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Kearifan Lokal Tunjuk Ajar Melayu Dalam Perspektif Hukum Pelayanan Publik

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Abstract *Public service is a state obligation that must be implemented not only effectively but also in accordance with legal certainty, equal treatment, transparency, accountability, and protection of citizens' rights. This study examined the position and relevance of Tunjuk Ajar Melayu as local wisdom in strengthening the implementation of public service law. The study employed a socio-legal approach with a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews with six service officials and ten service users, participant observation, and document analysis, while quantitative data involved 216 respondents consisting of 143 service users and 73 government officials. The findings showed that the local ethos/Tunjuk Ajar Melayu construct obtained a mean score of 4.07, while social cohesion reached 3.96. Qualitative findings indicated strong practices of hospitality, courtesy, respect, and social connectedness in service interactions. However, structural problems remained, including slow administrative systems, alleged informal payments, cultural favoritism, inconsistent service information, and inadequate facilities for vulnerable groups. The study concluded that Tunjuk Ajar Melayu should not be positioned as a substitute for positive law, but as a socio-cultural value that can strengthen the internalization of legal principles in administrative behavior. Integration should therefore position positive law as the normative boundary and local wisdom as an*

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ethical and social resource for strengthening lawful, equitable, transparent, and accountable public services.

Keywords Tunjuk Ajar Melayu; Local Wisdom; Public Service Law; Administrative Law; Legal Protection

1. Introduction

Public service is one of the concrete forms through which the state fulfills the rights and needs of citizens. From the perspective of administrative law, public service cannot be understood merely as an administrative activity for producing documents or services; it is also a legal relationship between service providers and citizens. Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services was enacted to provide legal certainty in the relationship between the public and public service providers and to regulate rights and obligations, service delivery, public participation, complaints, and sanctions.[1]

This legal framework shows that the quality of public services has both a legal-procedural dimension and an ethical-sociological dimension. The legal-procedural dimension concerns authority, legal basis, service standards, procedures, fees, time limits, and accountability mechanisms. The ethical-sociological dimension concerns how officials interact with citizens, respect the dignity of service users, respond to needs, and build trust. These two dimensions should not be separated because law requires human conduct to be implemented in practice.[2]

Law No. 30 of 2014 on Government Administration strengthens this framework by regulating governmental decisions and actions, authority, discretion, and the General Principles of Good Governance. Within this framework, official action must

[1] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services (2009).
[2] L. P. Sinambela, Reformasi Pelayanan Publik: Teori, Kebijakan, dan Implementasi (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2014).

have a legal basis and be directed toward governance that is good, transparent, professional, fair, and legally certain.[3]

At the same time, law is implemented within a social environment. Officials and citizens bring values, norms, habits, and cultural identities into service processes. In Malay society, one important source of such values is Tunjuk Ajar Melayu. Tenas Effendy describes Tunjuk Ajar Melayu as a body of advice and guidance concerning how a person should behave in social life. Marlina's study shows that Tunjuk Ajar Melayu contains values of good intention, moral conduct, harmony, wisdom, tolerance, humility, and the preservation of good relations with others.[4][5]

From the perspective of public administration, local values can function as social capital that helps build relationships between officials and citizens. Saputra, Suripto, and Chrisdiana emphasize the importance of an indigenous public administration perspective because administrative practice cannot always be separated from the social and cultural context in which government operates. Rengifurwarin and Rolobessy likewise show that cultural ties can support relationships between service providers and service recipients, although governments continue to face challenges as citizens' needs become increasingly diverse.[6][7]

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[3] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration (2014).

[4] Tenas Effendy, Tunjuk Ajar Melayu (Yogyakarta: Balai Kajian dan Pengembangan Budaya Melayu, 2006).

[5] Marlina, "Nilai Kearifan Lokal dalam Tunjuk Ajar Melayu Karya Tenas Effendi," Diksi 28, no. 2 (2020): 199–209, https://doi.org/10.21831/diksi.v28i2.33132.

[6] B. Saputra, Suripto, and Y. Chrisdiana, "Indigenous Public Administration: Melihat Administrasi Publik dari Perspektif Kearifan Lokal (Local Wisdom)," Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi 15, no. 2 (2018), https://doi.org/10.31113/jia.v15i2.180.

