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The Effect of Stakeholder Trust and Communication Quality on Collaborative Governance in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

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Collaborative governance, Stakeholder trust, Communication quality, Mandalika Special Zone, Tourism governance.

Abstract

The development of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) as a national strategic tourism destination requires effective collaborative governance among various stakeholders. However, differences in interests, power imbalances, and limited coordination often hinder the implementation of collaboration in regional governance. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of stakeholder trust and communication quality on collaborative governance in the Mandalika SEZ. This research employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to stakeholders involved in the management of the Mandalika SEZ, including local government institutions, zone management authorities, business actors, micro and small enterprises, and local communities. The data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that stakeholder trust and communication quality positively influence collaborative governance, with communication quality showing a stronger role in strengthening collaboration among stakeholders. These findings emphasize the importance of building trust and improving communication quality to support effective collaborative governance and sustainable tourism development in the Mandalika SEZ.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) as a national strategic tourism destination requires governance that involves various actors across sectors and levels of government. From a stakeholder perspective, every individual or group that can influence or be influenced by the achievement of organizational goals must be managed strategically (Barbero et al., 2019). In the context of tourist destinations, collaboration between stakeholders is a structural necessity due to the complexity of interests, resource dependencies, and unequal distribution of power. This shows that the success of the Mandalika SEZ is not only determined by formal policies, but also by the quality of relationships between stakeholders.

Conceptually, collaborative governance is defined as a public decision-making process that involves government and non-government actors in a joint forum that is consensus-based and deliberative (Ansell & Gash, 2008). The success of collaboration is determined by procedural factors such as face-to-face dialogue, trust building, commitment to the process, and the formation of a shared understanding (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In the context of sustainable tourism, collaborative governance is an important approach to aligning economic, social, and

environmental objectives through cross-actor coordination mechanisms (Imran & Wijaya, 2025). Evaluations of collaborative governance regimes also show that the productivity of collaboration is influenced by the quality of interactions, legitimacy, and adaptability between institutions (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015).

However, the practice of collaborative governance in the development of the Mandalika SEZ faces structural challenges. A study on the multi-level governance dilemma in Mandalika found a dominance of top-down approaches, a weak role for local government and communities, and limited capacity for negotiation between actors (Affandi et al., 2024). Other research related to the management of the Mandalika SEZ also shows that although collaboration indicators are in place, aspects of dialogue and communication still need to be strengthened to avoid miscommunication with the local community (Rasyid & Darumurti, 2022). In addition, power imbalances and the dominance of certain stakeholders in tourism governance also have the potential to hinder equal collaboration (Pujiyono et al., 2019).

Within this framework, stakeholder trust becomes a key variable. In governance and sustainable tourism, trust is seen as a fundamental element that influences power relations, legitimacy, and social capital among actors (Nunkoo, 2017). Trust enables open information exchange, commitment to agreements, and reduced conflict in collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Without trust, collaborative governance tends to become an institutional formality without participatory substance. Therefore, empirical testing of the influence of stakeholder trust on collaborative governance in the Mandalika SEZ is important to understand the relational dynamics in the governance of the area.

In addition to trust, communication quality is also an important determinant in collaboration. Effective collaborative communication can build common goals, increase shared capacity, and minimize conflicts between stakeholders (Affandi et al., 2024). Government communication strategies in tourism development have been proven to play a role in building cross-institutional coordination and increasing policy legitimacy (Anwar et al., 2022). Good public communication quality is also a prerequisite for information disclosure, public participation, and policy accountability (Farid, 2020). In the context of partnerships, organizational value communication strategies can strengthen the foundation for collaboration and build common perceptions among partners (Rejeki & Negoro, 2022). Thus, communication quality is not only a technical aspect of message delivery but also a strategic instrument in strengthening collaborative governance.

Although various studies have discussed collaborative governance in tourism development and specifically in the Mandalika SEZ (Imran & Wijaya, 2025; Affandi et al., 2024; Rasyid & Darumurti, 2022), most of these studies still focus on descriptive institutional analysis, policy strategies, or power dynamics. Furthermore, research on trust and communication in governance tends to be discussed conceptually and has not been specifically tested in empirical models that link stakeholder trust and communication quality to collaborative governance in the context of the Mandalika SEZ.

