

Subdistrict Employees' Performance in Indonesia: A Bibliometric-Thematic Review to Identify Gaps and Future Research Opportunities

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the trend of themes and the focus of scientific studies related to the performance of sub-district employees in Indonesia over the past decade. The issue of sub-district employee performance is a significant concern in the context of bureaucratic reform and enhancing the quality of public services at the local level. Using the systematic literature mapping method, this study analyzed 909 Indonesian-language scientific documents retrieved through the Publish or Perish application, based on a Google Scholar search engine, spanning the period from 2015 to June 2, 2025. The analysis process was conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively, utilizing a combination of the VOSviewer application for bibliometric visualization and NVivo 12 Plus for in-depth thematic analysis. The results of the study reveal that the topic of sub-district employee performance is characterized by four main thematic clusters: the individual-psychological cluster, the organizational-structural cluster, the evaluative-administrative cluster, and the public service cluster. These findings suggest that scientific discourse remains primarily focused on the internal dimensions of the organization and has not yet fully addressed strategic issues, such as the digitalization of services, community engagement, and the integration of social technology. This study recommends the development of interdisciplinary studies, participatory evaluative approaches, and the integration of humanistic and digital dimensions in future studies. This study makes an essential contribution to enriching the literature on sub-district-level bureaucracy. It can serve as a basis for formulating further research directions that are more contextual, innovative, and relevant to the needs of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

The performance of sub-district employees is a crucial aspect of effective regional governance (Badriyansyah, 2022). As an administrative node between the district/city government and the village/sub-district, the sub-district plays a strategic role in implementing public policies, distributing services to the community, and bridging the dynamics between the central government and the village government. In the context of decentralization that has been ongoing since the early 2000s, the role of sub-district officials has become increasingly prominent as the “front face” of the government, dealing directly with residents (Haning et al., 2016; Sadat, 2019). Therefore, the performance of sub-district employees is not only an indicator of technocratic success but also reflects the quality of the local democracy being built (Retnaningtyas et al., 2022; Suprihatin et al., 2023).

The transformation of government, which continues to move towards digital and collaborative approaches, requires sub-district officials to no longer be fixated solely on administrative tasks (Al'asqolaini & Sukiman, 2016; Arintowati, 2016; Mayamin, 2022). Necessary regulations, such as Permendagri No. 138 of 2017, emphasize the strategic role of sub-districts in providing public services. Meanwhile, Perpres No. 95 of 2018, concerning the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE), encourages the digitalization of services at the lowest level of government. Both mark a new direction for the Indonesian bureaucracy, which demands integration among structure, service, and technology. However, a fundamental question arises: have these grand directions and strategies been reflected in the ecosystem of scientific knowledge that discusses the performance of sub-district employees?

Scientific studies over the past decade have shown that attention to this theme tends to be stagnant and repetitive. Many studies continue to focus on classic variables, such as work motivation, discipline, leadership, and organizational environment (Apriansyah, 2018; Astuti et al., 2020; Bangun, 2012; Maucang, 2023). Based on brief observations made, the research methods employed are generally quantitative-descriptive, relying on questionnaire surveys, with limited exploration of contextual and socio-cultural aspects. As a result, new dynamics such as citizen participation, digital transformation, and ethical relations between employees and the community have not received much attention in academic studies related to this issue. In fact, in practice, the challenges of apparatus performance are increasingly complex, involving mastery of

technology, flexibility in communication, and the ability to adapt to the diverse needs of citizens (Ari Wibowo, 2017; Karmaley, 2023; Susilawati et al., 2024; Thomassawa, 2016).

Globally, studies on bureaucracy have undergone a paradigm evolution from New Public Management (NPM) to the New Public Governance (NPG) and New Public Service (NPS) approaches, which place greater emphasis on the values of collaboration, inclusion, and citizen accountability (Abbas & Sadat, 2020; Andhika, 2018; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000; Nashar, 2019; Osborne, 2006). Unfortunately, in the Indonesian context, this shift has not been fully adopted in research on the performance of local apparatus. Most publications remain fragmented, lacking a strong conceptual framework to bridge the gap between bureaucratic practices and scientific discourse. Additionally, the use of new methods, such as bibliometrics, thematic mapping, or software-assisted exploration, remains minimal.

The gap between policy dynamics and the literature map shows the importance of re-examining the knowledge structure that has been formed. A new approach is needed that not only documents the relationships between variables but also captures the social, cultural, and technological transformations that surround bureaucratic practices at the sub-district level. This study aims to address this need through a comprehensive mapping of the development of literature over the last decade. With a scope encompassing hundreds of reference articles, this study presents a new reading of the scattered scientific discourse, offering it in a more structured and thematic conceptual framework.

