



Building Bureaucratic Capacity for Improved Public Service Quality in Makassar City, Indonesia

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Abstract

The shift toward regional autonomy in Indonesia aims to bring public services closer to the community, with the expectation of improving service quality and ensuring that the benefits are felt by all stakeholders. However, local governments continue to face significant challenges in meeting the growing demand for high-quality public services, especially in crucial sectors such as clean water, health, population management, and licensing. This research evaluates the bureaucratic capacity of Makassar City, South Sulawesi, from 2020 to 2024, using a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis. Data was gathered through interviews with 12 key informants and secondary sources, including official documentation. The analysis reveals that the public service performance in Makassar does not meet community expectations, mainly due to limitations in the local government's bureaucratic capacity. These limitations include insufficient personal, organizational, and system capacities, weak political will, and low community engagement. The study concludes that improving bureaucratic capacity is essential for enhancing public service delivery. To address these challenges, the study proposes four key policy recommendations: 1) Developing a strategic plan for bureaucratic capacity building, 2) Innovating government policies to better meet community needs, 3) Implementing participatory reforms, and 4) Investing in information technology to enhance governance. The main contribution of this research is providing a deeper understanding of the role of bureaucratic capacity in improving quality of public service and developing policies that are more responsive to the needs of the community.

Keywords: Bureaucratic Capacity, Public Service Performance, Local Government, Political Will, Community Engagement

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Introduction

The development of local government bureaucracy is crucial for accelerating the realization of empowered, independent, and prosperous autonomous regions (Bel et al., 2023). With regional autonomy, public services become more accessible to the community, with the expectation that service quality will improve, and the benefits can be felt by all stakeholders in the local government. The demand for quality public services is increasingly urgent, and it is vital for the government to meet these demands. To improve services in the regions, building the capacity of the public sector is necessary, which requires strong commitment from local authorities (Apostolopoulos et al., 2020; Resnick & Siame, 2023). However, one of the primary challenges in enhancing public sector capacity at the regional level is corruption (Martitah et al., 2021). Additionally, several economic factors such as consumption patterns, productive behaviors, and subjective well-being create obstacles in implementing an anti-corruption culture within local government bureaucracy (Putera, 2012; Wahyono & Narmaditya, 2022). Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the overall effectiveness of government services in Makassar, South Sulawesi, and ensuring the successful development of local governance and delivery service.

In the context of community needs, there are various types of needs, namely goods; market services; public services; civil services; and care (Simangunsong, 2016). Goods and market services can be met through open market mechanisms, accessible to everyone, allowing them to be traded. However, the need for public services and care cannot be fulfilled through market mechanisms. Public services are essential and strategic, not for economic profit, but as a basic need that must be met for every individual and group in society (Pratama & Imawan, 2019). Therefore, only the government can ensure that people can access public services faster, at a lower cost, in a fair, accessible, and responsible manner (Doberstein, 2022). However, in practice, the implementation of these essential services to the community still falls short of expectations. There are many complicated procedures and high costs involved in accessing the services required (Kusnandar, 2019; Nevers, 2016).

Local governments are responsible for providing public services that meet the needs of individuals, residents, communities, and the nation. Therefore, every local government must innovate in its policies to meet the various needs of society with high-quality results and benefits (Ejersbo & Svava, 2012; Putera et al., 2023).

The Indonesian government's 2010-2025 bureaucratic reform aims to create a professional, adaptive, and high-performance bureaucracy, free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism. The reform focuses on enhancing the professionalism of the state apparatus to support successful development and improve governance at both central and regional levels. Two key policy directions are: 1) strengthening state apparatus professionalism through bureaucratic reform for good governance, and 2) improving governance by consolidating bureaucratic reforms in law and apparatus. These policies emphasize the importance of 'bureaucratic capacity' and 'public service performance' in public administration (*Peraturan Presiden (PERPRES) Republik Indonesia Nomor 81 Tahun 2010 Tentang Grand Design Reformasi Birokrasi 2010-2025*, 2010).

The concept of 'performance of public service' is closely related to 'bureaucratic capacity' in the literature review (see **Figure 1**). The results of the visualization of the literature review of the two concepts provide a clear picture that both are closely related to concepts such as local government (Filippetti & Cerulli, 2018; Huque, 2011; Ordóñez, 2023; Zhu et al., 2022), public services (Christensen et al., 2017; Laksana et al., 2020; Meričková et al., 2020; Varotsis, 2022), civil society (Andrews, 2012; Batley & Mcloughlin, 2015; Blanton et al., 2023), service delivery (Ohemeng & Foli, 2022; Vakkuri, 2010), and several other concepts. However, if one looks closely, the 'performance of public service' can be seen from the public satisfaction index. This can be reflected in the satisfaction

of the community and community groups in receiving public services (Lanin et al., 2023; Woodhouse et al., 2022), where the state apparatus provides public services. State officials with relevant skills and expertise can deliver public services properly (Foa, 2022). This reflects that the capacity of the state apparatus with good quality is the key to public satisfaction (Núñez-Barriopedro et al., 2023).

