

Problematics of Legal Counseling in Integrated Police Service Center (SPKT) Services as an Instrument for the Protection of Reporters' Rights (A Study at the North Sumatra Regional Police)

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Abstract

This study examines the problem of legal counseling within the services of the Sentra Pelayanan Kepolisian Terpadu (SPKT) as an instrument for protecting reporters' rights in the Indonesian criminal justice system. The research is motivated by the strategic role of SPKT as the primary entry point for public reports, which should not only function administratively but also provide legal guidance to ensure access to justice. The study addresses two main questions: the normative construction of legal counseling within SPKT services and the practical challenges in its implementation, particularly in the North Sumatra Regional Police. This research employs an empirical juridical approach with a descriptive-analytical method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis, and were analyzed qualitatively using an interactive model. The findings reveal that legal counseling is not yet explicitly regulated as a mandatory component of SPKT services, resulting in inconsistent implementation. Structural limitations, cultural paradigms, and technical constraints further hinder its effectiveness, leading to inadequate protection of reporters' rights. The study recommends strengthening the normative framework, developing standard operating procedures, enhancing officers' legal communication skills, and promoting a humanistic service approach. These measures are essential to optimize legal counseling as a means of protecting reporters' rights and improving public trust in police services.

Keywords: Legal Counseling, SPKT, Reporters' Rights, Criminal Justice System, Public Service, Access To Justice

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Introduction

The background of this study is grounded in the strategic importance of the Sentra Pelayanan Kepolisian Terpadu (SPKT) as the primary entry point within the Indonesian criminal justice system, particularly at the initial stage of receiving public reports and complaints. SPKT serves a crucial function in delivering police services that are prompt, precise, and accountable, including the provision of preliminary legal information to reporting parties. In this context, legal counseling emerges as a vital element, as it functions both as a means of legal education and as an instrument for protecting the rights of reporters, ensuring they do not suffer disadvantages due to a lack of understanding of applicable legal procedures. Normatively, the protection of reporters constitutes part of the guarantee of human rights recognized within the national legal system, as reflected in the principles of due process of law and the protection of victims and witnesses in criminal proceedings [1].

However, empirical realities indicate that the implementation of legal counseling within SPKT services has not been optimal. Several reports in national and local media reveal public complaints regarding SPKT services that have not adequately provided legal explanations. For instance, media coverage of cases involving the refusal to receive reports or the lack of clear procedural explanations to reporters in several police jurisdictions, including North Sumatra, demonstrates that the educational function of SPKT still faces significant challenges [2]. Furthermore, data from the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia show that the police sector, including SPKT services, remains one of the most frequently reported institutions for maladministration, such as prolonged delays, failure to provide services, and lack of clarity of information [3]. These conditions indicate that legal counseling has not yet been systematically integrated into SPKT service standards.

From a normative perspective, the regulation of police services, including SPKT, has been stipulated in various internal regulations of the Indonesian National Police, such as the Chief of Police Regulations on public services and SPKT standard operating procedures. Nevertheless, these regulations tend to emphasize the administrative aspects of report reception rather than the substantive aspect of providing legal counseling to reporters. In fact, within the framework of the integrated criminal justice system, the initial stage of the legal process is decisive in ensuring the protection of individual rights, including the right to obtain clear information, the right to legal certainty, and the right to fair treatment [4]. The absence of an explicit normative construction regarding legal counseling within SPKT potentially creates a legal gap that weakens the protection of reporters.

On the other hand, the problems in implementing legal counseling are also influenced by structural and cultural factors. Structurally, the limited number of personnel with adequate legal communication competence, combined with the high workload of SPKT officers, poses a challenge to delivering optimal services. Culturally, there remains a service paradigm that is oriented toward administrative procedures rather than a humanistic approach that positions the reporter as a subject deserving protection. Empirical studies indicate that the quality of public services in the police sector is strongly influenced by the competence of officers in delivering clear and empathetic information to the public [5]. Therefore, legal counseling should not merely be viewed as a complementary feature but as an integral component of SPKT services.

In the context of the North Sumatra Regional Police, this issue becomes increasingly relevant given the high number of public reports received annually, both for general and special crimes. Several cases reported in the media indicate public dissatisfaction with initial police services, particularly in terms of transparency of information and clarity of legal procedures [6]. This reflects a gap between the normative expectations (*das sollen*) and the realities in practice (*das sein*), thereby necessitating an in-depth study to analyze both the normative construction and the implementation of legal counseling within SPKT services.

