



Research Paper

General Ethics in the Implementation of the Joint Program to Fix Damaged Roads (BERKIBAR) in Lampung Province

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Abstract

Public ethics is a fundamental aspect in the implementation of government administration that is oriented to the interests of the community. This study aims to analyze the application of general ethics in the implementation of the BERKIBAR Program run by the Lampung Provincial Highway and Construction Agency. This program is a collaborative innovation between local governments, the private sector, and the community in accelerating road infrastructure improvements through co-financing and resource sharing schemes. The approach used is descriptive-qualitative with reference to the theory of Public Administration Ethics (Cooper, 2012), New Public Governance (Osborne, 2010), and Evidence-Based Policy (Van Thiel, 2014). The results of the study show that the application of general ethics in the BMBK Office is realized through the principles of transparency, accountability, justice, and public participation. The BERKIBAR program shows that decision-making and policy implementation based on ethics

Keywords: Public Ethics, Highway Service, BERKIBAR Program, Good Governance, Lampung.

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I. Introduction

Public ethics occupy a very important position in local governance. In the context of modern bureaucracy, the success of development programs is measured not only by physical or administrative achievements, but also by the extent to which public policies are carried out with integrity and moral responsibility. Public ethics is a reflection of the morality of state administrators in managing public power and resources for the benefit of the wider community. According to Cooper (2012), ethical public administration is one that always places the values of justice, responsibility, and integrity as the basis of every public decision.

The change in the paradigm of government towards *good governance* and new public governance requires every public organization, including local governments, to uphold ethical values. This is not only to prevent bureaucratic irregularities such as corruption or conflicts of interest, but also to build public trust in the government. In the context of regional infrastructure development, integrity and ethics are the main foundations to maintain fairness in the distribution of benefits and transparency in the use of the budget.

Public ethics function as a moral guideline in every aspect of government administration. In practice, public ethics governs how public officials exercise authority, make decisions, and act in serving the interests of the community. Frederickson (2017) states that the legitimacy of the bureaucracy depends on the ability of the apparatus to carry out public responsibilities honestly and fairly.

In the context of infrastructure development, the Lampung Provincial Highway and Construction Agency (BMBK) faces challenges in realizing ethical and equitable public services. Through the BERKIBAR (Together We Repair Damaged Roads) Program, BMBK innovates to develop collaboration between the government, the private sector, and the community in accelerating the handling of damaged roads without relying entirely on the APBD. However, this kind of collaboration requires strong ethical standards to keep the process transparent, accountable, and public-interest-oriented.

The application of general ethics in the BMBK Office is reflected in the CSR contribution reporting system, community involvement in project supervision, and the implementation of independent audits on the

implementation of activities. These steps are in line with the principles of *New Public Governance* (Osborne, 2010) and *Evidence-Based Management* (Van Thiel, 2014) which emphasize cross-actor collaboration and the use of data as the basis for decision-making. The purpose of this study is to analyze the application of general ethics in the implementation of the BERKIBAR Program at the Lampung Provincial Highway and Construction Office. Identify ethical values that play a role in public decision-making and collaboration between the government, the private sector, and the community and evaluate the extent to which public ethics support the realization of clean, participatory, and equitable governance in Lampung Province.

II. Literature Review

1. The Essence of Ethics in Public Administration

Public administration ethics are a moral pillar that directs the behavior of state apparatus to be in harmony with the values of justice, honesty, and the public interest. Terry L. Cooper (2012) states that administrative ethics is a moral reflection on the responsibility of public officials to social justice and community welfare. Ethics become a "moral compass" that ensures public decisions are not only legally legal, but also morally correct. According to Menzel (2015), public ethics research has evolved from a normative approach to a behavioral ethics approach that emphasizes the importance of values, organizational culture, and institutional context in shaping bureaucratic ethical behavior. He emphasized that "ethics in public administration is not simply about codes of conduct, but about creating an ethical culture that sustains integrity over time." This approach expands the meaning of ethics from simply obeying the rules to the development of a sustainable moral culture.