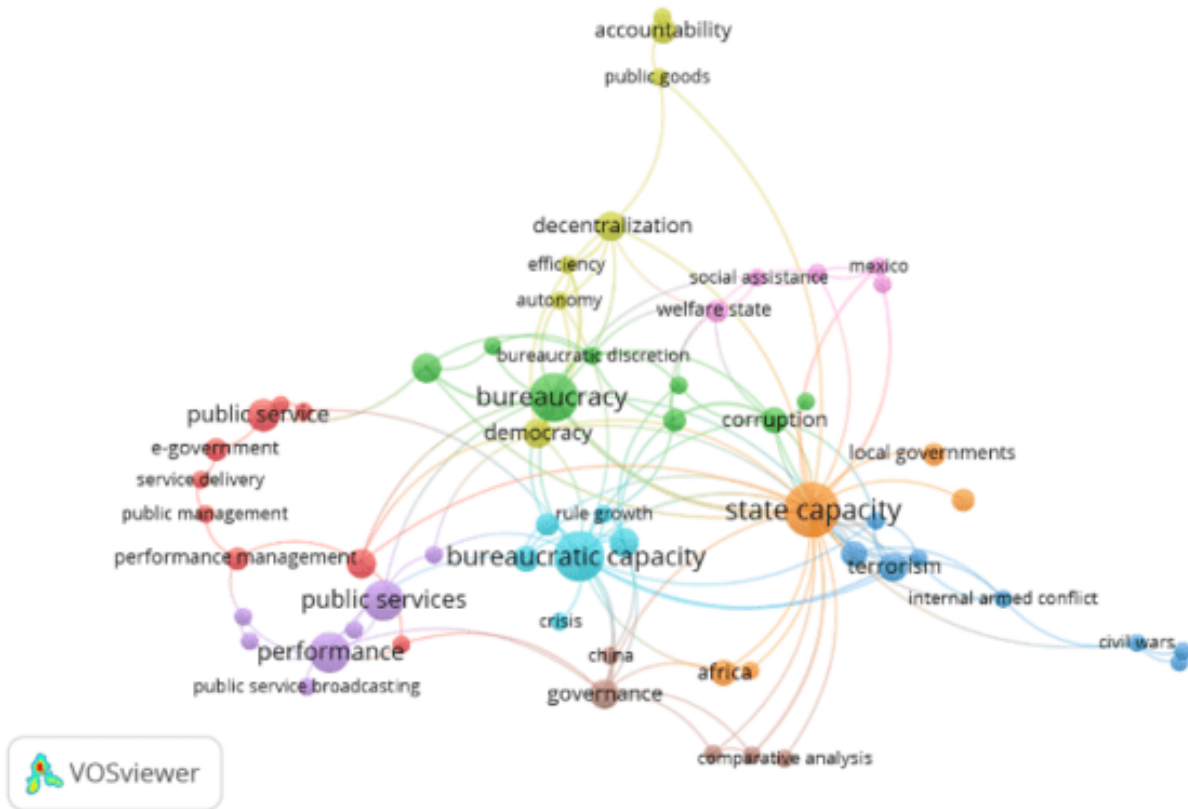


Figure 1. Visualization of the literature review. Source: Processed by the researcher, 2025

Based on the existing concept, in this research, 'bureaucratic capacity' is seen from bureaucratic capacity building (Gorsky & Manton, 2023; Varotsis, 2022), development of individual bureaucratic capacity (Hansen, 2022; Klüser, 2022; Núñez-Barriopedro et al., 2023), development of bureaucratic organizations capacity (Bauer & Ege, 2016; Tensay & Singh, 2020; Van Den Bekerom et al., 2021), increasing the role of the community (Bayulgen, 2020; Howlett, 2000; Taylor & Kelly, 2006), political will (Bayulgen, 2020; Calhoun et al., 2013; Lim, 2014), and local endowment factors (Ke & Liu, 2023; Savoia & Sen, 2015; Suryanarayan & White, 2021).

For example, between 2008 and 2015, municipalities in Pennsylvania innovated financing for building transportation infrastructure using loans from State Infrastructure Banks (Ke & Liu, 2023). A similar approach was adopted by local governments in China in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (Huang et al., 2023), as well as by local governments in Indonesia collaborating with the national government to tackle the pandemic (Putera, Widianingsih, et al., 2022). In Mexico City, for instance, the government launched the country's first universal social pension program (Medrano, 2023).