The purpose of this study is to map the dominant themes that emerge in studies on sub-district employee performance, identify patterns of concept associations and keyword distributions during the 2015–2025 period, and formulate opportunities for more contextual, participatory, and integrative research development. Through this approach, it is hoped that this study can contribute to sharpening the local bureaucracy research agenda at the sub-district level, making it evidence-based and able to address the demands of ever-evolving governance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a combination of bibliometric and qualitative thematic analysis approaches, aiming to map the structure, trends, and thematic gaps in studies on sub-district employee performance. The bibliometric approach was chosen because it enables the quantitative explanation of the literature landscape through relationships between keywords, author networks, and publication trends (Donthu et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the

thematic analysis approach is used to explore in depth the narrative meaning and dominant issues contained in the article metadata.

The data collection process was conducted using the latest version of the Publish or Perish application, which utilized the Google Scholar search engine as its primary source. The keywords used are "Sub-district Employee Performance" in Indonesian, with a search time scope limited from 2015 to June 2, 2025. This time limit was set to obtain a longitudinal picture over the past decade. This process yielded 909 relevant scientific documents that met the inclusion criteria, specifically those containing the primary phrase in the title or abstract of each document (Harzing, 1997).

All metadata of exported articles from Publish or Perish were mined in RIS data format and then imported into the Mendeley Reference Manager application to update data, including author names, titles, publishers, and years of publication. The "Update Details" feature was used to align metadata with the Mendeley database online. After being updated, the metadata file was re-exported in RIS data format for use in the subsequent bibliometric and thematic analysis stages.

Table 1. Steps of Tools and Functions of Literature Data Mining

Steps	Tools	Functions
Metadata Search	Publish or Perish (Google Scholar)	Compiling a document database.
Metadata Enhancement	Mendeley	Bibliographic data synchronization
Bibliometric Analysis	VOSviewer	Network, density, overlay mapping
Thematic Analysis	NVivo 12 Plus	Findings of dominant themes and meaning grouping

Source: Processed by the author

Bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software, a widely recognized tool in bibliometric studies for creating visualizations of keyword co-occurrence networks and relationships between scientific entities (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Three types of visualizations were employed in this study: Network Visualization to map keyword relationships and form thematic clusters, Density Visualization to display term density based on frequency of occurrence and Overlay Visualization to illustrate the temporal dynamics of keyword distribution by year of publication. This visualization facilitates the interpretation of conceptual developments in literature.

Furthermore, to enrich the qualitative analysis, the same metadata were processed using the NVivo 12 Plus application. The data for this type of research were imported as a Memo in NVivo, then analyzed using the auto-coding feature to capture key themes that

emerged repeatedly. Visualizations, including Treemap, Word Cloud, and Cluster Analysis, were used to clarify word association patterns and meaning groupings. NVivo was chosen due to its ability to classify content and produce context-based thematic mapping (Dollah et al., 2017; Hutchisona et al., 2010; Wiltshier, 2011). The validity of the final findings was strengthened through a manual curation process, particularly during the stages of document sorting and visualization interpretation. Only articles that had substantive relevance and were included in the specified time frame were processed further. With this approach, the research results were not only descriptive but also analytical and reflective of the existing literature structure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Trend of Scientific Publications on Sub-district Employee Performance

An analysis of the trend in scientific publications discussing the issue of sub-district employee performance reveals interesting dynamics over the past decade. Based on the results of data mining using Publish or Perish with the keyword “Sub-district Employee Performance” in Indonesian through the Google Scholar search engine, 909 scientific documents were obtained that were published between 2015 and 2025 (data collection was carried out on June 2, 2025).

