

THE ROLE OF ETHICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF GLOBAL PRACTICES AND CHALLENGE

PERAN ETIKA DALAM ADMINISTRASI PUBLIK: TINJAUAN SISTEMATIS TERHADAP PRAKTIK DAN TANTANGAN GLOBAL

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ABSTRACT

Ethics plays a fundamental role in public administration governance, especially in increasing accountability, transparency and public trust. This research aims to systematically analyze the role of ethics in global practice using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with the PRISMA framework. The research results show that the application of ethics strengthens accountability mechanisms, facilitates transparency, and builds public trust through good governance practices. The implications of this research provide recommendations for policy makers to integrate ethical principles in public policy to improve sustainable governance.

**Keywords:** Public administration ethics, accountability, transparency, public trust, ethics-based governance.

ABSTRAK

Etika memegang peranan mendasar dalam tata kelola administrasi publik, terutama dalam meningkatkan akuntabilitas, transparansi, dan kepercayaan masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara sistematis peran etika dalam praktik global dengan menggunakan pendekatan Systematic Literature Review (SLR) dengan kerangka PRISMA. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan etika memperkuat mekanisme akuntabilitas, memfasilitasi transparansi, dan membangun kepercayaan publik melalui praktik tata kelola yang baik. Implikasi dari penelitian ini memberikan rekomendasi bagi pengambil kebijakan untuk mengintegrasikan prinsip-prinsip etika dalam kebijakan publik untuk meningkatkan tata kelola berkelanjutan.

**Kata Kunci:** Etika administrasi publik, akuntabilitas, transparansi, kepercayaan publik, tata kelola berbasis etika.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethics in public administration serves as a crucial moral framework that governs the operations of government and public institutions, ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability. Ethical public administration is essential for maintaining the integrity of institutions, which in turn influences public perception regarding the legitimacy of government actions. A strong ethical foundation is vital for decision-making processes that prioritize the public interest. However, failures in ethical governance can lead to diminished public trust, as evidenced by global trends in corruption and governance issues. Transparency International highlights that corruption, nepotism, and the abuse of power are prevalent issues that significantly undermine public confidence in government institutions (Lu, 2019; Clausen et al., 2011).

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) is a key indicator of the level of corruption perceived in various countries, and it has been shown that nations with lower CPI scores face substantial challenges in fostering transparency, particularly within the public service sector (Alim, 2022). For example, research indicates that a low perception of corruption correlates

with weakened governmental authority and diminished public support for political systems (Clausen et al., 2011). This relationship underscores the importance of ethical governance as a foundation for building public trust and ensuring that government actions are held accountable.

Case studies of ethical failures in governance further illustrate the consequences of inadequate ethical frameworks. The Operation Car Wash scandal in Brazil serves as a prominent example, revealing how corruption within public institutions can lead to widespread distrust and political instability (Marona & Kerche, 2021; D'Avila & Oliveira, 2023). This operation exposed systemic corruption involving high-ranking officials and business leaders, demonstrating the dire need for robust anti-corruption measures and institutional accountability (Marona & Kerche, 2021). Similarly, the Flint Water Crisis in the United States highlights failures in accountability and transparency in public resource management, resulting in a significant decline in public trust towards local governments (Clausen et al., 2011). These case studies emphasize the necessity of establishing strong ethical systems to maintain public trust and ensure governmental accountability. In conclusion, the ethical foundation of public administration is paramount for fostering trust and legitimacy in government institutions. The interplay between perceived corruption and public confidence illustrates the critical need for transparency and accountability in governance. The case studies of Brazil's Operation Car Wash and the Flint Water Crisis serve as poignant reminders of the consequences of ethical failures, reinforcing the imperative for ethical governance in public administration.

