNPAZ students receive FDCH scholarships across various categories. These initiatives aim to enhance access to higher education and advance student knowledge, aligning with the principles of Maubereism.



**Figure Maubereism Collaborative Mode**

The emphasis on Maubereism values as a foundation for collaboration between the government and private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in Timor-Leste underscores the relevance of historical values in modern educational contexts. (Ansell & Gash, 2007) highlight the importance of facilitative leadership in building trust and fostering dialogue among stakeholders. Maubereism values such as solidarity, hard work, and mutual assistance establish a robust foundation for trust-building and active participation in collaboration. (Lasker & Weiss, 2003) emphasize the importance of leadership skills in enhancing participation and facilitating productive group dynamics. This aligns with the Maubereism approach, which promotes a culture of mutual aid and inclusive participation in educational development. *Instituto Superior Cristal* (ISC) reflects these values in its modern practices by implementing flexible payment systems for underprivileged students. (Vangen & Huxham, 2003) stress the need for strategic interventions by leaders to address conflicts in collaboration. By integrating Maubereism values, collaboration between the government and PHEIs in Timor-Leste can serve as a sustainable model for addressing challenges such as education financing and capacity development while strengthening national identity and inspiring younger generations.

**5. Conclusion**

This study examines the collaboration between the government and private higher education institutions (PU) in Timor-Leste to enhance the quality of human resources (HR). Despite disparities in power and resources, the collaboration has remained productive due to government-supported regulations, subsidies, and HR development programs. The cultural values of Maubereism,

emphasizing solidarity and mutual cooperation, serve as a foundational element in fostering open communication and joint solutions amidst regulatory and bureaucratic challenges. These values encourage community engagement and solidarity among faculty and staff, even in the face of inadequate compensation. The primary challenges include financial constraints, limited human resources, and conflicts of interest among stakeholders. The disparity in tuition fees and inequality in incentive distribution exacerbate these challenges, particularly for PU with lower tuition rates.

Collaboration among PU, the government, and international organizations strengthens HR development through the integration of subsidies, scholarships, and infrastructure advancements. The Maubereism approach also enhances stakeholder relationships through open dialogue and cooperation, helping to mitigate conflicts and build trust. The participatory leadership model adopted by PU reflects the spirit of Maubereism, involving various parties in decision-making processes. However, resource and capacity limitations continue to hinder the full implementation of this participatory leadership.

This study concludes that collaboration between PU and the government is essential for advancing the quality of higher education and human resources in Timor-Leste. The Maubereism approach has proven effective in addressing institutional challenges, offering flexibility and empowerment to stakeholders.

Several recommendations are proposed, including promoting equity in incentive distribution, strengthening resources and infrastructure, reducing dependency on external incentives, expanding international collaboration, and integrating Maubereism values into education. Implementing these approaches is expected to foster more effective and sustainable collaboration in improving human resource quality in Timor-Leste.

## 6. References

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