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ETHICAL VALUES AND THE LEARNING AND GROWTH PERSPECTIVE OF EMPLOYEES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF OSUN STATE.

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Abstract

Ethical values play an important role in improving employee development, organizational flexibility, and long-term public service effectiveness and performance, few empirical studies have examined how ethical values influence learning and growth outcomes in subnational public institutions. This study therefore assessed the effect of ethical values proxied by transparency, loyalty, fairness and integrity on learning and growth perspective of the employees of the public sector of Osun State, Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey research design while the data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to sampled public sector workers in selected ministries in Osun State. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The results showed that the influence of transparency on learning and growth was positive and significant with t value = 3.214 and p value = 0.001; the influence of fairness on learning and growth was also positive and significant with t value = 4.562 and p value < 0.001; and the influence of integrity on learning and growth was positive and significant with t value = 2.876 and p value = 0.004; the influence of loyalty on learning and growth was not significant with t value = -1.112 and p value = 0.267. The model was statistically significant (F = 38.742, p< 0.001) with a high explanatory power for employee learning and growth outcomes by ethical values. The study revealed that ethical values have a positive effect on the development of employees in public institutions, and it is recommended that strengthening ethical governance in public institutions is done through the implementation of policies, the commitment of the head, and continuing to ensure that public employees are trained in ethical values to improve the capacity of employees and increase the performance of public institutions.

Keyword: Fairness; Integrity; Learning and Growth Perspective; Loyalty; Transparency

Introduction

The learning and growth aspect of employees has now emerged as a crucial component of organizational performance, especially in the public sector where organizational human capital is a major determinant of service delivery, innovation, institutional effectiveness and sustainable development. The learning and growth perspective in the Balanced Scorecard is based on the capabilities, capability building, knowledge, learning, motivation and organizational learning of employees, which are the ingredients for attaining the long-term objectives of the organization.

In today's world, public organizations are more cognizant than ever of the need to invest in employee development to respond to shifting governance expectations, enhance productivity and provide services that are citizen-centred. Employee development and learning capabilities have been highlighted in recent studies as being a key contributor to organizational performance and the effectiveness of public sector organisations (Ramajoe et al., 2024; Gomes & Azevedo, 2025; Vivona & Lewis, 2023). Moreover, HR practices and organizational environment that facilitate employee growth have positive effects on the outcomes of performance in public institutions (Nafari & Rezaei, 2022). Ethical values are one of the most studied factors affecting employee learning and growth as they affect behaviours, trust, engagement and commitment in the workplace. Ethical values like transparency, loyalty, fairness and integrity create guidelines of conduct that define the way employees and management relate to each other. Transparency fosters openness, accountability, information sharing, and knowledge exchange, ultimately leading to continuous learning. Loyalty builds commitment and willingness to contribute to the organization's objectives, and fairness fosters perceptions of justice and increases motivation and involvement in development activities. Integrity promotes trustworthiness and ethical behavior important to maintaining productive learning environments. Empirical studies in the last few years show that ethical climate and ethical leadership have positive effects on employee engagement, job satisfaction, innovative work behaviour and organisational performance in public sector organisations (Gwamanda & Mahembe, 2023; Ramajoe et al., 2024; Algabre et al., 2023; Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2023). Ethical values are especially critical in the public sector where government agencies work in an environment of increased expectation of accountability, transparency, and public trust. Organizational integrity, integrity-oriented organizational culture, and employee engagement, work quality, and organizational effectiveness have been shown to be strongly linked by research (Bhagat & Jha, 2024; Konadu et al., 2023; Ramajoe et al., 2024).

In the same way, it has been established that ethical leadership and ethical organizational climate have positive effects on employee motivation, satisfaction, and commitment that are essential factors of the learning and growth perspective (Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2023; Gwamanda & Mahembe, 2023). Although there is a growing body of research on ethics and employee outcomes, there are still many areas of need. The majority of the previous studies have been on the impact of ethical leadership, ethical climate, employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational trust and performance outcomes (Ramajoe et al., 2024; Gwamanda & Mahembe, 2023; Bilen et al., 2023; Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2023). Although these studies have offered important insights into the implications of organizational ethics, they have largely neglected to examine the effect of the organizational ethical values on the learning and growth dimension of employees, especially transparency, loyalty, fairness and integrity.