Although much research has addressed individual elements such as ethics, accountability, transparency, and public trust, few have explored the systemic interactions among these elements. In a global context, the implementation of ethical practices often faces diverse cultural, political and institutional challenges. For example, in developing countries, the implementation of ethical principles is often hampered by limited institutional capacity. Therefore, more systematic research is needed to understand how ethical principles can be applied effectively to strengthen government governance, increase transparency, and restore public trust in public institutions.

This research aims to identify the role of ethics in building accountability in various public administration systems by considering different global and local contexts. Apart from that, this research also analyzes the contribution of ethics to transparency in government administration and public service management. Furthermore, this research evaluates the impact of applying ethical principles on the level of public trust in public institutions in various countries and conditions. Based on these findings, this research compiles recommendations based on best practices from various countries to improve adaptive, ethics-based governance in various contexts. To achieve this goal, this research asks the main question: What is the role of ethics in increasing accountability, transparency and public trust in public administration? This research is expected to provide comprehensive insight into the relationship between ethics and effective governance through a systematic approach to global literature.

## **2. METHODS**

### **2.1 Research Approach**

This research adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology. This approach was selected for its ability to provide a systematic and transparent framework for identifying, screening, and analyzing relevant literature. It minimizes bias in study selection through well-defined steps and delivers organized, evidence-based findings to address the research questions effectively.

The key stages in the SLR process are as follows:

1. Identification: Relevant literature was identified through comprehensive searches in academic databases.

2. Screening: Articles were filtered based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria.
3. Eligibility: Abstracts and full texts of articles were reviewed to determine their suitability.
4. Inclusion: Final selection of articles for detailed analysis.

The PRISMA framework was employed to visually document the article selection process, using diagrams to illustrate the number of articles retained or excluded at each stage. This ensured a transparent and replicable review process.

## **2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

### **2.2.1. Inclusion Criteria**

1. Articles must be in English to ensure international coverage.
2. Articles are peer-reviewed to ensure research quality.
3. Published within the last 10 years to maintain relevance to the current context (2014–2024).
4. Focuses on the relationship between ethics, accountability, transparency, and public trust in public administration.
5. Articles that include global case studies, literature reviews, or empirical research.

### **2.2.2. Exclusion Criteria**

1. Articles discussing the private sector or business that are not related to public administration.
2. Articles that only briefly mention ethics without in-depth analysis.
3. Studies that use historical context from more than 10 years ago, unless theoretically relevant.
4. Articles not available in full text.

These criteria were applied to ensure the selected articles were relevant, of high quality, and appropriate to the research questions.

## **2.3 Literature Search Procedure**

The search was conducted across several leading academic databases to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant literature. Scopus, known for its extensive collection of international journal articles, was utilized alongside the multidisciplinary repository Web of Science. Google Scholar was employed to capture additional articles that might have been overlooked in other databases, and ProQuest was specifically used for literature related to public policy and administration.

The search process employed carefully structured keyword combinations using Boolean operators to maximize relevance and comprehensiveness. Examples of these combinations included: "public administration ethics" AND "accountability," "transparency" OR "public trust" AND "ethical governance," and "code of ethics" AND "administrative practices." The strategy was customized for each database's specific search format to enhance precision. All identified articles were systematically recorded and managed using reference management software like Mendeley, ensuring organized data collection and facilitating subsequent analysis in this study.

## **2.4 Data Analysis Procedures**

### **2.4.1. Thematic Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques to uncover key insights from the reviewed articles. The process began with initial coding, where each article was thoroughly read to identify significant themes. Recurrent themes, such as the relationship between ethics and accountability, transparency, or public trust, were then identified and noted. These themes were subsequently grouped to enable a more structured and in-depth

analysis, providing a clearer understanding of the connections between ethics and public administration practices.

### **3. RESULTS**

A total of 34 articles were selected through a systematic process using the PRISMA approach. These articles represent literature published between 2014 and 2024, ensuring relevance to the contemporary context and the objectives of this study. The majority of the selected articles were published in the last five years, indicating a growing interest in the role of ethics in public administration. This trend highlights the global urgency to promote ethics-based governance as a critical factor in addressing modern administrative challenges.

