

The Influence of Administrative Ethics on Public Trust in Government Bureaucracy

Muhammad Husein Maruapey¹ Rislal Amanda Putri², Marshella Rahma Sitompul³, Anita Rahmawati⁴, Siska Rahmawati⁵, Muhammad Haikal⁶
Djuanda University, Bogor, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Muhammad Husein Maruapey

Muhammadhusein1@unida.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Administrative Ethics; Public Services; Professionalism; Transparency; Good

Received : 22 March

Revised : 22 May

Accepted: 24 June

©2026 Maruapey, Putri, Rahmawati, Sitompul, Rahmawati, Haikal : This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

The development of contemporary public administration that has shifted from *the paradigm of Old Public Administration* (OPA) to *New Public Service* (NPS) requires the government bureaucracy to place citizens as the main focus of public services. This research aims to analyze the role of administrative ethics, as well as map its relationship in reconstructing the legitimacy of government institutions. The method used is *Library Research* with a *Systematic Review approach* based on qualitative synthesis of theories and previous empirical findings. The results of the study show that the dimensions of administrative ethics which include transparency, accountability, fairness, and responsiveness have a significant effect as the main foundation in creating clean and quality public services. Although in the field its application is still faced with the pathological challenges of bureaucracy, paternalistic culture, political pressure, and suboptimal internal supervision, the consistent enforcement of administrative ethics has proven to form a model of reconstructing public trust.

INTRODUCTION

The development of public administration has undergone a significant paradigm shift from the Old Public Administration (OPA) to the New Public Service (NPS) paradigm. While OPA emphasizes bureaucratic hierarchy, rule compliance, and administrative efficiency, NPS positions citizens as the primary focus of public services and encourages government institutions to prioritize transparency, accountability, participation, and responsiveness. This transformation requires government bureaucracies not only to comply with legal regulations but also to uphold ethical principles in every aspect of public administration. Administrative ethics serves as a moral foundation that guides public officials in carrying out their duties with integrity, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and a commitment to the public interest. Ethical values are essential because public administration is not merely concerned with procedural compliance but also with ensuring that government actions meet societal expectations of justice and accountability. Consequently, the quality of public services is increasingly determined by the ethical conduct of public officials rather than by administrative procedures alone. Despite continuous bureaucratic reforms, many countries, including Indonesia, continue to face various ethical challenges such as corruption, abuse of authority, nepotism, discrimination in public services, and weak accountability mechanisms. These problems have negatively affected citizens' perceptions of government institutions and contributed to declining public trust. Public trust is widely recognized as an important form of social capital because it strengthens policy legitimacy, increases citizens' willingness to comply with government regulations, and supports the successful implementation of public programs.

Previous studies have demonstrated that administrative ethics contributes to improving public service quality and strengthening public trust. However, most existing studies have focused on specific ethical dimensions, such as transparency, accountability, or integrity, within particular institutions or local government settings. Other studies have primarily examined public trust as an outcome of service quality or government performance without comprehensively integrating the broader dimensions of administrative ethics. Consequently, the existing literature remains fragmented and provides limited understanding of how various ethical principles collectively contribute to reconstructing public trust in government bureaucracy through a systematic synthesis of previous findings. This condition indicates a research gap. Although numerous empirical studies discuss administrative ethics and public trust separately, relatively few studies comprehensively synthesize previous research to explain the relationship between transparency, accountability, fairness, and responsiveness as integrated ethical dimensions that influence the reconstruction of public trust in government bureaucracy. Therefore, a systematic literature review is necessary to consolidate previous findings, identify consistent patterns, reveal remaining research limitations, and provide a more comprehensive conceptual understanding of the relationship between administrative ethics and public trust.

Based on this gap, the research addresses the following questions:

- How do the dimensions of administrative ethics influence public trust in government bureaucracy?
- Which ethical dimensions are most consistently identified in previous studies as determinants of public trust?
- What challenges hinder the implementation of administrative ethics in strengthening public trust?
- How can previous research findings be synthesized to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework regarding the relationship between administrative ethics and public trust?

