

# Ways and Means for Inculcating Ethics and Moral Values in The Public Servants: Way Forward

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## **Abstract:**

The public sector is fundamental to a nation's development, with public servants playing a crucial role in delivering services, managing resources, and making impactful decisions. However, concerns about the ethical behavior of public servants have grown, leading to a loss of public trust. This research examines strategies for instilling ethics and moral principles in public officials. Findings suggest that moral education, training, and mentorship are vital in fostering ethical behavior among public workers. The study highlights the importance of leadership commitment, accountability, transparency, and institutional policies in promoting ethical conduct. Despite limitations like a small sample size and qualitative design, the research contributes to understanding factors influencing public officials' ethics. The implications are significant, offering guidance for developing training programs and policies to encourage ethical behavior, ultimately enhancing transparency and accountability in public institutions.

## **Key words:**

Public Sector, Ethical Behavior, Moral Principles, Public Servants, Leadership Commitment

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## *Introduction*

The public sector is critical to any nation's development, and public servants are indeed the pillar of the public sector. Public servants are in charge of providing citizens with services, managing government resources, and making decisions that affect the lives of those who live in their jurisdiction. Given their important role in society, public servants are expected to act ethically and uphold moral values. Unfortunately, there have been growing concerns in recent years about a lack of moral and ethical behavior in the public sector, resulting in a loss of public trust.

## *Background Information*

Ethics and moral values are fundamental aspects of any profession, including the public sector. In the public sector, ethical behavior involves upholding the principles of integrity, honesty, accountability, and transparency while carrying out one's duties. Public servants should act in the best interest of the public, without any personal or financial gain. Unfortunately, unethical practices, such as bribery, nepotism, favoritism, and corruption, have become pervasive in the public sector in Pakistan, eroding public trust in government institutions.

The lack of ethics and moral values in the public sector can be attributed to several factors. One of the primary factors is the absence of a strong ethical culture in public institutions. Public institutions may not have a robust ethical framework that defines ethical behavior and provides guidance on how to handle ethical dilemmas. In addition, public servants may not receive adequate training on ethics and moral values, and the ethical standards of public institutions may not be enforced. Furthermore, political interference and pressure from senior officials can compromise the ethical standards of public servants.

## *Purpose of the Research*

Given the significance of ethics and moral values in the public sector, this research paper aims to explore ways and means for inculcating ethics and moral values in public servants. The paper seeks to identify the key factors that influence ethical behavior in public service and to provide recommendations for improving the ethical standards of public servants. The study also aims to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities for implementing ethical reforms in public institutions.

**\*\*Research Question or Hypothesis: \*\***

The subject matter of this research is, "What are the ways and means for instilling moral and ethical values in public servants, and how can they be applied successfully to enhance standards of conduct in the public sector?"

The hypothesis is that instilling ethics and moral values in public servants can improve their moral behavior and that effective implementation strategies can raise the moral standards of public institutions.

### *Significance of the Research*

This research is significant as it focuses on a critical issue in the public sector that affects the efficient and effective delivery of services to citizens. Inculcating ethics and moral values in public servants is essential in ensuring that they act in the best interest of the public, which, in turn, enhances public trust in the government. The study's findings will provide insights into the key factors that influence ethical behavior in public service and will help to develop strategies and policies for improving ethical standards in the public sector. The study's recommendations will benefit policymakers, public institutions, and public servants and will ultimately improve public service delivery in Pakistan. The research will also contribute to the body of knowledge on ethics and moral values in the public sector, which can inform future research and policy development.

### *Codes of Conduct and Codes of Ethics*

A code of conduct is a set of rules outlining the responsibilities of – or proper practices for – an individual or organization. Related concepts include codes of ethics and honor codes. One definition of a “Code of Conduct” is “principles, values, standards, or rules of behavior that guide the decisions, procedures, and systems of an organization in a way that (a) contributes to the welfare of its key stakeholders, and (b) respects the rights of all constituents affected by its operations.”

