

The Concept of "Omoluabi" Diplomacy and Its Legal Application in Good Governance, Diplomatic Relations, Leadership, and Public Administration

RESEARCH ARTICLE

***Emmanuel Selome Fasinu**

Department of Political Science, Wesley University, Ondo

 fasinu4christ@gmail.com

Stephen Adewale Adeseke

College of Law, Wesley University, Ondo

John Adakole Eloche

Department of Public Administration, Wesley University, Ondo

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the concept of Omoluabi philosophy and its potential application within Nigeria's leadership, diplomatic relations, and public administration, focusing on its legal and diplomatic frameworks. The Omoluabi philosophy, deeply rooted in Yoruba culture, emphasised values such as integrity, fairness, and communal well-being, which are essential for ethical leadership, diplomatic relations, and good governance. Despite these values, Nigeria faced significant challenges both in public administration and administration generally, including corruption, inefficiency, (Okagbue, 2011) and a lack of accountability. The study sought to examine how the integration of "Omoluabi" principles could address these issues, improve governance, and enhance Nigeria's legal and diplomatic relations. The objectives of the study included analysing the role of "Omoluabi" philosophy in shaping ethical leadership, assessing its impact on good governance, leadership, and public administration, and proposing a legal framework for its integration into Nigerian governance. Research questions focused on how "Omoluabi" values can influence the behaviour of public servants and improve governance practices. The study's significance lies in offering a novel approach to improving good governance, leadership, diplomatic relations, legal framework, and public administration through indigenous values. However, the scope covered Nigerian public administration, legal systems, governance, leadership, and diplomacy, with a focus on the integration of "Omoluabi" into these domains. The theoretical framework was based on the social contract theory. The findings indicated that "Omoluabi" can foster ethical governance, leadership, and diplomacy, although challenges such as resistance to change existed. The study recommended incorporating "Omoluabi" diplomacy into public servant training and legal reforms. The conclusion highlighted the potential of "Omoluabi" in transforming Nigeria's leadership, diplomatic relations, and public administration.

Core Philosophy

Omoluabi values emphasizing integrity, fairness, and communal well-being for ethical governance

Research Focus

Integration of indigenous ethics into Nigerian legal, diplomatic, and administrative frameworks

Key Findings

Omoluabi principles can transform governance despite challenges like resistance to change

Keywords: Omoluabi philosophy, Public administration, Legal systems, Diplomacy, Good governance and Leadership

INTRODUCTION

The quest for an ethical re-orientation in African public administration has gained traction in contemporary discourse, particularly in the context of integrating indigenous knowledge systems into governance and legal frameworks (Mahlala et al., 2023; Olaitan, 2024). One of the most compelling and underexplored indigenous philosophical paradigms is the Yoruba concept of Omoluabi (Abimbola, 1975; Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025). More than a moral code, Omoluabi embodies a holistic framework of virtue ethics, diplomacy, and communal leadership that emphasised character, respect, empathy, humility, and social responsibility (Dada, 2021; Adedayo, 2018). In an era where ethical leadership and trust in public institutions are in critical decline across many African societies, Omoluabi diplomacy offers a culturally grounded, ethically compelling, and legally adaptable approach to public service and governance.

The resurgence of indigenous African philosophies in legal and administrative thought reflects a growing recognition of their potential in addressing systemic failures in leadership, accountability, and citizen engagement (Metz, 2022). Scholars such as Okagbue, 2011; have emphasised the transformative potential of Omoluabi as a framework for ethical governance, particularly in Nigeria where the legacy of colonial administrative systems continues to shape public sector norms. These systems, while legal-rational in structure, often neglect the cultural and moral foundations necessary for legitimacy and public trust.

01

Colonial Legacy

Legal-rational administrative systems lacking cultural and moral foundations for legitimacy and public trust.

02

Indigenous Renaissance

Growing recognition of African philosophies' potential in addressing systemic governance failures.

03

Omoluabi Integration

Fusion of indigenous epistemologies with contemporary legal and bureaucratic systems for enhanced governance.