Thus, there is a clear research gap, namely the absence of empirical research that simultaneously examines the influence of stakeholder trust and communication quality on collaborative governance in the Mandalika SEZ. This study attempts to fill this gap by constructing an integrated model of the relationship between variables in the context of tourism-based special economic zone governance. Theoretically, this study enriches the collaborative governance literature by emphasizing the relational and communicative dimensions. Practically, the results of

this study are expected to provide strategic recommendations for strengthening more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable collaborative governance in the Mandalika SEZ.

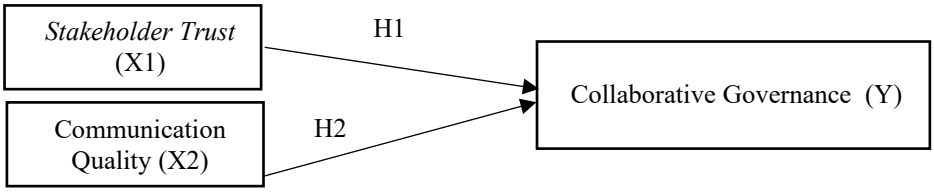


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis

Thus, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:
H1: Stakeholder Trust is expected to have a positive effect on Collaborative Governance.
H2: Communication Quality is expected to have a positive effect on Collaborative Governance.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with explanatory research to analyze the influence of stakeholder trust and communication quality on collaborative governance. The research was conducted in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which is a national tourism strategy area involving various stakeholders.

The research population includes stakeholders involved in the management of the Mandalika SEZ, such as the government, local authorities, area managers, industry players, MSMEs, and community leaders. The sample was determined using purposive sampling techniques with criteria for respondents involved in activities or area management and who understand the process of collaboration between stakeholders. The minimum sample size followed SEM-PLS requirements, which is 5-10 times the number of indicators, resulting in a range of 100-200 respondents.

The data used consists of primary data obtained through a 1-5 Likert scale questionnaire and secondary data derived from policy documents, official reports, and related literature. The research variables consist of stakeholder trust (X1) and communication quality (X2) as independent variables and collaborative governance (Y) as the dependent variable. Data analysis was performed using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the SmartPLS application through outer model evaluation (construct validity and reliability) and inner model evaluation (structural relationships between variables).

RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Amount	Percentage
Age		
17 to 20 Years	5	4.2%
21 to 24 Years	23	19.2%
25 to 28 Years	28	23.3%
29 to 35 Years	29	24.2%
>35 Years	35	29.1%

Total	**120**	**100%**
Gender		
Male	62	51.7%
Female	58	48.3%
Total	**120**	**100%**
Current address		
Mandalika Area	68	56.7%
Outside Mandalika	52	43.3%
Total	**120**	**100%**
Type of Work		
Tourism	70	58.3%
Mixture	38	31.7%
Non-Tourism	12	10%
Total	**120**	**100%**

Source: Data processed in 2026

Measurement Model Assessment (Outer Model)

