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# Government Governance in the Management of Border Areas: Perspective of Good Governance

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**ABSTRACT**

Border area management is a strategic issue in public governance because it is closely related to national sovereignty, equitable development, public service delivery, and community welfare. North Central Timor Regency (Timor Tengah Utara/TTU), as one of Indonesia's border regions directly adjacent to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, continues to face various governance challenges, including suboptimal intergovernmental coordination, limited institutional capacity, inadequate implementation of good governance principles, and the lack of integrated border management policies. This study aims to analyze governance in the management of the North Central Timor border area from a good governance perspective and to identify research findings, implications, and research gaps based on the existing literature. This study employs a qualitative approach using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The units of analysis consist of eight scholarly articles retrieved from Google Scholar, Scopus, SINTA, DOAJ, and Crossref databases, as well as relevant government policy documents related to border area management. Data were collected through document analysis using literature selection guidelines based on inclusion and exclusion criteria following the PRISMA 2020 framework. The data were analyzed using thematic synthesis through data reduction, coding, thematic categorization, cross-study comparison, and interpretation based on the perspectives of new governance, border governance, and good governance. The findings reveal that governance in the management of the North Central Timor border area is characterized by three major themes: institutional governance and intergovernmental coordination, the implementation of good governance principles at the local government level, and border area development strategies as instruments for strengthening national sovereignty.

## INTRODUCTION

Border regions hold a highly strategic position in the administration of government, as they serve not only as territorial boundaries but also as the nation's front lines, reflecting the state's capacity to promote public welfare, safeguard national sovereignty, and provide high-quality public services. From the perspective of public administration, the management of border areas is understood not merely as physical development efforts, but as a process of governance involving inter-institutional coordination, synergy between the central and local governments, community participation, and the application of the principles of good governance—including transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, the rule of law, and public participation UNDP (1997). Therefore, the quality of governance is a critical factor in determining the success of border area development as a safe, advanced, and competitive region.

North Central Timor Regency (TTU), East Nusa Tenggara Province, is one of the regions that shares a direct border with the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Based on Law No. 43 of 2008 Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 43 Tahun 2008 Tentang Wilayah Negara on the Territory of the State and Presidential Regulation No. 44 of 2017 on the National Border Management Agency, border areas are designated as national priority regions that must be managed through cross-sectoral collaboration to safeguard national sovereignty while improving community welfare. Nevertheless, various studies indicate that the TTU border area still faces challenges, including limited basic infrastructure, suboptimal interagency coordination, low access to public services in some border areas, and the need to strengthen institutional capacity in border area management (BNPP, 2020; Tmaisan et al., 2022). These conditions indicate that the development of border areas requires a more collaborative form of governance that is oriented toward the principles of good governance.

Recent developments indicate that the government continues to increase its focus on the border areas of North Central Timor Regency. In 2024, the National Border Management Agency (BNPP) implemented a community empowerment program for frontier villages in North Central Timor Regency as part of efforts to strengthen the defense and security system in border areas. The program emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the central government, local governments, security forces, and the community in safeguarding border areas while improving the well-being of local communities Wicaksono et al. (2025). Furthermore, the 2020–2024Master Plan for the Management of National Boundaries and Border Areas also emphasizes that improving the effectiveness of institutional coordination, public services, and community economic development are top priorities in the

governance of Indonesia's border areas (BNPP, 2020). This phenomenon indicates that border area management today is no longer focused solely on security aspects but also on improving the quality of governance.

Various previous studies have examined the border areas of North Central Timor Regency from diverse perspectives. The study by Tmaisan et al. (2022) on the strategies and priorities for the development of North Central Timor Regency's border areas utilized SWOT analysis to determine the region's development priorities. The study's findings indicate that infrastructure development, improving human resource quality, and strengthening the economic sector are the top priorities for border area development. However, this study was more focused on regional development strategies and thus did not examine how public administration and the principles of good governance influence the implementation of these strategies.

The study by Naimnule et al. (2024) on participatory village development planning from a good governance perspective in North Central Timor Regency indicates that the principles of transparency, accountability, and community participation have not been optimally implemented in the village development planning process. Although this study adopts a good governance perspective, its scope is limited to village governance; thus, it does not provide an overview of border area governance involving the central government, local governments, the National Border Management Agency, and other stakeholders.

Meanwhile, the study by Roy et al. (2023) on the role of the East Nusa Tenggara Provincial Border Management Agency in resolving the Indonesia–Timor-Leste border dispute in North Netemnanu Village focuses on institutional aspects in resolving international border conflicts. This study indicates that inter-institutional coordination is a key factor in resolving territorial boundary disputes. However, the study has not yet comprehensively analyzed governance based on the principles of good governance, particularly regarding transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and collaboration in border area management.