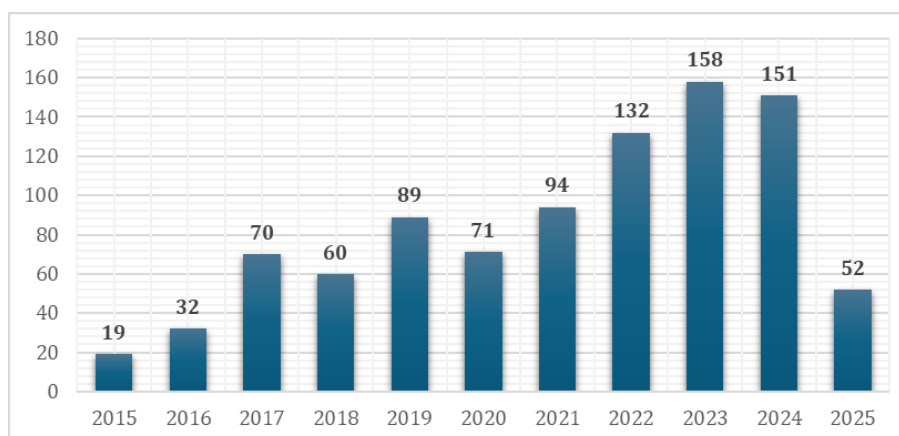


Figure 1. Annual Trend of the Number of Scientific Publications

Source: Processed by the author based on data mining results in Publish or Perish

As depicted in Figure 1, there has been a significant increase in the number of publications since 2015 (19 articles) to reach its peak with the highest annual document contribution in 2023, with a total of 158 documents. This spike indicates the growing interest of academics in the theme of government apparatus performance at the sub-district level, which may be driven by increasing demands for public accountability and the decentralization of public service policies (Dwiyanto, 2018). In 2024, document growth decreased slightly to 151 documents, although this figure still shows high

research intensity. Meanwhile, as of 2025, the number of documents recorded is 52. This decline does not represent a substantial downward trend, but rather reflects the data collection period, which was conducted before the current calendar year ended, specifically in early June 2025. Therefore, this figure is temporary and may increase with the publication of new works in the second semester of 2025.

Overall, it can be noted that the increasing trend in the number of articles also indicates that the issue of the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of work of sub-district officials is a crucial topic in the discourse on local public administration. This development is also in line with government encouragement through various regulations, such as Permendagri No. 83 of 2015 concerning Guidelines for Official Documents in the Regional Government Environment, and regulations related to bureaucratic reform, which increasingly strengthen the demands for systematic performance evaluation in sub-district government units.

Most Influential Articles Based on Highest Citations

To obtain an overview of the most influential literature in the study of sub-district employee performance, an analysis was conducted on the number of citations in 909 searched documents. Citations are one of the critical indicators in determining the level of relevance, quality, and influence of an article in the scientific community (Tahamtan et al., 2016; Tahamtan & Bornmann, 2019). The following table presents the ten articles with the highest number of citations based on Google Scholar data analyzed using the Publish or Perish application:

Table 2. Ten Articles with the Highest Number of Citations

No	Author & Year	Title	Source	Citations
1	S Syam	Pengaruh Efektifitas Dan Efisiensi Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai Pada Kantor Kecamatan Banggae Timur	Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen Profitability	239
2	I Erawati, M Darwis, M Nasrullah	Efektivitas Kinerja Pegawai pada Kantor Kecamatan Pallangga Kabupaten Gowa	Jurnal Office	154
3	D Irawan, G Kusjono, S Suprianto	Pengaruh Disiplin Kerja Dan Lingkungan Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai Negeri Sipil Pada Kantor Kecamatan Serpong	Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa (JIMAWA)	141
4	B Tumanggor, RM Girsang	Pengaruh Kompetensi Dan Disiplin Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai Pada Upt Badan Pendapatan Daerah Kecamatan Gunung Malela Kabupaten Simalungun	Manajemen: Jurnal Ekonomi	114
5	NMM Anjasmari, N Nor'aini	Kinerja Pegawai Pada Unit Pelayanan Pendapatan Daerah (UPPD) Sistem Administrasi Manunggal Satu Atap	SENTRI: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah	101

No	Author & Year	Title	Source	Citations
		(SAMSAT) Kecamatan Daha Selatan Kabupaten Hulu Sungai Selatan		
6	AS Sinaga, A Kadir, S Mardiana	Peranan Motivasi Kerja dalam Kinerja Pegawai pada Kantor Kecamatan Tanjungbalai Utara Kota Tanjung Balai	Strukturasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Magister Administrasi Publik	100
7	E Nurhayati	Pengaruh penerapan sistem penilaian e-kinerja dan kompetensi terhadap kinerja pegawai di kecamatan Semarang Timur melalui motivasi sebagai variabel intervening	Jurnal Penelitian Ekonomi dan Bisnis	82
8	M Sari, F Masruroh	Pengaruh motivasi dan disiplin kerja terhadap kinerja pegawai di Kecamatan Magelang Tengah Kota Magelang	JMAN Jurnal Mahasiswa Ilmu Administrasi Negara	57
9	S Masyita	Efektivitas kinerja pegawai dalam pelayanan masyarakat untuk pembuatan e-ktip pada kantor kecamatan Bontoa kabupaten Maros	Jurnal Ilmiah Bongaya	52
10	D Maharani	Pengaruh manajemen sumber daya manusia dan budaya Organisasi terhadap kualitas kinerja pegawai pada kantor Kecamatan cikijing kabupaten majalengka	Dinamika governance: jurnal ilmu administrasi negara	49