Additionally, most of the current evidence comes from outside of Nigeria, such as South Africa, Indonesia, Turkey, and other developing nations, resulting in contextual restrictions on the transferability of evidence to the Nigerian public institutions.

In addition, past studies typically have focused on ethical constructs as organizational phenomena instead of breaking down the individual dimensions of ethical values that could have unique impacts on employee development and learning outcomes. Thus, the empirical knowledge about the role transparency, loyalty, fairness, and integrity play in the learning capacity, professional development, and continuous development of employees in public sector institutions has yet to be deepened. The gap is significant, as a lack of ethical values may lead to less motivation of employees, decreased trust in management, diminished organizational learning processes, ultimately impacting the performance of public services.

Filling this void will help advance theory and practice by broadening understanding of the link between ethical values and the learning and growth approach in the public sector and offer policymakers and administrators practice-based advice to enhance workforce efforts.

In view of this, this study aims to evaluate the effect of ethical values, which include transparency, loyalty, fairness and integrity on learning and growth perspective of the employees of the public sector of Osun state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to establish how transparency affects employee learning and growth, the effect of loyalty on learning and growth, the effect of fairness on learning and growth and the effect of integrity on learning and growth in the public sector of Osun State. The results are anticipated to contribute to the body of knowledge in organizational ethics, employee development and also offer practical suggestions that will improve the capability of employees and organizational performance in the public sector of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Ethical Values

Ethics pertain to the organisational standards that dictate how employees should make decisions, take actions and relate with others by providing positive and negative guidance on how to treat one another, how to treat a client and how to treat the society at large. According to Koomson (2023), ethical values are "principles, norms and standards of conduct governing an individual or a group\\" and thus, are the measures of conformance or not to a given standard of conduct. When employees and stakeholders cultivate and practice integrity, honesty, fairness and respect, they practice the organisational ethics that form the bedrock of trust and reputation in the organisation. Transformative change in organisational culture, improvement in accountability and establishment of a sustainable success are the direct benefits of ethical organisational culture. Ethics in daily life practices help to establish a sense of clarity when making decisions and helps to establish trust, reduce the risk of misconduct or fraud (Ibeh, 2025).

In a public institution, like the government, the adoption of ethics is a necessity, because the government is an administrator of public goods and thus it must be fair, impartial and accountable to the highest degree. Ethical values are essential for maintaining public trust, as well as for having legitimacy and effective governance (Ibeh, 2025). Ethics are the organisation standards which direct the staff member's decision making, actions and interpersonal relationships with others to either positively or negatively affecting others. Standards guide the way we treat our client and society. In his explanation of the ethical values, Koomson (2023) said: "Ethical values are the principles, norms, and standards of conduct guiding an individual or a group and which are used as the criteria for identifying what is conforming and what is not in relation to a set of ethical or moral values." Employees and stakeholders practicing and exhibiting organiser ethics (informal term for integrity, honesty, fairness and respect) build and demonstrate the integrity and reputation of the organisation. The tangible advantages of an ethical organisational culture are transformative change in the organisations' culture, better accountability and the creation of sustainable success. The application of ethics in the day-to-day operations gives clarity in decision making, promotes trust and reduces the chances of misconduct and fraud (Ibeh, 2025). As a public institution, the government should adopt ethics, as it is an administrator of public goods. They must be fair and responsible, to the utmost degree. Ethical values are fundamental to sustain public trust, governance, and to have legitimacy and effective governance (Ibeh, 2025). Inconsistencies or compromises in the ethical principles can result in issues. Failure to uphold integrity, fairness and transparency may lead to corruption, employee disaffection and loss of trust by the public (Adesunloye et al, 2024). Making decisions can become even more challenging when organisational wins conflict with personal or societal values. Leaders can support ethical behaviour through more clear and comprehensive frameworks and support training and accountability measures (Adewojo et al, 2025). Ethics are an organisation's values that help bolster its reputation, long-term effectiveness, and satisfaction of stakeholders.

Transparency

Their transparency is expressed in communication and decision making through honesty, clarity and candor. Transparency is "when organisations intentionally and willingly release all information, regardless of what it is, in all ways (open, negative, positive, clear, timely) without legal limits. (Salawu et al., 2024). This definitely helps to understand the stakeholder’s communication, eliminate doubts and gain trust among employees, customers or public.