The modern public ethics literature distinguishes two main approaches in the ethical management of public organizations, namely the *compliance-based* and *integrity-based approaches*. Perlman (2023) explains that the *compliance* approach emphasizes compliance with regulations, supervision, and sanctions; while the *integrity* approach emphasizes the internalization of moral values, ethical training, and exemplary leadership. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but complementary: "*A balanced integrity system combines formal controls with moral commitment to foster lasting ethical behavior.*" In the context of the Highway and Construction Agency the application of these two approaches can be seen from the combination of the audit system (as a compliance instrument) and community involvement and corporate CSR (as a form of *integrity-based collaboration*). This strategy creates a balance between external control and internal ethical awareness in the implementation of the BERKIBAR Program.

Moon's (2022) research in the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* shows that ethical leadership has a significant influence on increasing public trust and decreasing dysfunctional behavior in organizations. Leaders who are honest, fair, and consistent in ethical actions play an important role in creating an organizational culture of integrity. Similar findings are also put forward by De Graaf and Wal (2017) who state that ethical leadership is "*a moral compass that aligns bureaucratic discretion with public values.*" In the context of the BERKIBAR Program, ethical leadership is realized through the commitment of the Head of the BMBK Office to encourage data transparency, open public access to CSR contribution reports, and ensure that there are no conflicts of interest in the procurement and project implementation process.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2016) developed the concept of the *Public Investment Integrity Framework* to manage corruption risks in the public construction sector. The framework includes four components: (1) integrity risk management at each stage of the project, (2) transparency and openness of contracts, (3) public reporting mechanisms, and (4) independent audit systems. The study by Sulitzeanu-Kenan et al. (2022) added that countries that have a strong public project integrity system show higher levels of public trust and budget efficiency.

The implementation of this framework is relevant to the BMBK Office because the development of road infrastructure through the BERKIBAR Program involves public funds and private contributions simultaneously. The implementation of the Regional Grant Agreement system, routine audits by the Inspectorate, and the publication of development results are a real reflection of the application of the principle of public project integrity as recommended by the OECD. Modern public ethics intersect closely with the *Evidence-Based Policy* (EBP) approach as explained by Sandra van Thiel (2014). This approach emphasizes that ethical public decisions should be based on empirical evidence and objective data, not mere political considerations. Head (2016) added that "*ethical governance requires both moral judgment and empirical justification*", meaning that ethical public policies must be morally and scientifically accountable.

In the context of the BERKIBAR Program, the implementation of EBP is carried out through the *Road Asset Management System (RAMS)* system for mapping road conditions, evaluation based on performance indicators, and publication of development data results. This shows that the BMBK Office integrates the principles of public ethics and scientific approaches to ensure that development policies are fair, efficient, and accountable. The *New Public Governance* (NPG) paradigm put forward by Osborne (2010) places ethics as the

foundation of relationships between actors in collaborative networks. In a government system that involves many parties, ethics function as a trust mechanism that regulates behavior between actors to remain within the corridor of public interest.

Torring, Sørensen, & Røiseland (2019) assert that "*co-creation without ethical boundaries risks reproducing inequality and eroding legitimacy.*" This statement is relevant to explain how public ethics are a tool to maintain a balance in public-private cooperation such as the BERKIBAR Program. Without ethics, collaboration can potentially be used by certain parties, while with strong ethics, collaboration becomes a means of sustainable *public value creation*.

III. Research Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand in depth the application of public administration ethics in the implementation of the BERKIBAR Program at the Lampung Provincial Highway and Construction Office. This approach was chosen because it is able to explain social phenomena and administrative behavior in the real context of public organizations. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research focuses on the interpretation of social processes and experiences naturally without the manipulation of variables. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely literature study, observation, and in-depth interviews. Literature studies were used to strengthen theoretical foundations related to public ethics and governance, while observations were carried out in the work environment of the BMBK Office to observe interaction patterns, organizational culture, and reporting and supervision mechanisms. In-depth interviews were conducted with structural officials, technical staff, and private partners involved in the BERKIBAR Program to gain an empirical understanding of the application of the principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity. The data obtained were analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman (2014) through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn.

