

The existence of bureaucratic network governance in optimizing the role of districts institution

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the existence of bureaucratic network governance in optimizing the role of district institutions in Kumelembuai District, South Minahasa Regency. The change in the status of the sub-district as a regional apparatus, following Law Number 23 of 2014, has shifted the sub-district's functions toward greater coordination. However, the district remains an important node in the delivery of government services, public services, and community empowerment. This research uses a qualitative approach, employing case study methods that include observation, interviews, and documentation. The study's results show that limited authority, a lack of human resources, and weak coordination across sectors are the main obstacles to optimizing district institutions. However, there are local initiatives, such as the appointment of district staff as acting village heads, that demonstrate leadership potential and adaptability in the bureaucracy. This research emphasizes the importance of strengthening governance within the bureaucratic network through training, competency adjustments, and broader delegation of authority. These findings are expected to make a significant contribution to formulating policies that strengthen district institutional capacity in the era of regional autonomy.

Keywords: governance, bureaucratic network, institutional capacity

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Introduction

The shift in the district's position from the regional apparatus to the District apparatus is a significant step toward broader implementation of regional autonomy, as mandated by Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government (Aminah, 2020). The implementation of regional decentralization policies signifies a fundamental change in the institutional architecture of local government, particularly concerning the status of the district. This redefinition transforms the role of the district head from an administrative territorial authority into a Regional Government Apparatus of the Regency/Municipality, explicitly mandated to receive the delegation of partial autonomous authorities from the Regional Head. This strategic position is designed to optimize the efficiency of public services and accelerate the implementation of regional autonomy at the local level, thus establishing it as a crucial issue in the study of public administration and governance (Yusuf, 2025; Simanjuntak, 2015). In his new position, the district not only carries out administrative functions but also serves as a channel for the community's aspirations in its work area (Surya & Suhardi, 2024). This provides space for districts to be at the forefront of responding to the needs and dynamics of the community, while strengthening the implementation of regional autonomy, which

is oriented towards improving community welfare at the regency/city level. Districts, as the leading government units, play a strategic role in regulating general government affairs and public services and serve as a coordination node across the regional and village apparatus. However, in practice, the existence of districts as institutional institutions is often not optimal, both in terms of bureaucratic governance and in building coordination networks between institutions (Darmayadi, 2023; Netti & Erianjoni, 2023; Sakir, 2024).

Although the district has a strategic position as an extension of the district/city government at the regional level, in practice, its institutional role often does not operate optimally. This is reflected in weaknesses in internal bureaucratic governance, including a lack of capacity within the apparatus, a limited operational budget, and a lack of authority to make strategic decisions (Rismawati & Rafiie, 2022; Hulu, 2022; A'yun, 2025). In addition, the district also faces challenges in building effective coordination networks with cross-sector agencies and with village governments. This lack of synergy affects the slow response to local issues and the low effectiveness of public services, ultimately weakening districts' position as nodes of government coordination in their areas (Yusuf, 2024).

In this case, the need for efforts to strengthen the district institution, as formulated in this study, it is interpreted that the district still needs its presence in the future as a developing government institution, at least continuing to carry out its functions, including: Government Functions, in the form of public services and the implementation of government in the district. The development function consists of coordination and facilitation nodes for the operation of the agency's technical implementation units in district and district areas. The function of the community is operationalized as a center for complaints and the resolution of social problems, addressing various issues faced by the community. Community Empowerment is implemented by stimulating self-help activities at the district level, empowering the community. Thus, the district institution becomes optimal, with the district continuing to focus on these functions.

In a decentralized government setting, improving the capacity of district-level institutions is essential to make local government functions run effectively. This is important because challenges in resource distribution, capacity building, and community participation often emerge during the delivery of basic public services at the grassroots level (Suripatty & Edyanto, 2023). The central issue in contemporary public administration is the transition from the traditional hierarchical bureaucratic model toward the network governance model. Within the decentralization framework, local government bureaucracies, including the district apparatus, are confronted with the demand to cease operating in isolation. Instead, they must interact intensively with sectoral government units and non-state actors (Levesque et al., 2017). Bureaucratic network governance is within the district constitutes an essential variable in optimizing four primary functions: namely, the function of governance, development, public service delivery, and community empowerment. This is particularly critical when considering crucial issues related to decentralization, which include: (1) The fragmentation of authority across Regional Government Apparatus Organizations (OPDs), (2) Inconsistency in the implementation of Public Service Standards (PSS), and (3) The institutional capacity of the district head in managing cross-sectoral coordination networks.

This network governance approach becomes crucial for addressing complex public issues, often termed as wicked problems, which frequently transcend formal

jurisdictional boundaries (Imperial et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the implementation of this network model poses significant challenges for local bureaucracies, particularly concerning horizontal coordination, accountability, and the fragmentation of authority (Han et al., 2025). The delegation of authority to the District Head is frequently poorly integrated, creating a dilemma where the District Head possesses only limited coordination authority, while the functional authorities remain centralized within the sectoral agencies. This condition directly influences the bureaucratic network capacity of the district, specifically the ability of Civil Servants to establish and manage effective collaborative relationships in order to optimize the four mandated governmental functions. Consequently, the implementation of bureaucratic network governance in Kumelembuai Regency is expected to optimize the role of the district amidst the challenges of inter-organizational coordination and the accountability dilemma of local bureaucracy (Mudhoffar et al., 2025).