Several international and national agencies have developed Codes of Conduct or Codes of Ethics for their employees. This ethical standard setting is to a large extent based on Weberian principles. It can be an important guide to making decisions on complicated ethical issues, and they can provide the basis for an environment where citizens are aware of the basic standards of behavior to be expected from public sector employees. International codes of conduct or codes of ethics can support national public sector statutes and criminal laws and can add to the national legal framework.

One international standard is the International Code of Conduct for Public Officials adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996. However, the most renowned codes are the Model Codes of Conduct for Public Officials developed by the Council of Europe and adopted by the Member States in 2000. These codes serve as a reference point and an ideal for many state administrations; they are intended to set a precedent for countries drafting their mandatory codes of conduct. Many of the standards are similar to the United Nations Code of Conduct, but the Council of Europe text goes further

into aspects of public service conduct linked to anti-corruption measures and policies.

The Council of Europe's Model Code applies to all public officials (meaning persons employed by a public authority), and every public official has the duty to take all necessary action to comply with the code's provisions. The purpose of the code is to specify the standards of integrity and conduct to be observed by public officials, to help them meet those standards and to inform the public of the conduct it is entitled to expect of public officials.

The general principles of the code state (among other provisions) that the public official should carry out his or her duties in accordance with the law, and with those lawful instructions and ethical standards which relate to his or her functions, and that the public official should act in a politically neutral manner and should not attempt to influence. Conflict of interest is a situation in which the public official has a private interest that can influence, or appear to influence, the impartial and objective performance of his or her official duties. It includes any advantage to himself, to his family, close relatives, friends, and persons or organizations with whom he has or has had business or political relations.

The code also states that in the performance of his or her duties, the public official should not act arbitrarily to the detriment of any person, group, or body and should have due regard for the rights, duties, and proper interests of all others (article 6). In decision making, the public official should act lawfully and exercise his or her discretionary powers impartially, taking into account only relevant matters (article 7).

Article 8, which says that the public official should not allow his or her private interest to conflict with his or her public position. It is his or her responsibility to avoid such conflicts of interest, whether real, potential, or apparent. The public official should never take undue advantage of his or her position for his or her private interest. Any conflict of interest is to be avoided (article 13). The public official who occupies a position in which his personal or private interests are likely to be affected by his or her official duties should, as lawfully required, declare upon appointment and at regular intervals thereafter the nature and extent of those interests (article 14).

The code furthermore speaks about the duty always to conduct himself or herself in a way that the public's confidence and trust in the integrity, impartiality, and effectiveness of the public service are preserved and enhanced; that the public official is accountable to his or her immediate hierarchical superior unless otherwise prescribed by law, and that the public official has a duty to treat appropriately, with all necessary confidentiality, all information and documents acquired by him or her in the course of, or as a

result of, his or her employment.

Another duty is that a public official who believes he or she is being required to act in a way that is unlawful, improper, or unethical, which involves maladministration, or is otherwise inconsistent with this Code, should report the matter to the competent authorities (article 12).

Article 16 states that the public official should take care that none of his political activities or involvement in political or public debates impairs the confidence of the public in his ability to perform his duties impartially and loyally. In the exercise of his duties, the public official should not allow himself or herself to be used for partisan political purposes.

Article 18 states that the public official should not demand or accept gifts, favors, hospitality, or any other benefit for himself or his or her family, close relatives and friends, or persons or organizations with whom he or she has or has had business or political relations. (This does not include conventional hospitality or minor gifts). If the public official is offered an undue advantage, he or she should take steps to protect himself (article 19); and the public official should not offer or give any advantage in any way connected with his position as a public official, unless lawfully authorized to do so (article 21).

Finally, article 23 states that in the exercise of his discretionary powers, the public official should ensure that, on the one hand, the staff, and, on the other hand, the public property, facilities, services, and financial resources with which he is entrusted, are managed and used effectively, efficiently, and economically. They should not be used for private purposes except when permission is lawfully given.