Based on a review of previous studies, there is a research gap indicating that most studies still focus on regional development strategies, village governance, or the resolution of international border conflicts in a piecemeal manner. To date, there has been very limited research that specifically synthesizes various research findings on governance in the management of the North Central Timor Regency border area through the lens of good governance. However, this approach is crucial for understanding how the principles of transparency, accountability, effectiveness, participation, inter-institutional coordination, and governmental collaboration are applied in the management of border areas as an integrated governance system.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze governance in the management of the border areas of North Central Timor Regency using a qualitative method with a literature review approach. This study is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of Public Administration, particularly regarding the application of good governance principles in border area governance, while also serving as a reference for local governments and stakeholders in formulating more effective, collaborative, and sustainable border area management policies.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach because its objective is to understand, interpret, and synthesize various concepts, policies, research findings, and published governance practices, rather than to statistically test relationships between variables. The method used is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) Snyder (2019)to analyze public governance in the management of the border areas of North Central Timor Regency (TTU) from a good governance perspective.

The data sources for this study consist of secondary data derived from: scientific journal articles indexed in Scopus; national journal articles accredited by SINTA; articles in the DOAJ database; articles indexed in Google Scholar; relevant government documents, such as: Law No. 43 of 2008 on the Territory of the State, Presidential Regulation No. 44 of 2017 on the National Border Management Agency, the Master Plan for the Management of State Borders and Border Areas (BNPP), and publications from the Central Statistics Agency of North Central Timor Regency. The data analysis technique used was Thematic Synthesis, as developed by Thomas et al. (2021). This technique was chosen because it is capable of integrating various findings from both qualitative and quantitative research into more comprehensive conceptual themes.

The literature search was conducted systematically across Google Scholar, Scopus, SINTA, DOAJ, and Crossref using a combination of keywords in both Indonesian and English. The use of bilingual keywords was intended to ensure a more comprehensive retrieval of relevant literature, as some studies have been published in Indonesian while others are available in English. The primary keywords used were: governance, good governance, border governance, border area management, border management, border region governance, North Central Timor, Indonesia border area, local government, collaborative governance, intergovernmental coordination.

This study analyzed eight scientific articles that met all the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Although the number of selected articles is relatively limited compared with some Systematic Literature Review (SLR) studies in other fields, it is considered sufficient because the topic of government governance in the management of the Timor Tengah Utara border area represents a highly specialized research domain that has received limited scholarly attention. The initial literature search across Google Scholar, Scopus, SINTA, DOAJ, and Crossref identified a number of potentially relevant publications. However, following a rigorous screening process based on topic relevance, publication quality, full-text availability, and alignment with the research focus, only eight articles satisfied all the established selection criteria.

In a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), the quality and relevance of the selected studies are prioritized over the quantity of articles analyzed. Accordingly, this study adopted a purposive evidence selection approach by including only articles that directly addressed government governance, the implementation of good governance, border area management, and studies relevant to Timor Tengah Utara Regency or Indonesia's border regions. Consequently, the eight selected articles are considered sufficient to represent the current state of the literature, identify emerging patterns of findings, and reveal existing research gaps in accordance with the objectives of this study.

The articles analyzed in this study were published between 2016 and 2025. The distribution of the selected studies comprises one article published in 2016, one in 2018, two published during 2021–2022, one in 2024, and three in 2025. This distribution indicates that the majority of the literature included in this review consists of recent publications, thereby

providing an up-to-date representation of the evolving scholarship on government governance in border area management.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Institutional Governance and Government Coordination

The governance framework for managing the border areas of North Central Timor Regency (TTU) has undergone a significant paradigm shift. Whereas in the past border areas were primarily viewed as zones of national defense and security managed in a centralized manner, developments in governance studies indicate that border areas are now positioned as a governance arena involving various actors, interests, and levels of government. This shift aligns with Rhodes (1996) concept of new governance, which emphasizes that governance no longer relies on the dominance of the state (government), but rather on collaborative networks among institutions. In the context of border regions, this approach has become increasingly relevant because the complexity of the issues faced cannot be resolved solely through the government's administrative authority but requires coordination across sectors, regions, and even nations.