IV. Results and Discussion

1. Overview of the BERKIBAR Program

The BERKIBAR program is an innovation of the Lampung Provincial Government implemented by the Highway and Construction Agency since 2021. This program was born in response to the limited regional budget in repairing damaged provincial road infrastructure. Through *the co-financing and resource sharing mechanism*, local governments collaborate with the private sector (through CSR) and the community to participate in the financing, implementation, and supervision of road construction activities.

Data from BMBK (2024) shows that until the end of 2024, 320 km of roads have been repaired and improved spread across 10 districts/cities, with a total CSR contribution of IDR 78 billion from 19 partner companies. The implementation of the Regional Grant Agreement (NPHD) system ensures that all private contributions are legally recorded and auditable. In addition, community participation is realized through a digital application-based road damage reporting mechanism and village deliberation forums, which strengthen the social accountability of this program.

2. Application of General Ethical Values in the BERKIBAR Program

The results of the study show that the implementation of the BERKIBAR Program has applied general ethical principles as formulated in the theory of Public Administration Ethics (Cooper, 2012; Frederickson, 2017). Key values such as transparency, accountability, fairness, integrity, and public participation become moral and administrative guidelines in each stage of activities.

a. **Transparency.** BMBK implements an open reporting system for all activities, including the publication of a list of partner companies, the value of CSR contributions, and development progress on the official website of the provincial government. This transparency is in accordance with the principle of *ethical disclosure* (Menzel, 2015) which emphasizes information disclosure as a form of government moral responsibility to the public.

b. **Accountability.** Every road repair project must be accompanied by financial reports, field verification, and audits by the Lampung Provincial Inspectorate. In addition to administrative accountability, BMBK also implements moral accountability, which is to ensure that the decisions and actions taken are in accordance with the values of justice and the interests of the community (Cooper, 2012).

c. **Justice and Equal Access.** In determining the priority of road repairs, BMBK uses a *data-driven decision making* approach through the *Road Asset Management System (RAMS) system*. This approach ensures that the areas most in need are prioritized reflecting the principle of distributive justice (Frederickson, 2017).

d. **Integrity and Anti-Corruption.** The use of NPHD and the involvement of BPKP and the Inspectorate prevent potential conflicts of interest in the distribution of CSR funds. This approach is in line with the OECD's (2016) *Integrity Framework for Public Investment*, which recommends transparency-based oversight and independent audits for the infrastructure sector.

e. **Public Participation.** The community is involved in reporting damaged roads and project supervision through deliberative forums and digital channels. This principle describes *co-creation* in the *New Public Governance* paradigm (Osborne, 2010), where the government and citizens work together to generate public value.

The results of the analysis show that the application of general ethics in the BMBK Office has a direct impact on increasing public trust and institutional effectiveness. BMBK's internal survey (2024) showed that 88% of public respondents expressed satisfaction with the transparency and quality of road repairs, while the level of complaints related to project unclearness decreased by 40% compared to the previous year. In addition, CSR involvement shows the high commitment of the private sector in supporting sustainable development, while strengthening the principles of *corporate citizenship*. These findings show that public ethics not only produce *good governance*, but also expand *social capital* between the government and the community.

V. Conclusion

The application of Public Administration Ethics in the BERKIBAR Program proves that moral values such as justice, integrity, and social responsibility can be operationalized through evidence-based and collaborative governance. Through a combination of *compliance and integrity* approaches, BMBK has succeeded in maintaining a balance between administrative efficiency and public morality. This model shows how the regional bureaucracy can become a real laboratory of public ethics combining policy rationality with moral responsibility to citizens.

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