[7] Z. A. Rengifurwarin and M. J. Rolobessy, "Public Service Based on Local Wisdom," Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Administrasi Publik 11, no. 2 (2021): 577–582, https://doi.org/10.26858/jiap.v11i2.30501.

However, placing local wisdom within public service law requires conceptual caution. Tunjuk Ajar Melayu is not a formal source of governmental authority and cannot be used to override statutory regulations. Cultural values should be positioned as social norms that support the internalization of law. Positive law remains the basis for determining authority, procedures, rights, obligations, prohibitions, and accountability mechanisms.[89]

This issue is particularly important because strong cultural values do not necessarily correspond to strong governance. Kinship may improve friendliness and communication, but without the principle of equal rights it may develop into favoritism. Likewise, courteous behavior is insufficient when service information is not transparent, procedures are inconsistent, or complaint mechanisms are ineffective.[10]

The empirical study underlying this article employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design involving 216 respondents, consisting of 143 service users and 73 officials, as well as interviews with six officials and ten service users. These data make it possible to examine Tunjuk Ajar Melayu not only as a cultural value but also as a social factor interacting with integrity, transparency, justice, and service quality.[11]

The findings show that the local ethos/Tunjuk Ajar Melayu construct obtained a mean score of 4.07, while social cohesion reached 3.96. However, in the multiple regression model, local ethos was not a significant independent predictor of perceived public service quality after the other constructs were controlled. This

[8] P. M. Marzuki, Penelitian Hukum (Jakarta: Kencana, 2017).

[9] H. R. Ridwan, Hukum Administrasi Negara (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2018).

[10] A. Dwiyanto, Mewujudkan Good Governance melalui Pelayanan Publik (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2018).

[11] Author's empirical research data, involving 216 respondents and qualitative interviews with 16 participants.

finding is important because it indicates that local wisdom cannot be assumed to be a single factor that automatically produces quality public services.[12]

The research gap lies in the need to explain more specifically how local wisdom relates to public service law. Studies of Tunjuk Ajar Melayu have largely emphasized educational, literary, character-building, and cultural dimensions, while studies of public services based on local wisdom have generally emphasized administrative and social-relational dimensions. This article brings the two fields together through a socio-legal perspective.[13][14]

This article aims to analyze the position of Tunjuk Ajar Melayu as local wisdom from the perspective of public service law, identify its relevance to the principles of legal certainty, equal rights, transparency, accountability, and public protection, and formulate the boundaries and an integration model for local wisdom and positive law in the conduct of public service officials.[15]

2. Literature Review

Public Service Law

Public service is an area of administrative law in which governmental authority meets citizens' rights. Law No. 25 of 2009 places public services within a framework covering providers, organizations, rights and obligations, service standards, public participation, complaints, and sanctions. Public services therefore have legal consequences that extend beyond user satisfaction.[16]

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[12] Author's quantitative analysis, based on the multiple regression results reported in the study.

[13] Marlina, "Nilai Kearifan Lokal dalam Tunjuk Ajar Melayu Karya Tenas Effendi."

[14] Jonsa et al., "Integrating Local Wisdom in Public Services during the Digitalization Era in Indonesia," PINISI Discretion Review 7, no. 1 (2023), https://doi.org/10.26858/pdr.v7i1.58026.

[15] The research objective is formulated from the problem and research gap identified in the present manuscript.

[16] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services.

Service standards are important instruments because they translate general legal obligations into operational measures that can be known by the public. Service standards commonly include the legal basis, requirements, procedures, completion time, fees, service products, facilities, staff competence, supervision, complaints, service guarantees, and evaluation. From a legal perspective, these standards also provide a basis for assessing whether the provider's actions comply with its obligations.[17]

Government Administrative Law and the General Principles of Good Governance

Law No. 30 of 2014 provides a framework for governmental action through rules on authority, decisions, actions, discretion, and the General Principles of Good Governance. Legal certainty, benefit, impartiality, accuracy, prohibition of abuse of authority, openness, public interest, and good service are relevant principles for assessing administrative conduct.[18]

In this study, Tunjuk Ajar Melayu is positioned as a value that can strengthen the ethical dimension of those principles. For example, amanah (trustworthiness) can strengthen an orientation toward responsibility; justice can support equal treatment; and courtesy can improve the quality of communication. The relationship is therefore supportive rather than substitutive.[19]

Local Wisdom and Public Administration

Local wisdom can be understood as knowledge, values, norms, and practices developed within a community and used as guidance for addressing life problems. Saputra et al. stress the importance of viewing public administration from a local perspective because an administrative model

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[17] Republic of Indonesia, Government Regulation No. 96 of 2012 concerning the Implementation of Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services (2012).