**Table 1.** Results of the Thematic Analysis on Institutional Governance and Government Coordination

| Synthesized Indicator | Supporting Articles | Synthesized Findings |
|---|---|---|
| Inter-agency coordination is the primary factor determining the success of border area management | Chan & Womack (2016); Fritantus & Bria (2021); Herawati et al. (2024) | The effectiveness of border area management is influenced by the quality of coordination among the central government, local governments, the National Border Management Agency (BNPP), security agencies, and village governments. |
| Institutional capacity remains a major constraint | Fritantus & Bria (2021); Herawati et al. (2024); Rusdiono et al. (2025) | Limitations in human resources, inter-agency coordination, and organizational capacity hinder the effective implementation of border management policies. |
| Evidence-based policymaking remains limited | Fritantus & Bria (2021) | Research findings have not been optimally utilized in the formulation of border area management policies. |

Based on the synthesis of eight selected articles, three major indicators emerged within the theme of institutional governance. The most prominent finding highlights inter-agency coordination as the key determinant of successful border area governance. Three studies consistently demonstrate that the effectiveness of border management policies largely depends on the ability to establish strong synergy among the central government, local governments, the National Border Management Agency (BNPP), security agencies, and village governments.

Furthermore, three articles identify institutional capacity as a persistent challenge in border governance. The major constraints include limited human resources, suboptimal coordination mechanisms, and inadequate organizational capacity to implement cross-sectoral programs effectively. In contrast, only one study explicitly emphasizes the importance of utilizing research findings as the basis for policy formulation through an evidence-based policymaking approach. This indicates that the integration of research evidence into border governance policies has received relatively limited attention in previous studies.

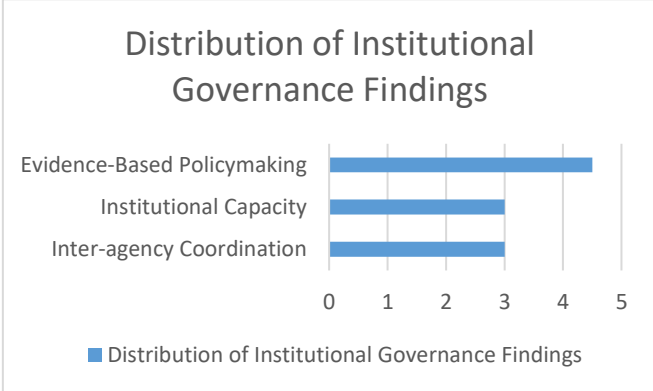


**Figure 1.** Distribution of Findings on Institutional Governance

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of the frequency of the main indicators related to institutional governance and government coordination identified across the eight articles included in the analysis. The synthesis reveals three dominant indicators: inter-agency coordination, institutional capacity, and evidence-based policymaking. Among these, inter-agency coordination is the most frequently reported indicator, appearing in three studies. This finding suggests that the majority of the literature considers coordination among the central government, local governments, the National Border Management Agency (BNPP), security agencies, and village governments as a critical determinant of the effectiveness of border area management. The high frequency of this indicator indicates that cross-sectoral coordination remains a central issue in the governance of border areas in North Central Timor Regency.

Institutional capacity is likewise identified in three articles. These studies indicate that the quality of human resources, organizational capability, and the effectiveness of institutional functions remain key concerns in previous research. Several studies further demonstrate that limited institutional capacity constrains the effective implementation of public policies, particularly in the execution of cross-sectoral programs and inter-agency coordination. In contrast, the indicator of evidence-based policymaking appears in only one study. Its relatively low frequency suggests that the utilization of research findings as a foundation for formulating border management policies has received limited attention in the existing literature. Consequently, Figure 1 demonstrates that previous studies have placed greater emphasis on institutional coordination than on innovations in evidence-based policy formulation. Overall, the distribution presented in Figure 1 indicates that institutional governance continues to be the primary focus of border area management research. This pattern suggests that most existing studies concentrate on identifying the institutional factors that influence the effectiveness of governance, rather than directly evaluating the outcomes and impacts of policy implementation.

These findings are reinforced by the study by Chan & Womack (2016), which introduces the concept of border governance. They explain that border areas are spaces of interaction where political, economic, social, cultural, and security dimensions converge; therefore, their management must simultaneously accommodate the interests of various actors. From this perspective, the government's role is no longer merely that of a regulator but also that of a facilitator, mediator, and coordinator capable of effectively building

inter-institutional relationships. This concept broadens the understanding of border area governance, which has traditionally been perceived as the sole responsibility of security institutions. Consequently, the management of border areas requires coordination mechanisms that are not only vertical between the central government and local governments but also horizontal, through partnerships with communities, the private sector, customary institutions, and institutions of neighboring countries.

