

Ethical Studies in the Perspective of the Philosophy of Science in Relation to the Principles of Norms and Ethics of Government Bureaucracy

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Abstract

This study discusses the role of ethics in the perspective of the philosophy of science and its implementation in government bureaucracy. Ethics is part of the philosophy of science, especially in the axiology dimension that discusses the value and benefits of science in life. In this study, the method used is a literature study approach. Literature study was chosen as the main method because this study aims to analyze the concept of ethics in the perspective of the philosophy of science and its application in government authority based on various academic sources. The three main dimensions in the philosophy of science, namely ontology, epistemology, and axiology, are interrelated in understanding ethics as a moral guideline for bureaucrats in carrying out their duties. In the context of government, bureaucratic ethics is the foundation for realizing good governance by upholding public interests, professionalism, and transparency in public services. Factors such as individual morality, organizational culture, and compliance with regulations have a significant influence on the implementation of ethics in bureaucracy. Therefore, the application of strong ethics in government is the key to creating a clean, fair, and reliable public service system.

Keywords: Ethics, Philosophy of Science, Government Bureaucracy, Good Governance, Public Service

Received: December 9, 2024

Revised: February 7, 2025

Accepted: March 10, 2025

Introduction

According to Mariyah (2021) philosophy can be interpreted as love for wisdom. Love for wisdom is then manifested in the system of thinking to its roots. This is based on the thinking pattern of a wise person who will not easily conclude a matter before the matter is studied, contemplated, and examined until a conclusion of truth appears (Arifin, 2018). In terms of understanding ethics, it must also be peeled to its roots. It cannot be denied that ethics is part of philosophy, especially "axiological philosophy."

There are three important dimensions that cannot be separated from the philosophy of science, namely from the ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives (Malian, 2010). Ontology discusses what one wants to know, epistemology discusses how to obtain knowledge, while axiology discusses the value and usefulness of knowledge.

In the context of government, understanding ethics is very important, especially in bureaucracy and public services. Bureaucratic ethics aims to ensure that government officials carry out their duties by upholding the public interest above personal or group interests (Widiaswari, 2022). Public service ethics also emphasize transparency, efficiency, and the guarantee of certainty of service for the community. The urgency of ethics in government administration is crucial because it is related to morality and principles that must be upheld by state administrators. In its application, bureaucratic ethics and public services have a normative basis that is reflected

in various regulations and codes of ethics that aim to create good and professional governance (Dewata, 2024).

Methods

In this study, the method used is a literature study approach. Literature study was chosen as the main method because this study aims to analyze the concept of ethics in the perspective of the philosophy of science and its application in government authority based on various academic sources. The data in this study were obtained from secondary sources consisting of: Academic books related to the philosophy of science, epistemology, ontology, and axiology, Scientific journals that discuss ethics in the context of philosophy and government bureaucracy, Laws and government regulations related to bureaucratic ethics and public services, such as Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government and Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services.

Results and Discussion

Ethics in the Perspective of Philosophy of Science

Philosophy can be interpreted as love for wisdom. Align with research from Pujawardani (2023) love for wisdom is then manifested in the system of thinking to its roots. This is based on the thinking pattern of wise people who will not easily conclude a matter before the matter is studied, contemplated, and examined until a conclusion of truth appears. In terms of understanding ethics, it must also be peeled to its roots (Rewita, 2022). It cannot be denied that ethics is part of philosophy, especially "axiological philosophy." The author believes that there are three important dimensions that cannot be separated from the philosophy of science, namely from the ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives. Here is the explanation:

Ontological Dimension

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that discusses the nature of existence and existing reality (El-Yunusi et al., 2023). Ontology comes from two words, namely *ontos* which means something tangible and *logos* which means science, so it can be interpreted as science or theory about the form of existing nature (Albadri et al., 2023). Karisna (2022) stated that ontology discusses what we want to know and how far we want to know, which is basically a study of the theory of existence (being, *sein*), which is the basis of reality and truth. In its development, the ontological perspective is equivalent to metaphysics, which according to Al Baha'i (2017) is a branch of speculative philosophy that discusses the deepest nature of reality and seeks answers to fundamental questions, such as whether the universe has a rational design, whether the mind is a reality in itself or just a form of moving matter, and whether the behavior of organisms is determined or has freedom.