[18] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration.

[19] P. Nonet and P. Selznick, Law and Society in Transition: Toward Responsive Law (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001).

developed from one experience cannot necessarily be applied identically to every community.[20]

Rengifurwarin and Rolobessy show that cultural values can support the quality of relationships between service providers and recipients. Nur et al. likewise demonstrate that local wisdom can be examined in relation to officials' behavior and organizational climate. Suranto and Darumurti show that local wisdom can also become a source of policy and service innovation at the local level.[21][22][23]

Tunjuk Ajar Melayu as a Social Value

Marlina found that Tunjuk Ajar Melayu contains values of good intention and moral conduct, harmony, wisdom, tolerance, willingness to sacrifice, humility, and maintaining good relations with others. These values show that Tunjuk Ajar Melayu has strong interpersonal and moral dimensions.[24]

In this article, these values are understood through four analytical categories: trustworthiness and responsibility; justice and equality; courtesy and respect; and care and solidarity. These categories are then compared with public service law principles to identify both points of convergence and boundaries of application.[25]

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[20] B. Saputra, Suripto, and Y. Chrisdiana, "Indigenous Public Administration."

[21] Z. A. Rengifurwarin and M. J. Rolobessy, "Public Service Based on Local Wisdom."

[22] M. I. Nur, R. Q. Aeni, and T. Juana, "Measuring the Essence of Local Wisdom's Value in the Behavior of Government Apparatuses in State Administration Institutions," Jurnal Administrasi Publik 11, no. 2 (2021): 161–168, https://doi.org/10.31289/jap.v11i2.5647.

[23] Suranto and A. Darumurti, "Local Wisdom-Based Policy Innovation in Indonesia during 2018–2021," Journal of Governance and Public Policy 11, no. 1 (2024): 60–70, https://doi.org/10.18196/jgpp.v11i1.16920.

[24] Marlina, "Nilai Kearifan Lokal dalam Tunjuk Ajar Melayu Karya Tenas Effendi."

[25] Tenas Effendy, Kesantunan dan Semangat Melayu (Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Pengajian Melayu, Universiti Malaya, 2012).

3. Method

This study uses a socio-legal approach with a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. The socio-legal approach was selected because the study does not examine law only as normative text, but also examines how legal principles interact with officials' behavior and citizens' experiences in public services.[26]

The empirical component uses data collected in the underlying study. Quantitative data involved 216 respondents, consisting of 143 service users and 73 officials. Qualitative data were obtained through interviews with six service officials and ten service users, participant observation, and analysis of service documents. In this article, these data are interpreted through the perspective of public service law and the position of local wisdom.[27]

The quantitative instrument covered six constructs: integrity, humanity/responsiveness, social cohesion, transparency/democracy, distributive justice/access, and local ethos/Tunjuk Ajar Melayu, while perceived public service quality was used as the outcome variable. The local ethos construct consisted of five items and had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.876.[28]

Quantitative analysis was conducted descriptively, correlationally, and through multiple regression to examine the position of local ethos within the public service quality model. Qualitative analysis was conducted through thematic coding of interviews, observations, and documents. For the legal analysis, the empirical findings were then compared with Law No. 25 of 2009, Government Regulation

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[26] P. M. Marzuki, Penelitian Hukum.

[27] Author's empirical research dataset and field records.

[28] Author's survey instrument and reliability analysis; the local ethos construct comprised five items with Cronbach's alpha = 0.876.