Through a network approach, districts no longer operate sectorally and separately but become coordination nodes that connect various government actors, technical units, and the community. Integration between actors in the bureaucratic network allows for improving the quality of public services through cross-agency coordination (government function), effectiveness of regional development facilitation (development function), rapid response to social problems (community function), and strengthening citizen participation (empowerment function). Thus, the governance of the bureaucratic network is an important foundation for ensuring that the district functions optimally as an adaptive, collaborative, and responsive institutional node at the grassroots level.

Bureaucratic network governance is important to analyze because it illustrates the extent to which coordination, communication, and synergy between institutions can run effectively (Muriany & Ruhunlela, 2021; Nurnawati, 2024; Elazhari & Siregar, 2025). The selection of Kumelembuai District as the location for the research was based on several contextual and strategic considerations that underscore its high relevance to the issue of bureaucratic network governance and the optimization of the district's institutional role. The selection of Kumelembuai District as the research location is predicated upon strategic considerations that underscore its high relevance to the issues of bureaucratic network governance and the optimization of institutional roles. Geographically, Kumelembuai district is a district within Minahasa Selatan Regency, primarily consisting of rural areas with complex social and administrative characteristics. This complexity is empirically verified by 2023 data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), which indicates a high degree of socio-economic vulnerability, evidenced by a Poverty Rate of 15.5% (exceeding the regency average) and significant Geographic Disparity, where 60% of the villages in Kumelembuai district are classified as difficult-to-reach rural areas (BPS, 2023). This profile establishes the location as an ideal case study for examining governance under challenging conditions.

Within the context of regional autonomy implementation, an analysis of the Minahasa Selatan Regency Local Government Agency Performance Report (LKjIP) for 2023 indicates that Kumelembuai district faces significant implementation challenges. The findings regarding these challenges, extracted as secondary/primary data from the official regional report, encompass: (1) Limited apparatus resources (as the ideal staff ratio is only 55% achieved, according to workload analysis). (2) Insufficient cross-sectoral coordination in program execution. (3) Low delegation of substantive authority from the regency government. This assertion is substantiated by quantitative empirical data, such as the percentage of village development budget absorption, which reached

only 62% by the end of Quarter IV, and the Community Satisfaction Index (CSI) for district public services, which stood at 2.90 (categorized as unsatisfactory) as of December 2023 (Minsel, 2023). These factors directly impede the effectiveness of public service delivery and village development.

In addition, initial observations indicate that the frequency of interaction and coordination between Kumelembuai Regency and other regional agencies remains low, both in development planning forums and in cross-institutional activities. This makes Kumelembuai a potential regional representative that warrants further study to identify obstacles and opportunities to strengthen the district's institutional role. By using Kumelembuai as a case study, this research is expected to provide an accurate empirical picture and produce policy recommendations that can be applied to strengthen the governance of bureaucratic networks at the district level, not only in South Minahasa but also in other areas with similar conditions.

The formulation of the problem in this study is: How does the existence of bureaucratic network governance optimize the role of district institutions in Kumelembuai Regency? Meanwhile, the purpose of this study is to analyze the existing forms of bureaucratic network governance and evaluate the extent to which this governance supports the strengthening of district institutions in carrying out their roles. The urgency of this research lies in the need to strengthen the district institutional structure as a node of government that can bridge planning and services between districts and villages. In the midst of the demands for bureaucratic reform and efficient public services, strengthening the bureaucratic network is one of the keys to realizing districts that are adaptive and responsive to local dynamics. Without a strong and coordinated bureaucratic network, districts will tend to become weak administrative entities in strategic decision-making.

Several previous studies have confirmed that bureaucratic networks significantly influence the effectiveness of government organizations. For example, Dwijayanti (2021) research shows that the governance of bureaucratic networks built on cross-sectoral collaboration can accelerate the implementation of regional policies. Meanwhile, a study by Dewi, (2019) revealed that weak network connections between districts and technical agencies lead to overlapping authority and asynchronous public services. Not only in Indonesia, the results of Mensah et al., (2024) research on district governments in Ghana (UTAZ Councils) show that limited resources, a lack of workforce, and low institutional capacity affect service effectiveness. Research by (Yang, 2024) underscores the importance of network governance at the grassroots level, using the "Five Chiefs System" model in Chongqing, China. The study highlights how urban governance innovation can develop through a network governance approach, which places inter-stakeholder relationships, cross-sector coordination, and interdependence as the key to the effectiveness of governance, where the success of governance is not only determined by a hierarchical bureaucratic structure, but also by the ability to build collaborative networks between stakeholders.