Accordingly, this research is important to comprehensively examine how legal counseling is normatively constructed within the framework of SPKT services and how it is implemented

in practice, particularly in the North Sumatra Regional Police. This study is expected to contribute to strengthening the protection of reporters' rights and improving the quality of public services in the police sector through a more humanistic and human rightsbased approach. Based on the foregoing, the research questions are as follows:

1. How is the normative construction of legal counseling within SPKT services as an instrument for protecting the rights of reporters in the Indonesian criminal justice system?
2. What are the problems in the implementation of legal counseling in SPKT services at the North Sumatra Regional Police in protecting the rights of reporters at the initial stage of the criminal justice process?

Literature Review 1. Integrated Criminal Justice System Theory

The integrated criminal justice system is a mechanism that involves various subsystems namely the police, prosecution, courts, and correctional institutions which operate in a coordinated manner to enforce criminal law. Within this framework, the police, particularly through SPKT, play a decisive initial role in ensuring the protection of reporters' rights. The stage of receiving reports is not merely an administrative process but constitutes an integral part of the legal process that has implications for the overall progression of a case [11].

From a systemic perspective, failure at the initial stage such as the absence of adequate legal counselling may lead to legal uncertainty and potentially disadvantage the reporter. This aligns with the view that each stage within the criminal justice system must uphold the principles of justice, legal certainty, and legal utility in a balanced manner [12]. Therefore, the existence of legal counseling within SPKT can be positioned as an integral component of the rights protection mechanism within the criminal justice system.

2. Theory of Legal Protection for Reporters

Legal protection is a fundamental concept in a rule of law state, aimed at safeguarding individual rights against arbitrary actions. In the context of reporters, legal protection extends beyond physical protection to include procedural protection, such as the right to obtain clear and accurate information regarding the legal process to be undertaken [13].

The theory of legal protection emphasizes that the state has an obligation to guarantee security and legal certainty for every citizen interacting with the criminal justice system. In this regard, legal counseling becomes a crucial instrument to ensure that reporters understand their rights and obligations from the outset. Without legal counseling, reporters may experience injustice due to a lack of understanding of legal procedures, which ultimately may hinder access to justice [14].

Furthermore, modern approaches to legal protection promote the principle of victimoriented justice, which positions victims or reporters as subjects who must be actively protected by the state. This requires a shift from a formalistic approach toward a more humanistic and responsive approach that addresses the needs of society [15].

3. Public Service Theory in the Policing Context

Public service is one of the primary functions of the state in fulfilling societal needs. In the context of policing, public service is not limited to law enforcement but also encompasses the delivery of professional, transparent, and accountable services to the community. SPKT, as the frontline of police services, bears the responsibility to provide high-quality services, including the provision of legal information to reporters [16].

Modern public service theory emphasizes the importance of service quality oriented toward public satisfaction. Service quality is not solely measured by speed and accuracy but also by the ability of officers to deliver information in a clear, communicative, and empathetic manner [17]. In this context, legal counseling can be understood as part of service quality that reflects the professionalism and integrity of the police institution.

Moreover, the concept of good governance in public service requires transparency, accountability, and public participation. Legal counseling within SPKT can serve as a means to realize these principles, as it enables reporters to understand legal processes in a more open and structured manner [18].

4. Legal Counseling as Access to Justice

Legal counseling is a process of providing legal information, explanations, and guidance to individuals in need, with the aim of enhancing legal understanding and decision-making capacity. In the context of SPKT, legal counseling functions as a bridge between the public and the formal legal system [19].

The concept of access to justice emphasizes that every individual should have equal opportunities to understand and access the legal system. Legal counseling is one of the key instruments in achieving this objective, particularly for individuals with limited legal knowledge [20]. Without legal counseling, the legal process risks becoming exclusive and difficult for the general public to access.

In practice, legal counseling within SPKT does not merely serve as a means of information delivery but also functions as an initial form of assistance that is preventive in nature, particularly in preventing potential violations of rights. This aligns with the progressive law approach, which views law as a tool to achieve substantive justice rather than merely formal justice [21]. Therefore, the integration of legal counseling into SPKT services becomes an urgent necessity to strengthen the protection of reporters' rights.

Research Methodology

This study employs an empirical juridical approach with a descriptive-analytical character to comprehensively examine the normative construction and the implementation problems of legal counseling within the services of the Sentra Pelayanan Kepolisian Terpadu (SPKT) as an instrument for protecting the rights of reporters, particularly within the North Sumatra Regional Police. The juridical approach is used to analyze legal norms governing police services and the protection of reporters' rights within the criminal justice system, while the empirical approach is utilized to understand the realities of SPKT service practices in the field, including how legal counseling is implemented and the challenges faced by both officers and reporters. This approach is selected because it is capable of bridging the gap between normative aspects (*das sollen*) and factual practices (*das sein*), as identified in the research background and reinforced by the theoretical framework in the literature review [22].