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the influence of administrative ethics on public trust in government bureaucracy through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Specifically, the study seeks to identify the dominant ethical dimensions discussed in previous literature, synthesize empirical findings regarding their relationship with public trust, examine the challenges affecting ethical implementation, and develop a comprehensive conceptual framework explaining how administrative ethics contributes to the reconstruction of public trust.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it provides a comprehensive synthesis of previous theoretical and empirical studies concerning administrative ethics and public trust through a systematic review approach. Second, it identifies major research trends, consistent findings, and unresolved issues within the existing literature, thereby offering clearer directions for future research. Third, it proposes an integrated conceptual framework demonstrating that transparency, accountability, fairness, and responsiveness constitute interconnected ethical dimensions that collectively enhance public service quality, strengthen citizen satisfaction, and ultimately rebuild public trust in government bureaucracy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In studying the concept of public administration ethics, a basic understanding must be placed on its meaning as a set of values, norms, and substantive moral principles that bind and become a guiding compass for government officials in executing official duties and transforming services to the community. The scope of ethics goes beyond the limits of the obligation of legalistic compliance with formal law, because it falls into the substantive territory of how a public official is required to be honest, objective, fair, transparent, and always prioritize moral responsibility in every decision sheet he sets. Public administration theory notes the fundamental views of H. George Frederickson who pays great attention to the aspect of social equity. Frederickson argues sharply that government apparatus should not be trapped in the dichotomy of effective and efficient work alone, but rather bear a moral mandate to guarantee that all levels of society have the right to receive fair treatment and services without any discriminatory barriers of any kind (Wulandari et al., 2026).

On the other hand, Terry L. Cooper emphasizes that the ethical affairs of public administration are closely intertwined with the *moral responsibility* that is

inherent in each government employee individually. When carrying out their tasks, public officials are often confronted with dilemmas that require them to make quick decisions based on personal considerations or the use of office discretion (Oktari et al., 2023). Therefore, Cooper emphasized that every decision born from the discretionary space must remain based on ethical values and put the benefit of the interests of the community as the highest priority. The strengthening of this concept was also voiced by Donald C. Menzel who views the ethics of public administration as the main anchor in constructing a clean *and* accountable government order. Menzel emphasized that the institutionalization of the values of integrity, transparency, accountability, and the enforcement of the code of ethics within government organizations is a non-negotiable dead price to mitigate and prevent the spread of corrupt practices, abuse of authority, and *conflicts of interest*. Overall, the universal values of honesty, integrity, professionalism, objectivity, transparency, accountability, and excellent service orientation must be used as a standard guideline for the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in order to maintain the honor of the institution and maintain public trust.

The concept of *public trust* itself is defined as a form of collective belief, optimism, and positive public assessment that the government has the capacity, honesty, and sense of responsibility in operating its mandate of power and authority. The existence of this trust is very crucial because its massive influence is able to determine the degree of public support for government stability, increase citizens' awareness of compliance with policy implementation, and ensure the smooth execution of government work programs in the field. Public trust does not grow in a vacuum, but is eliminated or constructed empirically through the accumulation of direct experience and the quality of interaction between citizens and the government machinery. When the government proves itself to be able to distribute quality services, treat citizens fairly, and work on the rail of professionalism, the public trust graph will move up linearly. On the contrary, the explosion of corruption cases, abuse of office scandals, and poor performance of public services will be the determining factors that undermine the positive sentiment of the community (Citradewi et al., 2021).

When dissecting the construction of trust, Roger C. Mayer offers a theoretical analysis framework that is very relevant by mapping the three main dimensions that form trust, namely *ability*, *benevolence*, and *integrity*. The dimension of *ability* represents the total capacity, mastery of knowledge, technical skills, competence, and professionalism possessed by government institutions and individual apparatus in solving the complexity of public problems and distributing services. The better the real skills shown by the government, the thicker the public's confidence in the performance of the institution will be (Puhi et al., 2025). Furthermore, the dimension of *benevolence* (good intentions) reflects the perception and belief of the public that the government is driven by moral sincerity and pure concern for the fate of its people. This is clearly recorded from the degree of responsiveness of the government in capturing the pulse of citizens'