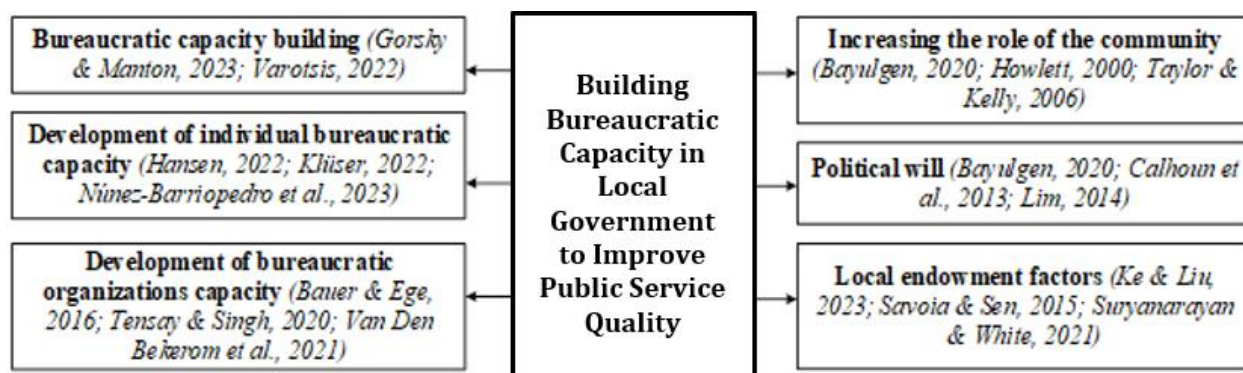


Figure 2. Conceptual framework. Source: Processed by the researcher, 2025

One of the government's policy innovations to appropriately meet these needs is through strategies such as Reinventing People (RIPE), Reinventing Government (RIGO) (David et al., 2018; Stumpf, 2016), and Reengineering Government (REGO) (Janssen & Klievink, 2010; Katz, 1994). RIPE can be defined as efforts to revolutionize Indonesia's people at the national level, as well as consumers at the transactional level between the government and the governed (Simangunson, 2016). This RIPE strategy must be followed by the Reinventing Government (RIGO) strategy, meaning creating a government capable and willing to meet and protect the people's interests, followed by the reengineering Government (REGO) strategy to reform bureaucracy and eliminate ineffective bureaucratic practices (Osborne & Plastrik, 2000). The government ultimately reorganized the bureaucratic structure by adjusting the structure, processes, and behaviours of government organizations at various levels (proper sizing, correct function, and appropriate behaviours).

This study focuses on the bureaucratic capacity of the Makassar City Government, one of the autonomous regions that has implemented policy innovations, especially in providing high-quality public services. Similar research related to the role of bureaucracy has been conducted in several regions in Indonesia, such as disaster management in Central (Sukowati & Nelwan, 2019), the use of communication media in the role of bureaucracy in Batang Regency (Risqiana, 2017), the role of communication media and bureaucratic behaviours in public services during the pandemic in West Java (Mulyaningsih, 2021), and the role of bureaucratic reform in planning in Medan City (Ma'ruf, 2022).

This research focuses on the bureaucratic capacity of the Makassar City Government, South Sulawesi, during the 2020-2024 period. The study evaluates public services in the sectors of clean water, health, population management, and licensing. This focus is aligned with the spirit of regional autonomy, which emphasizes the importance of local bureaucracy in translating public trust into outputs for government processes. Additionally, this study includes an in-depth investigation into the low performance of public services because of insufficient individual, organizational, and system capacities within the local bureaucracy, which hampers the effective implementation of regional autonomy and the fulfilment of community needs in the form of goods and services.

Although the literature on public administration and bureaucratic capacity building has advanced significantly, most existing studies still focus primarily on macro or national aspects, without giving special attention to dynamics at the city government level. Previous research has provided valuable insights into bureaucratic reform but has been limited in examining the implementation of bureaucratic capacity at the city level, particularly in the context of Indonesia.

Most of these studies focus on specific sectors, such as healthcare and education, which discusses strengthening administrative capacity in the healthcare sector, and examines the dynamics of public employment in the context of administrative reform.

Recent studies, Stumphf (2016) have identified the importance of technology and human resource training in supporting the improvement of bureaucratic capacity. However, few have specifically explored how these factors contribute to improving public service quality in city governments. They also emphasize the importance of administrative reforms in improving public service, but their frameworks remain general and do not give special attention to the diverse local contexts, such as that of Makassar.

Moreover, they discuss the importance of evaluating bureaucratic capacity-building strategies in local governments, but their study is more focused on general models that may not be relevant to the challenges faced by city governments in Indonesia. The lack of understanding regarding how to strengthen bureaucratic capacity at the city level, as well as the application of technology and innovation in public administration, suggests a significant gap that needs to be addressed by further research.

This study aims to fill that gap by focusing on strengthening bureaucratic capacity in Makassar. It will examine how local policies, human resource training, and the utilization of technology can contribute to improving public service quality in the city. Thus, this research will not only offer new insights into city bureaucracy but also contribute to the broader literature on bureaucratic reform in Indonesia, particularly at the local government level.

Research Question (RQ): How important is the capacity of local government bureaucracy in improving public services in Makassar City (South Sulawesi, Indonesia)?

Research Methods

The approach used in this research was a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method. The object or focus of the research was all local government stakeholders who were directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of regional government. When the research started from 2020-2024, the place of research was Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province, with the consideration that Makassar City was a pilot project for implementing regional autonomy and was an example of an area inhabited by a heterogeneous community and segmented in a pluralistic social structure. The following is the diagram of the research methodology.

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method. The focus of this study is on all local government stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of regional governance in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. Makassar was chosen as the research location because it serves as a pilot project for regional autonomy and represents an area with a heterogeneous population and a pluralistic social structure. The research covers the period from 2020 to 2024.