No. 96 of 2012, Law No. 30 of 2014, the General Principles of Good Governance, and administrative law literature.[2930]

The validity of the findings was strengthened through source and method triangulation. Survey data were used to identify general patterns, while interviews and observations were used to explain the context and concrete forms of service behavior. In the interpretation, positive law was treated as the normative boundary, while Tunjuk Ajar Melayu was analyzed as a social value capable of supporting the internalization of legal norms.[31]

4. Result & Discussion

A. Profile of the Local Ethos and Social Cohesion Constructs

The measurement results show that local ethos/Tunjuk Ajar Melayu obtained a mean of 4.07, a standard deviation of 0.51, and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.876. Social cohesion obtained a mean of 3.96, a standard deviation of 0.59, and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.887. In comparison, transparency/democracy had a mean of 2.85 and distributive justice/access had a mean of 2.74. Local values and social cohesion were therefore perceived more strongly than these institutional dimensions.[32]

This difference is legally important. The strength of social values does not necessarily indicate the strength of institutional mechanisms. Local values can create a positive interactional environment, but law requires procedures, standards, documentation, supervision, and complaint mechanisms to protect citizens' rights.[33]

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[29] S. Soekanto and S. Mamudji, Penelitian Hukum Normatif: Suatu Tinjauan Singkat (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2015).

[30] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009; Government Regulation No. 96 of 2012; Law No. 30 of 2014.

[31] L. M. Friedman, The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1975).

[32] Author's descriptive statistical analysis of the research constructs.

[33] A. Hardiyansyah, Kualitas Pelayanan Publik: Konsep, Dimensi, Indikator dan Implementasinya (Yogyakarta: Gava Media, 2018).

B. Hospitality, Courtesy, and Respect as Manifestations of Local Values

The qualitative analysis shows that staff hospitality was the most frequently occurring code, with 22 references, followed by slow systems with 19 references and courtesy and kinship with 17 references. The pattern reveals two realities operating simultaneously: relatively warm interpersonal relationships and structural problems within administrative processes.[34]

This finding is consistent with the character of Tunjuk Ajar Melayu, which emphasizes moral conduct, harmony, wisdom, tolerance, and good relations with others. In public services, these values can improve communication and help citizens feel respected.[35]

From a legal perspective, however, friendliness is a supporting aspect rather than the sole measure of the legality of a service. A friendly service must still comply with time limits, requirements, fees, procedures, and the rights of service users. Courtesy should therefore operate within a lawful service framework.[36]

C. Amanah and Legal Certainty

Amanah, or trustworthiness, is an important concept in Tunjuk Ajar Melayu. In public service, amanah can be translated into an obligation to exercise authority responsibly, process applications according to procedure, protect citizens' information, and avoid obtaining personal benefits from public office.[37]

The study found reports of processes taking longer than the stated standard and allegations of informal payments to accelerate services. Leaders also stated that a zero-tolerance policy toward illegal charges was in place. These findings

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[34] Author's qualitative coding of interview and observation data.
[35] Marlina, "Nilai Kearifan Lokal dalam Tunjuk Ajar Melayu Karya Tenas Effendi."
[36] Law No. 25 of 2009, particularly its provisions concerning service standards and users' rights.
[37] Tenas Effendy, Tunjuk Ajar Melayu.

demonstrate the importance of distinguishing personal ethics from institutional integrity.[38]

From an administrative-law perspective, legal certainty cannot be achieved merely through officials' good intentions. Certainty requires standards that are known and applied consistently. Law No. 25 of 2009 treats service standards and complaint resolution as important components of public service delivery.[39]

Accordingly, amanah should be operationalized into auditable indicators: compliance with time standards, compliance with official tariffs, accuracy of service outputs, process documentation, and follow-up of complaints.[40]

D. Justice, Equal Rights, and the Potential for Cultural Favoritism

The value of justice in Tunjuk Ajar Melayu has strong relevance to the principle of equal rights. Public services should be provided to citizens on the basis of their legal status as service users, rather than on the basis of personal proximity to officials.[41]

The qualitative finding concerning cultural favoritism shows that strong social relationships can have two sides. Kinship can facilitate communication, but it can also create differential treatment. Local wisdom therefore cannot be used to justify preferential treatment that has no legal basis.[42]

Under the General Principles of Good Governance, officials must act impartially and must not abuse their authority. Social relationships should function as a

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[38] Author's qualitative findings concerning service delays and alleged informal payments.