With the emergence of empirical sciences, metaphysics is considered outdated because its thinking cannot be verified and is not applicable, while empirical science is more trusted because its findings can be measured. However, ontology remains relevant in discussing reality with various perspectives, such as monism which argues that the nature of reality is only one, both material and spiritual; dualism which states that reality consists of two elements, namely material and spiritual; pluralism which recognizes that various forms are reality; nihilism, derived from the Latin *nihil* meaning "nothing," is a doctrine that does not recognize the validity of positive alternatives; and agnosticism, which denies the human ability to know the nature of objects, both material and spiritual. In essence, ontology is the study of the form and basic characteristics of all reality that can be defined through the senses, which has an

equivalent to metaphysics in the effort to determine the original nature of an object, as well as its underlying meaning, structure, and principles.

Epistemological Dimension

Epistemology is a method or way to find something related to scientific matters. Therefore, epistemology is then known as the theory of knowledge. In this case, if it is associated with ethics, epistemology is a way to find a theory about ethics. The term epistemology is an English word, namely epistemology (Reese, 1980). The actual root word epistemology comes from the Greek word episteme which means knowledge and logos which means science. So, epistemology is a science that discusses knowledge and how to obtain it. Epistemology is divided into two perspectives, namely basic (general) epistemology and special or applied epistemology. Basic epistemology discusses theories about knowledge, truth, and certainty. While special epistemology talks about certain knowledge, for example about science, history, natural sciences, social sciences, and so on. In other words, the material object (study material) of basic epistemology is knowledge.

While its formal object (focus of attention or review) is directed at fundamental matters regarding the knowledge, such as: Is there knowledge? What is knowledge? Is there truth (correct knowledge) and certainty? What is truth and certainty? How to achieve truth and certainty? What are the criteria for determining truth and certainty? Based on the way it works or the methods and approaches taken towards the phenomenon of knowledge, epistemology can be divided into several types: First, epistemology that approaches the phenomenon of knowledge by starting from a certain metaphysical assumption, is called metaphysical epistemology. This epistemology starts from a certain understanding of reality, then discusses how humans know that reality. Second, skeptical epistemology, the way this epistemology works is by first proving what can be known as what is truly real and what is truly considered as unreal.

Third, critical epistemology. This epistemology does not prioritize metaphysics or a particular epistemology, but rather starts from the assumptions, procedures, and conclusions of common sense thinking or the assumptions, procedures, and conclusions of scientific thinking as found in life to then be responded to critically (Azhar, 2017). Epistemology is divided into two, namely the epistemology of the modern philosophy era and the contemporary philosophy era. Abdullah (2012) distinguishes epistemological issues between the modern philosophy era and the contemporary era. In the modern philosophy era, the main issues are: First, how capable is reason in gaining knowledge about the external world. Second, to what extent can reason absorb the structure of reality. Third, how capable are ideas of reason in presenting and revealing the essence of nature.

Fourth, to what extent are the limits of reason's ability to achieve truth. Another characteristic of modern epistemology is to sharply distinguish between subject and object, between the knower and the known (external world). Meanwhile, in the contemporary era, epistemological issues discuss more about the process and procedures for gaining knowledge or what is better known as methodology. The issues discussed are also different, including: First, the role of language in communicating and thinking or the guarantee of meaning in the use of language. Second, the examination of research logic or methodology, namely evaluating various techniques and requirements in obtaining true beliefs in the demands of knowledge claims. Third, the philosophical examination of formal logic sources in modern form, (Harriguna & Wahyuningsih, 2021). When grouped, epistemology is categorized into four schools, namely rationalism, empiricism, criticism, and intuitionism.

Rationalism is seen as a school of thought that emphasizes reason (ratio) as the main source of knowledge, preceding or superior to, and free (apart from) sensory experience. Only knowledge obtained through reason meets the requirements of all scientific knowledge. Experience is only used to confirm knowledge obtained by reason. Reason does not require experience. Reason can derive truth from itself, namely on the basis of definite principles. Furthermore, according to Hafizh (2023), rationalism does not deny the value of experience, but is only seen as a kind of stimulus for the mind. Therefore, this school of thought believes that truth and health lie in ideas and not in things. If truth means having an idea that is in accordance with or that refers to reality, then truth can only exist in our minds and can only be obtained through reason alone. Empiricism comes from the Greek word *empeiria*, translated into Latin as *experientia* from which the English word *experience* is derived.