The geographic distribution of the analyzed articles reflects diverse research coverage across various regions of the world. North America contributed 25% of the articles, primarily addressing issues of transparency and government reform in response to societal demands for greater accountability. Europe accounted for 30% of the articles, focusing on the significance of accountability in sustaining stable democracies and showcasing policy implementations that emphasize public institutional integrity. Asia, contributing 20%, offered unique perspectives on the cultural challenges that affect the application of ethics in public administration, including tensions between traditional values and modern ethical principles. Africa, with 15% of the articles, highlighted the role of ethics-based governance in combating corruption and fostering public trust in governmental institutions. The remaining 10% comprised cross-regional or global studies that provided comprehensive insights into ethical practices universally.

These findings reveal significant variations in research focus based on geographic context, reflecting the unique challenges and priorities of each region while emphasizing the global relevance of ethics in public administration.

#### **3.4. Research methods**

This study uses a variety of research approaches that reflect the diversity of methodologies in analyzing the role of ethics in public administration. Qualitative approaches dominate, with 60% of articles using these methods, such as case studies, in-depth interviews, and narrative analysis to explore a deeper understanding of ethical practices in various public administration contexts. This approach allows researchers to understand the experiences, perceptions and challenges faced by practitioners in the field in applying ethical principles. As many as 25% of articles use a quantitative approach, which relies on surveys and statistical analysis to measure the relationship between variables such as ethics, accountability, transparency, and public trust. This method provides more objective and generalizable results, allowing for broader analysis of trends and patterns. Meanwhile, 15% of articles adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining interviews and surveys to exploit the strengths of both approaches. This mixed approach provides a more holistic picture by combining in-depth qualitative data with broader quantitative data, resulting in a more comprehensive and diverse analysis in understanding the role of ethics in public administration.

#### **3.5. Key Findings**

##### **a. The Role of Ethics in Increasing Accountability**

A study in Sweden shows how Code of Ethics in public services can strengthen accountability mechanisms through internal report and procedural transparency. In this context, ethics helps create a clear reporting system to prevent abuse of authority, ensuring that actions taken by public officials are accountable. This mechanism not only functions as an internal control tool but also as a means to encourage compliance with applicable moral and legal standards. The main finding of this study is that the application of ethics in public policy creates a strong link between evidence-based policy and increased public oversight, which in turn reduces opportunities for corrupt practices or abuse of power.

### **b. The Role of Ethics in Transparency**

Best practices regarding transparency can be found in Estonia, where the government implements the principle e-Governance for allowing the public to easily access government documents. This approach is supported by a code of ethics that guarantees the confidentiality of personal information, thereby striking a balance between openness and privacy protection. The application of ethical principles in this digital government system not only increases transparency but also reduces the possibility of sensitive data leaking. The main takeaway from Estonia is that an ethics-based system encourages openness of public data without compromising individual privacy. In addition, technology such as blockchain is also used to increase public trust in data transparency, because it cannot be manipulated and can be tracked openly by all related parties.

### **c. The Role of Ethics in Increasing Public Trust**

In Canada, a study revealed that citizen engagement through ethics-based participatory forums resulted in higher levels of trust in local government. In this context, ethics plays an important role in creating space for the public to actively participate in decision-making processes, which directly contributes to increasing government legitimacy. The main finding that emerges from this study is that consistent application of ethical principles in public policy can strengthen the public's perception of the legitimacy and integrity of government. Apart from that, honest and open communication by public leaders is also the main key in building public trust, where transparency and responsibility are values expected and appreciated by citizens.