Source: Processed by the author based on data mining results in Publish or Perish

From the ten articles, it can be seen that the tendency of the topics raised and gaining high citation popularity is related to effectiveness, efficiency, work discipline, work environment, competence, and the application of digital systems in public services. This indicates that these issues are considered relevant and crucial in the context of improving the quality of services at the sub-district level. Interestingly, most of the most cited articles originate from open-access national journals and focus on public management and state administration. This suggests that the managerial approach remains the primary analytical tool for discussing the performance of the sub-district government apparatus.

Thematic Analysis Using VOSviewer Network

A bibliometric analysis of 909 scientific documents was then conducted using VOSviewer software to identify thematic structures in the study of "Sub-district Employee Performance". Three types of visualization results were used, namely network visualization, overlay visualization, and density visualization. All three provide a comprehensive understanding of the focus, relations, and dynamics of topic development, thus providing readers with a good knowledge base.

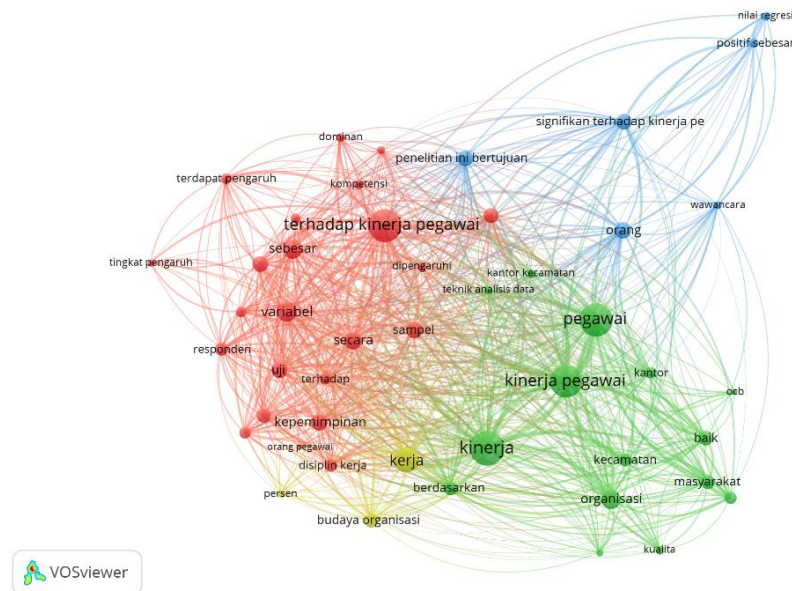


Figure 2. Keyword Coexistence Network Visualization
Source: Results of author data processing through VOSviewer

Figure 2 shows the interconnectedness between keywords based on coexistence in the title and abstract of the article. Words such as performance, employees, work, and discipline occupy a central position, with large node sizes indicating high frequency and strong cross-theme influences. Four main clusters are identified based on color. The red cluster comprises words such as “motivation”, “discipline”, and “competence”, which represent personal and psychological dimensions that influence employee performance. The green cluster encompasses the “work”, “leadership”, and “supervision” environments, which indicate attention to structural and organizational aspects. The blue cluster displays words such as “efficiency”, “performance indicators”, and “assessment”, which reflect an evaluative and quantitative approach. The yellow cluster comprises the terms “community satisfaction”, “excellent service”, and “transparency”, which represent the dimensions of public service and orientation towards external outcomes. The interrelationships between clusters indicate that the issue of sub-district employee performance is multidimensional. For example, work discipline (red) is often correlated with supervision (green) and service effectiveness (blue); this relationship shows that individual productivity is closely related to the institutional system and its impact on society.