[39] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009.

[40] Author's synthesis of the amanah value and auditable public service indicators.

[41] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009, concerning equal rights and non-discriminatory service delivery.

[42] Author's qualitative findings concerning cultural favoritism.

communication resource, not as a basis for granting different administrative rights.[43]

The implication is that integration of Tunjuk Ajar Melayu with public service law must follow a principle of universality: kinship and solidarity should apply to all service users, not only to people who have social connections with officials.[44]

E. Transparency and Administratvie Honesty

Transparency/democracy obtained a mean of 2.85, lower than local ethos. The qualitative findings also indicate that information about service procedures was available, but there were discrepancies between written and verbal information. Digital complaint channels were also not yet optimal because some citizens questioned whether complaints were followed up.[45]

This finding demonstrates that transparency is more than placing information on a notice board. Transparency requires consistency, accessibility, updating, and correction mechanisms. Under public service law, information must enable citizens to understand their rights, obligations, procedures, fees, and service times.[46]

The value of honesty in Tunjuk Ajar Melayu can support a culture of transparency, but transparency still requires institutional mechanisms. Local government should therefore ensure consistency among service standards, information media, digital systems, and the practices of front-line officers.[47]

F. Integrity and the Prevention of Maladministration

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[43] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 30 of 2014, concerning the General Principles of Good Governance.

[44] Tenas Effendy, Tunjuk Ajar Melayu.

[45] Author's qualitative findings concerning written and verbal service information and digital complaints.

[46] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure (2008).

[47] Tenas Effendy, Kesantunan dan Semangat Melayu.

Integrity obtained a mean of 3.01 and correlated with perceived public service quality at $r = 0.625$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates a substantial relationship between integrity and perceived service quality.[48]

The qualitative finding concerning alleged informal payments should be interpreted carefully because the study was not designed to establish an offense by any particular individual. Institutionally, however, the finding indicates the need for prevention, supervision, and complaint mechanisms that citizens can trust.[49]

Law No. 37 of 2008 on the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia strengthens external oversight of public services, while Law No. 25 of 2009 regulates complaint resolution. In this context, amanah and honesty can form part of organizational culture, while supervision and complaint mechanisms function as formal controls.[5051]

G. Protection of Vulnerable Groups as a Legal and Ethical Dimension

The observations identified accessibility barriers, including a blocked wheelchair ramp, a lactation room that was not functioning as intended, and a malfunctioning elevator. These findings show that courteous service does not automatically become inclusive service.[52]

From a legal perspective, vulnerable groups require meaningful access to services. Equal rights do not always mean identical treatment; rather, they require every person to be able to use public services properly in accordance with their needs and applicable law.[53]

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[48] Author's correlation analysis of integrity and perceived public service quality.
[49] Author's qualitative findings; the study does not establish individual legal liability.
[50] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 37 of 2008 concerning the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia (2008).
[51] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009.
[52] Author's participant-observation findings concerning accessibility facilities.
[53] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009; see also the general principle of equal access to public services.

The values of care and solidarity in Tunjuk Ajar Melayu can provide a cultural basis for strengthening officials' orientation toward vulnerable groups. However, these values must be translated into policies, facilities, priority procedures, accessible information, and measurable supervision.[54]

H. Why Local Ethos Is Not an Independent Predictor

Local ethos has a positive correlation with perceived public service quality of $r = 0.542$, $p < 0.001$. However, in the multiple regression model, local ethos was not a significant independent predictor, with $\beta = 0.044$ and $p = 0.466$. This is an important finding for the legal interpretation of the study.[55]

Conceptually, the result indicates that cultural values may be associated with service experiences, but their independent contribution may become smaller when structural factors such as integrity, transparency, responsiveness, and justice are considered simultaneously.[56]

The finding supports the view that legal culture cannot be separated from legal institutions. Social values require procedures and organizations to produce consistent action. Conversely, formal rules also require internalization so that they do not remain merely documents.[57]

Accordingly, Tunjuk Ajar Melayu is more appropriately positioned as a cultural support mechanism in public service. Law remains the source of authority and the normative boundary, while local wisdom helps shape officials' behavioral orientation.[58]