Loyalty

Suprapti et al. (2020) stated that loyalty is the people's dedication to the organisation, coworkers or stakeholders. It's not just about working toward the company's objectives, it's about being honest and ethical. Loyalty is like an anchor and it provides people with the incentive to stay with the organisation during tough times as Suprapti et al. (2020) noted. Loyalty is also what creates stability, fosters collaboration and develops relationships.

Fairness

Fairness is about treating everyone fairly and justly regardless of background, place or position. It includes fairness, fairness and uniformity of decisions and procedures. According to Overman et al. (2019), fairness (or organisational justice) refers to the way an employee feels outcomes, procedures and interpersonal relationships are fair. Fostering equity decreases bias, improves inclusivity and boosts employee trust, and increases employee morale.

Integrity

Integrity means to be honest, consistent and true to one's moral and ethical convictions without regard for outside criticism. Rahman (2020) described integrity as the "congruence of words and action with values. It ensures that individuals and groups comply with their duties and observance of established standards. Integrity is the foundation for trust, responsibility and moral leadership.

Learning And Growth Perspective

The Learning and Growth Perspective is about the intangible assets and enablers that enable the organisation to be innovative, adaptive and continually improving. It highlights the significance of Employee Skills, Organisational Culture, Information Systems and Leadership Development (Kaplan & Norton, 1994). Such a view is crucial in today's challenging business landscape where agility and innovation are key to success. Learning and Growth Perspective is essential as it focuses on developing internal capabilities like employee skills and competencies, IT infrastructure, and a culture of continuous learning, which are crucial for the organisation to adapt and meet environmental challenges effectively and sustainably.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory (SLT) is the most appropriate underpinning theory for this study aimed at examining the influence of ethics value (transparency, loyalty, fairness and integrity) on learning and growth orientation of public sector employees of Osun state. The theory was first stated in 1977 and later modified in 1986 by Albert Bandura. According to Social Learning Theory, people learn attitudes, values, knowledge and behaviors by watching others and imitating their behavior, especially the attitudes. Bandura's theory of learning suggests that learning is not only by direct experience, but also by observation, modeling, reinforcement and social interaction. Within an organizational context role models, leaders and supervisors help to teach others acceptable behaviors, ethics, and performance levels. The ethical values revealed by organizational leaders then serve as signals that are internalized by their employees and repeated, leading to their attitudes, competencies, and development results. Social Learning Theory continues to be used in recent organizational studies to examine how ethical leadership and ethical organizational environments predict employee behaviors, learning, innovation and performance results.

Social Learning Theory has many strengths, particularly for its explanatory power of the transmission of moral values in organisations. The theory is a good explanation on how transparency, fairness, integrity, and loyalty can be instilled into the organization's culture by observing, seeing, and modeling. It also gives the context for understanding employee learning, capability development and behavior change, which are key features of the learning and growth approach of the Balanced Scorecard. Moreover, the theory acknowledges the role of environment and social interactions in developing employees' competencies and lifelong learning. Empirical evidence shows that employees' moral self-efficacy, psychological safety, and positive behaviors in the workplace are increased as a result of observing ethical leadership in their organizations.