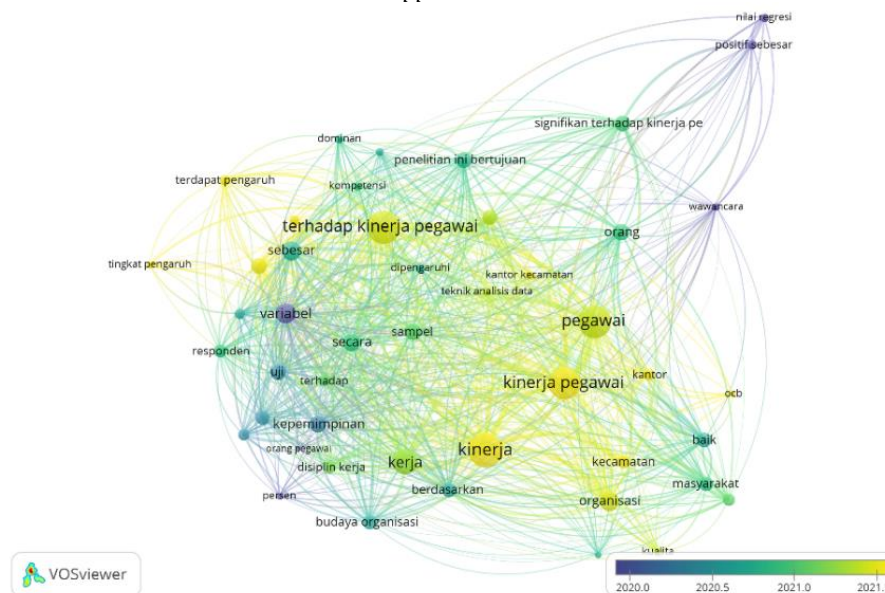


Figure 3. Visualization of Time Gradation of Keywords
Source: Results of author data processing through VOSviewer

Next, moving on to Figure 3, the results of this overlay visualization add a temporal dimension based on publication time. Yellow indicates newer topics (2021-above), while blue indicates older topics (2020-below). Words such as “employees”, “employee performance”, and “public service” appear in yellow shades, indicating that the focus on service evaluation and its impact on society is a new direction that is developing. In contrast, terms such as “leadership”, “work discipline”, and “variable test” are more dominant at the beginning of the period, indicating the initial interest of the literature in individual and methodological aspects.

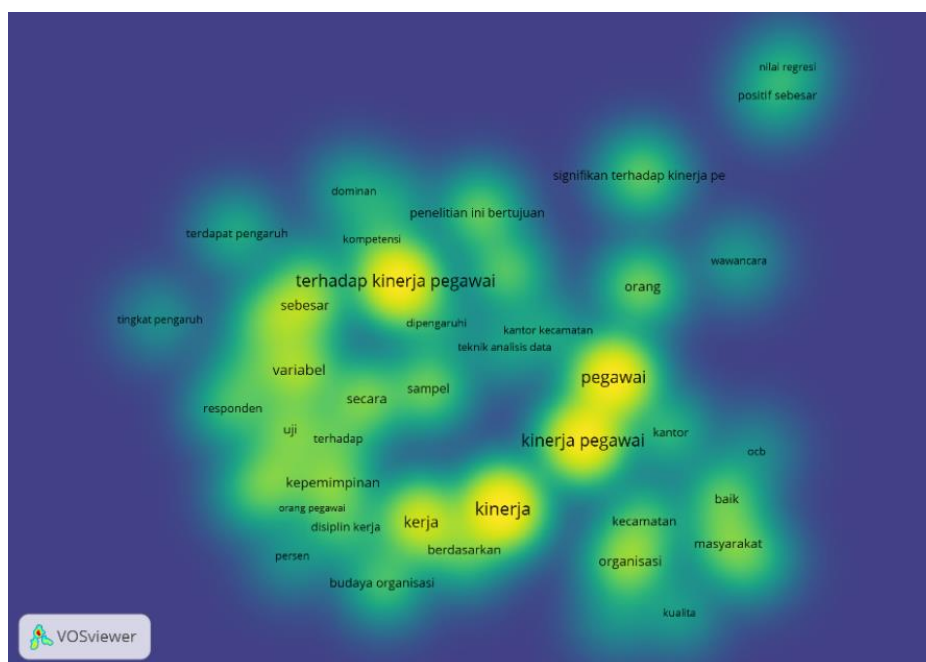


Figure 4. Keyword Density Visualization
Source: Results of author data processing through VOSviewer

Moving on to the third data processing result, namely density visualization (see Figure 4), this shows the density of word frequency occurrences. The yellow area indicates topics with the highest concentration, including “performance”, “employees”, and “variables”. This confirms that the literature predominantly raises these issues as central keywords. At the same time, other terms, such as “OCB”, “transparency”, and “service quality”, are present as areas that are starting to develop but are still rarely explored in depth.