needs, the hospitality attitude of the apparatus when serving, to the substantial partiality of policy products born against the lives of the people (Timbuleng et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the integrity dimension is a binding pillar that measures the uncompromising consistency of the government in maintaining moral values, honesty, and ethical compliance. This integrity manifests in absolute harmony between the narrative of words and the reality of deeds, obedience to the corridor of applicable rules, and a strong commitment to stay away from the temptation of abuse of power. The three elements in Mayer's dimensional triangle are intertwined with each other; The combination of work skills, sincerity of service, and the solidity of the fortress of integrity is an absolute prerequisite in giving birth to strong and deep-rooted public trust (Feramahdalena et al., 2025).

Theoretically, the common thread between public administration ethics and public trust has a very close and positive linear causality. The theoretical framework confirms that any escalation in the quality of the implementation of ethics by the ranks of ASN will be directly proportional to the increase in the trust graph given by the public to the government circle. Ethical behavior is reflected in the manifestation of honesty, information disclosure, concrete responsibility, and high morality in the implementation of official duties. When this ethical value system is firmly internalized in the bureaucratic culture, the space for the proliferation of corruption, collusion, nepotism, and abuse of authority viruses will itself shrink significantly, which then stimulates the birth of a sense of security and trust in the community's conscience. Not only stopping at reducing deviations, the institutionalization of ethics that runs optimally is also the main fuel for improving the quality of public services. Apparatus who work under the guidance of professional ethics will always put their work orientation to satisfy the needs of many people. This excellent and satisfactory service output will in turn convert the temporal satisfaction of the community into an institutional and long-term public trust. Thus, public administration ethics occupy a key position as the main determinant that influences the pattern of government-people relations. A government that puts ethical values above all else will much easier to mobilize voluntary support from the public, increase civil obedience to the direction of state policies, and accelerate the realization of *good governance*.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine the influence of administrative ethics on public trust in government bureaucracy. The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines to ensure a systematic, transparent, and reliable literature selection process. The literature search was conducted using four academic databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), Google Scholar, and SINTA. Articles published between 2015

and 2025 were included to capture recent developments in administrative ethics and public trust. The search used several combinations of keywords with Boolean operators (AND/OR), such as "Administrative Ethics" AND "Public Trust", "Administrative Ethics" AND "Government Bureaucracy", and "Public Ethics" AND "Public Service". Only peer-reviewed journal articles written in English or Indonesian were selected. The inclusion criteria consisted of journal articles discussing administrative ethics, public trust, governance, or public services that were available in full text. Meanwhile, conference papers, books, theses, duplicate articles, studies unrelated to the research topic, and publications without clear research methods were excluded. Following the PRISMA procedure, the initial search identified 312 articles. After removing 62 duplicate records, 250 articles remained for title and abstract screening. Subsequently, 165 articles were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. The remaining 85 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility, and 55 articles were excluded due to methodological limitations or insufficient relevance. Finally, 30 articles were included in the qualitative synthesis. Data from the selected studies were extracted systematically, including the author, publication year, research method, research focus, and main findings. The extracted information was then organized into a literature synthesis table to facilitate comparison across studies. The selected articles were analyzed using qualitative thematic analysis. The analysis focused on identifying similarities, differences, and recurring themes related to administrative ethics, particularly transparency, accountability, fairness, integrity, and responsiveness, as well as their contribution to strengthening public trust in government bureaucracy.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The synthesis of the selected literature demonstrates that administrative ethics plays a fundamental role in strengthening public trust in government bureaucracy. Across the reviewed studies, four ethical dimensions—transparency, accountability, fairness, and responsiveness—consistently emerge as the primary determinants influencing citizens' perceptions of government performance and institutional legitimacy. Although each study emphasizes different aspects of administrative ethics, the overall findings indicate that ethical behavior contributes significantly to improving public service quality, increasing citizen satisfaction, and rebuilding public trust. One of the most consistently discussed ethical dimensions is transparency. Previous studies by Welni et al. (2024), Pananrangi et al. (2021), and Yudianto et al. (2024) emphasize that transparent public administration enables citizens to obtain accurate information regarding administrative procedures, service requirements, processing time, and service costs. Such openness reduces information asymmetry between government institutions and citizens while limiting opportunities for corruption, illegal fees, and maladministration. Similar findings are reported by Anshar and