This situation is reflected in various studies on North Central Timor Regency, which indicate that the main challenge in border area management lies not in regulatory limitations but in the effectiveness of institutional governance implementation. Fritantus & Bria (2020) note that the North Central Timor Regency Border Management Agency has played a strategic role in formulating border area development policies; however, the policy-making process still requires adequate research support to produce evidence-based policies. These findings indicate that institutional capacity is not merely measured by the existence of an organization or formal authority, but also by an institution's ability to process information, integrate data, and translate research findings into public policies that are adaptive to the dynamics of border areas.

Furthermore, research by Herawati et al. (2024) shows that the dynamics of border area management in TTU following East Timor's independence still present fairly complex coordination challenges. Border area management is not only related to safeguarding national sovereignty but also involves the provision of public services, community economic development, the resolution of social issues, and the strengthening of cross-border relations. This complexity means that various institutions—such as the National Border Management Agency (BNPP), provincial governments, regency governments, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the Indonesian National Police, technical agencies, and village governments play interrelated roles. However, the presence of many actors does not necessarily result in effective governance if institutional coordination is not functioning optimally. In this context, coordination is not merely an administrative mechanism but a process of aligning objectives, distributing authority, exchanging information, and formu-lating integrated policies.

These findings indicate that the institutional structure for managing border areas in Indonesia still exhibits the characteristics of a bureaucracy that tends to be sectoral. Each institution has its own duties and authorities based on applicable regulations, but cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms are often unable to effectively integrate various interests. This situation leads to overlapping development programs, divergent policy priorities among agencies, and slow decision-making processes. Therefore, the effectiveness of border area governance cannot be adequately measured by the mere existence of formal institutions; rather, it must be evaluated based on the quality of inter-institutional relationships, coordination capacity, and the ability to build synergies in achieving border area development objectives Regif et al. (2023).

From a good governance perspective Hadiwinata (2007; Sedarmayanti, 2012), these coordination weaknesses indicate that the implementation of the principles of effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness still requires strengthening. (McConnachie et al., 2022; UNDP, 1997) emphasizes that good governance is not only characterized by compliance with regulations but also by the ability of public institutions to deliver services that are effective, transparent, participatory, and oriented toward the public interest. In the context of North Central Timor Regency, border area management should not only be directed toward maintaining security stability but also toward improving community welfare through the provision of quality public services, the empowerment of the local economy, and increased access to education, health care, and basic infrastructure. Thus, institutional coordination serves as a crucial instrument to ensure that every development policy can address the needs of border communities in an integrated manner.

An analysis of various literature also reveals a close relationship between the quality of institutional governance and the effectiveness of public policy implementation. Institutions with strong coordination mechanisms tend to be better able to integrate various resources, reduce program duplication, and improve the efficiency of development implementation. Conversely, weak coordination leads to policy fragmentation, resulting in development programs that are implemented in a piecemeal manner and fail to produce sustainable impacts. This phenomenon indicates that the success of border area management is determined not only by the size of the budget or the number of development programs, but by the ability of institutions to establish governance that is adaptive to local dynamics (Seran, 2018). When viewed through the lens of new governance theory, this situation indicates that hierarchical models of governance are increasingly unable to address the complexities of border region issues. (Rhodes, 1996) argues that modern states no longer possess the capacity to resolve all public issues independently, making it necessary to establish governance networks that involve various actors. In the context of TTU, this network encompasses relationships between the central government, local governments, the National Border Agency (BNPP), village governments, security forces, civil society organizations, customary institutions, academics, and the private sector. Each actor possesses complementary resources, authority, and knowledge; thus, the success of governance depends on the government's ability to foster effective collaboration. Consequently, the government's role has shifted from "command and control" to "steering and facilitating" that is, guiding, facilitating, and synergizing various interests toward a shared development goal.

Based on the overall synthesis of findings, it is evident that institutional governance in the management of the border areas of North Central Timor Regency remains in a transitional phase, moving from an administrative governance model toward a collaborative governance model. National regulations, including Law No. 43 of 2008 on the Territory of the State and Presidential Regulation No. 44 of 2017 on the National Border Management Agency, have provided a relatively adequate institutional framework. However, the effectiveness of their implementation still depends on the capacity of institutions to foster cross-sectoral coordination, strengthen inter-agency communication, integrate development planning, and involve the community as part of the governance process Naimnule et al. (2024). Thus, strengthening institutional governance is not merely an administrative necessity but a key prerequisite for achieving effective, inclusive, and sustainable border area management in accordance with the principles of new governance, border governance, and good governance.