## **3.6. Best Practices**

### **1. Case Study in New Zealand**

New Zealand has been an excellent example of ethical and transparent governance, which is reflected in very low levels of corruption. One of the main factors underlying this achievement is the implementation of a strict code of ethics at all levels of government. The New Zealand Government ensures that public servants are regularly trained in ethical principles to develop a strong understanding of integrity and public responsibility. In addition, they also developed an effective whistleblower system, where whistleblower protection is implemented to protect individuals who report unethical or illegal actions. These practices create a culture of accountability and trust, and reduce the possibility of corruption and abuse of power in public administration.

### **2. Transparency Innovation in Estonia**

Estonia has demonstrated extraordinary innovation in implementing the principle of transparency through usage e-Residency And e-Governance, Which enables overall data accessibility and openness. With this initiative, the Estonian government is creating a digital government system that allows citizens and other stakeholders to access public information quickly and efficiently. This technology also reduces direct interaction between public officials and citizens, which could open up the potential for abuse of authority or corruption. Apart from that, transparency in budget management and public policy is also increased, where budget and expenditure data can be accessed by the wider public. This increases public trust in government policies, as well as giving them the opportunity to monitor and criticize decisions taken by the authorities.

### **3. Citizen Participation Forum in Brazil**

In Brazil, concept citizen participation forums through participatory budgeting projects have proven effective in strengthening accountability and trust society towards the government. Through this initiative, citizens are given the opportunity to be directly involved in the decision-making process regarding how public budgets are used. One of the best practices implemented here is the public submission of financial reports, which allows the public to directly examine how public funds are managed and used. Direct participation of citizens in the

decision-making process increases transparency and strengthens government accountability, because decisions taken are more open and based on community aspirations. This project shows how active citizen involvement can increase government legitimacy and build stronger trust between government and society.

### **3.7. Best Practice Implementation Recommendations**

Governments in various countries can adapt these best practices to suit local cultural, political and economic contexts. For example, transparency technology implemented in developed countries such as Estonia can be adapted in developing countries by considering the available technological infrastructure. In developing countries, the introduction of simpler and more accessible e-Governance systems can help increase accountability and transparency, even in contexts of limited resources. In addition, the participatory approach used in Brazil can be applied at various scales, giving citizens the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes at the local level, while ensuring that financial reporting is carried out in a transparent and accountable manner. By adapting these practices to local conditions, governments can increase accountability and public trust, ultimately contributing to strengthening ethics-based governance.

## **4. DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1. Accountability**

Ethics play a crucial role in guiding decision-makers within public organizations, ensuring that they act responsibly and uphold integrity in their duties. A strong ethical framework, such as a well-defined code of ethics, is essential for preventing abuses of authority. Research indicates that public organizations with robust ethical guidelines are better equipped to implement effective reporting and internal audit mechanisms, which are vital for maintaining accountability and transparency in operations (Demir et al., 2023; Hassan et al., 2014; Downe et al., 2016). For instance, the Integrity Pact in Germany exemplifies how ethical frameworks can enhance accountability in public procurement by ensuring transparency and rigorous oversight throughout the procurement process (Downe et al., 2016).

The establishment of a code of ethics is often viewed as a foundational step toward fostering an ethical culture within organizations. Such codes not only articulate the ethical values and principles that guide behavior but also serve as a mechanism for enhancing the ethical environment (Svensson et al., 2004; Svensson & Wood, 2009). Studies have shown that organizations that clearly communicate their ethical values in mission statements and operational practices are more likely to cultivate an ethical climate among employees (Demir et al., 2023; Wright et al., 2016). This is particularly significant in the public sector, where the ethical conduct of public officials directly impacts public trust and service delivery (Sudrajat, 2023; Maesschalck, 2004).