These three visualizations simultaneously show that the study of sub-district employee performance is experiencing a shift in focus. The literature that previously emphasized normative and institutional approaches is now shifting towards a data-based, evaluative approach that is oriented towards service recipients. This finding aligns with the statement by Mathis et al., (2017) which posits that performance achievement in the public sector is the result of interactions among individuals, work systems, and organizational contexts. In addition, Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government emphasizes the urgency of sub-district capacity as the executor of part of government affairs, so that increasing HR capacity is an absolute prerequisite for the effectiveness of public services.

Thematic Literature Exploration through Treemap and Dendrogram

The Treemap visualization generated from the metadata processing of 909 articles through NVivo 12 Plus provides a quantitative overview of the keywords that most frequently appear in academic studies related to sub-district employee performance in the period 2015–2025 (see Figure 5). The size and color of the blocks in the treemap reflect the intensity of occurrence and semantic associations between words. The results of the analysis reveal the dominance of words such as “employee”, “employee performance”, “work”, “on performance”, and “sub-district”, indicating that the primary focus of the literature remains on the performance of individuals and government organizations at the sub-district level. This aligns with classic themes in public administration, such as bureaucratic performance, work productivity, and relationships between organizational variables.

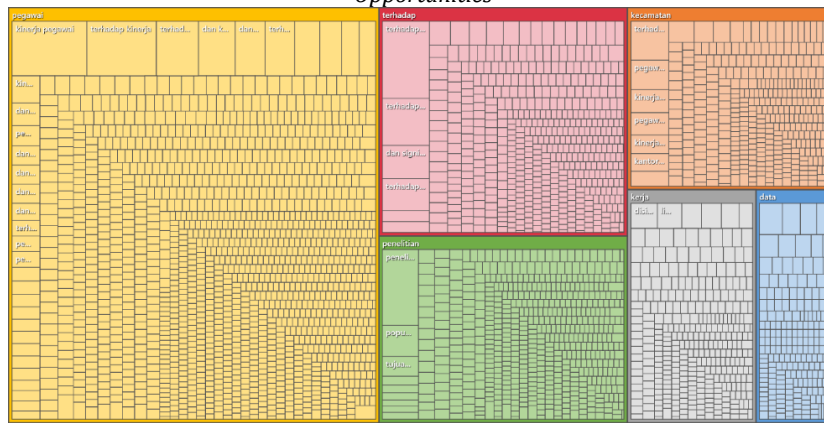


Figure 5. Visualization Treemap of Dominant Keywords in Literature on Sub-district Employee Performance

Source: Results of the author's data processing through NVivo 12 Plus

Interestingly, the emergence of words such as "motivation", "leadership", and "organizational culture" in separate blocks indicates that psychological and institutional dimensions remain essential foundations in analyzing employee performance. This supports Behn (2003) view that bureaucratic performance measures must consider both managerial and public satisfaction aspects in a balanced manner.

Although the word "society" does not appear dominant in this treemap visualization, its presence is recorded in other thematic analyses (see Sub 1). This finding suggests that the orientation towards public service is gradually gaining prominence in academic discourse. In this context, Osborne (2006, 2010) New Public Governance framework is very relevant, as it emphasizes the importance of responsiveness, collaboration, and accountability in local government services. Support for this approach is also evident in policies such as Permendagri No. 132 of 2018, concerning Sub-district Administrative Service Standards, which encourages increased efficiency and quality in public services.

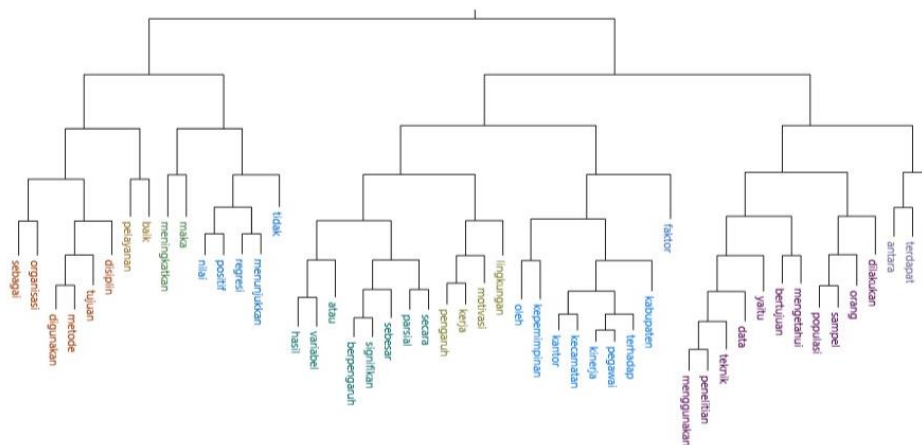


Figure 6. Dendrogram of Thematic Association of Keywords Based on Hierarchy of Emergence and Semantic Relatedness