**Implementation of Good Governance**

The implementation of good governance principles in the management of the border areas of North Central Timor Regency (TTU) has been the focus of various studies; however, its implementation still faces structural and institutional challenges. The principles of good governance as formulated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) namely participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, the rule of law, equality, and consensus-building have, in principle, been incorporated into various national policies regarding border area management. However, the results of various studies indicate that the implementation of these principles has not been fully realized, as it remains constrained by limited institutional capacity, suboptimal cross-sectoral coordination, and the distinct social and geographical characteristics of border areas compared to other administrative regions (Yahya & Zein, 2020). Thus, the main issue no longer lies in the normative aspects of policy but rather in the capacity of government institutions to translate the principles of good governance into the practice of day-to-day governance.

**Table 2.** Results of the Thematic Analysis on the Implementation of Good Governance Principles

| Good Governance Principle | Supporting Articles | Synthesized Findings |
|---|---|---|
| **Transparency** | Regif; Naimnule; Rusdiono | Transparency has been implemented; however, public access to information remains limited. |
| **Accountability** | Regif; Naimnule; Rusdiono | Accountability mechanisms have begun to function but remain inconsistent in practice. |
| **Public Participation** | Regif; Naimnule; Rusdiono | Community members have been involved in participatory deliberation processes, although participation remains uneven across communities. |
| **Service Effectiveness** | Rusdiono; Herawati | Public service delivery has improved, but its effectiveness is not yet supported by strong inter-agency coordination. |

A review of the literature reveals a consistent trend regarding the importance of transparency, accountability, and public participation as key indicators of the quality of governance. Research conducted at the village government level in North Central Timor Regency indicates that these three principles are beginning to be implemented through village development deliberation mechanisms, the dissemination of public information, and community involvement in the formulation of development programs. However, this implementation remains largely procedural and has not yet fully resulted in substantive participation. Community involvement in decision-making processes remains dominated by certain groups, while access to public information is not yet fully equitable. These conditions indicate that the existence of participatory mechanisms does not automatically result in democratic governance unless accompanied by enhanced community capacity, greater transparency of information, and a commitment by government officials to treat the community as partners in the governance process.

These findings are strongly correlated with research results from other border areas in Indonesia, particularly in (Rusdiono et al., 2024), which indicate that the weak implementation of good governance is primarily due to governance issues rather than regulatory deficiencies. The similarity in patterns of findings across two border areas with distinct geographical characteristics suggests that the challenges of managing border areas in Indonesia tend to be systemic in nature. Institutional fragmentation, poor intersectoral coordination, and limited bureaucratic capacity are factors that consistently affect the quality of governance. Thus, governance issues in border areas cannot be understood as merely local problems but are consequences of a public administration model that remains dominated by a sectoral approach and has not yet fully adopted collaborative governance.

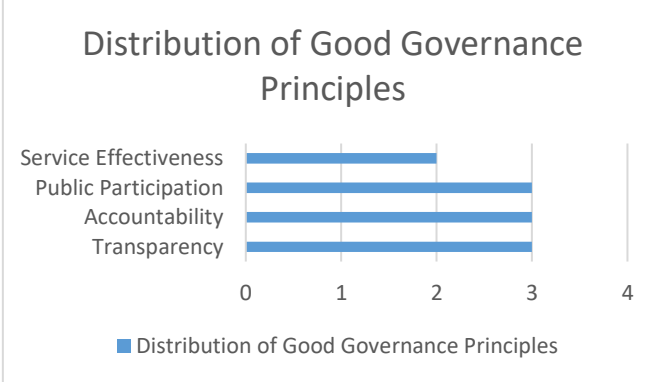


**Figure 2.** Distribution of Good Governance Principles

Although most studies reach relatively similar conclusions, there are variations in research focus, analytical indicators, and methodological approaches, leading to differences in the emphasis placed on research findings. Studies on border region development tend to prioritize infrastructure development, human resource capacity building, and local economic development as the primary indicators of development success. In contrast, research adopting a good governance perspective focuses more on the quality of governance processes, such as transparency, accountability, public participation, and the effectiveness of public services. On the other hand, research on border crosser management and regional security places greater emphasis on aspects of national sovereignty, border control, and bilateral relations between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. These differing orientations do not indicate a contradiction among the studies but rather demonstrate that border area management is a multidimensional phenomenon requiring various analytical perspectives to achieve a comprehensive understanding.

Differences in research findings are also influenced by variations in the level of analysis used. Studies employing a macro-level approach tend to view border area governance as part of the national governance system, thus placing greater emphasis on the relationships between the central government, local governments, and national policy dynamics. Conversely, research using case studies at the village or district level provides a more detailed picture of policy implementation on the ground, including the dynamics of the relationship between government officials and the community. Consequently, research with a macro perspective yields strategic and institutional recommendations, whereas research at the local level primarily offers operational recommendations related to improving the quality of public services, community empowerment, or strengthening the capacity of government officials. These two approaches are, in fact, complementary because the effectiveness of border area governance can only be understood if analysis is conducted simultaneously at both the policy and implementation levels.