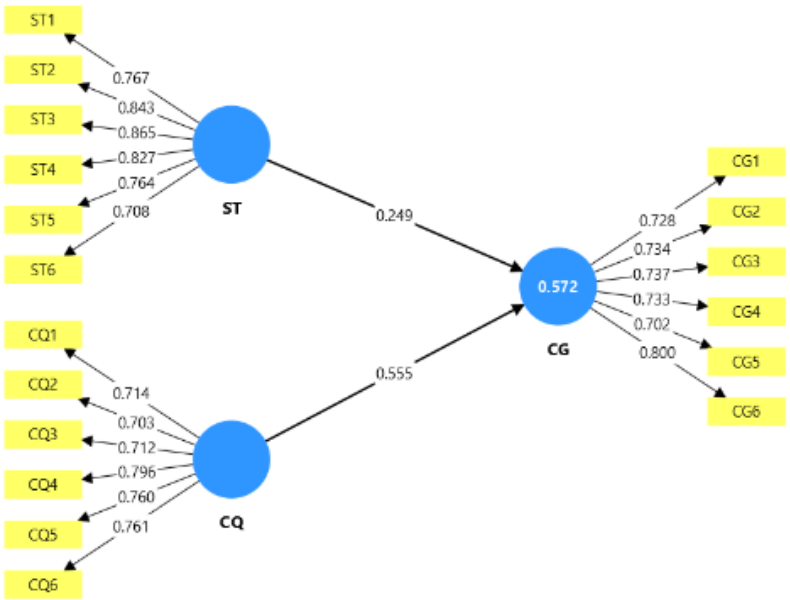


Figure 2. Outer Model

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

Shows the estimation results of the measurement model (outer model) which illustrates the relationship between indicators and latent constructs, namely Stakeholder Trust, Communication Quality, and Collaborative Governance/CG. The numbers shown on each arrow reflect the outer loading value for each indicator.

1. Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity can be seen from the Outer Loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results as follows:

- Outer Loading

Table 2. Outer Loading

Outer loadings - Matrix

	Collaborative Governance	Communication Quality	Stakeholder Trust
CG1	0.728		
CG2	0.734		
CG3	0.737		
CG4	0.733		
CG5	0.702		
CG6	0.800		
CQ1		0.714	
CQ2		0.703	
CQ3		0.712	
CQ4		0.796	
CQ5		0.760	
CQ6		0.761	
ST1			0.767
ST2			0.843
ST3			0.865
ST4			0.827
ST5			0.764
ST6			0.708

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

Based on the outer loading test results, all indicators in the Stakeholder Trust variable (X1) have values ≥ 0,70 with a range of 0,708-0,865. The highest values are found in indicators ST3 (0,865) and ST2 (0,843), which show the strongest contribution in representing the Stakeholder Trust construct. In the Communication Quality (X2) variable, the outer loading values ranged from 0,703 to 0,796, with the highest value found in the CQ4 indicator (0.796), thus all indicators were declared convergent valid. Meanwhile, in the Collaborative Governance (Y) variable, the outer loading values ranged from 0,702 to 0,800, with the CG6 indicator (0,800) being the strongest in explaining the Collaborative Governance construct. Since all indicators in the three variables had outer loading values ≥ 0.70, there were no indicators that needed to be eliminated. Thus, the measurement model has met the convergent validity criteria based on outer loading and can proceed to AVE testing, discriminant validity, and construct reliability.

- Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construct reliability and validity - Overview

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite rel...	Composite ...	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Collaborative Governance	0.834	0.837	0.879	0.547
Communication Quality	0.837	0.842	0.880	0.550
Stakeholder Trust	0.885	0.893	0.913	0.636

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

The table shows that the AVE value for the Stakeholder Trust/ST variable is 0,636 > 0,50, Communication Quality/CQ is 0,550 > 0,50, and Collaborative Governance/CG is 0.547 > 0,50. These values indicate that 55% or more of the variance of the indicators can be explained by the construct, and all variables have passed the convergent validity test through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test.

2. Discriminant Validity TestUji

Discriminant validity can be assessed using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) methods as follows:

- Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity - Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Collaborative Governance	Communication Quality	Stakeholder Trust
Collaborative Governance	0.740		
Communication Quality	0.737	0.742	
Stakeholder Trust	0.655	0.731	0.798

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

In the table of AVE square root values for each construct, namely Stakeholder Trust/ST at 0,798, Communication Quality/CQ at 0,742, and Collaborative Governance/CG at 0,740, these values are greater than the correlation values between other constructs. Therefore, discriminant validity has been fulfilled in accordance with the Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

- Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Tablw 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

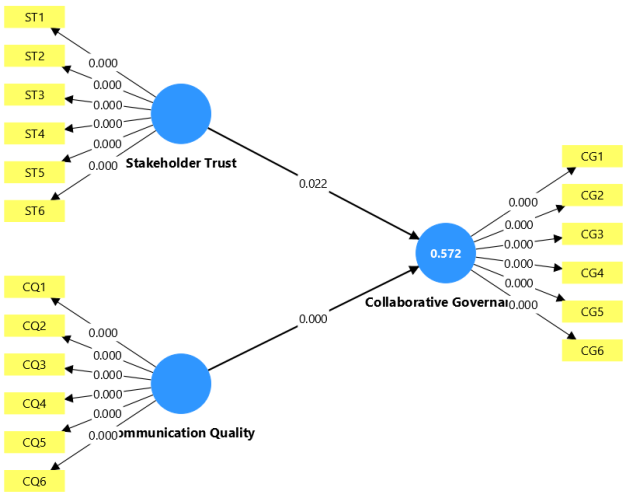
Discriminant validity - Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix

	Collaborative Governance	Communication Quality	Stakeholder Trust
Collaborative Governance			
Communication Quality	0.868		
Stakeholder Trust	0.757	0.859	

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

In the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) test results table, all HTMT values between constructs are below 0,90. This indicates that there is no overlap between constructs and each variable is distinct from one another. Therefore, the measurement model has met the discriminant validity criteria according to the HTMT criteria.

Penilaian Model Struktural (Inner Model)



Gambar 3. Inner Model

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

3. Multicollinearity Test (VIF)

Table 6. Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

Collinearity statistics (VIF) - Inner model - Matrix

	Collaborative Governance
Collaborative Governance	
Communication Quality	2.150
Stakeholder Trust	2.150

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

Based on Table 6, the VIF values for all predictor constructs on the dependent variable range from 2,150. All values are below 5,0, indicating that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables in the structural model. Therefore, each variable can explain the dependent variable specifically, and the path coefficient estimates in the model can be interpreted accurately.

4. Coefficient of Determination

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

R-square - Overview

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Collaborative Governance	0.572	0.565

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

The table shows that the R-square value for the Collaborative Governance/CG variable is 0,572, while the adjusted R-square is 0,565. These values indicate that 57,2% of the variation in Collaborative Governance/CG can be explained by Stakeholder Trust/ST and Communication Quality/CQ. It can be concluded that the structural model has moderate explanatory power, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study.

5. Effect Size (f-Square) (f 2)

Table 8. Effect Size (f-Square) (f2)

f-square - Matrix

	Collaborative Governance
Collaborative Governance	
Communication Quality	0.335
Stakeholder Trust	0.068

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

The effect size (f2) test was conducted to identify the contribution of each independent variable to the increase in the R-square value of the dependent variable. The test results in the table show that Stakeholder Trust/ST has an f 2 value of 0,068, which is classified as a small effect. Communication Quality/CQ has an f 2 value of 0,335, which is classified as a large effect. It can

be concluded that Communication Quality/CQ plays the most dominant role, while the other variables have a small to moderate effect on the significant increase in model strength.

6. Predictive Relevance (Q-Square) (Q2)

Table 9. Predictive Relevance (Q-Square) (Q2)

PLSpredict LV summary - PLS-SEM

	Q^2predict	RMSE	MAE
CG	0.543	0.687	0.533

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

The Predictive Relevance (Q2) value is obtained through the PLSpredict/CVPAT procedure to evaluate the predictive ability of the model. A Q2 value greater than 0 indicates that the model has strong predictive relevance. The table shows that the Q2 value for the Collaborative Governance/CG variable is 0,543. This value falls into the category of strong predictive relevance, meaning that the model is not only able to explain the sample data but also demonstrates good ability in predicting observational data.

7. Hypothesis Testing

Table 10. Path Coefficients

Path coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T values, p values — Copy to Excel/Word

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Communication Quality -> Collaborative ...	0.555	0.554	0.094	5.887	0.000
Stakeholder Trust -> Collaborative ...	0.249	0.256	0.108	2.298	0.022

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

Based on structural analysis, the equation Y = 0,249X1 + 0,555X2 was obtained, indicating that Collaborative Governance is positively influenced by Stakeholder Trust and Communication Quality, with Communication Quality having a more dominant influence. Hypothesis testing at a 5% significance level shows that Stakeholder Trust has a positive and significant effect on Collaborative Governance (t = 2,298; p = 0,022), thus the hypothesis is accepted. Similarly, Communication Quality has a positive and significant effect (t = 5,887; p = 0,000), thus the hypothesis is also accepted. These findings confirm that increased trust among stakeholders strengthens commitment and coordination, while clear and open communication more strongly promotes the effectiveness of collaborative governance in the Mandalika SEZ.

