



The Application of Public Administration Ethics in Improving the Quality of Public Services in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Public service is the government's primary obligation in meeting the needs of the community. The quality of service is determined not only by administrative systems, regulations, and technology, but also by the ethical behavior and moral values of government officials. Public administration ethics serve as a guide in fostering professionalism, transparency, accountability, and service oriented toward the public interest. This study aims to analyze the role of public administration ethics in improving the quality of public services in Indonesia using a qualitative literature review method. The results show that ethical principles such as integrity, transparency, accountability, fairness, professionalism, and responsiveness play a crucial role in improving service quality and public trust in the government. Therefore, strengthening public administration ethics is necessary to support effective service delivery and achieve good governance.

INTRODUCTION

The government has an obligation to provide quality public services to all segments of society. As stipulated in Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services, public services are activities aimed at meeting the public's needs for goods, services, and administrative services provided by public service providers.

In practice, public services in Indonesia still face various challenges, such as a lack of transparency, complicated procedures, low responsiveness from government officials, unequal access to services, and conduct that does not fully align with public administration ethical standards. These conditions contribute to a decline in public trust in government institutions.

High-quality public service cannot be achieved solely through clear regulations and procedures but also depends on the attitudes and behavior of government officials. Public administration ethics provide guidelines for officials to act in the public interest through the values of integrity, responsibility, transparency, accountability, professionalism, and fairness. Welni et al. (2024) state that the application of these ethical principles can enhance the professionalism of civil servants as well as the quality of public services.

Although research on public administration ethics and the quality of public services in Indonesia continues to evolve, most previous studies have addressed these two topics separately. Research on public administration ethics generally focuses on the application of ethical values to support civil service professionalism and good governance, whereas research on public service quality more often employs the SERVQUAL approach to measure public satisfaction without comprehensively linking it to the ethical dimensions of the civil service (Choirulsyah & Azhar, 2024; Mozin et al., 2025). Furthermore, most previous studies have examined only one or two ethical indicators within the context of specific local governments, thus failing to elucidate the holistic relationship between administrative ethics, public service quality, and the principles of good governance. Previous research has also not provided detailed explanations of the literature selection process used in systematic reviews, resulting in limited research replicability.

Based on this gap, this study offers a novel contribution in the form of an analytical framework that integrates Dwight Waldo's six indicators of public administration ethics, the five dimensions of service quality from SERVQUAL, and the principles of good governance into a single conceptual model. The integration of these three approaches is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the application of public administration ethics influences the quality of public services while supporting the realization of good governance. Additionally, this study employs a Systematic Literature Review method, involving the systematic stages of identification, selection, evaluation, and synthesis of the literature, thereby yielding more credible and replicable findings.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the contribution of the application of public administration ethics to improving the quality of public services in Indonesia through the integration of Dwight Waldo's six ethical indicators, the

SERVQUAL dimensions, and the principles of good governance, based on the results of a Systematic Literature Review of various relevant scientific literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. *Public Administration Ethics*

Public administration ethics is a set of values, norms, and moral principles that function as a guiding framework for state apparatus in fulfilling service obligations to the community. Administrative ethics are not limited to compliance with formal regulations; Ethics also includes how the apparatus makes responsible decisions in carrying out their duties.

Henry (2018) emphasized that public administration is essentially connected to moral values, considering that every government decision produces a significant impact on society. Public officials must therefore give adequate consideration to the public interest in every action taken. The main ethical principles of public administration include:

a. **Integrity**

Integrity refers to the ability of the apparatus to carry out duties honestly, consistently, and responsibly. Officials who have integrity will not abuse their authority and will prioritize the interests of the community over personal interests. Integrity is also reflected in the suitability between the words and actions of the apparatus in carrying out public service duties. Apparatus with integrity is able to maintain public trust and prevent corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN) practices that can harm the public interest.

b. **Accountability**

Accountability means that every action and decision of the government must be accountable to the public. The government must be open to constructive evaluation and criticism so that the quality of services can continue to be improved. In practice, accountability is realized through the preparation of performance reports, internal and external supervision, and public complaint mechanisms. With accountability, the public can assess the extent to which the government has carried out its duties and responsibilities effectively.

c. **Transparency**

Transparency is related to the government's openness in conveying information about service processes, service standards, related costs, and procedural requirements that must be met by the public. Transparency is essential to reduce misunderstandings, prevent abuse of authority, and increase public trust in the government. The easier information is accessed by the public, the greater the opportunity to create clean and quality public services.

d. **Justice**

Public services must be organized equally, without discrimination based on social background. Every citizen has the same right to receive services from the state. Public services must be carried out equally without discrimination based on social, economic, religious, ethnic, gender, or

physical condition of the community. Every citizen has the same right to obtain proper services from the government. The principle of justice requires the apparatus to treat all service users equally and objectively so that no community group is harmed or privileged in the service process.

d. Responsiveness

Responsiveness shows the ability of the apparatus to understand and meet the needs of the community quickly and precisely. Responsive apparatus is able to provide solutions to community problems and respond well to public complaints and aspirations.