The data used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data are obtained through in-depth interviews with police officers assigned to SPKT at the North Sumatra Regional Police, as well as with members of the public who have acted as reporters. The interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore officers' understanding of legal counseling, service delivery patterns, and the experiences of reporters in obtaining legal information at the initial stage of the criminal justice process. In addition, direct observation of SPKT service processes is conducted to obtain a factual overview of the interaction between officers and reporters. Secondary data are collected through a literature study of statutory regulations, legal literature, and scientific articles relevant to the research topic, including peer-reviewed journal publications and official reports from state institutions [23].

Data collection techniques are carried out through three main methods: document study, interviews, and observation. The document study focuses on analyzing regulations related to police services, SPKT standard operating procedures, and provisions concerning the protection of reporters' rights within the criminal justice system. Interviews are conducted purposively by selecting informants who are directly related to the research object, ensuring that the data obtained are relevant and in-depth. Observation is conducted in a limited participatory manner

to understand the dynamics of SPKT services contextually, including aspects of legal communication between officers and reporters [24].

Data analysis in this study is conducted qualitatively using an interactive analysis method, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from various sources are systematically analyzed to identify patterns of problems related to the normative construction and implementation of legal counseling within SPKT services. The results of the analysis are then linked to the theories outlined in the literature review, thereby providing a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the relationship between legal norms, service practices, and the protection of reporters' rights [25].

To ensure data validity, this study employs triangulation techniques, both source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants, while methodological triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and document studies. In addition, the researcher performs cross-checking of the data with relevant literature and previous research findings to ensure consistency and accuracy [26].

With this methodological design, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive and objective understanding of how legal counseling is normatively constructed and how it is implemented in practice within SPKT services at the North Sumatra Regional Police. This method is also expected to generate findings that are not only descriptive but also analytical and solution-oriented, thereby contributing to the development of legal policy and the improvement of public service quality in the policing sector in a more humanistic and human rights-based manner.

Results 1. Normative Construction of Legal Counseling in SPKT Services as an Instrument for Protecting Reporters' Rights in the Indonesian Criminal Justice System

Normatively, the existence of the Sentra Pelayanan Kepolisian Terpadu (SPKT) represents the manifestation of the public service function of the Indonesian National Police in receiving public reports and complaints. SPKT is regulated under various internal police regulations that emphasize the principles of prompt, precise, transparent, and accountable service. However, the findings of this study indicate that the normative construction of legal counseling within SPKT services has not been explicitly formulated as a structured obligation within the police service system. Existing regulations tend to position SPKT primarily as an administrative unit for receiving reports, rather than as an initial forum for providing legal education and assistance to reporters [27].

From the perspective of the integrated criminal justice system, the initial stage of receiving reports plays a crucial role in determining the direction of subsequent legal processes. When reporters do not obtain adequate understanding of legal procedures, rights and obligations, as well as the potential development of their cases, this condition may lead to legal uncertainty and even diminish public trust in the police institution. The findings reveal that, normatively, the principle of protecting reporters' rights is implicitly embedded in various legal provisions, including the principles of due process of law and the protection of witnesses and victims. However, these principles have not been concretely operationalized in the form of a structured legal counseling mechanism within SPKT services [28].

The absence of explicit regulation concerning legal counseling creates a wide space for interpretation at the implementation level. In practice, the provision of legal information to reporters largely depends on the initiative and individual capacity of SPKT officers. This indicates that the existing normative construction remains partial and has not been integrated into a service framework oriented toward the protection of rights. In fact, based on legal protection theory, the state is obligated not only to provide access to law but also to ensure that individuals understand the legal processes they undergo [29].

Furthermore, when viewed from the perspective of public service theory and good governance, legal counseling should constitute part of the minimum service standards within SPKT. Transparency of information, clarity of procedures, and empathetic communication are key indicators of fair and high-quality public service. However, the analysis shows that these aspects have not yet been normatively formalized within SPKT service policies. This condition indicates the need to reconstruct the normative framework so that it does not merely focus on administrative aspects but also incorporates the substantive dimension of legal counseling as an instrument for protecting reporters' rights [30].