In South Minahasa, limited research has specifically examined bureaucratic network governance at the district level, particularly from an institutional perspective. Therefore, this study is important for analyzing and rethinking how bureaucratic networks should be structured at the district level in order to strengthen the role of districts as strategic institutional actors. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the formulation of policies that strengthen the institutional capacity of the district, including regulations, human resources, and coordination mechanisms between institutions so that this research is relevant to strengthen research on the governance

of bureaucratic networks in optimizing the role of districts institutionally, especially in the context of increasing the effectiveness of coordination and synergy between government units at the local level.

Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to achieve an in-depth understanding of how the existence of bureaucratic network governance optimizes the institutional role of the district. This approach was selected to intensively explore the phenomenon (governance and capacity issues) within a real and confined context, allowing for a comparison across case units, namely Kumelembuai District, Tenga, and Amurang Barat in Minahasa Selatan Regency which exhibit variations in geography and HR allocation (Nurahma, GA, & Hendriani, 2021). Qualitative research methods, with a case study approach, are used to explain the research focus and address the problem formulated: how the existence of bureaucratic network governance optimizes the role of district institutions in Kumelembuai District. The key informants for this research were determined through purposive sampling technique, selected based on the relevance of their position and the richness of their information concerning the research focus. The informants chosen were not merely the institutions in general, but specific individuals, such as the District Head of Kumelembuai District (as the principal implementer), the Head of the Organization Division of the Regional Secretariat (as the formulator of delegation policies), and the Head of the General Services Section (as the source of empirical technical data) and the community.

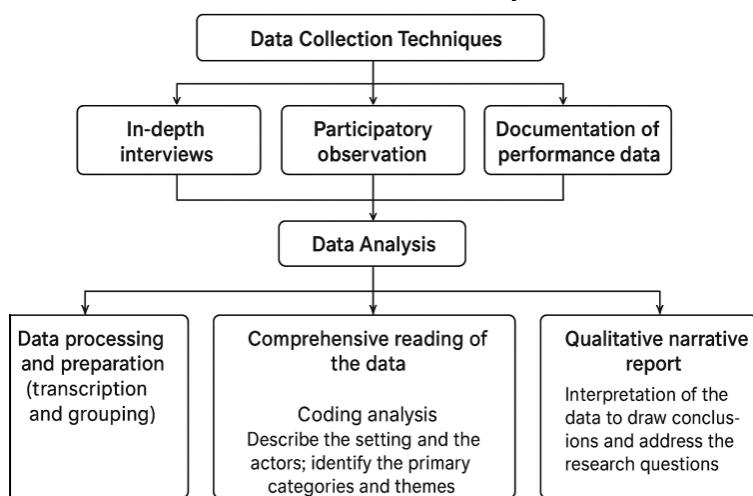


Figure 1. Data Collection Techniques

Source: Researcher's Data

Data collection techniques comprised in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and the documentation of performance data. Subsequently, the data were systematically analyzed using an interactive model of thematic analysis, manually conducted by the researchers. The data analysis flow began with verbatim transcription. The process continued with a comprehensive reading of the data (familiarization). The researchers then applied coding analysis developed inductively (bottom-up) to describe the setting and the actors, and to identify the labels (codes) emerging directly from the data. These codes were grouped into categories and subsequently integrated into the core research themes, which were developed deductively from the network governance theoretical framework. The results of the analysis are presented in a qualitative narrative report, culminating in the interpretation of the data. The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through source triangulation and Member Checking, while Ethical

Approval (IRB) and Informed Consent were guaranteed to meet ethical compliance and confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

This research adopts the concept of Bureaucratic Network Governance, which is defined as a non-hierarchical coordination mechanism where the district interacts with other public and non-public actors through collaborative relationships, resource interdependence, and trust, distinguishing it from market- or hierarchical-based coordination (Rhodes, 2017). This network approach is believed to be more effective as it can overcome the fragmentation of authority and manage the wicked problems faced by the Four Institutional Functions of the District (Governance, Development, Service Delivery, and Empowerment), which require resources from various agencies (Slayton, 2021). Theoretically, the effectiveness of the district lies in its capacity to manage and utilize these networks to facilitate the horizontal flow of information and decisions, where a strong network structure can multiply the positive impact of skilled staff, or even compensate for limited individual capacity through collaborative support (Goldsmith & Eggers in Tukijan, 2024). Therefore, this conceptual framework explicitly links the analysis of the network level (structure, coordination mechanisms, relational capacity) with individual-level competence to examine the conditions under which networks can optimally enhance public service efficiency and regional institutional accountability.

In analyzing the problems related to the existence of bureaucratic network governance for optimizing the institutional role of the district in Kumelembuai, the authors refer to the concept of district government functions as proposed by Ryas Rasyid (Tukijan, 2024). This bureaucratic network governance approach is fundamentally based on the division of governmental functions into four principal categories: (1) the public service function, (2) the development function, (3) the community empowerment function, and (4) the regulatory function. Research findings indicate that the existence of institutional bureaucratic network governance in Kumelembuai District encounters significant constraints. The primary constraint stems from the limited functional (delegated) authority of the District Head, which, in practice, is restricted solely to the coordination of general governmental affairs. This condition confirms a significant shift in the pattern of authority following the enactment of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government. Law No. 23/2014 explicitly positions the district as a Regional Government Apparatus Organization (OPD), institutionally equivalent to other sectoral organizations. However, the implication is that the District Head's attributed authority is now strictly limited to coordination functions within their territory, while the substantive authority to execute the four main functions (service, development, empowerment, and regulation) is entirely dependent upon the delegated authority from the Regent or Mayor. It is this limitation in delegated function that impedes the district's ability to undertake effective interventions outside of its coordination mandate.