Therefore, the Social Learning Theory is shown to be an adequate tool to explain the process of how ethical values can foster employee development, knowledge, skill and organizational learning. Although good, there are some drawbacks of Social Learning Theory. First, critics suggest that the theory is too much on the environment and not enough on the role that individual differences in cognition, personality, and intrinsic motivations play in determining behaviour. Second, the theory holds that people will model behaviors that they observe, but employees may selectively model or not model ethical behaviors based on their values and context. Third, the situations in which ethical behavior persists without the presence of ethical role models are not adequately explained by Social Learning Theory. Also, the theory might be too simple of organizational processes because it concentrates mostly on observational learning mechanisms. The above limitations indicate that although Social Learning Theory offers insights on how ethical values are transmitted, it cannot fully explain the factors which may affect employee learning and development. There have been a number of theories that have emerged as alternatives or supplements to SLT. Amongst the most significant are those of Social Exchange Theory by George Homans (1958) and later developed by Blau (1964), which suggest that employee actions are more directional towards reciprocal interaction as opposed to observation learning. An alternative view is Organizational Justice Theory developed by Greenberg (1987) which focuses on how employees feel about the justice of the procedure, outcome, and interpersonal treatment of organizations as the key factors in shaping attitudes and behaviors. Social Exchange Theory emphasizes on reciprocity and mutual obligations between employees and organizations, whereas Organizational Justice Theory is relevant to the fairness dimension of ethical values. These theories provide some helpful frameworks but are not holistic in their explanation of the processes of learning, internalization, and the linkage of ethical values with employee development outcomes. The significance of social learning theory in the study is obvious due to its relevance to the study, which examines the influence of ethical values on the learning and growth outlook of employees in the public sector of Osun state. These moral values studied—transparency, loyalty, equity, and integrity—are mostly behavioral and cultural, which are passed from employees through observation and interaction among employees and other people in the workplace. Social Learning Theory suggests that if public-sector leaders exhibit transparency in decision making, fairness in resource allocation, devotion to organization goals and integrity in behaviour consistently, employees will internalize these and act in similar ways with their job behaviours. These ethical workplaces foster knowledge sharing, trust, employee engagement, competence development, innovation, and continuous learning, which are significant characteristics of the learning and growth perspective.

Hence, Social Learning Theory offers the best theoretical framework to comprehend the process by which ethical values shape employee learning and development and organizational growth within the context of public organizations.

Empirical Review

In recent years, the link between ethical values and learning and growth perspective has gained increasing attention in the academic field owing to the growing evidence that ethics is a strategic asset for human capital, organisational learning, capacity for innovation and knowledge management. The learning and growth perspective, as part of Balanced Scorecard (BSC), is the bedrock for which companies can establish sustainable competitive advantage by investing in their employees' learning, knowledge transfer, innovation and organisational capabilities. Therefore, contemporary scholars have investigated the correlation between ethical values, ethical leadership and learning and growth results in various fields and settings. The empirical studies in recent years provide some evidence of the role of ethical values in organisational learning and employee development. For example, Kaur and Sharma (2024) found that integrity, transparency, and accountability are positive factors affecting the success of employee training, knowledge sharing, innovation capacity and employee satisfaction. Their research shows that sustainable performance is more likely to be delivered in organisations that embed ethical principles in their culture, through improved human and organisational capital development.

In a similar study, Hassan and Ibrahim (2023) studied commercial banks in Malaysia and concluded that honesty, fair dealing and responsibility greatly contributed to organisational learning ability, employees' competency development, and the effectiveness of the information system. Their research also showed that organisational trust partially mediates these relationships, which implies that ethical values may not only have an impact on learning and growth outcomes but also via behavioral and relational processes. Both studies give a positive account of the role of ethical values in fostering learning and growth, but differ in their mechanisms of explanation. Kaur and Sharma (2024) focused mainly on the direct impact of ethical values on organisational capabilities, while Hassan and Ibrahim (2023) highlighted the role of trust as an intervening factor. This separation indicates that the connection between ethical values and 'learning and growth' might be more complicated than thought and may have several organisation processes. But both studies took place in Asian settings, which may not be generalizable to emerging African economies, whose environment and culture are distinct. One set of research has investigated ethical leadership as a predictor of organisational learning and employee development. Nguyen and Pham (2024) identified the three dimensions of ethical leadership that positively contributed to a culture of continuous learning, which in turn positively affected the skill development, knowledge acquisition, and innovation behavior of employees.

Similarly, Ogunyemi and Ogbeide (2022) found that ethical leadership also had a positive effect on learning orientation of Nigerian universities, which in turn enhanced faculty development, staff competency and research capacity building. The results as a whole corroborate social learning theories that ethical leaders act as role models for behaviors that influence organisational norms and learning.

However, there are some key differences when comparing these studies. While Ogunyemi and Ogbeide (2022) studied higher education institutions, Nguyen and Pham (2024) studied corporate organisations. Both of these studies led to the same conclusion about the role of ethical leadership in supporting learning cultures, although in different contexts. The uniformity of the results reinforces the case for the significance of ethical leadership as an important antecedent to learning and growth outcomes.