I. Tunjuk Ajar Melayu as Social Capital

Social cohesion obtained a mean of 3.96. From a social-capital perspective, social relationships can increase trust, communication, and cooperation. In public

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[54] Tenas Effendy, Tunjuk Ajar Melayu.
[55] Author's correlation and multiple regression analysis.
[56] Author's interpretation of the multivariate model.
[57] L. M. Friedman, The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective.
[58] P. Nonet and P. Selznick, Law and Society in Transition.

services, these conditions can reduce psychological distance between officials and citizens.[59]

However, social capital may also become exclusive when particular social networks receive greater access than others. Law therefore functions as a boundary mechanism ensuring that solidarity does not become discrimination.[60]

An appropriate integration of local wisdom does not eliminate cultural identity; rather, it directs social capital toward the public interest. Social relationships can strengthen communication and participation, while administrative decisions must remain based on law and service standards.[61]

J. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings are consistent with Marlina, who showed that Tunjuk Ajar Melayu contains values of moral conduct, harmony, tolerance, wisdom, humility, and good social relations. The similarity can be seen in the qualitative findings concerning hospitality and courtesy and kinship.[62]

The findings are also consistent with Rengifurwarin and Rolobessy, who showed that local wisdom can strengthen relationships between service providers and recipients. This article adds a legal dimension by showing that social relationships must remain controlled by legal certainty and equal rights.[63]

Saputra et al.'s perspective on indigenous public administration is also relevant because it emphasizes the importance of local context in understanding public administration. This article extends that perspective by connecting it with public service law.[64]

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[59] Author's descriptive analysis of social cohesion.
[60] S. Soekanto, Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Penegakan Hukum (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2008).
[61] T. R. Tyler, Why People Obey the Law (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
[62] Marlina, "Nilai Kearifan Lokal dalam Tunjuk Ajar Melayu Karya Tenas Effendi."
[63] Rengifurwarin and Rolobessy, "Public Service Based on Local Wisdom."
[64] Saputra, Suripto, and Chrisdiana, "Indigenous Public Administration."

Nur et al. demonstrate the importance of local wisdom in officials' behavior. The present findings support that argument while also identifying its boundary: cultural values do not automatically generate service quality when institutional mechanisms are weak.[65]

Suranto and Darumurti show that local wisdom can become a source of policy innovation, while Jonsa et al. demonstrate that local wisdom remains relevant to public service in the digitalization era. In this article, such integration must nevertheless comply with legal standards and the protection of citizens' rights.[6667]

K. Model for Integrating Local Wisdom and Public Service Law

[65] Nur, Aeni, and Juana, "Measuring the Essence of Local Wisdom's Value."
[66] Suranto and Darumurti, "Local Wisdom-Based Policy Innovation in Indonesia."
[67] Jonsa et al., "Integrating Local Wisdom in Public Services during the Digitalization Era in Indonesia."