Apart from the changes in the District Head's authority pattern, Law Number 23 of 2014 also altered the hierarchical relationship between the village and district government levels. Based on this Law, the Village is accountable to the Regent or Mayor, and this accountability is coordinated through the District Head, rather than being directly accountable to the Regional Head via the Regional Secretary. The position of the District Head and the institutional role of the district will function optimally when substantive authority is delegated from the Regional Head to the

district, particularly in the management of licensing or development affairs that require the integration of authorities. According to Ishak (2020), Bureaucratic governance is intrinsically linked to efforts aimed at creating an efficient and effective government, which ultimately enables the state apparatus to deliver optimal public services. Based on this perspective, innovation and initiative in managing bureaucratic network governance constitute a crucial aspect. In Kumelembuai District, despite the District Head's attributed authority being limited to coordination functions, institutional optimization can still be achieved by reinforcing an adaptive bureaucratic network governance system

The implementation of the governmental, public service, and community empowerment functions at the district level is reflected through the practices of bureaucratic network governance. Based on secondary data, Kumelembuai District comprises eight villages: Kumelembuai Satu, Kumelembuai, Kumelembuai Atas, Kumelembuai Dua, Malola, Malola Satu, Makasili, and Makasili Lolombulan. The operation of bureaucratic network governance is indicated by the appointment of district staff as Interim Village Heads (Penjabat Kepala Desa/Hukum Tua), who fill leadership vacancies at the village level. While this reflects resource limitations at the village level, the appointment also demonstrates the District Head's organizational and bureaucratic leadership capacity to occupy and manage the immediate governance network, thereby providing a new impetus for the institutional optimization of district functions.

Research findings confirm that the implementation of the institutional functions of the District (Governance, Development, Service Delivery, and Empowerment) is currently in a dilemma due to the implementation of Law Number 23 of 2014. This Law repositions the district as a Regional Government Apparatus Organization (OPD), institutionally equivalent to sectoral agencies. This dilemma results in a major constraint for Bureaucratic Network Governance: District Head's authority, in terms of attributed authority (obtained by virtue of office), is limited to general coordination, while the substantive authority for the execution of the Four Functions relies solely on delegated authority from the Regent. This limitation inhibits the capacity of Kumelembuai District to undertake effective interventions outside of the coordination mandate, despite efforts to innovate through adaptive systems (Ishak et al., 2020). Evidence from Kumelembuai (Table 1, the assignment of staff as Interim Village Heads/Pj. Kepala Desa) demonstrates that the District Head utilizes his bureaucratic leadership capacity to manage the village governance network at the lower level, yet this action also indicates resource capacity vulnerability at both the village and the district levels itself (Nur, F. A., & Wardani, 2024).

Table 1. Bureaucratic Network Governance

No	District Staff	Village
1.	Rommy Rumengan	Acting Old Law/Makasili Village Head, Lolombulan
2.	Jenly Sinaulan	Acting Legal Elder/Head of Malola Village
3.	In Meibie Sangian	Acting Old Law/Makasili Village Head
4.	Jen Rantung	Acting Elders / Head of Malola Village 1

Source: Researcher's Data

Table 1 (which presents data on district staff simultaneously serving as Interim Village Heads) illustrates the limited capacity and organizational vulnerability in executing bureaucratic duties and functions within Kumelembuai District. According to Thoha, in (Nur, F. A., & Wardani, 2024), the bureaucracy plays a strategic role in executing governmental functions, which encompass: (1) translating public policy into

tangible action, (2) providing public services (administration, health, etc.), (3) coordinating and supervising programs, (4) managing resources, and (5) contributing to long-term development planning. In the context of Kumelembuai District, staff capacity is a decisive factor in ensuring that all these functions are executed optimally and professionally. Nevertheless, empirical findings reveal that the limitation of apparatus resources (the ideal staff ratio being only 55% achieved) and the low Community Satisfaction Index (CSI of 2.90) directly impede the district bureaucracy's ability to fulfill Thoha's strategic role. This capacity constraint compels the District Head to reassign staff as Interim Village Heads, which indicates a resource vulnerability that consequently impacts the performance within the district office itself.

An effective bureaucratic pattern in governance plays a crucial role in maintaining organizational stability, facilitating the development process, bridging the interests between the government and the community, and ensuring that the enforcement of laws and regulations is executed optimally (Fatah Hidayat, 2023). To assess this effectiveness, it is crucial to review the organizational behavior underlying how individuals and groups operate within the bureaucratic system. Structurally, bureaucracy is defined as a form of rational organization designed to achieve specific objectives through a clear division of tasks and responsibilities, supported by structured working mechanisms. Therefore, bureaucratic behavior is inseparable from how the organization is managed. The behavior of every individual Civil Servant within the bureaucratic system will directly influence the overall effectiveness and productivity of the organization in fulfilling its mandate.