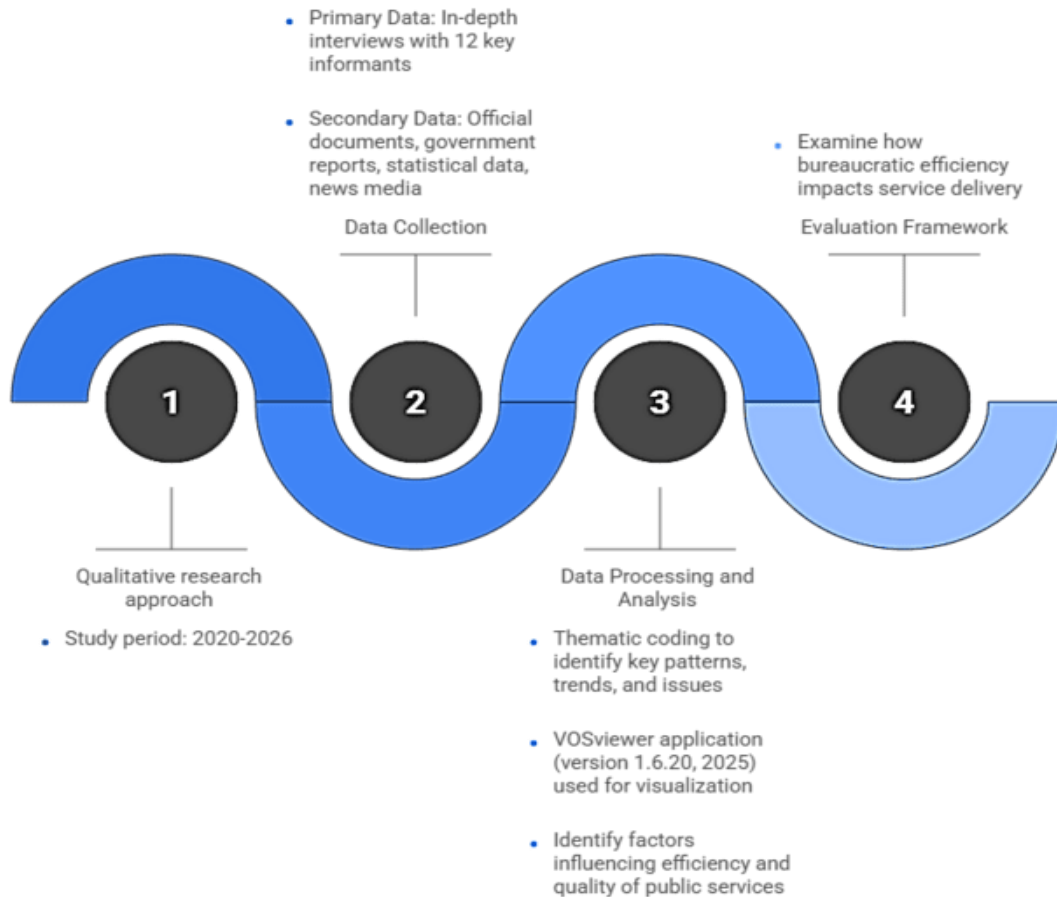


Figure 3. Research Methodology. Source: Processed by the researcher, 2025

The details of the required data included primary data and secondary data. Primary data was directly recorded in the field through in-depth interviews and observations by the researchers as research instruments with informants (Putera, Suryanto, et al., 2022). Meanwhile, secondary data was data that had been processed and published officially, obtained from official documentation and news media. Other essential data sources were the results of in-depth observations and participation, documents, statistical data, and news from the local mass media. The informants in this study were all interested parties from the government bureaucratic work unit and the people of Makassar, South Sulawesi Province.

To ensure the reliability of the findings, this study employed data triangulation by combining data from in-depth interviews with secondary data from official documentation and media sources. The triangulation process was used to verify the findings, compare information from various sources, and strengthen the validity of the results. The collected data was then analyzed using a framework derived from the literature review, allowing the researcher to categorize the data and draw more comprehensive and valid conclusions. Through this process, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and transparent picture of the bureaucratic capacity in improving public service performance in Makassar City.

This study uses two types of data: primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected directly in the field through in-depth interviews and observations, using informants as research instruments. Secondary data was obtained from officially processed and published documentation, as well as local news media. Other important data sources include the results of

in-depth observations and participation, documents, statistical data, and news from local mass media.

Informants were determined based on purposive principles with a purposeful stratified sampling type (Palinkas et al., 2015). Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted with the twelve informants. The interview data collected were then coded and grouped according to the needs of the analysis. Analysis was performed using a framework from the literature review. Informants were classified into four groups of informants (Table 1), namely 1) local leadership cluster (Regent and Regional Secretary of Regency Government and its apparatus), 2) Entrepreneurs, 3) Leaders of the Regional People's Representative Council (Legislative), and 4) NGOs: interest group groups associated with the social control function of government processes and journalists concerned about developing bureaucratic capacity and performance of public services. The number of Key Informants that were interviewed was 12 people, as involved in the following table:

Table 1. The classification of information and the number of key informants. Source: Processed by the researcher, 2025

Informant Classification	Key Informants
Local leadership	Regent (1)
	Regional Secretary of Regency Government (1)
	Assistant for General Administration (1)
	Secretary of BKD (Local Employment and Training Agency) (1)
	Directors of PDAM (Local water company) (1)
Entrepreneur	Entrepreneur (2)
Leaders of the Regional People's Representative Council (Legislative)	Chairman of the DPRD Commission (2)
NGOs: interest group groups associated with the social control function of government processes and journalists concerned about developing bureaucratic capacity and performance of public services	NGOs (1)
	journalists (1)
	community leaders (1)

Results and Discussion

The research findings indicate that the bureaucratic capacity in Makassar, South Sulawesi, has significant implications for the quality of public services provided to the community. Despite efforts to improve services in critical areas such as health, clean water, population management, and licensing, public service performance has not met community expectations. Key issues identified include inefficiencies in service delivery, delays, a lack of responsiveness from public servants, and a gap between public expectations and the services provided. These problems are primarily due to limitations in the local bureaucracy's capacity, including insufficient personal, organizational, and system capabilities, as well as weak political will and low community engagement.

The low performance of public services in Makassar reflects broader issues within the bureaucracy. These challenges highlight the need for reforms that focus on enhancing bureaucratic capacity through better recruitment, clearer job roles, improved employee discipline, and stronger legal frameworks. The study also emphasizes the importance of developing a more participatory approach to governance, ensuring that the community has a say in the decision-making process. Moreover, investing in information technology and infrastructure is critical to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

Overall, the findings suggest that addressing these systemic issues and strengthening the bureaucratic capacity in Makassar will be crucial in delivering better, more responsive public services that meet the needs of the community.