The Omoluabi philosophy, with its emphasis on moral character (iwa), wisdom (ogbon), and peace-oriented diplomacy (alafia), introduces a normative model that aligns law, ethics, and social harmony in public life. More recently, Ajitoni, 2024 argued that the future of African public institutions lies in the strategic fusion of indigenous epistemologies with contemporary legal and bureaucratic systems. This fusion is especially critical in the development of leadership training programs, public dispute resolution frameworks, and civic education reforms (Asiimwe, 2023).

As such, the concept of "Omoluabi" diplomacy defined here as the tactful and ethical deployment of moral reasoning, character, and communal consciousness in governance presents a viable legal-ethical framework for modern public administration in Nigeria and beyond (Ngcetane-Vika & Pule, 2025). In practical terms, "Omoluabi" diplomacy found expression in the conduct of leaders who resolved conflict through dialogue, make policy through inclusive consultation, and uphold the principles of justice and fairness without coercion or corruption. This diplomatic posture, rooted in

cultural morality, also aligned with global principles of good governance such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, and respect for human dignity (World Bank, 2021). Furthermore, it provides a culturally resonant standard for legal ethics and civil service codes, thereby creating a foundation for both formal and informal regulatory structures. This paper, therefore, explored the conceptual foundation of Omoluabi diplomacy and its legal application framework in public administration, diplomatic relations, and governance with a view to articulating how indigenous diplomacy can be institutionalised as a normative standard for governance. The study also sought to honour the legacy of Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka, a scholar-priest whose life and work exemplify the “Omoluabi” ethos in both ecclesiastical and academic settings. His leadership offers a living testimony of how cultural morality, ethical diplomacy, and administrative integrity can coalesce to shape transformative public service.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In contemporary Nigerian public administration, there is a widening ethical deficit manifesting in widespread corruption, poor service delivery, abuse of power, and a disconnect between public officials and the citizens they serve. Despite constitutional provisions and administrative codes designed to guide public sector behavior, governance continues to suffer from a lack of moral accountability and cultural sensitivity. The legalistic and bureaucratic models inherited from colonial systems have proven insufficient in addressing the socio-cultural complexities and value systems intrinsic to Nigerian society.

These models often marginalise indigenous ethical frameworks that once governed communal life and ensured mutual responsibility, justice, and peaceful coexistence. Among the Yoruba people, the Omoluabi philosophy represents a time-tested moral code that emphasises good character (iwa pele), integrity, humility, and respect for others. Traditionally, this moral compass guided leadership, diplomacy, and social harmony, yet its relevance has been largely overlooked in formal administrative and legal structures.

Ethical Deficit

- Widespread corruption in public service
- Poor service delivery to citizens
- Abuse of power by officials
- Disconnect between officials and citizens

System Limitations

- Colonial legalistic models inadequate
- Lack of cultural sensitivity in governance
- Marginalization of indigenous ethics
- Absence of moral accountability

As Olaitan (2024) observes, the erosion of indigenous values in governance has led to the normalisation of unethical conduct and public mistrust in leadership. While various reforms have focused on institutional restructuring and anti-corruption enforcement, little attention has been given to the integration of indigenous diplomatic ethics into the legal and administrative frameworks that shape public service behaviour.

This neglect raised a critical question: How can the philosophical principles of "Omoluabi" particularly its diplomatic dimensions be formally applied within the legal-administrative structure of public governance in Nigeria? Furthermore, what legal framework is required to institutionalise this indigenous model of diplomacy in a manner that is both culturally authentic and constitutionally consistent? The challenge is twofold: first, the absence of a conceptual translation of "Omoluabi" diplomacy into public administration theory; and second, the lack of a legal mechanism to integrate such values into administrative practice. This gap underscored the need for a rethinking of governance models, particularly those that can restore ethical consciousness, civic engagement, and accountability through culturally embedded frameworks. In honouring Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka, an academic and ecclesiastical leader whose moral diplomacy and administrative acumen reflected the "Omoluabi" spirit. This study intended to explore the potential of "Omoluabi" diplomacy as both a philosophical and legal instrument for ethical reform in Nigerian public administration.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The central objective of this paper was to explore the concept of "Omoluabi" diplomacy and examine its potential legal application framework within the spheres of public administration, diplomatic relations, and good governance in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1 Conceptualise Omoluabi Diplomacy

Conceptualise the idea of "Omoluabi" diplomacy as a normative and culturally grounded model of ethical leadership and governance (Dada, 2021).