Public organizations, such as the district, are established with a formal structure designed to regulate how each apparatus operates in accordance with defined functions and responsibilities. Within this framework, organizational behavior serves as a reflection of the extent to which individual apparatuses can adapt to the work system, comprehend their specific roles, and collaborate effectively with colleagues to achieve the primary objective: public service delivery. Therefore, comprehending organizational behavior constitutes the foundation for optimizing district staff capacity. Positive behaviors such as discipline, effective communication, teamwork, and a service orientation can significantly enhance bureaucratic performance. It is important to note that government organizations at the district level must be viewed not merely as rigid administrative structures, but also as a complex arena of social interaction, where interpersonal dynamics directly influence the apparatus's mode of operation and, ultimately, the overall organizational productivity.

Individual behavior within an organization is not solely determined by the personal capabilities of the apparatus, but is also significantly influenced by the prevailing work environment and organizational culture. The capacity of district staff will only develop optimally if their work environment is supportive. A supportive environment in this context implies the existence of open communication between leadership and subordinates, alongside genuine opportunities for the apparatus to innovate in executing their duties. This constant interaction between the individual and their environment is what shapes diverse patterns of bureaucratic behavior. These behavioral pattern differences, in turn, can affect the overall level of bureaucratic effectiveness. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of organizational behavior is the essential key to managing and optimally developing the potential of human resources (HR) within the governmental bureaucracy.

In the context of Kumelembuai District, staff capacity constitutes a crucial factor

in the effective execution of bureaucratic duties and functions. Personnel possessing adequate technical capability, a positive attitude, and high motivation are key to translating government policy into tangible actions that are directly perceived by the community. Conversely, unsupportive behaviors, such as low discipline or poor internal coordination, can severely impede the achievement of organizational objectives and lead to inefficiency. Therefore, fostering sound organizational behavior must be the primary focus in the strategy for strengthening district staff capacity. Through these efforts including the creation of a conducive work environment, the reinforcement of accountability, and the enhancement of the apparatus's interpersonal and professional skills bureaucratic performance in Kumelembuai can be maximized to deliver public services that are more effective, responsive, and oriented toward community needs.

It is undeniable that the capability of the apparatus constitutes the main priority in the execution of governance at the district level, given that the district is the front office government institution for serving the community. Whether in Kumelembuai District, Tenga, or Amurang Barat, the starting point for successful governance execution is highly dependent on the capacity of the bureaucrats, specifically the Civil Servants. Bureaucratic capacity here refers to the technical administrative capabilities possessed by the employees. Adequate technical capability will simplify and streamline various affairs within the district, particularly concerning public service delivery. As emphasized by Huda (2024), the presence and performance of the government at the district level are highly contingent upon the effectiveness of administrative execution within the district office. Consequently, administrative efficiency serves as the principal benchmark of success, simultaneously forming the foundation for the strengthening and development of district governance. The execution of district functions must be a serious priority for the local government. Data obtained reveals that the number of Civil Servants assigned to each district office in the study locations (Kumelembuai District, Tenga, and Amurang Barat) exhibits variations, reflecting differences in staffing needs and Human Resources (HR) allocation.

Based on preliminary observations, differences in the number of Civil Servants across the case study districts of Kumelembuai, Amurang Barat, and Tenga are closely related to the strategic position and historical development of each area. In Kumelembuai District, the relatively higher number of Civil Servants can be explained by its substantial demographic and institutional workload. The district has a significantly larger population than the average district in Manado City, even though it is administratively part of South Minahasa, which increases the volume and complexity of government affairs that must be handled. In addition, Kumelembuai functions as an educational hub, as it hosts the largest university in North Sulawesi. The presence of this institution contributes to more complex administrative and non-regulatory service demands, despite the university itself being formally located in Manado.

Conversely, West Amurang and Tenga District's show differences in the allocation of civil servants due to historical administrative factors. Both districts are newly developed expansion territories (*wilayah pemekaran*) created in 2012. As a consequence of this expansion, The number of civil servant personnel available in the District must be divided and allocated in a limited manner to these two new districts. The resulting contextual difference between a long-established district with a high workload (Kumelembuai) versus the relatively recent expansion districts (Amurang Barat and Tenga), creates a disparity in the allocation of human resources. For greater clarity, The number of civil servants in each district can be seen in the following table:

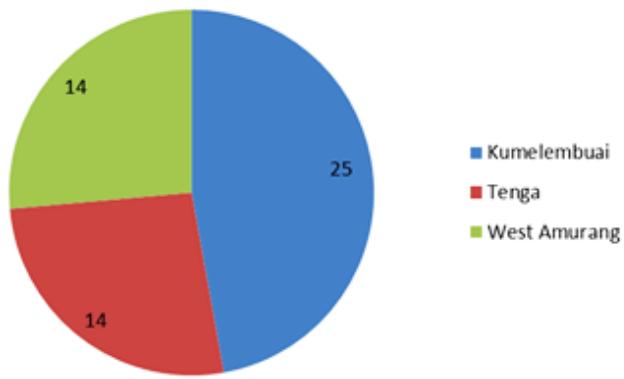


Figure 2. Number of civil servants in Kumelembuai District, Tenga District, West Amurang District