Source: Results of the author's data processing through NVivo 12 Plus

Moving on to other data, namely the dendrogram structure (see Figure 6), which shows a tendency towards grouping themes that represent a special emphasis in the literature related to sub-district employee performance. These clusters suggest that academic studies over the last decade have not only focused on performance as a single concept, but also as a complex and multidimensional entity. One of the main clusters highlights the organizational context, with terms such as environment, support, and organization indicating the importance of external influences and work atmosphere in supporting employee performance. In addition, the role of leadership also emerged strongly as an essential theme, as reflected in the emergence of the words "leadership", "leader" and "superior," which underscore the importance of strategic direction and managerial style in determining bureaucratic productivity.

Another dimension that emerges from the dendrogram is the psychological aspect, including motivation, drive, and job satisfaction, which suggests that studies on employee performance often prioritize individual internal factors as the determining variables. On the other hand, the methodological approach is also clearly evident through the use of terms such as data, techniques, and variables, which indicate the tendency of the literature to employ a quantitative approach in measuring and analyzing bureaucratic phenomena. Additionally, the spatial context of local government, including districts, sub-districts, and regional apparatuses, is also a prominent theme, given that the research focus is often at the local government level.

Last but not least, although not visually dominant, the theme of public service remains present through keywords such as "service," "community," and "satisfaction," which indicate an external orientation towards citizens as the end-users of bureaucratic services. Based on these findings, the overall dendrogram image illustrates that studies on sub-district employee performance are eclectic, encompassing various dimensions from individual micro aspects to institutional macro levels. This finding aligns with the literature analysis efforts that encourage addressing the challenges of public sector performance, which are not only measured by internal output but also by the level of citizen satisfaction and perception.

Frequency of Keywords and Indication of Dominant Themes in Literature

The word cloud visualization generated from the analysis of 909 article metadata using NVivo 12 Plus software displays the distribution of the most frequently used

keywords in academic studies on sub-district employee performance during the period 2015–2025 (see Figure 7). Words such as “employee”, “performance”, “against”, “influence”, and “sub-district” appear with the largest size, indicating the highest frequency of occurrence. Word clouds, as explained by McNaught and Lam (2010), provide a visual representation of the most common words found in a text corpus, allowing them to be used to identify initial patterns of discourse development in the literature.



Figure 7. Word Cloud Frequency in Sub-district Employee Performance Literature

Source: Results of the author’s data processing through NVivo 12 Plus

The emergence of words such as “motivation”, “leadership”, and “work environment” also shows the focus of the study that emphasizes the psychological and structural aspects of the organization. This aligns with the findings of Robbins and Judge (2017), which state that organizational behavior, particularly in the context of government, is significantly influenced by complex personal and situational factors. However, it is interesting to note that words such as “society”, “transparency”, and “public service” do not occupy a dominant position in this visualization. The absence of these words prominently indicates that the citizen-based approach in studies on the performance of sub-district officials still receives less attention, as evidenced by the frequency of keyword appearance. This aligns with Osborne (2006), criticism, which emphasizes the need for a shift from administrative efficiency alone to New Public Governance, which prioritizes collaboration and accountability to the public.

In this context, word clouds act as an initial exploratory tool that is very useful in discourse mapping (Heimerl et al., 2014), but have limitations in capturing semantic associations or conceptual relationships between words. Therefore, this data needs to be complemented with advanced visualizations such as treemaps or dendrograms (see

previous sub), which can describe thematic connections more holistically and in-depth. However, overall, this visualization re-emphasizes that the literature related to employee performance at the sub-district level is still centered on internal organizational and individual issues, with considerable room open for strengthening the perspective of citizen-based public services and bureaucratic digitalization as a form of contemporary administrative transformation.

Dominance of Issues and Opportunities for Study Development

Over the past decade (2015–2025), scientific discourse on the performance of sub-district employees in Indonesia has exhibited a relatively stable trend, yet it tends towards a repetition of approaches. Bibliometric and thematic analyses conducted on 909 article metadata reveal the dominance of classic themes, such as the influence of motivation, discipline, and leadership on individual performance (see Figures 5 and 6). This dominance indicates that the majority of studies are still based on the conventional bureaucratic model, which positions performance as a product of individual characteristics and the internal structure of the organization. This tendency aligns with the criticisms of Dwiyanto (2021), Prasajo (2020), and Yusriadi (2018) who argue that the Indonesian bureaucracy remains entrenched in a rigid administrative-legalistic model, rendering it less responsive to the evolving needs of citizens. Whereas normatively, through regulations such as Permendagri No. 138 of 2017, sub-districts have been directed to become the vanguard in community-oriented public services.