The application of ethical principles such as integrity, accountability, transparency, fairness, and responsiveness is an important foundation in realizing quality public services. By applying these principles, public services can run more effectively, professionally, and increase public satisfaction and trust in the government.

2. *Quality of Public Services*

The quality of public services refers to the extent to which the government is able to meet the needs of the community through effective and satisfactory services. High-quality services can increase public satisfaction and strengthen trust in government institutions.

Based on the SERVQUAL framework, service quality can be measured through five dimensions, namely Tangibles (physical facilities and officer appearance), Reliability (the ability to provide services consistently and accurately), Responsiveness (alertness in helping the community), Assurance (competence and professionalism that fosters trust), and Empathy (the ability to understand and meet individual needs).

The quality of public services is one of the main indicators of the success of government administration. This quality is not only measured by the speed of service, but also by the ease of access, accuracy of procedures, clarity of information, and the attitude of officers in serving the community. As public expectations increase, government agencies are required to provide services that are transparent, easily accessible, and oriented to public needs.

The quality of service is influenced by various factors, such as the competence of human resources, information technology, facilities and infrastructure, administrative systems, and the application of ethical values. The state civil servants who are professional, responsive, and ethical will be better able to provide satisfactory services. Research by Zikra et al. (2026) on health services at Buluye Napoa'e Moutong Hospital shows that reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy have a significant effect on the quality of public services, thus confirming the relevance of the SERVQUAL dimension in the public sector in Indonesia.

3. *Dwight Waldo's Ethical Indicators in Public Administration*

Dwight Waldo, one of the leading scholars of public administration, put forward six normative indicators that define ethical behavior for public servants. These indicators—responsibility, dedication, loyalty, sensitivity, equity, and fairness—constitute an integrated framework for evaluating the ethical performance of government institutions. Waldo's framework emphasizes that the quality of public services cannot be separated from the

moral character of their organizers. When these six indicators are operationalized consistently, public services become more effective, efficient, fair, and responsive to the needs of the community (Rahman & Assyahri, 2025).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach using the systematic literature review (SLR) method to examine the role of public administration ethics in improving the quality of public services in Indonesia

Search and Database Strategy

Systematic literature search was conducted in three academic databases: Google Scholar, Scopus, and SINTA (Indonesia's national scientific database). The search keywords used were: (1) "public administration ethics", (2) "quality of Indonesian public services", (3) "ethics of good governance", (4) "ethics of public administration", and (5) "quality of public services". Searches are limited to literature published between 2018 and 2026.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Articles were selected using the following criteria:

- Inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed journal articles and government policy documents; published in 2018–2026; discuss the ethics of public administration and/or the quality of public services in the Indonesian context; written in English or Indonesian.
- Exceptions: grey literature without peer review; articles that do not discuss Indonesia or public administration; duplicates; Inaccessible full text

Article Selection (Based on PRISMA)

After going through systematic screening, a total of 20 primary sources were selected for final analysis from an initial set of 67 articles identified in various databases. The selection process follows a protocol based on PRISMA as illustrated in Figure 1.

Stage	Counting
Records identified through a database search	67
Data after duplicate removal	51
Records were screened based on title and abstract.	51
Excluded records (irrelevant or not relevant to the Indonesian context)	24
Full-text articles were assessed for eligibility.	27
Excluded full-text articles (not peer-reviewed / inaccessible)	7

Stage	Counting
Articles included in the final synthesis	20

Figure 1. Article Selection Flow Based on PRISMA

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which consists of five stages: (1) familiarization – an in-depth reading of all selected sources; (2) initial coding – systematic labeling of relevant passages related to ethical principles, dimensions of service quality, and governance outcomes; (3) theme identification – grouping codes into major themes (ethical principles in public administration; dimensions of public service quality; the relationship between ethics and service improvement); (4) review and refinement – repeated cross-checking of themes against the coded data; and (5) interpretation – synthesizing themes in relation to the Waldo indicators, SERVQUAL, and good governance.