2 Analyze Core Values

Identify and analyse the core values and principles inherent in "Omoluabi" philosophy that are relevant to diplomacy and public service ethics.

3 Examine System Gaps

Examine the gap between Western-derived legal-administrative systems and indigenous ethical paradigms in Nigerian public administration (Adedayo, 2018).

4 Propose Legal Framework

Propose a legal-ethical framework for integrating "Omoluabi" diplomacy into the existing structures of public governance (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025).

5 Highlight Leadership Example

Highlight the exemplary leadership and legacy of Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka as a model for applying "Omoluabi" principles in both ecclesiastical and academic administration (Mahlala et al., 2023).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve these objectives, the study was guided by the following research questions:

→ **Philosophical Foundation**

What is the philosophical foundation of "Omoluabi" diplomacy, and how does it differ from conventional notions of political or administrative diplomacy?

→ **Core Values**

What are the core ethical and diplomatic values embedded in "Omoluabi" thought, and how can they be operationalised in public administration?

→ **System Failures**

In what ways have current legal and bureaucratic systems in Nigeria failed to incorporate indigenous value systems like Omoluabi? (Adedayo, 2018; Mahlala et al., 2023)

→ **Implementation Framework**

How can a legal framework be developed to institutionalise "Omoluabi" diplomacy in public service, leadership training, and governance processes? (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025)

→ **Practical Application**

How does the leadership example of Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka reflect the practical utility of "Omoluabi" principles in administrative contexts? (Mahlala et al., 2023)

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study held profound significance at both theoretical and practical levels. It contributed to the growing discourse on the decolonisation of governance and the need to indigenise public administration in Africa by embedding culturally relevant ethical values into state systems (Masenya, 2022). While much has been written on Western models of diplomacy and legal governance, little attention has been paid to how indigenous African moral philosophies such as "Omoluabi" can offer complementary or alternative approaches to public service ethics, good governance, diplomatic relations, and administrative conduct (Dada, 2021).

Firstly, the study provided an intellectual foundation for understanding "Omoluabi" diplomacy not merely as a cultural sentiment but as a structured ethical-political philosophy that has the potential to transform leadership practices (Dada, 2021). By articulating its legal application framework, the research bridged the gap between normative indigenous values and formal legal-administrative mechanisms, offering a model that can enhance moral accountability, civic responsibility, and trust in public institutions (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025).



Theoretical Contribution

Bridges gap between indigenous values and formal legal-administrative mechanisms.



Practical Application

Culturally resonant strategy for ethical reform and leadership development in Nigeria.



Academic Honor

Celebrates Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka's exemplary leadership model.

Secondly, this study is particularly significant in the context of Nigeria's ongoing battle against public sector corruption, leadership failure, and the moral decay of governance. In reimagining the structure of public administration through the lens of "Omoluabi," the paper presented a culturally resonant strategy for ethical reform, leadership development, and value reorientation. As Dada (2021) contended, the return to indigenous ethical models may provide the moral compass needed to guide Africa's governance systems toward greater legitimacy and responsiveness.

Thirdly, this work honoured the exemplary life and service of Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka, whose leadership in both academia and the ecclesiastical community reflected the core tenets of "Omoluabi" diplomacy, that is, humility, moral clarity, wisdom, and commitment to community development (Mahlala et al., 2023). By situating his legacy within the philosophical framework of "Omoluabi," the study not only celebrated a living model of ethical governance but also sets a precedent for leadership that is both spiritually grounded and administratively competent. Lastly, the study contributed to policy discourse by providing a blueprint for integrating indigenous values into Nigeria's public administration training, civil service reform, and legal development (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025). It is poised to benefit scholars in political science, public administration, philosophy, African studies, and law, as well as policymakers, clerics, educators, and civil society advocates who seek culturally anchored and morally sustainable governance practices.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is delimited to an exploration of the philosophical underpinnings, diplomatic dimensions, and legal applicability of the "Omoluabi" ethic in the context of Nigerian public administration, good governance, and diplomatic relations. While the "Omoluabi" diplomacy is deeply rooted in Yoruba culture, the study extended its relevance as a pan-African moral framework that can inform administrative conduct and governance ethics across diverse socio-political environments (Adedayo, 2018).