1. Public Services in Makassar City

The performance of public services is a critical factor in assessing the success of regional autonomy and governance reform. The implementation of regional autonomy has granted local governments more authority to address community needs and deliver public services based on regional characteristics. An essential aspect of regional autonomy's success lies in its impact on public services. Interviews with key informants provided a comprehensive overview of public service performance, particularly in the sectors of health, licensing, population management, and drinking water services.

First, the performance of public services in Makassar had yet to reach its full potential and meet community expectations. While services were being provided, there was a lack of consistent improvement, and services often followed an output-focused approach rather than addressing outcomes. Public services were being carried out in a standard manner, without considering the specific needs and desires of the community.

Second, the performance of public services was hindered by delays, miscommunication, and a lack of responsiveness from service providers. The low responsiveness was primarily due to insufficient external communication and a lack of development in this area. This gap in service delivery was evident in the large disparity between public expectations and the actual quality of services received, creating a significant "service gap."

Third, the challenges faced by public services in Makassar City were related to the orientation of service delivery, specifically how much effort and resources were being used by the bureaucracy to effectively deliver services. A functional service delivery system could be observed, but the human resources within the bureaucracy were not being utilized to their fullest potential.

The findings indicate that the overall low quality of public services in Makassar can be attributed to several systemic issues within the local government bureaucracy. Public services were meant to address community needs; however, the interviewed informants reported that services were neither efficient, transparent, nor fair. As a result, the government bureaucracy struggled to respond to political and economic dynamics, leading to inefficiency, unresponsiveness, and a lack of accountability in service delivery. These issues highlighted the complexity of challenges within the regional government bureaucracy.

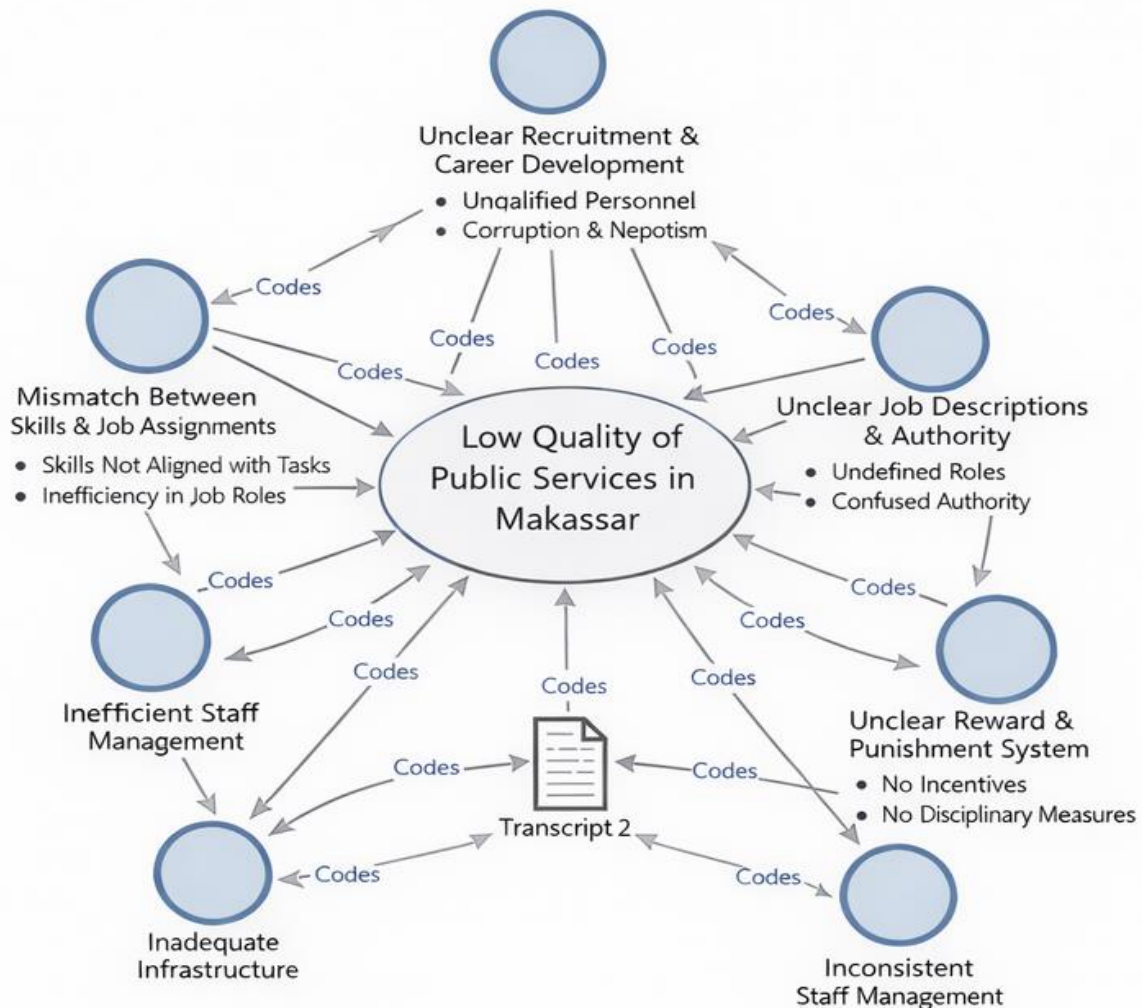


Figure 4. Issues Affecting Bureaucratic Capacity in Makassar City. Source: Based on Nvivo analysis of interview data, 2025

Based on the NVivo analysis of interview data, several issues were identified contributing to the low performance of public services in Makassar. These include unclear recruitment and career development, leading to unqualified personnel and corruption; a mismatch between employee skills and job assignments, causing inefficiencies; and low employee discipline, affecting service quality. Additionally, inconsistent staff management, unclear job descriptions and authority, and an unclear reward and punishment system were noted as key problems. Weak enforcement of laws and regulations and inadequate infrastructure further hindered service delivery. Addressing these issues through improved recruitment, better alignment of skills and roles, and investment in infrastructure can significantly enhance public service performance in Makassar.