To ensure credibility, source triangulation was conducted by comparing information across various journal articles, government regulations, and academic monographs, and then aligning the findings with the theoretical framework (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

LITERATURE SYNTHESIS

Table 1 presents a structured synthesis of the key studies on which this review is based, summarizing the researchers, years, focuses, methods, and key findings.

Author	Year	Focus	Methods	Key Findings
Rahman & Assyahri	Year 2025	Ethics in public administration and good governance	Qualitative review	Ethics serve as the moral foundation for a professional and accountable bureaucracy; ongoing challenges include low compliance and limited responsiveness.
Rahman & Assyahri (Isora)	Year 2025	Quality of bureaucratic services and public administration ethics	Qualitative review	Six ethical indicators (Waldo) were identified as operational dimensions for improving service quality.

Author	Year	Focus	Methods	Key Findings
Welni dkk.	Year 2024	The application of ethics and professionalism at the West Sumatra Social Services Agency	Case study	The internalization of ethical values – rather than mere formal compliance – is what distinguishes responsive public institutions.
Welni, Putri & Oktarina	Year 2024	Ethical principles and service quality in local government	Literature review	Transparency, accountability, and fairness enhance professionalism and service quality.
Zikra, Bahar & Nursalam	Year 2026	Quality of health care services at Moutong Hospital	Quantitative survey	Reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy (SERVQUAL) significantly influence the quality of public services in Indonesia.
Paduan Suara dan Azhar	Year 2024	The application of public administration ethics in good governance.	Literature review	Good governance requires simultaneous structural reforms and the development of a sustainable culture of ethics.
Mozin dkk.	Year 2025	Public service ethics in local government bureaucracy	Qualitative case study	Local governments need ethics training and oversight mechanisms to meet service quality standards.
Henry	Year 2018	Public administration and public affairs (conceptual)	Textbooks/theory	Every government decision carries moral weight; public officials must prioritize the public interest.

Table 1. Synthesis of the Main Literature on Public Administration Ethics and Service Quality

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Public Administration Ethics in Improving Service Quality

Research by Rahman and Assyahri (2025) shows that public administration ethics play a crucial role in creating high-quality bureaucratic services and supporting the realization of good governance. Public administration ethics serve not only as a code of conduct for civil servants but also as a moral foundation for decision-making and the delivery of public services. When ethical principles are consistently applied, government officials can carry out their duties professionally, honestly, transparently, and in accordance with the public interest.

The study also highlights various challenges within the Indonesian bureaucracy, such as low compliance with ethical standards, limited government responsiveness, discriminatory practices, weak transparency, and declining public trust. These conditions indicate that bureaucratic reform depends not only on improving systems and regulations but also on strengthening the integrity and conduct of government officials.

The application of ethical values such as integrity, accountability, transparency, fairness, and responsiveness contributes to improving the quality of public services by reducing abuse of authority, corruption, and discrimination. As a result, public services become more professional, effective, and trustworthy.

Furthermore, public administration ethics help build public trust in the government, which is essential for increasing public participation, strengthening the legitimacy of policies, and fostering harmonious relations between the government and the public. Therefore, strengthening public administration ethics must be a key component of bureaucratic reform and efforts to improve the quality of public services in Indonesia.

2. Application of Waldo's Six Ethical Indicators

In an effort to improve the quality of public services, Rahman and Assyahri (2025) operationalized six indicators of public administration ethics put forward by Dwight Waldo: responsibility, dedication, loyalty, sensitivity, equality, and justice. These six indicators reinforce each other and collectively form the foundation for building quality public services.

a. Responsibilities

In the dimension of responsibility, government officials must carry out their duties professionally and be ready to account for every decision. This indicator appears to be implemented through compliance with SOPs, services according to the rules, and efforts to help the public. However, there are still irregularities, such as weak regulatory compliance and corrupt practices, collusion, and nepotism that reduce the quality of services and hinder the realization of good governance.

b. Dedication

The dimension of dedication is also a critical factor in advancing the professionalism of the apparatus. Dedication reflects the sincerity of the apparatus in serving the community without prioritizing personal interests. Apparatus that is imbued with the spirit of dedication will strive to provide

the best service, help solve community problems, and work with full commitment and responsibility. The findings of the study show that most government institutions have implemented the principle of dedication with sufficient effectiveness, for example through timely service completion, clear information, and proactive problem solving in responding to public complaints. Challenges remain, however, including a lack of preparedness to address digital system disruptions and limited solutions when technical issues arise in the implementation of technology-based services.