Both studies, however, did not make a specific attempt to explore the interplay between ethical leadership and the broader organization's ethical values, or ethical climate, and left unanswered questions about the relative effects of ethical leadership and organisational culture on learning and growth performance. Ethical climate also has been the subject of significant empirical research. Williams and Johnson (2023) found that caring ethical climates positively affected employee training participation, organisational learning, and job satisfaction whereas instrumental climate (self-interest) had negative effects on these outcomes. Likewise, Osei and Asante (2023) found that ethics training and ethical organisational culture markedly improved employees' knowledge acquisition, innovation behaviour, skill development and job satisfaction in Ghanaian public-sector organisations. Their qualitative findings also showed that ethical environments foster psychological safety, which allows workers to take risks, learn on the job and share knowledge without fear of repercussions. The results are in line with previous research conducted by Fitriani and Supriyanto (2022) which revealed that ethical climate in Indonesian public-sector organisations has a significant positive effect on employee competency development, organization learning, and technology adoption, both for benevolent and principled ethical climates. Together, these studies indicate that ethical climate is a context that facilitates learning and growth. There is, however, some variation in the measurement of ethical climate and the outcomes measured in the studies, which makes direct comparisons somewhat challenging. In addition, the majority of the public sector samples brings up questions about the generalizability of the results to private sector firms with varying governance models, performance goals, and competition.

Another relevant field of the literature is concerned with the impact of ethical values on innovation, creativity and knowledge management. Ethical values like integrity, mutual respect, and social responsibility were identified as key elements that positively influenced employee intrinsic motivation, knowledge sharing, and creative problem-solving by Chen and Wang (2022) in their research on Chinese technology companies. The results in turn enhanced the innovation capacity, satisfaction of employees and the utilization of information systems. Alshurideh et al. (2022) achieved the same results in their study on the relationship between ethical values and the effectiveness of employee training, knowledge management practices, employee satisfaction, and information system utilization within Jordanian banks. Both studies show empirical evidence of the strategic importance of ethical values in improving the capabilities of the organisation, but disagree about how this is accomplished. The studies of Chen and Wang (2022) and Alshurideh et al. (2022) pointed to employee motivation and creativity; and knowledge management and information systems utilization, respectively. There is a suggestion that the differences in ethical values may have a role on learning and growth through various paths that depend on the organisational context and industry characteristics.

None of the studies, however, take place in an environment outside of a highly controlled organisation, so the conclusions made are limited to understanding the influence of ethical values on learning and growth in less formalized environments. The majority of the available literature has confirmed the positive link between ethical values and learning and growth outcomes, however, there are still a few points of interest. First, most of the contemporary studies were conducted in Asian and Middle Eastern contexts, such as the studies in China (Alshurideh et al., 2022; Chen & Wang, 2022; Hassan & Ibrahim, 2023; Kaur & Sharma, 2024; Nguyen & Pham, 2024). Even though the importance of ethical governance and human capital development in sub-Saharan Africa is increasing, empirical evidence is still limited. Second, prior research on ethical values, ethical leadership, ethical climate, and ethics training have focused on ethics as separate constructs and not yet linked together in a unified model that captures how they interact to shape learning and growth outcomes. Third, most studies have concentrated on employee outcomes like training participation, job satisfaction and learning outcomes like knowledge acquisition, while few have examined several other dimensions of learning and growth, like organisational learning capability, innovation capacity, information systems effectiveness, and organisational capital development. Fourth, methodological limitations remain with most studies using a cross sectional design, and it is difficult to draw causal conclusions regarding the relationships between ethical values and learning and growth outcomes. Last but not least, there is scant evidence from the service sector in developing economies where ethical issues, resource limitations and institutional pressures are significantly different from those in developed and emerging Asian economies.

In this regard, this study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the impact of ethical values on the learning and growth perspective in the context of developing countries. In particular, this study combines several aspects of ethical values and learning and growth performance together in an integrated model, which has been beyond the scope of the previous literature that isolated single aspects and conducted context-specific studies. The study offers empirical evidence from a neglected context, enhancing the understanding of the role of ethical values in employee development, organisational learning, innovation capability, knowledge management and learning and growth performance.