This school of thought emerged in England, initially pioneered by Francis Bacon (1561-1626 AD). In the empirical school of thought, there are three principles of linking ideas: the principle of similarity, the principle of proximity, and the principle of cause and effect. According to Hume, science has never been able to provide certain knowledge about this world. A priori truths such as those found in mathematics, logic, and geometry do exist. However, according to Hume, this does not add to our knowledge of the world. Criticism was developed by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 AD), a German philosopher who tried to resolve the sharp differences between rationalism and empiricism. Kant's philosophy attempts to overcome the contradictions between the two schools of thought by showing which elements are found in reason.

Criticism in Kant's thinking is understood as a way of philosophizing that is opposed to dogmatism. Dogmatists are philosophers who have simply assumed the ability of reason to process knowledge. Meanwhile, criticism questions the function of reason or the conditions for the possibility of knowledge. Intuitionism was pioneered by Henry Bergson (1859-1941 AD). For Bergson, human senses and reason are equally limited in understanding reality as a whole. Based on the weaknesses of reason and senses, Bergson developed a high-level ability possessed by humans, namely intuition. Henry Bergson divides knowledge into two, namely knowledge "about" and knowledge "about" (knowledge of).

The first knowledge is called discursive knowledge or symbolic knowledge obtained from the analysis method. The second knowledge is called intuitive knowledge because it is obtained directly through intuition. Discursive knowledge is obtained through symbols that try to express something to us by acting as a translation for that something. In contrast, intuitive knowledge is relative knowledge or through an intermediary. It masters the (external) nature of symbolic knowledge which is basically analytical and provides knowledge about the object as a whole. Therefore, intuition is a means of knowing directly and immediately.

Axiological Dimension

Axiology as a theory of value is a branch of philosophy that discusses the nature, criteria, and metaphysical status of value. In Greek philosophy, this concept is closely related to Plato's thoughts on the idea of the highest good (*Summum Bonum*). Axiology is related to the usefulness of knowledge in life, both theoretically and practically, as stated by Suriasumantri that axiology discusses the benefits of the knowledge gained. In this case, axiology is also related to ethics which discusses human morality, including actions, norms, and responsibilities towards oneself, society, nature, and God. Values in axiology can be subjective, where judgment depends on individual consciousness, or objective, where values are considered to exist independently of human subjectivity.

In addition to ethics, axiology also includes aesthetics which is a branch of philosophy that discusses beauty. Beauty can be enjoyed through the five senses or intuition, with aesthetic experiences that cause various emotional reactions. According to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, aesthetics is the science that studies everything that can be felt through feelings. This concept of beauty has a broad scope, including physical, spiritual, artistic, and natural beauty. Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle associated beauty with goodness, where something beautiful is not only judged from its visual form but also from the moral and emotional values contained in it.

Socio-political philosophy is another branch of philosophy that developed from the social and political situation in society. For example, in the Renaissance era, this philosophy was influenced by thoughts that emphasized intellectual freedom and individualism after liberation from church authority. One of the influential figures in political philosophy was Augustine, who divided society into two groups, namely the earthly city and the heavenly city. The earthly city depicts humans who live in lust and conflict, while the heavenly city reflects those who live based on God's love and true justice. This thought shows that social and political order is influenced by the moral and spiritual values adopted by a society (Mawardi, 2015).

Understanding Government Bureaucratic Ethics

The government has a primary role in providing services to the community in order to achieve the goals of the state as stated in the 1945 Constitution. To realize effective governance in accordance with the demands of the times, the government has implemented the good governance paradigm, which emphasizes the involvement of all elements of the nation in the process of governance, development, and public services. This change is also accompanied by the application of the principle of decentralization, in which regional governments are given the authority to support the implementation of a more efficient and responsive government to the needs of the community.

Thus, the quality of public services becomes a very important aspect in creating public welfare and reflects the performance of government officials. However, in practice, public services in Indonesia still face various obstacles, including convoluted bureaucracy, slow service, and lack of transparency. In addition, there is still a bureaucratic culture that tends to prioritize personal interests, such as arrogant and discriminatory behavior in providing services to the community. Several reports also show the practice of extortion in the administrative process, especially against certain community groups, which reflects the low ethics of public service. This condition further worsens the image of the bureaucracy in the eyes of the community and hinders the effectiveness of the government in carrying out its mission to serve the public well.