Source: Researcher's Data

Empirical data reveals a pronounced disparity in the allocation of Civil Servants across the three districts under investigation. Specifically, Kumelembuai District employs the largest number of civil servants, totaling 25 personnel. Conversely, Tenga and West Amurang District's have the same allocation, namely 14 Civil Servants each. Theoretically, based on the larger staff complement, Kumelembuai District should possess the capacity to accelerate service delivery to meet community needs efficiently. However, the research findings indicate a contradiction, as the service processes in Kumelembuai do not meet expectations. A concrete example of this inefficiency is observed in the processing of critical documents, such as building establishment certificates and district approval letters for community-proposed businesses. These administrative processes, which should be expeditious, frequently consume a disproportionate amount of time extending up to several days or even more than a week before the required documentation is received by the public. This reality underscores that the quantitative capacity of Human Resources (number of civil servants) does not necessarily correlate positively with the effectiveness and speed of public service delivery.

Information obtained from the field indicates that several constraints experienced by the community when handling affairs at the district office originate from internal bureaucratic inefficiency and communication issues, although formal concerns regarding the completeness of the documents processed by the community also contribute as a hindering factor. Formally, requirements for document completeness and validity must be strictly adhered to, given the subsequent demands for accountability and auditing by the Inspectorate. Consequently, the public's expectation for service acceleration is often impeded by necessary verification processes. However, the significant time delays and service quality issues are primarily caused by internal factors. Misunderstandings and a discontinuity of communication frequently occur during the service process, where the citizen submitting the documents and the apparatus following up on the documents are not always the same person. This disparity in information relay among the apparatus leads to varied responses and creates confusion within the community. In addition to Human Resources (HR) and communication problems, the findings also confirm that the limited capability of facilities and infrastructure (technical equipment) at the district office must be acknowledged as still falling short of the ideal standards required to support the provision of fast and modern public services.

Meanwhile, in Amurang Barat District and Tenga, the research found that each district office employs only 14 personnel. This limited number of staff indicates that the

execution of various community-initiated affairs frequently encounters constraints. Staff limitation is a major factor causing the community to experience difficulties in accessing services easily and promptly. Meanwhile, based on field observation and secondary studies, Amurang Barat District is recognized as one of the districts within Minahasa Selatan Regency. Amurang Barat District comprises 8 villages (desa) and 2 districts (kelurahan), collectively referred to as the output. This district is unique compared to Kumelembuai and Tenga as it possesses archipelagic characteristics, with some villages located on Bunaken Island. From the perspective of education services, Amurang Barat District is acknowledged to have a role, yet this role is coordinative and facilitative in supporting the provision of basic and secondary education within its territory. The relationship with the bureaucrats (teachers) is strictly within the context of territorial coordination and the implementation of the technical policies set by the Education Agency (Dinas Pendidikan), rather than the direct supervision of their functional duties. This can be observed in the presence of bureaucrats, in this case teachers, because they fulfill their primary duties and functions. The research findings indicate that, in terms of staff quantity, the situation remains inadequate. Furthermore, the average residence of the employees is not on Bunaken Island but in the mainland districts of Manado City. This has a consequence on the staff attendance rate at the District Office, as the average attendance rate is also unsatisfactory. Consequently, critical affairs, such as the management of domicile certificates and business permit certificates, are often conducted outside the office premises. Information obtained suggests that the majority of transactions are carried out at the Mayor's Office or even at the harbor, which points to a service dysfunction at the designated district office location.

The results of the interview indicated that, The effectiveness of public services in Amurang Barat District and Tenga is impeded by disparity in Human Resources (HR) capacity and contextual constraints. In Amurang Barat District, the current number of employees is considered insufficient given the geographical complexity of the region. Work visits to archipelagic villages (e.g., on Bunaken Island), which require access via motorboat (a travel time of approximately 30 minutes round-trip), significantly impact staff attendance and availability at the district office. Furthermore, natural phenomena, such as changes in weather and sea waves, frequently disrupt the service process. Consequently, important administrative affairs sometimes must be settled outside the district office (e.g., at the Mayor's Office or the harbor), indicating a service dysfunction at the front office. Meanwhile, in Tenga District, which possesses a limited number of employees, service delivery to meet community needs is reported to require more than one week. This time inefficiency is exacerbated by issues of service information inconsistency. If a temporary staff change occurs due to the absence of the primary person in charge, the information provided to the community often varies and differs from previous explanations. This disparity in information relay causes confusion among service users and directly disrupts their daily activities and the smooth processing of their requests. Both cases affirm that HR limitations, combined with geographical challenges (Amurang Barat) and internal communication disruption (Tenga), are the primary impediments to the optimization of public services at the district level.