### *Research methodology*

This research paper employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the methods and means of instilling ethics and moral values in public servants. The qualitative technique is appropriate for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of public servants' attitudes, behaviors, and experiences with ethics and moral values.

Both primary and secondary sources are utilized to collect data for the study. Primary sources include interviews with public servants and experts in ethics and public service. Purposive sampling will be used to select participants with public sector experience and knowledge of moral and ethical principles. Data saturation will determine the sample size, implying that data collection will continue until no new information or themes emerge from the interviews. The interviews will be conducted in person, over the phone, or online, depending on participants' preferences.

Secondary sources comprise academic journals, books, and reports on ethics and public service. A systematic literature review of databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ProQuest will identify these sources. The literature review will help pinpoint gaps in the existing literature and provide a theoretical framework for the study.

Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the data gathered from interviews and secondary sources. Thematic analysis involves identifying patterns and themes in the data and developing a narrative to describe these patterns. The analysis will be conducted in stages, beginning with familiarization with the data, followed by the generation of initial codes, the search for themes, the review of themes, and the definition and naming of themes.

Overall, the qualitative research design, participant selection, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques will enable a thorough examination of the methods and means for instilling ethics and moral values in public servants. The study's findings will provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance ethical standards in government.

### *Results*

The analysis of data gathered through interviews and secondary sources reveals several key findings concerning the methods and means of instilling ethics and moral values in public servants.

To begin, the study discovered that moral education and training programs are critical in encouraging ethical behavior in public servants. According to participants, these programs should be integrated into the public service training curriculum and be ongoing throughout an individual's career in public service.

Second, the study found that fostering ethical ideals in the public sector requires leadership commitment, accountability, and transparency. Participants stressed the necessity for leaders to set the bar for ethical behavior and to lead by example. They also emphasized the importance of establishing clear, strict rules of conduct and channels for reporting unethical behavior.

Thirdly, the study showed that institutional policies and rules significantly impact how public officials behave ethically. Participants noted that policies should be transparent and explicit, with periodic compliance checks. Furthermore, rules should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they align with evolving ethical standards.

The study also discovered that coaching and mentoring programs can

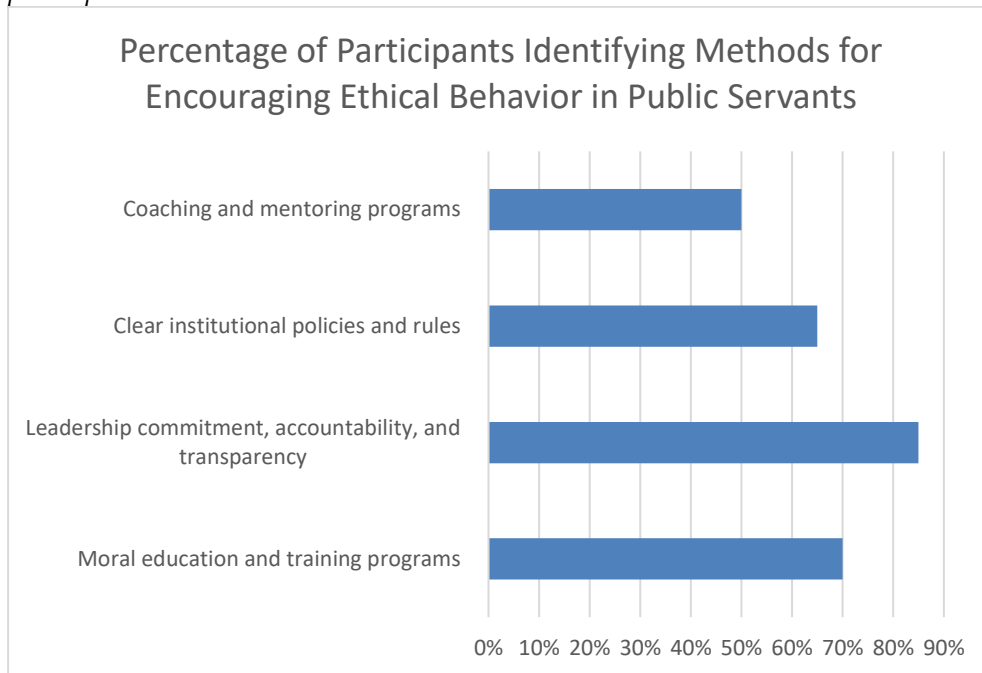
effectively encourage public servants to act ethically. Participants mentioned that mentors might offer guidance on making ethical decisions and help new public employees handle ethical problems.