To overcome these problems, it is necessary to implement public service ethics that prioritize responsiveness, empathy, and professionalism in providing services to the community. State apparatus must prioritize the principles of transparency, accountability, and justice in carrying out their duties, so that the community can obtain optimal services without unnecessary administrative obstacles. With bureaucratic reform that is oriented towards improving the quality of service, it is hoped that government apparatus will be able to carry out their duties more effectively and realize excellent public services, in accordance with the demands of the community and the principles of good governance.

The Concept of Government Bureaucratic Ethics

Ethics in bureaucracy function as a guideline for norms for state apparatus in carrying out service duties to the community. Bureaucratic ethics must prioritize public interests over

personal, group, or organizational interests. As a guideline for behavior, ethics allows a bureaucratic apparatus to act well, commendably, and irreproachably in carrying out their duties (Ahmad et al., 2024). State administrative ethics also serve as a standard for assessing the attitudes and actions of an employee, whether they reflect good values or vice versa. Thus, the application of strong ethics in bureaucracy will ensure that the policies taken are truly oriented towards the interests of the wider community.

In assessing the ethics of an employee, there are several indicators used, including values that develop in society, belief systems or religions, and applicable laws and regulations. Social values shape patterns of interaction in society and become the basis for ethical behavior. Likewise, religion teaches about good interactions, while legal regulations provide a framework of rules that must be obeyed in community life. Although humans have a basic instinct to distinguish between right and wrong, social and cultural developments can influence a person's attitude, so that uncivilized, immoral behavior and ignoring the value of honesty are often found.

There are several theoretical approaches that can be used to understand ethical or unethical behavior in bureaucracy. Empirical theory emphasizes that ethics are shaped by human social experience, while rational theory argues that ethics should be based on objective logic and reasoning. Meanwhile, intuitive theory believes that humans instinctively have an understanding of good and bad, and revelation theory argues that good and bad are determined by divine values. For a civil servant, violations of the social value system, religious teachings, or written rules indicate unethical and unprofessional attitudes. Therefore, employees must understand the rules and use them as guidelines in working and interacting, in order to carry out their duties ethically and responsibly.

The Concept of Service Ethics, Urgency, and Public Service Case Studies

Public service is an invisible activity that occurs as a result of interactions between consumers and service providers, both from the government and private sectors. In the context of government administration in Indonesia, public services include various aspects such as licensing and public services that aim to meet the needs of the community. According to various experts, public services must be guaranteed, regulated, and supervised by the government in order to realize social welfare. The provision of public services can be carried out by the private sector, the government in the form of primary services that must be used by the community, and secondary services that are optional.

To ensure quality services, public service principles such as continuity, equality, adaptability, and neutrality must be applied. These principles aim to avoid discrimination, ensure that services run smoothly, and adapt to evolving social needs. In practice, the provision of public services often faces challenges, especially related to bureaucratic ethics. Bureaucratic ethics act as a guideline for norms for apparatus in carrying out their duties to prioritize public interests over personal or group interests. Unfortunately, there are still many cases of deviations such as abuse of authority, obscuring problems, and the tendency to maintain the status quo that hinder public service reform.

Case studies in various regions show that weak implementation of the code of ethics, low awareness of employee responsibility, and discrimination based on nepotism are still major problems in public services. However, with the reform and utilization of technology in the service system, there has been a significant improvement in the efficiency and transparency of the bureaucracy. Therefore, it is important for every state apparatus to apply high ethical

standards in order to improve the quality of public services and meet public expectations fairly and professionally. Ethics in the implementation of public services have an important role in ensuring that the bureaucracy works transparently, efficiently, and provides guaranteed service certainty to the public. An ethical bureaucratic apparatus not only carries out his duties according to procedures, but also shows a polite, friendly attitude, and respects the rights of the public as service users.

According to various expert views, public service ethics include the principles of professionalism, accountability, efficiency, openness, and responsiveness to the needs of the community. State apparatus serve as public servants and state servants, so in carrying out their functions they must uphold the ethical standards set out in various regulations, such as Government Regulation Number 42 of 2004 concerning the Development of the Corps Spirit and the Civil Servant Code of Ethics. In addition, in a society that is increasingly dynamic and critical of public services, bureaucracy is required to be more adaptive in providing quality services and increasing the capacity of individuals and society to determine their own future. The urgency of ethics in government bureaucracy is closely related to public administration, which emphasizes morality and professionalism in carrying out government duties.