From a methodological perspective, the majority of studies employ a qualitative approach using a case study design. This methodological choice is understandable because public governance is a social phenomenon influenced by inter-institutional interactions, the political context, local culture, and the characteristics of border communities. The qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of decision-making processes, the dynamics of institutional coordination, and the factors influencing policy implementation. However, the predominance of the qualitative approach also presents a number of limitations. Most studies focus on only one location or one institution, thereby limiting the generalizability of the research findings. Furthermore, some studies have not provided detailed explanations of data validation procedures, triangulation techniques, or strategies to minimize researcher bias; consequently, the credibility and transferability of the findings cannot be fully evaluated.

Another methodological limitation is the lack of standardized good governance indicators. Some studies use only certain indicators such as transparency and participation while others focus more on institutional effectiveness or accountability. These differences in indicators make it difficult to directly compare research findings, as each study employs a different evaluation framework. In fact, according to the (UNDP, 1997), the principles of good governance form an interconnected whole; therefore, evaluations of governance should be conducted comprehensively, taking into account all relevant dimensions. This inconsistency in the use of indicators is one reason why there is still no complete empirical picture of the level of good governance implementation in the border areas of North Central Timor Regency.

Furthermore, most studies still employ descriptive research designs, which place greater emphasis on identifying phenomena rather than analyzing cause-and-effect relationships Teyseran et al. (2025). Consequently, while various studies have successfully identified issues such as coordination problems, low community participation, or weak institutional capacity, they have not been able to provide an in-depth explanation of the mechanisms underlying these conditions. For example, there are still few studies examining the relationship between bureaucratic capacity and the effectiveness of inter-institutional coordination, or how the quality of local leadership influences the successful implementation of good governance principles. These limitations highlight the need to develop more analytical research designs—such as mixed methods, policy evaluation, or cross-regional comparative analysis to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

A critical analysis of the literature as a whole also reveals a tendency for some studies to still separate the issue of border area development from that of governance. In reality, these are two inseparable dimensions. The success of infrastructure development, improvements in community welfare, and the strengthening of regional security are highly dependent on the quality of governance that regulates the processes of planning, implementation, oversight, and policy evaluation. Therefore, an approach that focuses solely on development outcomes without evaluating governance processes risks yielding a partial understanding of the effectiveness of border area management.

Based on this synthesis, it can be understood that the implementation of good governance in the border areas of North Central Timor Regency is still in the stage of institutional strengthening and improving the quality of governance. The consistency of findings across various studies indicates that the main challenge lies in the implementation aspect, not in regulatory deficiencies. On the other hand, the variety of methodological approaches indicates that research on border area governance still has significant room for development through the use of more comprehensive analytical frameworks, more standardized indicators, and research designs capable of explaining the relationship between the quality of governance, institutional capacity, and the success of border area development in greater depth.

**Theoretical and Practical Implications, Integration of Theory, Research Gaps, and a Conceptual Model**

The results of this literature synthesis provide important theoretical implications for the development of public administration studies, particularly in understanding border area governance as a complex and multidimensional system of governance. To date, studies on border regions in Indonesia have primarily developed from the perspectives of national defense and security, regional development, and international relations. Consequently, the dimension of governance is often treated as a supporting factor rather than a key variable determining the success of border region management. In fact, a synthesis of various studies indicates that the success of border area development depends not only on the availability of infrastructure, the size of the budget, or the strength of regulations, but is primarily determined by the capacity of government institutions to foster coordination, collaboration, accountability, and community participation. These findings reinforce the argument that public governance is the cornerstone of achieving effective, sustainable, and community-welfare-oriented border area development.