Table 11. Confidence Interval 97.5%

Path coefficients - Confidence intervals

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	2.5%	97.5%
Communication Quality -> Collaborative ...	0.555	0.554	0.371	0.739
Stakeholder Trust -> Collaborative ...	0.249	0.256	0.048	0.467

Source: Primary data processed in 2026

Based on the 97,5% Confidence Interval (CI) test, a relationship is considered significant if the interval range does not include zero. The results show that the effect of Stakeholder Trust on Collaborative Governance has a CI range of 0,048-0,467, all above zero, so it is declared positive and significant. Similarly, Communication Quality on Collaborative Governance has a CI range of 0,371-0,739, which is also entirely above zero and statistically significant. These findings confirm that the higher the level of trust and the better the quality of communication between stakeholders, the stronger the effectiveness of collaborative governance in the Mandalika SEZ. Overall, the CI results reinforce the hypothesis test findings that both variables have a positive and significant effect on collaborative governance.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that Stakeholder Trust and Communication Quality have a positive and significant effect on Collaborative Governance in the Mandalika SEZ. Empirically, Communication Quality has a more dominant influence than Stakeholder Trust, as reflected in the larger path coefficient value and stronger effect size value. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of collaborative governance is not only determined by the level of trust among stakeholders, but also heavily depends on the quality of communication established in the collaboration process. In the context of tourism area development involving various actors with diverse interests, clear, open, and consistent communication is a key factor in creating effective coordination and mutual understanding among parties.

These results are in line with the collaborative governance theory proposed by Ansell and Gash (2008), which states that trust between actors is an important foundation in building a sustainable collaboration process. Trust enables stakeholders to share information, reduce potential conflicts, and increase commitment to achieving common goals. The research findings are in line with Emerson and Nabatchi (2015), who emphasize that the success of a collaborative governance regime is greatly influenced by the quality of interaction and communication in the collective decision-making process. In this study, effective communication was proven to strengthen coordination, accelerate information exchange, and facilitate constructive dialogue among stakeholders.

In addition, the finding that Communication Quality has a greater influence than Stakeholder Trust shows that in the context of complex special economic zone governance involving various institutional actors, operational communication mechanisms play a more direct role in improving the effectiveness of collaboration. Transparent and responsive communication enables stakeholders to understand their respective roles, reduce misunderstandings, and strengthen cross-sector coordination processes. This is in line with empirical findings in tourism governance studies, which show that quality communication can improve the effectiveness of cooperation between actors and encourage synergy in tourism destination development (Nunkoo, 2017).

In practical terms, the results of this study imply that strengthening collaborative governance in the Mandalika SEZ needs to focus on improving the quality of communication between stakeholders, for example through regular coordination forums, policy information transparency, and inclusive dialogue mechanisms. On the other hand, building trust remains an important aspect that needs to be maintained through policy consistency, commitment to mutual agreements, and fair and open conflict resolution mechanisms. With a combination of effective communication and a high level of trust, collaboration between stakeholders can be more

synergistic, thereby increasing the effectiveness of tourism governance in the Mandalika SEZ.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of Stakeholder Trust and Communication Quality on Collaborative Governance in the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The results of the analysis using the PLS-SEM method show that both variables have a positive and significant effect on collaborative governance. Communication Quality has been proven to have a stronger influence than Stakeholder Trust in explaining the effectiveness of collaborative governance. The coefficient of determination value shows that more than half of the variation in collaborative governance can be explained by these two variables, indicating that the research model has a fairly good explanatory power.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the collaborative governance literature that emphasizes the importance of relational and communicative dimensions in the process of collaboration between stakeholders. In the context of tourism area development involving many actors with diverse interests, clear, open, and consistent communication has proven to be a major factor in strengthening coordination, enhancing mutual understanding, and encouraging synergy between stakeholders. Meanwhile, stakeholder trust continues to play an important role as a foundation that supports relationship stability and long-term commitment in the collaboration process. In practical terms, the results of this study indicate that strengthening the quality of communication between stakeholders needs to be a priority in the management of the Mandalika SEZ, for example through more structured coordination forums, policy information transparency, and inclusive dialogue mechanisms. On the other hand, efforts to build and maintain trust among stakeholders also need to be carried out continuously to maintain the sustainability of collaboration. This study still has limitations in the number of variables used and its cross-sectional research design, so further research is recommended to add other relevant variables and use a longitudinal approach in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of collaborative governance in special economic zones.

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