2. Analysis of Public Service Performance Improvement

a. Bureaucratic capacity building

The development of bureaucratic capacity certainly has aims and objectives (Gorsky & Manton, 2023; Varotsis, 2022), namely *first*, to realize an increase in the quality of public services in local government administration, *secondly*, to foster a professional, productive, and accountable

work climate in order to improve the performance of public services and create a regional bureaucracy that serves and is free of practice corruption, collusion, and nepotism. The capacity building of the bureaucracy is expected to create a bureaucracy that has a work culture, a work culture with high-performance integrity. It creates professional human resources who serve the community efficiently and effectively, better known as excellent service. In addition, building the bureaucracy's capacity is a significant step in building the empowerment of the state apparatus. It is no less important to provide improved service quality for employees of the community of Makassar City.

The current Mayor of Makassar, Munafri Arifuddin, explained that the policy for bureaucratic capacity building is already in place as one of the top priorities. The adaptation of these capacity-building policies is influenced by several factors, including human, system, organizational, and leadership aspects. Human factors encompass expertise, professionalism, honesty, networking, spiritual intelligence, and accountability. System factors include the availability of laws and regulations, operational standards, work relations, work atmosphere, and work culture. These findings align with previous research, which also emphasizes the importance of organizational factors such as workload, the number of organizational units, effectiveness, and management (Gorsky & Manton, 2023).

Furthermore, leadership factors include political will, leadership patterns, and leaders' attitudes. Meanwhile, the capacity-building policy-making process or mechanism is the same. Regional government involves stakeholders according to their expertise. The policy implementation is carried out in stages according to the target. However, success was not immediately apparent due to several constraints, such as funding, methods, and infrastructure. Several factors that influence the implementation of the policy are that the implementation of the policy needs to be accompanied by a good evaluation tool so that the success rate is difficult to measure. A large number of employees, inadequate expertise, and limited facilities are factors that can influence the implementation of the policy.

b. Development of individual bureaucratic capacity

The study's results suggest the need for individual capacity building of the bureaucracy to improve public service performance. The need for individual bureaucratic capacity development is based on the fact that public services provided by individual bureaucracies still need to be closer to the expectations of the public receiving public services. Developing individual bureaucratic capacities related to knowledge, skills, dispositions, and self-views is needed to change people's perceptions of irresponsive public service bureaucracies into responsive and accountable public service bureaucracies. A responsive public service bureaucracy is characterized by a responsive, informative, accessible, coordinating, uncomplicated, listening, effective and accountable (Burns et al., 1994).

One of the efforts that can be done is the human resources development program, which starts from the recruitment process, reinforcement to the retaining process. From the several stages, it is hoped that the results of the development of human resources of the apparatus that meet the demands of the apparatus themselves, in general, what is expected of them is a balance between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. With their existence being acknowledged, paying

attention to welfare will impact a more substantial commitment and increase the sense of loyalty of officials to local governments.

c. Development of bureaucratic organizations' capacity

Development of bureaucratic organizations' capacity related to resources and management. Resources consist of human resources and other organizations. Meanwhile, management includes strategic leadership, organizational programs and processes, and networking. This means that the achievement of bureaucratic organization goals is primarily determined by the ability of the organization to manage the social and internal environment in which the organization lives (Tensay & Singh, 2020).

The research results underline the need for human resource development, management strategies, and information communication technology applications to expedite services. In addition, the results of interviews with informants require the need to build partnerships, namely strategies intended to build cooperatively with the public receiving public services so that the services provided follow the needs, expectations, and demands of the community (Ficapal-Cusí et al., 2020; Bauer & Ege, 2016; Tensay & Singh, 2020; Van Den Bekerom et al., 2021).

The development of organizational capacity will positively impact the organization, and the organization will be empowered and strengthened from various directions. According to Ficapal-Cusí et al. (2020), organizations that are empowered and strengthened from various directions are characterized by: altruism, shared values, communal services, communication, confidence, political and administrative strengthening, and informative leadership that has power, influence, and the ability to mobilizing networking, skills, trust, unity and wealth. The success of improving public service performance is influenced not only by organizational and contextual factors, including skills, organizational culture, leadership, and incentives. These factors are highly interdependent and mutually supportive (Shortell et al., 1995).

d. Increasing the role of the community

The results show that apart from the low capacity of the bureaucracy in the delivery of public services, it is also seen that community involvement is in the delivery of public services. This implies the need to involve all government stakeholders, including the community, in delivering public services and making policies to develop the bureaucracy's capacity.