**Table 3.** Results of the Thematic Analysis on Border Area Development Strategies

| Aspect | Synthesized Findings |
|---|---|
| Infrastructure Development | Infrastructure development remains the primary priority in border area development. |
| Security Strengthening | Security continues to be the dominant orientation in border area governance and management. |
| Local Economic Development | Local economic development is regarded as a key instrument for improving community welfare. |
| Integration of Government Governance | Few studies have integrated institutional governance, good governance, and border area development within a single analytical framework. |
| Theoretical Integration | No previous studies were identified that integrate **New Governance**, **Good Governance**, and **Collaborative Governance** into a unified analytical framework. |

From the perspective of new governance theory, the findings of this study indicate that the concept proposed by (Rhodes, 1996) remains highly relevant in explaining the dynamics of border area management. Rhodes asserts that modern governance has shifted from a hierarchical bureaucratic model toward a network-based governance model, in which the state is no longer the sole actor in the administration of public affairs. The results of the literature synthesis indicate that the management of the North Central Timor Regency border area involves various actors with differing authorities, resources, and interests, such as the central government, local governments, the National Border Management Agency (BNPP), the Regional Border Management Agency (BPPD), the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the Indonesian

National Police (Polri), technical agencies, village governments, customary institutions, business actors, academics, and the community. The complexity of these actors indicates that a command-and-control approach to governance is no longer sufficient to resolve border area issues. Instead, the effectiveness of governance is largely determined by the government's ability to build institutional networks capable of integrating diverse interests into shared development goals.

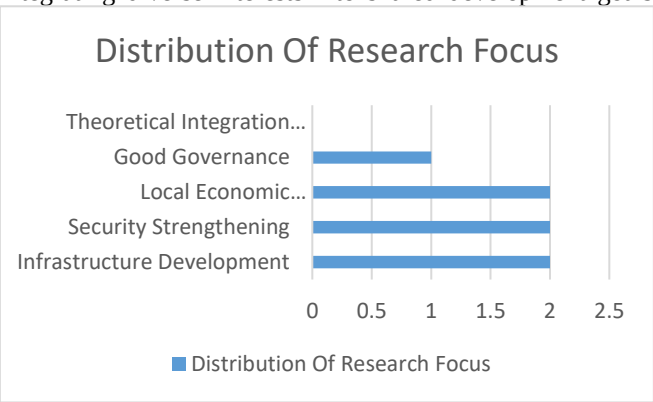


**Figure 3.** Distribution of Research Focus

This finding also reinforces the concept of border governance proposed by (Chan & Womack, 2016). Unlike traditional approaches that view borders as lines separating national sovereignty, the concept of border governance positions border areas as spaces of interaction that bring together political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and security dimensions. Therefore, the management of border areas cannot be limited to an administrative approach but must take into account the dynamics of cross-border community relations, economic activities, population mobility, and inter-regional cooperation. In the context of North Central Timor Regency, this approach explains why the success of border area management is not only measured by the preservation of state sovereignty but also by the government's ability to promote community well-being, expand access to public services, and foster harmonious socio-economic relations with the border regions of Timor-Leste.

In addition to reinforcing the theories of "new governance" and "border governance," the findings of this synthesis also indicate that the principles of good governance formulated by the (UNDP, 1997) remain a relevant normative framework for evaluating the quality of governance in border areas. Transparency, accountability, participation, effectiveness, efficiency, the rule of law, responsiveness, and a focus on consensus are interrelated indicators in determining the quality of governance. However, the literature synthesis reveals that most studies still use good governance indicators in a fragmented manner. Some studies focus only on transparency and participation, while others focus more on institutional effectiveness or regional development. Consequently, evaluations of the quality of governance in border areas have not yet been able to comprehensively describe the relationships among the various dimensions of good governance.

Based on these conditions, this study proposes the integration of new governance, border governance, and good governance theories as a more comprehensive conceptual framework for analyzing border area governance. Within this framework, new governance serves to explain the patterns of relationships among stakeholders through collaborative networks; border governance provides a perspective on the specific characteristics of border areas as spaces for multi-dimensional interaction; while good governance serves as a normative instrument for assessing the quality of governance processes. The integration of these three theories yields a more comprehensive perspective than the use of any single theory in isolation, as it can simultaneously explain the relationships between institutional structures, governance processes, and development outcomes in border areas.

In addition to theoretical implications, the results of this synthesis also offer practical implications for governance in the border areas of North Central Timor Regency. First, the local government needs to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Regional Border Management Agency by improving the quality of human resources, enhancing coordination functions, and developing an integrated information system. Institutional capacity is a critical factor because various studies indicate that the primary issue in border area management lies not in a lack of regulations, but rather in weak implementation and inter-institutional coordination. Second, the government needs to develop more adaptive cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms through coordination forums that involve all stakeholders, including village governments, indigenous communities, academics, and the private sector. This approach aligns with the principle of collaborative governance, which positions collaboration as the primary mechanism for resolving complex public issues. Third, the formulation of border area policies needs to prioritize an evidence-based policy approach. Findings by (Fritantus & Bria, 2020) indicate that research findings have not yet been optimally utilized in the policy formulation process in North Central Timor Regency. In fact, the use of empirical data can improve the quality of planning, strengthen policy accountability, and minimize the gap between community needs and development programs. Therefore, synergy between local governments, universities, and research institutions needs to be strengthened so that the decision-making process is based more on scientific evidence rather than solely on administrative considerations.