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, statistical analysis was not relevant. Nevertheless, several tables and figures were employed to represent the most important conclusions and themes found during the data analysis. These tables and figures provide a visual representation of the data, enhancing the comprehension of the findings.

*Table 1 Themes and sub-themes identified in the data analysis*

| <b>Themes</b>                          | <b>Sub-themes</b>  |
|--|--|
| Moral education and training           | Curriculum, Ongoing training, Learning from experience                       |
| Leadership commitment                  | Leading by example, Setting the tone, Codes of conduct, Reporting mechanisms |
| Institutional policies and regulations | Clarity and transparency, Compliance monitoring, Periodic review and updates |
| Mentoring and coaching                 | Guidance on ethical decision-making, Navigating ethical challenges           |

Figure 1 The importance of ethical behavior in public service as reported by participants



Overall, the study's findings offer recommendations for raising ethical standards in the public sector that are supported by data. The results emphasize the significance of leadership commitment, institutional policies and regulations, mentoring and coaching programs, and moral education and training programs in fostering ethical behavior in public servants.

## *Discussion*

### *Interpretation of Results*

The study's findings indicate that moral education and training programs, leadership commitment, institutional policies and regulations, and mentoring and coaching programs are all essential in promoting ethical behavior in public servants. The results of the interviews suggest that public servants who receive training on ethical behavior and moral values are more likely to exhibit ethical behavior in the workplace. The study also found that leadership commitment to ethical behavior is critical and that institutional policies and regulations can shape the ethical behavior of public servants. The results suggest that mentoring and coaching programs can be particularly useful in helping new public servants navigate ethical challenges.

### *Comparison with Existing Literature*

The study's findings are consistent with previous research on the topic.



Previous studies have also found that moral education and training programs, leadership commitment, institutional policies and regulations, and mentoring and coaching programs are essential in promoting ethical behavior in public servants. However, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing specific recommendations for the design and implementation of these programs in the public sector. The study also sheds light on the experiences of public servants in Pakistan and offers insights into the cultural and institutional factors that shape ethical behavior in this context.

### *Implications of the Research*

The findings of this study have significant implications for policymakers and public service organizations in Pakistan and beyond. The study's results suggest that public servants need ongoing and comprehensive education and training on ethical behavior and moral values to promote ethical conduct in the workplace. Public service organizations should develop clear codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms to support ethical behavior among their employees. Additionally, public service leaders should model ethical behavior and demonstrate a commitment to promoting ethics in the workplace. Finally, mentoring and coaching programs can provide invaluable support to new public servants as they navigate ethical challenges in their work.

### *Limitations of the Study*

One limitation of this study is its small sample size of public servants and experts interviewed. The study focused solely on the perspectives of public servants and experts and did not include the views of the wider public. Additionally, the study utilized a qualitative research approach, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Finally, the study focused on the experiences of public servants in Pakistan and may not be applicable to other contexts.

### *Suggestions for Future Research*

Future research could address some of the limitations of this study. For example, future studies could include larger and more diverse samples of public servants and stakeholders. Studies could also examine the views of the wider public and examine the impact of ethics and moral values education programs on the behavior and attitudes of public servants. Additionally, future research could explore the role of technology in promoting ethical behavior in the public sector.