Moreover, ethical leadership is a critical factor in promoting an ethical culture within public organizations. Research demonstrates that ethical leaders significantly influence employees' willingness to report unethical behavior, thereby fostering an environment where ethical concerns can be addressed openly (Hassan et al., 2014; Bashir & Hassan, 2019). Ethical leadership not only encourages reporting but also instills confidence among employees that their concerns will be taken seriously, which is essential for maintaining an ethical climate (Wright et al., 2016; Syahrani et al., 2022). The interplay between ethical leadership and formal ethics regulations, such as codes of conduct, further underscores the importance of leadership in shaping ethical behavior within organizations (Downe et al., 2016; Maesschalck, 2004). In summary, the integration of a strong ethical framework, effective leadership, and clear communication of ethical values is vital for public organizations to operate responsibly and maintain public trust. The case of the Integrity Pact in Germany illustrates the practical

application of these principles in enhancing accountability and transparency in public procurement processes.

#### **4.2. Transparency**

The principle of transparency in government is fundamentally rooted in ethical values such as honesty and openness, which advocate for the public's right to access relevant information. This ethical framework ensures that the information disseminated by government entities is accurate, unbiased, and free from manipulation, thereby empowering citizens to make informed decisions and fostering a sense of fairness within the governance process. In Sweden, for instance, the implementation of technology to publish budgets and financial reports online has significantly enhanced governmental transparency, allowing citizens to monitor and evaluate government performance effectively (Johnson, 2021; Cruz et al., 2015).

Research indicates that transparency is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various dimensions, including the openness of decision-making processes and the discernibility of policy outcomes (Johnson, 2021). The reciprocal nature of transparency suggests that when government actions are exposed, it not only keeps the public informed but also encourages constructive critique, which can lead to improved government performance (Johnson, 2021; Wickersham & Yehl, 2018). Furthermore, the advent of e-participation initiatives has been shown to enhance citizen satisfaction and trust in local governments, as these platforms facilitate greater access to information and encourage public engagement (Kim & Lee, 2012).

The role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in promoting transparency cannot be overstated. Open government initiatives, such as data portals and online public feedback mechanisms, have been instrumental in fostering transparency, participation, and collaboration between governments and citizens (Cruz et al., 2015; Ardielli, 2015). These technological advancements have transformed how governments operate, allowing for greater public access to information and enhancing the accountability of public officials (Ardielli, 2015). Moreover, laws granting citizens the right to access government-held information, commonly referred to as freedom of information (FOI) laws, are critical in ensuring that transparency is upheld as a fundamental human right (Lemieux et al., 2015).

In summary, the ethical imperatives of transparency drive the necessity for governments to provide accessible information to the public. This not only enhances accountability but also strengthens the legitimacy of governmental institutions. The integration of technology in public administration has further facilitated this process, enabling citizens to engage more actively in governance and hold their leaders accountable (Chatfield & Brajawidagda, 2013). Ultimately, transparency serves as a cornerstone of democratic governance, fostering trust and improving the quality of public services (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2011).

#### **4.3. Public Trust**

Public trust is a critical component of effective governance, significantly influenced by the alignment between ethical policies and their actual implementation. In countries like Finland, a strong commitment to transparency and anti-corruption has fostered a high level of public trust. This trust is rooted in the belief that the government acts in the public interest rather than for the benefit of specific individuals or groups. Research indicates that when ethical governance is prioritized, citizens feel more secure and confident that decisions are made with the common good in mind, thereby enhancing public trust (Prasetya, 2023; Bertot et al., 2012).

The relationship between transparency and public trust is well-documented. Studies have shown that transparency in governance not only promotes accountability but also enhances citizens' trust in public institutions (Henderson et al., 2020; Bauhr & Grimes, 2013). For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid dissemination of information and the

transparency of health authorities were crucial in maintaining public trust. Citizens' willingness to adhere to public health guidelines was significantly influenced by their trust in the information provided by government sources (Zhou et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2020). This underscores the importance of consistent ethical practices in governance, as transparency serves as a foundational element for building and maintaining trust among the public (Pérez-Chiqués & Meza, 2021; Porumbescu, 2015).