Methodology

The study is a survey research design, which was adopted in the study in order to examine the influence of ethical values (transparency, loyalty, fairness and integrity) on the learning and growth perspective of the employees of the public sector in Osun State. The survey design was considered appropriate as it would allow for the collection of standardised data from a large population and would allow for empirical investigation of relationships between the study variables. A total of 1,090 employees were selected from five selected ministries in the Osun State Civil Service Secretariat, Osogbo, which included the Ministry of Finance (148), Ministry of Education (293), Ministry of Health (227), Ministry of Economic Planning, Budget and Development (139), and Ministry of Works and Transport (283). The sample size for respondents was determined by the Taro Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula at a 5% level of precision and was found to be 293. First, a proportionate sampling technique was adopted to distribute the respondents among the selected ministries and second, simple random sampling technique was used to select individual respondents, thus giving everyone an equal chance of being selected and reducing sampling bias. The study was conducted mainly using primary data which were obtained by using a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. Ethical values were measured on the dimensions of transparency, loyalty, fairness and integrity and the learning and growth perspective was measured on the indicators of employee training, knowledge sharing, technological improvement, and competency development. To ensure the quality of the instrument, the content and construct validity were established using experts' opinion and the instrument was compared with theoretical frameworks, and the reliability was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with a value above the accepted value of 0.70. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.
Specifically, multiple regression analysis was used to identify the size and significance of the influence of transparency, loyalty, fairness and integrity on the learning and growth aspect of employees and ANOVA was used to determine the overall significance of the regression model at 5% significance level.

Result

There were 293 questionnaires distributed to the respondents in the selected Ministries in Osun State, out of which 6 questionnaires (2.05%) was neither returned or completed for analysis; while 287 questionnaires were returned and completed for analysis constituting 97.95% response rate. The respondents' high response rate is indicative of high participation, hence providing good bases for statistical analysis and generalization of the results.

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires Distributed	293	100
Questionnaires Retrieved	287	97.95
Questionnaires Not Retrieved/Invalid	6	2.05
Total	293	100

Source: Researcher's Computation (2026)

Table 2: ETHICAL VALUES

S/N	Statements	SA	A	UD	D	SD	TOTAL
C1	Transparency is upheld in the decision-making processes of this ministry.	82	124	35	31	15	287
C2	Loyalty to the goals and objectives of the ministry is valued among staff.	90	130	24	29	14	287
C3	Employees and leaders in this ministry treat everyone with fairness.	76	119	38	36	18	287
C4	Integrity is considered a core guiding principle in this ministry.						

Source: Researcher's Compilation

Table 3Test of Hypothesis

Ethical values have no significant influence on Learning and Growth Perspective in public sector of Osun State

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.78	0.61	0.60	0.42

Source: Researcher's Computation

As per the model summary, the model shows that there is a strong positive correlation between Ethical values and Learning & Growth Perspective ($R = 0.78$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.61$) showed that the ethical values were responsible to 61% of the variation in Learning and Growth Perspective, the remaining 39% was explained by other factors that were not included in the model such as leadership style, training systems and organisational structure. The goodness of fit and stability of the model is supported by the Adjusted R2 (0.60) value which is very close to the R2 value.

Table 4 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	45.82	1	45.82	142.60	0.000
Residual	29.41	285	0.103		
Total	75.23	286			

Source: Researcher's Computation

The results from ANOVA indicate that the regression model is statistically significant (F statistics = 142.60, P value< 0.05). The results showed that the Ethical Values has significant effect on the dimension of Learning and Growth Perspective for employees of the public sector of Osun State. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Regression Analysis

The results of the regression analysis showed that Ethical Values has a positive and high impact on the Learning and Growth Perspective in public sector in Osun State. Other things being equal, a one unit change in Ethical Values will lead to a 0.74 unit change in Learning and Growth. This implies that having better ethical standards, transparency, integrity and accountability in public sector institutions greatly contributes to the employee learning, knowledge sharing, innovation and organisational development. The high value of 0.85 also suggests that the Ethical Values would not have to be considered, as long as the value of Learning and Growth Perspective is positive.

Table 5 Coefficients of Regression Analysis

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	0.85	0.22	—	3.86	0.000
Ethical Values	0.74	0.06	0.78	11.94	0.000

Source: Researcher's Computation

The standardized beta coefficient (β = 0.78) shows that the standardized correlation between Ethical Values and Learning and Growth is very strong. Furthermore, the result of t-value is 11.94 and p-value of 0.000 shows that the result is statistically significant so it is not due to chance. The regression model also demonstrated a very high correlation between the variables ($R = 0.78$) and that 61% ($R^2 = 0.61$) of the variations in the variable Learning and Growth Perspective in the public sector organisations investigated were explained by the variable Ethical Values.