Thus, the normative construction of legal counseling within SPKT services remains implicit and has not been systematically institutionalized. This situation has implications for the weak position of legal counseling as an instrument for protecting reporters' rights within the Indonesian criminal justice system, thereby necessitating stronger and more comprehensive regulatory reinforcement.

2. Problematics of the Implementation of Legal Counseling in SPKT Services at the North Sumatra Regional Police in Protecting Reporters' Rights at the Initial Stage of the Criminal Justice Process

Empirical findings within the North Sumatra Regional Police indicate that the implementation of legal counseling in SPKT services faces various structural, cultural, and technical challenges. Structurally, the limited number of personnel and the high volume of public reports constitute the primary factors affecting service quality. Under conditions of heavy workload, officers tend to prioritize the administrative completion of reports rather than providing in-depth legal explanations to reporters.

From a cultural perspective, there remains a service paradigm oriented toward formal procedures, which does not fully position the reporter as a subject requiring active protection. Interview findings indicate that some officers perceive the provision of legal information as an additional task rather than an integral component of SPKT services. Consequently, legal counseling is often conducted briefly and, in some cases, not conducted at all. This condition results in a low level of understanding among reporters regarding the legal processes they will undergo, which in turn may lead to dissatisfaction and reduced trust in the police institution.

From a technical standpoint, the absence of specific standard operating procedures governing legal counseling mechanisms constitutes a significant obstacle to implementation. The lack of clear guidelines leads to inconsistency in the provision of legal information to reporters. This issue is further exacerbated by the limited training provided to SPKT officers in legal communication and humanistic approaches. In fact, effective communication skills are essential for bridging the gap between complex legal language and the understanding of the general public [31].

In addition, the findings reveal that the psychological condition of reporters is often overlooked in the service process. Reporters who come to SPKT are generally in emotionally unstable conditions and therefore require a more empathetic and supportive approach. However, in practice, such an approach has not yet become part of the service culture within SPKT. This indicates that the implementation of legal counseling has not fully adopted the humanistic principles emphasized in modern public service theory and the victim-oriented justice approach [32].

These conditions demonstrate a significant gap between the expected normative framework and the realities of implementation in the field. Legal counseling, which should function as an instrument for protecting reporters' rights, has not yet operated optimally in SPKT services within the North Sumatra Regional Police. Therefore, improvement efforts are required, including strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing human resource capacity, and transforming organizational culture toward a more humanistic and rights-oriented service model.

Accordingly, the problematics of implementing legal counseling within SPKT services are not merely technical in nature but reflect deeper issues within the police public service system. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach to ensure that legal counseling can function effectively as an instrument for protecting reporters' rights at the initial stage of the criminal justice process. **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that the normative construction of legal counseling within the services of the Sentra Pelayanan Kepolisian Terpadu (SPKT) in the Indonesian criminal justice system has not yet been explicitly and systematically formulated as an integral component of protecting reporters' rights. Although the principles of legal protection, due process of law, and access to justice are implicitly recognized in various legal frameworks, their operationalization in the form of structured legal counseling at the SPKT level remains limited. Existing regulations still predominantly emphasize administrative aspects of report reception rather than the substantive dimension of providing legal guidance and assistance to reporters. As a result, legal counseling has not been institutionally embedded as a mandatory standard of service, which weakens its role as an instrument for ensuring the protection of reporters' rights at the initial stage of the criminal justice process.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that the implementation of legal counseling in SPKT services at the North Sumatra Regional Police faces multidimensional challenges, encompassing structural, cultural, and technical factors. Structural constraints such as limited personnel and high workloads reduce the capacity of officers to provide comprehensive legal explanations. Culturally, the persistence of a procedural and formalistic service paradigm hinders the development of a more humanistic and rights-oriented approach that positions reporters as subjects in need of protection. Technically, the absence of clear standard operating procedures and the lack of specialized training in legal communication contribute to inconsistencies in service delivery. These conditions are further compounded by the insufficient attention given to the psychological state of reporters, which undermines the effectiveness of legal counseling as a supportive and protective mechanism.

Taken together, these findings indicate a significant gap between normative expectations and empirical realities. Legal counseling, which should function as a bridge between the public and the legal system and as a safeguard for reporters' rights, has not yet been optimally implemented within SPKT services. Therefore, strengthening the normative framework by explicitly incorporating legal counseling into police service regulations, enhancing the competence and capacity of SPKT personnel, and fostering a more empathetic and humanistic service culture are essential steps toward improving the protection of reporters' rights. In this regard, the integration of legal counseling into SPKT services is not merely a procedural enhancement but a substantive reform aimed at realizing a more just, accessible, and humane criminal justice system in Indonesia.

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