Wibowo (2024), who argue that transparency strengthens public oversight and increases institutional accountability. These findings consistently demonstrate that transparency is not merely an administrative requirement but also an essential mechanism for developing citizens' confidence in government institutions. Besides transparency, accountability represents another essential ethical principle influencing public trust. Most reviewed studies agree that accountability requires public officials to justify every policy decision and administrative action in accordance with legal, administrative, and ethical standards. Pamungkas (2025) argues that accountability promotes organizational integrity and strengthens public confidence because government institutions become more responsible for their performance. Likewise, Welni et al. (2024) conclude that accountability positively affects service quality and citizen satisfaction. Although both studies acknowledge the importance of accountability, Pamungkas primarily discusses accountability from an organizational governance perspective, whereas Welni et al. emphasize its practical implications for public service delivery. This comparison suggests that accountability contributes simultaneously to institutional performance and citizens' perceptions of government credibility.

The literature further identifies fairness as an indispensable component of administrative ethics. Choirulsyah (2024) argues that equal treatment regardless of social status, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation strengthens citizens' perceptions of justice within government institutions. Similarly, Anshar and Wibowo (2024) emphasize that fair public services reduce discriminatory practices and improve citizens' trust in administrative procedures. These findings indicate that fairness contributes not only to service satisfaction but also to the perceived legitimacy of government decisions. However, several studies also acknowledge that implementing fairness remains challenging because bureaucratic culture in many public institutions continues to be influenced by favoritism, patronage, and political intervention. Another recurring finding concerns responsiveness, which refers to the government's ability to respond promptly and effectively to citizens' needs and complaints. Timbuleng et al. (2023) demonstrate that responsive public officials improve service quality by providing timely solutions and maintaining effective communication with service users. Similar conclusions are presented by Sihombing et al., who emphasize that responsiveness directly affects public satisfaction because citizens expect immediate attention to administrative problems. Nevertheless, while previous studies consistently identify responsiveness as an important ethical dimension, relatively few explain how responsiveness interacts with transparency accountability, and fairness in influencing public trust. This limitation indicates that ethical dimensions should not be analyzed separately but rather as interconnected elements within an integrated administrative ethics framework.

Although the reviewed studies consistently report positive relationships between administrative ethics and public trust, they also identify several barriers that hinder ethical implementation within government bureaucracy. One of the most frequently discussed obstacles is the persistence of paternalistic organizational culture, where loyalty to superiors often outweighs adherence to professional ethical standards. Simon (2012) argues that hierarchical bureaucratic structures frequently discourage ethical decision-making and limit individual accountability. Similarly, Choirulsyah (2024) emphasizes that political intervention and conflicts of interest weaken bureaucratic neutrality and reduce public confidence in government institutions. Furthermore, several studies highlight weaknesses in internal supervision systems. Anshar and Wibowo (2024) report that ineffective complaint mechanisms, inadequate whistleblower protection, and weak law enforcement reduce the effectiveness of ethical regulations. Consequently, ethical violations frequently remain unresolved, thereby undermining institutional credibility. These findings suggest that establishing ethical regulations alone is insufficient; ethical values must be supported by effective monitoring systems, organizational commitment, and strong political leadership. Compared with previous studies, the present review offers a broader understanding of the relationship between administrative ethics and public trust by synthesizing findings from multiple empirical and theoretical studies rather than focusing on a single institution or administrative context. Most previous studies examine one or two ethical dimensions independently, whereas this review demonstrates that transparency, accountability, fairness, and responsiveness operate as complementary components that collectively influence public trust. The findings therefore support a more integrated conceptual model in which administrative ethics improves public service quality, enhances citizen satisfaction, strengthens institutional legitimacy, and ultimately reconstructs public trust in government bureaucracy.