Several driving factors have caused district/city governments to focus on strengthening their relationships with community members, among others, declining public trust in public service provision institutions. Demands for greater government transparency and accountability are growing as public and media investigations of government actions increase, and standards in public life are codified and raised. Governments at the local level are under pressure to integrate public input into the decision-making process and respond to community expectations so that their voices are heard and their views considered in decision-making. Governments must invest sufficient time and resources to develop legal, policy, and institutional frameworks of reference, develop appropriate tools, and evaluate their performance in engaging citizens in policymaking.

e. Political will

The results suggest that one of the determining factors in improving the performance of public services and developing the bureaucracy's capacity in Makassar City is related to the political will of the leaders or bureaucratic officials who provide public services to the community.

Brinkerhoff (2000) states that there are several indicators to measure political will: (a) about initiatives, namely initiatives to improve public service performance and develop local government capacity. Does the local government have the initiative to do so; (b) priority: Does the local government carry out an in-depth study and determine which sectors will be prioritized as targets for capacity building to improve public service performance; (c) mobility of political support: whether there is political will also depend on the willingness and ability to build support from the program, and (d) law enforcement in the form of penalties for officials who do not carry out capacity building activities (sanctions) and (e) business continuity is a continuous effort, or a momentary interest.

The degree of willingness on the part of governments themselves to acknowledge their respective weaknesses, first and foremost, and their willingness to face the challenge of finding solutions to these barriers will ultimately determine, to a significant degree, the degree of success achieved. In addition to the political will necessary to champion capacity-building efforts, there is also an appropriate need to equip technocrats in government to advance through positive interventions and agreed reform commitments.

The people of Makassar City themselves must be responsible for their progress. In this regard, bureaucratic capacity building and self-developed policies informed by local knowledge and perspectives provide the best hope for regional development challenges. The financial, intellectual, and other resources of the clever Makassar community, especially those outside Makassar, have not been fully utilized and effectively used to assist the progress of Makassar City, particularly in building leadership/governance capacity. In addition, many outstanding young leadership talents could be better spent in human capacity building.

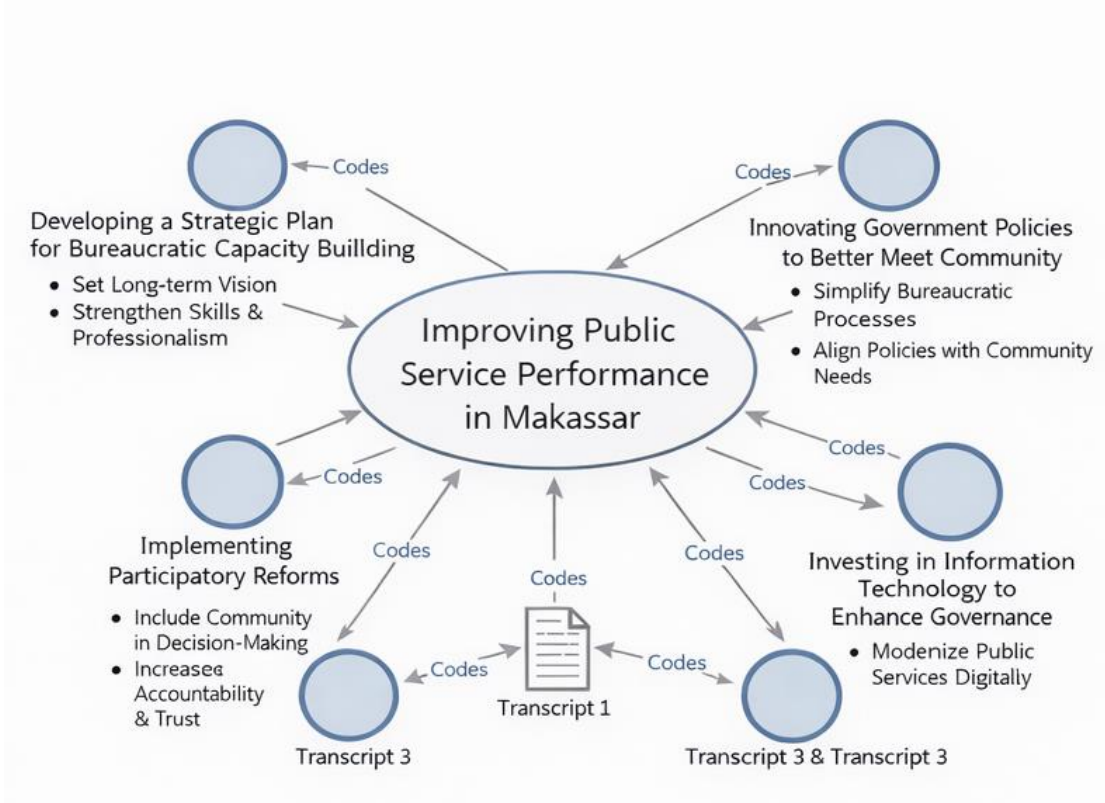


Figure 5. Strategies For Improving Public Service Performance in Makassar, South Sulawesi.
Source: Based on Nvivo analysis of interview data, 2025

The analysis of bureaucratic capacity in Makassar reveals several critical areas for improvement in public service performance. The results suggest that addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes the following key strategies:

a. Developing a Strategic Plan for Bureaucratic Capacity Building

A strategic plan for capacity building is essential for strengthening the bureaucracy. The findings indicate that without a clear and structured capacity-building framework, efforts to improve public services will remain ineffective. A well-developed plan would focus on improving the skills, knowledge, and professionalism of public servants, ensuring that they are adequately equipped to meet the demands of the community. It is also vital to establish a long-term vision for the development of human resources within the bureaucracy to create a responsive and efficient government.