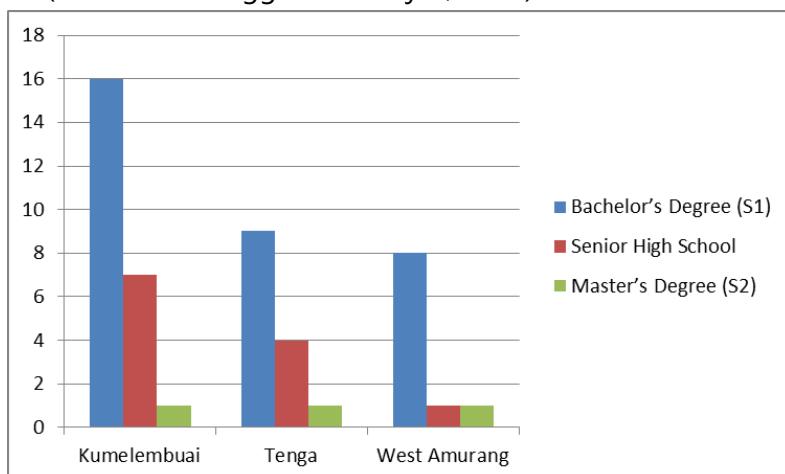
The comparative analysis across the three study locations reveals that the quantitative capacity of Human Resources (HR) does not correlate positively with service effectiveness and speed.

Tabel 2. Comparative Analysis Across the Three Locations

District	Number of Civil Servants (Quantitative)	Key Characteristics	Service Performance Indicators (Qualitative)
Kumelembuai	25	Demographic Workload & Educational Hub.	Convoluted processes (bureaucratic complexity), requiring more than one week for Building Permits (IMB)/Business Letters (Contradiction of Quantity vs. Performance).
Amurang Barat	14	Archipelagic Geography (Bunaken).	Service dysfunction: Frequently conducted outside the office (at the harbor) due to staff presence issues stemming from weather and logistical challenges.
Tenga	14	New Administrative Expansion Territory.	Time inefficiency (more than one week) is exacerbated by information inconsistency due to temporary staff rotation.

Source: Researcher's Data

Kumelembuai District despite possessing the highest number of Civil Servants (25 personnel), driven by demographic workload and the presence of educational institutions exhibits the worst inefficiency in critical document processing. This substantiates that internal structural factors (coordination, SOPs) and the qualitative aspects of Human Resources (technical competence) are far more crucial than the mere quantity of staff (Goldsmith & Eggers in Tukijan, 2024).

**Figure 3.** Distribution of Formal Educational Qualifications

Source: Researcher's Data

Based on interview results, constraints in public service delivery in Tenga District are largely attributable to job expansion (perluasan jabatan) which necessitates adjustments in work processes and human resource allocation. However, the core issue lies in the finding that the technical capability of the employees is deemed inadequate, which has dramatic implications for the efficiency of administrative service processes. The capability of the personnel, particularly the Civil Servants involved in services across Kumelembuai District, Amurang Barat, and Tenga, is acknowledged as a critical success factor (Huda, 2024). This ability is often assumed to be reflected in the level of formal education of State Civil Apparatus. Available data shows that the qualifications of civil servants in the three districts are dominated by Bachelor's degree (S1) level. The distribution of formal educational qualifications is as follows figure 3.

Although there is a dominance of Bachelor's degree qualifications, empirical findings regarding service inefficiency indicate a disparity between formal educational qualifications and the mastery of technical competence and administrative skills necessary to implement effective bureaucratic network governance at the district level. The reality of employee capability is viewed as a detrimental situation in the context of service acceleration and the effectiveness of governance execution. This limitation in capability, which is partially contributed by formal educational background, presents a serious problem requiring urgent attention from the local government, particularly concerning Human Resources (HR) management that is closely linked to regional development. The quality of service processes at the district level cannot be separated from the local government's strategic role in ensuring HR readiness.

Currently, the high public demand for fast, accurate services and the implementation of transparent governance must be met with optimal readiness from the bureaucratic human resources. However, field findings indicate that the local bureaucracy is not fully responsive to these demands. Despite this condition, there has been no significant change in service quality, which often disadvantages the community. Interview results with citizens processing various documents (such as district letters and Building Permit) empirically prove that the services provided tend to be convoluted (bureaucratic). Furthermore, when submitting letters for business purposes, the public is often asked to return repeatedly without receiving substantive changes in information from the Civil Servants. Regarding the provision of public information, this condition explicitly signals that the employees' technical capability is severely lacking; indeed, in some functions, competent technical personnel are unavailable, consequently causing detriment to the community.

Based on the personnel data obtained, it can be seen that socialization and training activities related to the implementation of administrative technicalities, including understanding standard operating procedures (SOPs) and employee backgrounds before placement, have not been the local government's main priority. This claim is supported by empirical data indicating that the average technical training attended by District Civil Servants is less than 1 time per year (BPSDM Minsel Report, 2023). This condition directly reflects the weak attention paid to Human Resources (HR) capacity building at the district level. The resulting problems are closely linked to the employees' limited capabilities, particularly in terms of knowledge, technical competence, and administrative skills. Based on the personnel data obtained, it appears that technical socialization and training activities (including the understanding of Standard Operating Procedures/SOPs and the alignment of placements with employee backgrounds) have not been a primary priority for the local government. The impact of this low capacity is a reduced responsiveness in providing public services, which is a key indicator of low bureaucratic effectiveness. This is manifested in the slow pace of service processes at the district office, exacerbated by a lack of clear and standardized service guidelines. Consequently, service department employees frequently receive complaints from the public due to delays or inaccuracies in following up on administrative issues, underlined the need for serious investment in developing the technical capabilities of the State Civil Service.