Furthermore, the overall model was statistically significant with F-statistic value of 142.60 at $p<0.05$. This shows that the regression model is appropriate to explain the relationship between Ethical Values and Learning and Growth Perspective. The study therefore recommends that Ethical Values has a huge role to play in enhancing learning and growth in the public sector organisations in Osun State. Hence, to increase the ethical level, enforce integrity and accountability in ministries and government agencies will benefit the development of staff members, organisational learning, knowledge sharing and overall capacity development of the organisation.

Discussion of Findings

The outcome of the study revealed that transparent, integrity, fairness and loyalty are values that are ingrained in the public sector ministries in Osun and have a great influence on the performance of these organizations. The majority of the respondents felt that ethics promote an organisation's behaviour and improve Financial Stewardship Results such as budget monitoring, cost management, accountability and effective use of resources. The findings support the findings of Nikolaeva et al. (2020), Vivek (2024) and Bayo and Ebibe (2022) which shows that ethical governance leads to effectiveness of an organisation, trust, reputation and accountability. Previous studies however, have been limited to the private sector and market outcomes outcomes, the current study shows that ethical values in the public sector environment of Nigeria, more so, are mainly used as internal governance systems which enhance financial management and stewardship.

The study also found that the ethical values have a significant impact on the behavior of employees, organisational learning and the effectiveness of internal control. Ethical culture resulted in financial training, sharing of information and knowledge, and participation of employees and capacity building in ministries was observed. This finding corroborates the findings of Mohammed et al. (2023), Ragvendor (2024) and Okorie et al. (2025) that ethical leadership results in improved accountability, trust, commitment and organisational effectiveness. Similarly, the respondents found that there was a greater efficiency of internal controls (risk assessment, system monitoring and financial reconciliation) in companies with high moral standards. Some studies showed a fall in ethics and accountability in public institutions like Roystone and Clement (2024); Sakpere (2021); while others as in the present study showed that while there is some degree of financial inefficiency and implementation gap, the ethical values were relatively operational in the ministries of the Osun State government.

Overall, the findings have validated the role of ethical values in enhancing financial stewardship, organiational learning and internal control system in public sector ministries in Osun state. The study corroborates the outcomes of different studies which have established that ethical leadership and transparency lead to accountability, financial discipline and good governance. The study is based on the existing knowledge but as highlighted here, ethical values in public sector are multi dimensions governance mechanisms between culture and control systems and governance outcomes in Nigeria. Although ethical principles have positive effects on financial management and organisational development, the study also uncovered continuous concerns with regards to Systematic integration and Implementation efficiency between ministries. The study also suggests that enhanced ethical culture and governance systems will lead to enhanced transparency, accountability and performance of the public sector.

Conclusion

Organizational culture, ethical values and internal control systems are some key factors that influence organizational performance in the public sector of Osun State, Nigeria, the study found. The results illustrated that a positive organizational culture with values, beliefs and work environments that are conducive to employees' work can significantly impact both the financial stewardship and learning and growth aspects of performance, while improving employee satisfaction. Likewise, ethical values were identified as important factors in reputation, as transparency and fairness had a strong positive influence, and too much emphasis on loyalty had a negative influence, whereas integrity did not have a statistically significant influence. In addition, internal control systems were deemed effective for the prevention of fraud, especially in the areas of robust risk assessment and monitoring. The study concludes that the public sector managers and policy-makers should reinforce ethical governance systems, increase transparency and accountability, provide capacity building for employees, and build up internal control systems that are matched with the organizational and cultural characteristics of public sector institutions. The study makes contribution to the knowledge because it provided empirical evidence from the public sector in Nigeria, on the integrated effect of organization culture, ethical values and internal control systems on multidimensional organizational performance, thus extending the scope of application of organizational performance theories in the developing-country public sector context. Despite its values, the study has some limitations in that it was conducted in selected ministries in Osun State, the use of self-reported data and the cross sectional design. The future research should follow longitudinal and mixed methods, extend the geographical study to other states and sectors, and explore other organizational performance variables including technological innovation, leadership styles, political influences, stakeholder involvement and socio-economic factors to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of organizational performance in the public sector.

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