b. Innovating Government Policies to Better Meet Community Needs

The study highlighted the need for innovative government policies that are more closely aligned with the community's needs. Traditional bureaucratic procedures are often outdated and slow, which leads to public dissatisfaction. Innovation in policy-making, such as simplifying bureaucratic processes, increasing transparency, and introducing digital platforms for public services, would help address these issues. Involving the community

in the policy-making process is essential to ensure that the services provided reflect the needs and expectations of the people.

c. Implementing Participatory Reforms

The results emphasize the importance of participatory reforms in improving public service delivery. Involving the community in decision-making processes ensures that public services are more tailored to their needs. This participatory approach can foster greater accountability, transparency, and trust between the government and the people. Additionally, community involvement helps ensure that reforms are practical, effective, and sustainable over time.

d. Investing in Information Technology to Enhance Governance

The implementation of information technology is identified as a crucial factor in enhancing governance. The study found that modernizing public services through digital tools and platforms would streamline processes, improve service delivery, and increase accessibility. Investment in technology can help reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, facilitate faster processing times for permits and services, and provide better data management for local government officials. Furthermore, it can enhance transparency and accountability, as citizens can access real-time information about the status of services they have requested.

The results of this study clearly highlight the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to strengthening bureaucratic capacity in Makassar. The analysis shows that while significant efforts have been made to improve public services, there are still considerable challenges in achieving the desired outcomes. One of the key findings is that bureaucratic capacity needs to be enhanced in several key areas: strategic planning, policy innovation, participatory reforms, and technological investment.

Firstly, the need for strategic planning in bureaucratic capacity building is essential. Without a clear and structured plan, efforts to improve the quality of public services will remain fragmented and ineffective. The local government must establish a long-term vision and framework for developing human resources, enhancing their skills, and ensuring they are equipped to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Secondly, policy innovation is crucial to ensure that government policies are responsive to the public's needs. The findings suggest that current bureaucratic procedures and policies often do not align with the expectations of the people. Innovating these policies to simplify processes, increase transparency, and introduce digital services will be key to improving service delivery and creating a more dynamic and accountable government.

Participatory reforms were also identified as essential for enhancing public service performance. By involving the community in decision-making processes, the government can ensure that services are more tailored to the actual needs of the people. The study emphasizes that participatory governance promotes accountability, transparency, and trust, and ensures that public services align with community expectations.

Finally, technological investment emerged as a critical factor for improving governance. The results indicate that the integration of modern technology into the public service delivery system can streamline operations, reduce bureaucratic inefficiencies, and enhance transparency. By investing in digital tools and systems, the local government can provide more accessible, timely, and efficient services to the citizens of Makassar.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that by focusing on these four key strategies, Makassar's local government can improve public service performance and meet the growing demands of the community. These strategies are essential for creating a government that is not only more efficient but also more transparent and responsive to the needs of its people.

Conclusion

This study shows that bureaucratic capacity in Makassar City has a significant impact on the quality of public services. The key findings of the study highlight issues such as a lack of skilled labor, low political will, and limited community involvement in the decision-making process. These factors contribute to the low performance of public services delivered to the community. This research, therefore, provides valuable insights into the challenges facing the local government in enhancing service delivery.

The study contributes theoretically by deepening the understanding of the critical role that bureaucratic capacity plays in public administration. It emphasizes the need for a more effective bureaucracy and offers practical recommendations to improve public service quality. These recommendations include developing a comprehensive strategic plan for bureaucratic capacity building, innovating government policies to better respond to community needs, implementing participatory reforms to increase public engagement, and investing in information technology to enhance governance.

On a practical level, the findings reveal that improving public service quality in Makassar can be effectively achieved through the development of a strategic plan aimed at strengthening bureaucratic capacity. By addressing critical areas such as recruitment, career development, and aligning employee skills with their tasks, the city can build a more competent and capable workforce. Moreover, adopting innovative policies that incorporate digital technologies and encourage community participation in decision-making will accelerate bureaucratic reforms, increase transparency, and ultimately contribute to a more efficient and responsive government.

Theoretically, the study enriches the existing literature by offering fresh perspectives on how bureaucratic strengths or weaknesses directly impact public service delivery at the city level. It integrates theories from human resource management, public policy, and technology, providing a comprehensive framework to understand how these elements collectively shape a responsive and efficient bureaucracy.

For local governments, the study offers essential guidance for formulating policies that can directly improve public service delivery. It underscores the need for enhanced human resource management practices, the adoption of inclusive and transparent policies, and the strategic use of technology to streamline government operations. By focusing on these areas, local governments

can foster a more effective bureaucracy, which will, in turn, strengthen public trust and ensure that services are aligned with the evolving needs of the community.

However, the study has its limitations, particularly in terms of sample size and geographic scope, as it focuses solely on Makassar City. Future research is recommended to expand the scope to other regions and investigate additional factors that may influence bureaucratic capacity and public service quality, such as organizational culture, human resource management, and local political dynamics.

By strengthening bureaucratic capacity through the recommended measures, the local government of Makassar can significantly enhance the quality of public services, making them more accountable, transparent, and efficient, while also better meeting the evolving needs of the community.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Assisted Technology

The authors declare that this study also acknowledges the use of AI-generated guidance to assist researchers in grammar checking, paraphrasing, proofreading, and improving English style (here, the author uses CHATGPT and GEMINI). In addition, the use of AI in research is limited to compiling outlines or initial ideas (such as brainstorming) on research topics, as well as compiling general literature summaries (here, the author uses ChatGPT, SCITE AI, and Scopus AI). The authors declare that this research is original and that there were no ethical issues in the use of AI tools in our research.

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