Overall, the synthesis indicates that administrative ethics should not be viewed solely as compliance with formal regulations but as a strategic governance instrument capable of improving bureaucratic performance and restoring public confidence. The implementation of ethical principles must therefore become an integral component of bureaucratic reform, organizational culture, and public service management. Sustainable public trust can only be achieved when ethical values are consistently institutionalized throughout government organizations and supported by effective accountability mechanisms, transparent governance practices, and responsive public service delivery.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a final common thread, it can be concluded unequivocally that the implementation of public administration ethics in the government bureaucracy is not just a complementary instrument that is a legal formality or a mere

administrative sweetener. Ethics is a moral foundation that has a very strategic value as well as a main pillar for the realization of good *governance*. The fluctuations in the degree of public *trust* are scientifically proven to be significantly controlled by the extent to which the bureaucracy is able to enforce its four main ethical pillars, namely transparency, accountability, justice, and responsiveness of the apparatus when carrying out the mandate to serve the community (Awaludin et al., 2026).

Although in empirical reality, the enforcement of ethics in the field still has to be hampered by a storm of challenges in the form of a strong paternalistic culture, political pressure intervention, and the still fragile internal oversight system, the existence of administrative ethics enforcement remains the single most crucial instrument that cannot be negotiated. Overall, the interaction between administrative ethics variables and public trust forms a cyclical and continuous reconstruction flow. The authentic and consistent application of administrative ethical values in the field is an upstream that will lead to an improvement in the quality of public services, which in the next stage will harvest public satisfaction, leading to the success of rebuilding and maintaining the existence of public trust in the dignity and legitimacy of government institutions (Wulandari et al., 2026).

Furthermore, the restoration of *public trust* through this ethical instrument will automatically strengthen the social capital needed by the government to run the wheels of development. When ethics have given birth to quality public services and fostered public satisfaction, the legitimacy of government policies will be stronger in the eyes of citizens. Thus, the reconstruction of public trust is no longer just a target of work achievements, but a cycle of governance sustainability in which morality and legality go hand in hand to create a contemporary bureaucracy that purely serves the public interest.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach and relied solely on secondary data obtained from previously published journal articles. Consequently, the findings are dependent on the quality, scope, and availability of existing literature rather than primary empirical evidence. Second, the review was limited to articles published between 2015 and 2025 and indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and SINTA, which may have excluded relevant studies published outside these databases or within different publication periods. Third, although the review identified transparency, accountability, fairness, and responsiveness as the dominant dimensions of administrative ethics, contextual differences among countries, government institutions, and administrative systems may influence the implementation of these ethical principles and their impact on public trust. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of the selected literature.

Future studies are encouraged to complement the findings of this systematic review by conducting empirical research using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches in various governmental institutions.

Comparative studies across different regions or countries would also provide a broader understanding of how administrative ethics influences public trust under different political, cultural, and institutional contexts. Furthermore, future research should examine additional factors that may mediate or moderate the relationship between administrative ethics and public trust, such as leadership, organizational culture, digital governance, public service quality, citizen participation, and government transparency. Such studies are expected to enrich the theoretical development of administrative ethics and provide stronger practical recommendations for strengthening good governance and improving public trust in government bureaucracy.