The synthesis also identified several research gaps that remain open for further exploration in future studies. First, most previous studies have examined aspects of border area governance in a piecemeal manner, such as regional development, village governance, or border security. Research that integrates all dimensions of governance into a single analytical framework remains very limited. Second, there is no conceptual model that specifically explains the relationship between institutional capacity, the quality of coordination, the implementation of good governance, and the effectiveness of border area development in North Central Timor Regency. Third, previous research has been dominated by descriptive qualitative approaches and thus has not been able to empirically measure the influence of each variable on the effectiveness of border area governance. Fourth, comparative studies among border regions in Indonesia are still relatively scarce, so it remains unknown whether the governance patterns in North Central Timor Regency share similar characteristics with or differ from those in other border areas.

Based on these gaps, this study proposes a conceptual model of border area governance that identifies institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, and multi-stakeholder collaboration as the key factors influencing the quality of good governance implementation. Furthermore, the implementation of good governance is viewed as a variable that determines the effectiveness of border area management through improvements in the quality of public services, local economic development, enhanced regional security, and community well-

being. In this model, the community is no longer positioned as the object of development but as an actor participating in the processes of policy planning, implementation, and evaluation. Thus, the relationship between the government and the community shifts from a bureaucratic model to a coll Thus, overall, this conceptual model affirms that border area governance is an interconnected system comprising institutional dimensions, governance processes, and development outcomes. The effectiveness of border area management depends not only on the strength of regulations or the scale of development investment, but primarily on the government's ability to establish a collaborative, accountable, transparent, responsive, and participatory governance framework. Therefore, this study not only enriches the development of governance theory in the field of Public Administration but also provides a conceptual foundation for the formulation of border area management policies that are more integrated, adaptive, and sustainable collaborative partnership model.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that government governance in the management of the Timor Tengah Utara border area can no longer be understood solely through the lens of physical infrastructure development or territorial security enhancement. Instead, it should be viewed as a governance system involving the interaction of multiple governmental and non-governmental actors. The synthesis of eight scientific articles identified three major findings: (1) the effectiveness of border area management is strongly influenced by institutional capacity and the quality of inter-agency coordination; (2) the implementation of good governance principles—particularly transparency, accountability, participation, and effectiveness—has not yet been fully optimized due to limited institutional capacity and weak cross-sectoral coordination; and (3) border area development continues to be dominated by physical development initiatives and the strengthening of defense functions, while the dimension of collaborative governance has received insufficient attention.

The literature synthesis further reveals that the selected studies complement one another in explaining the dynamics of border area governance. Research focusing on institutional arrangements emphasizes the importance of organizational capacity and inter-agency coordination, whereas studies on good governance highlight the quality of governance practices at the local level. Meanwhile, research on regional development and security indicates that physical development alone is insufficient to achieve effective governance unless it is accompanied by robust coordination mechanisms, community participation, and institutional accountability. Collectively, the reviewed literature consistently concludes that the successful management of border areas depends on the integration of multiple dimensions of government governance.

The primary contribution of this study lies in the development of a conceptual model of border area governance that integrates the perspectives of new governance, good governance, and collaborative governance into a single analytical framework. The proposed model positions inter-agency coordination as the core mechanism linking the central government, local governments, the National Border Management Agency (Badan Nasional Pengelola Perbatasan), village governments, security institutions, the private sector, and local communities. This integration is reinforced by the application of good governance principles as the normative foundation of public administration and by multi-stakeholder collaboration as the primary mechanism for policy implementation. Consequently, the proposed model not only explains the conceptual relationships among the key governance components but also provides a practical framework that can guide the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of border area management policies.

From a practical perspective, the conceptual model provides strategic guidance for policymakers to strengthen institutional capacity, improve cross-sectoral coordination, enhance community participation, and promote evidence-based policy-making in border area management. From an academic standpoint, the model enriches the field of Government Studies by offering a more integrated approach to analyzing border governance while providing a foundation for future research on the relationships among government governance, border area development, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. It synthesizes only eight articles that met the predefined inclusion criteria within the 2016–2025 publication period. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the scope of the literature review by incorporating a larger number of international publications and to empirically validate the proposed conceptual model through quantitative, mixed-methods, or comparative studies across border regions in Indonesia. Such empirical validation is expected to verify the relationships among the variables within the model and generate more applicable, evidence-based policy recommendations.

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