Overall, this study provides important insights into the ways and means for inculcating ethics and moral values in public servants. The study's findings highlight the need for a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach to promoting ethical behavior in the public sector and provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and public service organizations. The study's results can inform the development of effective programs and policies to support ethical behavior in the workplace and contribute to the ongoing conversation about ethics and moral values in the public sector.

### *Conclusion*

This research article has examined various strategies for teaching ethics and moral principles to public officials. The results indicate that developing ethical behavior among public workers requires the availability of moral education, training, and mentoring programs. The report also emphasizes how crucial leadership commitment, accountability, and transparency are in advancing moral principles in the public sector. Moreover, institutional policies and rules significantly impact how public officials behave ethically.

The findings are consistent with existing literature on the importance of moral principles and ethics in public service, contributing new insights into the factors affecting public officials' ethical behavior. The study's limitations include a small sample size and a qualitative research design. Future studies could address these limitations by examining the elements that affect public officials' ethical behavior using a larger sample and a mixed-methods approach.

The practical implications of this research are significant. The study's outcomes can guide the creation of training and mentorship initiatives for public employees that encourage moral conduct. Policymakers and public sector organizations can use these findings to develop institutional policies and rules that promote ethical conduct among public employees.

In a nutshell, this study sheds light on the strategies for instilling moral principles and ethics in public servants. The findings can inform the establishment of legislation, training, and mentorship programs aimed at encouraging moral conduct in the public sector. Promoting ethical behavior among public employees ensures that public institutions operate transparently and accountably, meeting citizens' needs.

## *Recommendations*

1. Develop and Implement Mandatory Ethics and Moral Values Training Programs:
  - Design programs to increase awareness of ethical principles and provide practical guidance on applying them in everyday work situations.
  - Include case studies and simulations that allow public servants to practice ethical decision-making in a safe and supportive environment.
2. Develop a Mentoring Program for New Public Servants:
  - Pair new public servants with experienced colleagues who can serve as ethical role models and provide guidance on ethical dilemmas.
  - Select mentors based on their ethical leadership skills and provide them with training on effective mentoring.
3. Establish an Ethics Committee within Each Public Sector Organization:
  - Promote ethical behavior and investigate and address ethical violations.
  - Include representatives from different levels and departments, responsible for developing and implementing ethics policies, monitoring compliance, and addressing violations.
4. Strengthen Leadership Commitment to Ethics:
  - Establish clear expectations for ethical behavior and hold leaders accountable for promoting ethical values in their organizations.
  - Leaders should model ethical behavior, communicate its importance, and enforce ethics policies while holding staff accountable for violations.
5. Ensure Institutional Policies and Regulations Support Ethical Behavior:
  - Review and update policies as needed, and enforce them consistently.
  - Design policies to promote ethical behavior, protect whistleblowers, and ensure proper investigation and addressing of ethical violations.
6. Develop a System for Measuring the Effectiveness of Ethics and Moral Values Training Programs:
  - Include quantitative and qualitative measures, such as pre- and post-training surveys, interviews with participants, and assessments of changes in behavior and culture within organizations.
7. Provide Ongoing Support for Public Servants Facing Ethical Dilemmas:
  - Offer access to ethics experts and support for whistleblowers, including guidance on navigating ethical dilemmas, counseling, and protection against retaliation.
8. Increase Public Awareness of the Importance of Ethics and Moral Values in Public Service:

- Implement public education campaigns and media coverage to inform the public about ethical challenges, measures to promote ethical behavior, and the consequences of unethical behavior.

By implementing these recommendations, public sector organizations can foster a culture of ethics and moral values that promotes the public interest and ensures public servants are held to the highest standards of integrity and accountability. This, in turn, can enhance public trust and confidence in government and promote more effective and efficient delivery of public services.

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