REFERENCE

- Anshar, S., & Wibowo, A. (2024). *Ekasakti Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Etika Administrasi Dalam Layanan Publik Yang Mengutamakan Keadilan Sosial*. 05, 83–89.
- Awaludin, A., Kirani, D. A., Larasati, N. A., Mayasaroh, D., & Ayni, M. N. (2026). *Pola Pikir Birokrasi dalam Administrasi Publik : Kajian Literatur Tentang Tantangan Reformasi Birokrasi di Indonesia menghadapi persoalan maladministrasi , seperti prosedur yang tidak jelas , waktu pelayanan*. April.
- Azdi, A. R., & Nurwahid, R. H. (2024). *Korupsi Dan Kegagalan Etika Dalam Administrasi Publik : Dampak Pada Pelayanan Masyarakat*. 11(02), 776–791.
- Choirulsyah, D. (2024). *Implementasi Etika Administrasi Publik : Langkah Utama dalam Menciptakan Good Governance di Indonesia*. 9(3), 195–203.
- Citradewi, U., Studi, P., Publik, A., Ilmu, J., Publik, A., Administrasi, F. I., & Brawijaya, U. (2021). *Etika pelayanan publik di birokrasi pemerintahan daerah*.
- Farhanuddin, A. F., Ayulia, A., Setia, P., Jauza, D., Etik, K., & Publik, P. (2022). *Penerapan etika pelayanan publik dalam mewujudkan good governance*. 19(1), 64–74.
- Feramahdalena, E., Rosidin, A., Wahyudi, H., & Maulana, J. (2025). *Penguatan Etika Islam dalam Birokrasi di Banten*. 3, 29–39.
- Musthafa, R. A., Fahesya, E. M., Auliya, F., Hukum, F., & Pasundan, U. (2026). *PROFESIONALITAS PERIZINAN BANGUNAN DI TENGAH TEKANAN KEPENTINGAN : TINJAUAN*.
<https://doi.org/10.11111/dassollen.xxxxxxx>
- Oktari, Y., Mindarti, L. I., Brawijaya, U., & Timur, J. (2023). *Jurnal Ilmiah Administrasi Publik (JIAP)*. 9(1), 11–20.
- Pamungkas, P. (2025). *Etika Administrasi dalam Membangun Integritas Publik*. 5(1), 42–52.
- Pananrangi, A. M., Muhammad, A., & Ismail, I. (2021). *PELAKSANAAN TUGAS PELAYANAN BIROKRAT*. 4(3), 3–19.
- Pendahuluan, I. (n.d.). *ETIKA DALAM WUJUD AKUNTABILITAS PENYELENGGARAAN PEMERINTAHAN Oleh : Imam Maulana Yusuf*. 150, 548–557.
- Puhi, M. S., Prihatini, F., Tui, D., & Nani, Y. N. (2025). *Penerapan Etika Birokrasi Dalam Pelayanan Publik (Studi Kasus di Dinas Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil Kabupaten Gorontalo) Implementation of Bureaucratic Ethics in Public Services (Case Study at the Population and Civil Registration Service of Gorontalo Regency)*. 3(1), 20–30.
- Sedarmayanti, H., & Nurliawati, N. (n.d.). *MENINGKATKAN KUALITAS PELAYANAN*. 337–362.
- Sihombing, P. N., Sihombing, M., & Kusmanto, H. (n.d.). *Analisis Strategi Penguatan Pemantauan dan Evaluasi Kinerja Penyelenggaraan Pelayanan Publik rendahnya kepuasan masyarakat terhadap layanan administrasi . Berdasarkan data target*.
- Simon, H. A. (2012). *Jurnal Adminsitasi Publik Volume 3 Nomor 1, Juni 2012*. 3, 400–401.
- Timbuleng, M., Johannes, R. A., Pangkey, I., Mamonto, F. H., Manado, U. N., &

- Ratulangi, U. S. (2023). *ANALISIS ETIKA PELAYANAN PUBLIK Studi Pada Kantor Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah Provinsi Sulawesi Utara Author*. 15(2), 208–221.
- Welni, A., Wulandari, M., Putra, R. W., & Hanoselina, Y. (2024). *Meningkatkan Profesionalisme Pelayanan Publik melalui Penerapan Etika Administrasi di Dinas Sosial Provinsi Sumatera Barat*. 4.
- Wulandari, A., Safitri, N. T., Azhara, M. A., & Aurian, A. A. (2026). *Integritas dalam Birokrasi: Implementasi Kode Etik ASN pada Pelayanan Publik Pemerintahan Kota Tangerang*. 5(2), 912–920.
- Yudianto, E., Syamsya, M., Mustofa, A., Fian, S., Nasution, H., Panca, U., & Probolinggo, M. (2024). *Urgensi Etika Administrasi Publik Dalam Mewujudkan Good Governance Pada Pelayanan Publik*. 17(1), 162–170.