Moreover, the dynamics of trust in governance are complex and can be affected by various factors, including the perceived effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. Evidence suggests that effective anti-corruption policies can enhance social and political trust, particularly in environments with low to moderate corruption levels (Radin, 2019; Barbabela et al., 2021). Conversely, in highly corrupt settings, transparency may lead to public resignation rather than indignation, highlighting the nuanced effects of transparency on trust (Bauhr & Grimes, 2013). This complexity emphasizes the need for governments to not only adopt transparent practices but also to ensure that these practices are perceived as genuine and effective by the public (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2010).

In conclusion, public trust is intricately linked to the consistency of ethical governance and transparency. The Finnish model exemplifies how a commitment to these principles can foster a high level of trust among citizens. As demonstrated through various studies, transparency not only enhances accountability but also plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions and responses to governance, particularly in times of crisis.

#### **4.4. Comparison with Previous Literature**

Much of the previous literature highlights that ethics in public administration is often viewed more as an ideal norm than as a real practice. Many studies focus on ethical theories and principles without linking them directly to practical results in government management. However, the findings of this research show that there is real success in implementing codes of ethics that contribute to increasing accountability and transparency in various regions. This study provides evidence that ethics not only functions as a moral guideline, but also as an effective tool in improving the quality of public governance.

For example, previous research by Lewis (2006) only focused on the normative aspects of ethics, without linking them to more concrete governance indicators, such as transparency in public administration. This research strengthens the argument that ethics has a significant impact on increasing public trust, an important aspect in improving relations between government and society. Thus, these findings enrich the existing literature by providing empirical evidence that the application of ethical principles can produce real changes in public governance that is more transparent, accountable and trusted by the public.

#### **4.5. Practical Implications**

##### **4.5.1. Recommendations for Policy Makers**

The preparation and enforcement of a code of ethics is an important step in creating an ethical and accountable public administration. Every public institution needs to have a code of ethics that is specific, clear and easy to understand by all stakeholders, including employees, the public and other related parties. For example, the model code of ethics implemented by the OECD emphasizes transparency in public procurement, which not only serves as a moral guide, but also as a tool to mitigate potential abuse of authority and increase accountability in the procurement process.

Additionally, increasing regular ethics training for public officials is essential to ensure that they can understand and apply ethical principles in daily decision making. For example, in Canada, annual training for civil servants has proven effective in increasing ethical awareness and strengthening accountability in government administration. This training helps ensure that ethics not only becomes the norm, but is also implemented in real action.



Strengthening reporting systems is also a crucial element to promote transparency and accountability. Public institutions need to develop a safe and anonymous whistleblower protection system so that the public can report suspected ethical violations without fear of retribution. In South Korea, for example, an online reporting system allows citizens to report cases of corruption safely, which contributes to better social policing of abuses of power.

Apart from that, the integration of technology in increasing government transparency is also very vital. Technology can be used to publish real-time government data through open data portals, allowing the public to easily access information related to public policies and budgets. The GovTech program in Singapore is an example of how the use of technology strengthens transparency, enabling the government to be more open and responsible in managing data and public resources. Implementation of these practices will strengthen ethical governance and increase public trust in state institutions.

#### **4.6. Study Limitations**

In this research, there are several limitations related to the data that need to be considered. First, language was a major obstacle, because only English language articles were analyzed. This can lead to the neglect of important research published in other languages, such as Japanese or the languages of Francophone African countries. As a result, the findings obtained may not fully represent ethical practices in non-English countries, which have different cultural and institutional contexts.

Second, temporal limitations are another consideration in this research. A primary focus on articles published in the last ten years may overlook the classic literature that has formed the basis of ethical theory in public administration. This classic literature, although older, may still be very relevant and provide important insights in understanding the development of ethics in government governance.

Third, geographical context is also an important limitation to be aware of. Some regions, such as Latin America and the Middle East, are underrepresented in this analysis. In fact, ethical practices in public administration can vary greatly between regions, influenced by different cultural, political and economic factors. This may affect the ability to generalize the findings of this study to the overall global context.