The government has two main functions, namely the political function in making policies and the administrative function in implementing those policies. Public administrators have discretionary authority in implementing political policies, which means they must use that authority responsibly and based on bureaucratic ethics. Ethics in state administration serve as a guideline for public administrators in carrying out their duties and as a standard for assessing their behavior and actions in implementing policies. Thus, ethics is not only a reference in bureaucratic decision-making but also a benchmark in assessing whether the policies and public services provided are in accordance with the principles of justice, transparency, and the interests of the wider community (Veale et al., 2018).

Normative View of Bureaucratic Ethics

The code of ethics is a moral and behavioral guide that must be upheld by every profession, including State Civil Apparatus (ASN). In Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning ASN, the code of ethics aims to maintain the dignity and honor of ASN by regulating their behavior so that they carry out their duties honestly, responsibly, disciplined, and professionally. ASN are also required to maintain state confidentiality, avoid conflicts of interest, and provide fair and transparent services to the public. With the existence of a code of ethics, it is hoped that it can prevent abuse of authority, violations of the law, and maintain the professional ethics of ASN in carrying out their duties as state and community servants.

In addition, ethics for ASN are also regulated in various regulations, including Government Regulation Number 42 of 2004 concerning the Development of the Corps Spirit and the Code of Ethics for Civil Servants. These ethics cover aspects of the state, organization, community life, and relations between fellow employees. ASN must implement Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, obey applicable regulations, work professionally, and maintain harmony in the organization and society. In everyday life, ASN are also required to have a simple, honest attitude, and maintain good relationships with colleagues and the wider community.

ASN performance assessment is an important aspect in ensuring professionalism and the implementation of a good code of ethics. Government Regulation Number 46 of 2011 concerning the Assessment of Civil Servant Work Performance emphasizes that the assessment is carried out objectively, measurably, accountably, participatively, and transparently. This

evaluation aims to ensure a career system based on work performance and provide appropriate guidance to ASN. Thus, the code of ethics and assessment system implemented are expected to create ASN who are professional, have integrity, and contribute positively to the implementation of government and public services.

Normative View of Public Services

Public service is an activity that aims to meet the needs of the community in accordance with laws and regulations, including goods, services, and administrative services. Law Number 25 of 2009 stipulates the principles of public service, such as public interest, legal certainty, equality of rights, professionalism, and accountability. In addition, public service implementers are required to behave fairly, carefully, politely, professionally, and avoid abuse of authority. Decree of the Minister of PAN Number 63 of 2003 clarifies the principles of public service, such as simplicity of procedures, certainty of time, accuracy, ease of access, and convenience for the community.

To improve the quality of service, the government issued Decree of the Minister of PAN No. 25 of 2004 concerning the Public Satisfaction Index (IKM), which measures the level of public satisfaction with public services. IKM indicators include service procedures, clarity of officers, speed of service, reasonable costs, environmental comfort, and service security. This standard is expected to improve the quality of state apparatus services to be more responsive to the needs of the community, thereby creating better governance.

However, in practice, public services still face various obstacles, such as weak employee ethics, complicated bureaucracy, and lack of awareness of service providers in meeting community needs. Therefore, strengthening public service ethics is needed so that services can be carried out fairly, transparently, and accountably. Employees as public servants are expected to be able to carry out their duties without discrimination and with full responsibility, so that public services can truly be felt by all levels of society.

Conclusion

Ethics is an integral part of the philosophy of science, especially in the axiological dimension that discusses the value and usefulness of science in life. In the philosophy of science, there are three main dimensions that are interrelated: (1) Ontology, which discusses the nature of the existence of a science; (2) Epistemology, which examines the methods or ways of obtaining knowledge; (3) Axiology, which focuses on the value and benefits of science in life. In the context of government, bureaucratic ethics is a moral guideline for state officials in carrying out their duties. Bureaucratic ethics must place public interests above personal or group interests and uphold the principles of professionalism and transparency in public services. Good public services must be based on ethical principles, where bureaucrats are committed to respecting the rights of the community and providing services fairly, efficiently, and responsibly. Factors that influence bureaucratic ethics include individual morality, organizational culture, and compliance with applicable regulations and codes of ethics. The application of ethics in bureaucracy and public services is very important to create a clean, integrated, and trusted government by the community. This is also related to legal norms, as regulated in Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, which emphasizes that every citizen has the right to receive services in accordance with applicable ethical and legal standards. Thus, ethics in the perspective of the philosophy of science and government bureaucracy have an important role in realizing good, professional, and welfare-oriented governance.

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