c. Loyalty

The loyalty dimension is related to the commitment of the apparatus to the task, organization, and interests of the community. Loyalty is manifested through honest, consistent, disciplined, and rule-abiding behavior. Research shows that the loyalty of the apparatus increases public trust in the government. When the apparatus provides services transparently, keeps commitments, and reliably fulfills responsibilities, citizens develop greater trust in government institutions. This trust is a vital social capital in building a harmonious relationship between the government and the community.

d. Sensitivity

The sensitivity dimension remains one of the areas that requires the most serious attention. Sensitivity refers to the ability of the apparatus to understand and respond to the needs of the community in a timely, accurate, and effective manner. In the era of rapid digital transformation, the apparatus is required to be more adaptive to changing situations and the needs of society that continue to develop. The findings of the study show, however, that some apparatus is still not responsive to public complaints, slow in the implementation of services, and has not been able to utilize the available technology optimally. This shortage results in a public perception that services feel complicated and unsatisfactory. Improving the competence of the apparatus through training programs, strengthening digital literacy, and developing a responsive service system is therefore a critical step in improving the quality of public services.

e. Equivalence

The dimension of equality also holds a very important position in the ethics of public administration. Equality embodies the principle that every citizen has an equal right to access services without discrimination. Public services must be provided to all levels of society without distinction based on social or economic status, ethnicity, religion, race, gender, or proximity to government officials. The findings of the study show that the application of the principle of equality in some government institutions has been functioning adequately, with services provided based on uniform procedures for all members of society. The implementation of this principle is very important to create a sense of justice and strengthen public trust in the government. When citizens feel that they are treated equally, the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the public is strengthened.

f. Justice

In addition to equality, the dimension of justice is an important element in the implementation of public services. Justice is related to the ability of the apparatus to consider moral values, social norms, and a sense of justice in every decision taken. Because each member of society has different conditions and needs, different treatment is sometimes necessary as long as it is done fairly and accountable. The principle of justice helps the apparatus to make decisions that are not only based on formal rules, but also consider humanitarian aspects and public interests. However, violations of this principle are still found, such as abuse of authority and conflicts of interest, so strengthening the integrity of the apparatus remains important.

3. Implications for Good Governance

Research by Rahman and Assyahri (2025) emphasizes that public administration ethics are the main foundation in creating a bureaucracy that is professional, accountable, transparent, and service-oriented. The consistent application of ethical values has the potential to improve the quality of public services, strengthen public trust in the government, and support the realization of good governance principles. Therefore, continuous efforts are needed, including ethics education and training for officials, strengthening supervision mechanisms, improving human resource competence, and developing an organizational culture that upholds integrity and professionalism.

The findings of this study have strong relevance to the condition of public services in Indonesia. The Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia consistently receives public reports regarding various forms of maladministration, such as delays in services, procedural irregularities, abuse of authority, service discrimination, and non-provision of services according to standards. These problems are still found in population administration services, health services, land services, and licensing services in various regions. This condition shows that the low quality of service is not only influenced by the limitations of the administrative system and technology, but also by the weak implementation of the ethical values of the apparatus, such as integrity, accountability, transparency, responsibility, and responsiveness. Therefore, strengthening public administration ethics is an important strategy in supporting bureaucratic reform while improving the quality of public services oriented to the needs of the community.

In the Indonesian context, bureaucratic reform is not enough just through structural improvements, procedures, technology, and regulations. Strengthening ethical culture through the values of integrity, transparency, and commitment to the public interest is also needed. Welni et al. (2024) emphasized that the internalization of these values is an important factor in creating a responsive bureaucracy and quality public services.

CONCLUSION

This article shows that the application of public administration ethics has an important role in improving the quality of public services in Indonesia. Ethical values such as integrity, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and

fairness are able to encourage more professional services and increase public trust in the government. Therefore, strengthening ethical culture through training, supervision, and bureaucratic reform needs to be carried out on an ongoing basis.

This research makes a theoretical contribution by integrating six indicators of public administration ethics according to Dwight Waldo, the dimensions of SERVQUAL service quality, and the principles of *good governance* into one analytical framework. The integration provides a more comprehensive perspective in explaining the relationship between public administration ethics and the quality of public services and can be used as a conceptual basis in the evaluation and development of public service policies in Indonesia.

In addition, the policy formulation process requires moral courage, honesty, and orientation to the public interest. Community participation is also an important factor to create policies that are fair and accepted by the community. In the end, the success of public services is highly dependent on the consistency of the apparatus in implementing ethical values and avoiding abuse of authority for the realization of good governance.

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