The lack of computer literacy and skills among employees constitutes a significant fundamental issue. Findings indicate that the majority of the staff have not mastered basic office applications, such as Microsoft Excel, which are essential for supporting modern, data-driven administrative processes. This competence deficiency creates various serious constraints in the effort to implement digital-based systems (e-

government), which are conceptually designed to accelerate and enhance service delivery efficiency. This condition collectively signals that employee adaptability and innovation factors are not yet fully developed. Furthermore, interviews indicate that this dysfunction extends to the formal bureaucratic process. In the service delivery process, particularly concerning the issuance of business certificates, Building Permits (IMB), and documents requiring the District Head's signature, completion is frequently delayed. Documents that should be processed comprehensively are often not fully followed up within a single work cycle, forcing the public to wait beyond the standard service time. To overcome these protracted process hurdles, employees in some cases must first consult with their direct supervisors to determine the resolution steps, which indicates a lack of operational delegation of authority or uncertainty in the application of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The misalignment of employee placement with their competence and the minimal relevant experience found are primary inhibiting factors. This condition directly impacts the staff's limited ability to deliver fast, accurate, and precise services. The primary constraints in service delivery and Bureaucratic Network Governance across the three study locations stem from the following:

Internal Communication Dysfunction (Network Level)

In all three Districts, particularly Kumelembuai and Tenga, discontinuity and inconsistency of service information frequently occur among the apparatus. The public is often asked to return repeatedly without substantive changes in information, indicating a weakness in communication networks and knowledge transfer among staff (especially during temporary changes in the person-in-charge).

Disparity in Technical Competence (Individual Level)

Although data shows a dominance of Bachelor's degree (S1) formal qualifications across all three Districts (including Kumelembuai, Tenga, and Amurang Barat), empirical findings confirm a significant disparity between formal qualifications and the mastery of technical competence and administrative skills. (a) Minimal Training: The average District Civil Servant attends technical training less than 1 time per year (BPSDM Minsel Report, 2023), which directly shows the low priority of local governments towards building the capacity of State Civil Apparatus. (b) Limited Computer Literacy: The majority of staff have not mastered basic applications such as Microsoft Excel, impeding efforts to implement e-government and modern administrative processes. (c) Mismatched Placement: The existence of misalignment between placement and individual competence exacerbates performance (Firdausijah & Priatna, 2020), particularly in Amurang Barat, where geographical challenges demand staff with high initiative and logistical management skills.

These findings are reinforced by the perspective of the citizens/service users interviewed. Interviews with residents empirically proved that the services provided tend to be convoluted (convolutional) and frequently force them to process documents (Building Permits/IMB, Business Letters) beyond the stipulated standard time. This issue is aggravated by the unclear procedures and the absence of competent technical personnel in several functions. In Amurang Barat, service dysfunction reached its peak when affairs had to be finalized outside the office (at the Harbor/Mayor's Office), indicating a functional failure of the District's front office due to a combination of HR limitations and geographical challenges.

Within the framework of organizational behavior, Firdausijah & Priatna (2020), emphasizes that competence constitutes the essential individual capacity to execute

various tasks within a job. Hence, the capability of employees, particularly Civil Servants, is the determinant factor in establishing the success of district organizations in finalizing administrative affairs. In the context of Kumelembuai District, Amurang Barat, and Tenga, employee capacity is the starting point for bureaucratic success in achieving practical public service goals. If employee capacity is enhanced through appropriate strategies (training, mentoring, and placement aligned with competence), the public service process will operate more efficiently. This enhancement will provide benefits to the community in the form of faster, more transparent, and accountable services. Ultimately, the improvement of this individual capability will serve as the foundation for regional development and the sustainable improvement of community welfare.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the implementation of bureaucratic network governance in Kumelembuai Regency is hampered by various structural and functional challenges, mainly due to the limited authority of the district following the enactment of Law No. 23 of 2014. The function of the district is now more coordinated, so that institutional optimization is highly dependent on local initiatives and delegation of authority from regional heads. However, the appointment of district staff to Old Legal Tasks in several villages is proof of the local bureaucracy's capacity to respond to service needs. However, findings on the ground also show that service quality is constrained by a limited number of employees, low technical competence, and a lack of training and the use of technology. This gap also exists in Tenga and West Amurang Regencies, especially in terms of the number of human resources, education level, and service effectiveness. Therefore, increasing the capacity of the apparatus, aligning competencies, and giving serious attention to the district functions of the local government are essential to support efficient and responsive public services and to strengthen the role of the district in overall regional development.

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