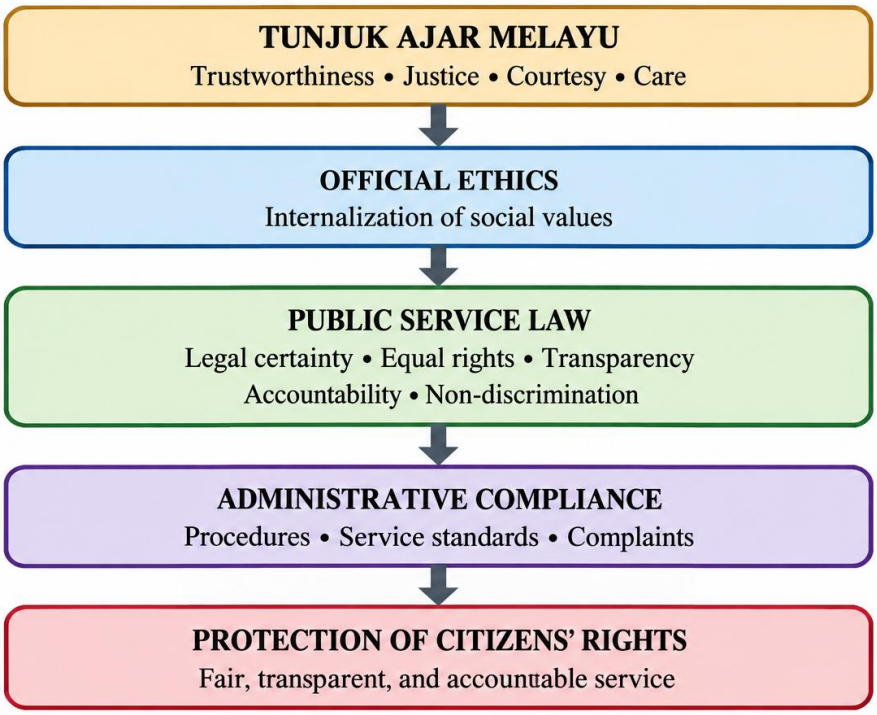


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for the Integration of Tunjuk Ajar Melayu and Public Service Law
Source: Research data, 2025.

The model positions Tunjuk Ajar Melayu as a source of ethical and social values, positive law as the source of authority and normative boundaries, and public service as the arena of implementation. The relationship among the three is complementary.[68]

At the first level, Tunjuk Ajar Melayu provides orientations such as trustworthiness, justice, courtesy, and care. At the second level, these values are internalized in officials' behavior. At the third level, that behavior must be translated into compliance with service standards and the General Principles of Good Governance. The ultimate objective is the protection of citizens' rights.[69]

[68] Author's conceptual synthesis of the empirical findings and the legal literature.
[69] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 30 of 2014.

The model also explains why local wisdom cannot replace law. When a cultural practice conflicts with legal principles such as equal rights or non-discrimination, positive law must remain the binding boundary.[70]

L. Theoretical Implications

This article has three theoretical implications. First, public service law should be understood within its social context because the effectiveness of legal norms is influenced by organizational culture and community values. Second, local wisdom can be understood as a mechanism for internalizing values, but it does not replace legal mechanisms. Third, the integration of law and local wisdom must recognize cultural ambivalence: local values can build solidarity while also creating the possibility of favoritism.[71]

M. Practical Implications

First, local governments can integrate the values of amanah, justice, courtesy, and care into officials' ethics training. Second, local values can be translated into evaluable behavioral indicators, such as not accepting payments outside official provisions, providing consistent information, and treating service users equally. Third, service standards should remain the primary reference throughout the service process.[72]

Fourth, complaint mechanisms should be strengthened so that citizens have channels that are accessible and trustworthy. Fifth, supervision should examine not only the existence of service documents but also whether practice conforms to the standards. Sixth, facilities for vulnerable groups should be evaluated periodically so that the value of care does not remain merely a cultural slogan.[73]

5. Conclusion

[70] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009.
[71] Friedman, The Legal System; Nonet and Selznick, Law and Society in Transition.
[72] Author's practical synthesis based on the research findings.
[73] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009; Government Regulation No. 96 of 2012.

Tunjuk Ajar Melayu is relevant as local wisdom that can support the development of ethical conduct among public service officials. The local ethos construct obtained a mean score of 4.07 and social cohesion 3.96, while qualitative data indicated strong practices of hospitality, courtesy, and social connectedness in service interactions.[74]

However, local wisdom does not automatically ensure legal compliance. The study still found structural problems involving slow systems, alleged informal payments, inconsistent information, potential cultural favoritism, and accessibility barriers for vulnerable groups. Local ethos also did not become a significant independent predictor of service quality after other factors were controlled.[75]

From the perspective of public service law, Tunjuk Ajar Melayu should be positioned as a socio-cultural value that supports the internalization of law, rather than as a substitute for positive law. Law remains the source of authority, standards, procedures, and accountability mechanisms. Local wisdom functions to strengthen the ethical orientation of officials so that legal norms are realized through trustworthy, fair, courteous, and caring behavior.[76]

Ultimately, the integration of law and local wisdom should be directed toward protecting citizens' rights. The success of Tunjuk Ajar Melayu in public services should therefore not be measured only by officials' friendliness, but by its ability to support services that are lawful, non-discriminatory, transparent, accountable, and capable of being justified.[77]

6. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

[74] Author's synthesis of the empirical findings.
[75] Author's multiple regression results.
[76] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 30 of 2014.
[77] Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 25 of 2009.

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