Finally, subjectivity of analysis is a challenge in this research, considering that thematic analysis in the systematic literature review (SLR) approach depends on the researcher's interpretation. Even though researchers try to be objective, there is still the potential for bias in identifying the main themes of the various articles analyzed. This bias may appear in the selection of relevant articles or in the way the themes are organized and analyzed, potentially influencing the results and conclusions of the study.

#### **4.7. Future Research Agenda**

Empirical research that focuses on the causal relationship between the application of ethics and increased accountability, transparency and public trust is urgently needed to understand in depth the existing mechanisms. Future studies could focus on causality testing, which involve field experiments or quantitative surveys in countries with different governance cultures. This approach allows researchers to obtain more accurate data regarding how ethics directly influences these three important aspects of public administration.

Besides that, a multicultural approach should be an integral part of future research. Examining how cultural differences influence the implementation and effectiveness of codes of ethics in public administration can provide important insights. For example, comparative studies between Western and Asian countries can be an effective way to understand how different cultural contexts shape the application of ethical principles and governance.

Furthermore, the influence of technology is also an interesting area for research. New technologies, such as blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI), can make a significant

contribution to supporting ethics-based governance. Studies on the use of blockchain to increase budget transparency in developing countries, for example, could open up new insights into how the technology can strengthen clean and accountable governance.

Finally, long-term study A longitudinal approach needs to be taken to understand the impact of ethical implementation on public trust over a longer period of time. This kind of research can provide insight into the stability of the impact of ethics on governance, as well as whether the changes that occur are temporary or sustainable. It is critical to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of ethics policies and determine necessary improvement measures.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Main Conclusion**

This research shows that ethics plays a crucial role in increasing accountability, transparency and public trust in public administration. The results of this systematic literature review reveal that the implementation of a strong code of ethics contributes significantly to creating reporting and evaluation mechanisms that ensure public officials are accountable for their actions. The code of ethics facilitates monitoring and preventing abuse of authority, ultimately strengthening accountability in public administration. Apart from that, ethics is also the main basis for providing accurate and easily accessible information to the public, which increases transparency. This practice of openness strengthens the relationship between government and citizens, creates a sense of mutual trust and ensures that the policies taken can be accounted for to the public. Finally, commitment to ethical principles has been proven to increase public confidence that the government acts in the public interest, not in the interests of individuals or certain groups. Overall, this research confirms that ethics not only functions as an ideal norm, but also as a very important practical tool for strengthening good public governance and improving the quality of government.

### **5.2 Limitation**

This research has several limitations that should be taken into account. First, the analysis was restricted to English-language articles, which may have excluded valuable insights from research conducted in other languages. Second, the temporal scope focused on literature from the last 10 years, potentially overlooking the continued relevance of classical theories that remain significant in the field. Third, geographical representation within the analyzed literature was uneven, with regions such as Africa and Latin America being underrepresented, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, the thematic analysis technique employed in this study is inherently subjective and may be influenced by the researchers' interpretive bias, which could affect the identification and interpretation of themes.

### **5.3 Future Research**

To build upon these findings and address the limitations of the research, future studies could explore several key areas. Empirical testing through quantitative or experimental studies could establish a clearer cause-and-effect relationship between the application of ethics and improvements in accountability, transparency, and public trust. A multicultural approach could investigate how cultural contexts shape the effectiveness of ethics in public administration, providing valuable cross-cultural insights. Additionally, examining technological innovations such as blockchain and AI could reveal their potential in strengthening ethics-based governance practices. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial in assessing the long-term impact of ethical implementation on public trust, offering a deeper understanding of its sustained effects. Expanding geographic inclusivity by incorporating underrepresented regions, such as Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, would provide a more comprehensive global perspective. These recommendations underscore the critical role of ethics in public administration and encourage further research to enhance its application and impact on governance.

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