However, in its development, the overlay visualization of VOSviewer (see Figure 3) shows that in the last five years, the seeds of a shift in research direction have begun to emerge, from an internal focus on bureaucracy to the realm of interaction between officials and citizens. Keywords such as community participation, transparency, and service innovation have begun to emerge, although still at a low intensity. This finding suggests that the New Public Service approach, which positions citizens as active partners (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000), , rather than just service objects, is beginning to gain traction, although it has not yet become a mainstream perspective in the results of existing literature analysis.

Most articles still employ a descriptive-quantitative approach, often using a simple correlational method. This approach makes it challenging for studies to capture the complexity of today's public service challenges, particularly in the context of bureaucratic digitalization, the need for high efficiency, and the demand for increased citizen

participationr (Mutiarin, 2014; Setiyowati, 2025). This is where the space for developing studies is wide open, especially in bridging the psychosocial, institutional, technological, and value dimensions of public service (Irawan & Maheri Laksono, 2020; Isabella & Susilowati, 2020; Samuel et al., 2017). One important direction of development is an interdisciplinary approach that combines government science, organizational psychology, information technology, and service sociology (Akbar et al., 2022; Pangestu et al., 2017; Wijayanto et al., 2017). This approach aligns with the whole-of-government paradigm and cross-disciplinary collaboration recommended by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in modern bureaucratic reform (Carroll & Kellow, 2021). This will make employee performance research no longer understood linearly, but as a product of interactions between personal, systemic, institutional, and social factors.

In addition, other research opportunities are also available in developing studies based on employee work experience in the digital era, for example, by linking the implementation of SPBE with aspects of psychological well-being and employee user experience (Lawelai et al., 2024). This approach is reinforced by the findings of Setiyowati, (2025) and Supriyani & Setyowati (2023) , which emphasize the importance of actor-based understanding in adaptive digital governance. Last but not least, the issue of participatory evaluation is also up-and-coming. Currently, the assessment of the apparatus's performance is still dominated by technocratic indicators, even though measurements based on citizen perceptions and social inclusion can broaden the concept of bureaucratic effectiveness. This kind of evaluation will provide space for a more contextual approach and have a real impact. Table 3 presents several developments focuses that researchers can pursue in the future.

Table 3. Opportunities for Developing Sub-District Employee Performance Studies

No	Development Focus	Brief Description	Recommended Approach
1	Interdisciplinary Perspective	Combining government, psychology, and IT for holistic performance studies	Cross-disciplinary, multi-level analysis
2	Employee Experience in the SPBE System	Assessing the impact of digital systems on employee work experience and well-being	Phenomenology, digital ethnography
3	Participatory Evaluation	Developing evaluations based on citizen perceptions and involvement in services	Participatory evaluation, citizen feedback
4	Community-Based Service Innovation	Assessing employee capacity in creating innovations from local citizen needs	Community-based innovation, case study

Source: Processed by Researchers based on overall analysis of findings

CONCLUSION

During the period 2015–2025, the scientific literature on the performance of sub-district employees in Indonesia was still dominated by the classical approach, which emphasized individual factors such as work motivation, discipline, and leadership. This approach highlights the significant influence of the administrative-legalistic bureaucratic model, in which bureaucratic performance is understood more as a result of internal systems and personal characteristics. However, over the last five years, a new trend has emerged in the literature, namely the development of themes that emphasize the dimensions of employee relations with the community, such as citizen participation, transparency, and service innovation. This shift aligns with the spirit of the New Public Service, which places citizens as active partners, rather than just passive recipients of services.

Although it has begun to emerge, this participatory approach has not yet become mainstream. Most articles remain descriptive and have not explored interdisciplinary or critical approaches. The challenges of local bureaucracy today demand a more adaptive response, especially in the context of digitalization and increasing public expectations. These findings suggest the need for more integrative studies that combine the perspectives of government, organizational psychology, and information technology. In addition, evaluating bureaucratic performance also needs to involve humanistic dimensions and public perception, so that performance is not only measured by administrative achievements, but also by the social impact and quality of services that have been carried out.

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