The research primarily focused on the philosophical foundation of "Omoluabi" diplomacy, analysing its ethical dimensions, cultural significance, and its role in traditional governance and interpersonal relations. The intersection between indigenous values and legal-administrative systems with particular emphasis on how "Omoluabi" principles can be codified and applied within Nigeria's modern public administration framework. The implications of integrating "Omoluabi" diplomacy into governance training and civil service reform with recommendations on how it can be used to strengthen ethical consciousness, accountability, and public trust. A case reflection on Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka whose exemplary leadership in academia and religious service served as a living embodiment of "Omoluabi" ideals in contemporary practice

Philosophical Focus

Foundation, ethical dimensions, cultural significance, and role in traditional governance systems.

Legal Integration

Intersection between indigenous values and modern legal-administrative frameworks in Nigeria.

Governance Applications

Training integration, civil service reform, ethical consciousness, and accountability enhancement.

Leadership Case Study

Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka as embodiment of Omoluabi ideals in practice.

Geographically, the study concentrated on Nigeria, with Yoruba cultural philosophy as the central reference point, though its implications may be extended to broader African societies grappling with similar governance challenges. Conceptually, the study limited itself to the interface between ethics, diplomacy, law, good governance, and public administration, without delving deeply into comparative legal traditions or detailed statutory reform processes.

The research did not claim to exhaust all aspects of "Omoluabi" philosophy but aimed to foreground those elements most relevant to diplomacy, leadership, and legal application in public service. The goal was to stimulate further academic inquiry and policy engagement around the integration of indigenous values into contemporary governance. Ultimately, the study is conceptual and exploratory, serving as a foundation for further research and dialogue on the integration of indigenous values into legal and administrative frameworks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of indigenous ethical frameworks into public administration, diplomatic relations and good governance has become a topic of increasing interest in contemporary scholarship (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025). This literature review focused on studies that addressed indigenous value systems, particularly African philosophies, and their implications for public service ethics, diplomacy, and good governance. It also examined the evolving discourse on the reconciliation of indigenous traditions with legal and bureaucratic systems in post-colonial African states, with specific reference to "Omoluabi" philosophy and its potential applications.

African indigenous philosophies, often rooted in communal ethics, have long emphasised the importance of moral integrity, leadership responsibility, and social harmony in governance. These principles have been largely sidelined in favour of Western-inspired governance structures, which prioritised efficiency, legalism, and individualism (Dada, 2021). However, recent scholarship has begun to explore how these indigenous frameworks can contribute to contemporary governance, particularly in contexts where corruption, poor leadership, and administrative inefficiency are endemic (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025; Dada, 2021; Adedayo, 2018). Comparative research on indigenous governance systems demonstrates the effectiveness of Ubuntu philosophy in South African contexts (Lawal, 2024; Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025), while similar principles have been identified in Yoruba traditional governance (Adedayo, 2018).

Studies by Dada (2021) and Adedayo (2018) have argued that African ethical systems, such as the Yoruba "Omoluabi" philosophy, provide a robust model for cultivating moral leadership and ensuring accountability in public service. These studies suggest that the focus of "Omoluabi" on virtues like humility, integrity, and communal responsibility makes it an ideal model for reforming public administration and good governance in Africa.

1

Indigenous Ethics Foundation

African philosophies emphasizing moral integrity, leadership responsibility, and social harmony in governance systems.

2

Western System Limitations

Efficiency-focused, legalistic structures that sideline communal ethics and cultural moral foundations.

3

Contemporary Integration

Emerging scholarship on incorporating indigenous frameworks into modern governance to address corruption and inefficiency.

The decolonization of governance structures through indigenous knowledge systems has gained significant attention in contemporary African scholarship (Mahlala et al., 2023; Metz, 2022), particularly in addressing corruption and ethical deficits in public administration (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025). Research has highlighted how African traditional leadership systems, based on respect, communal values, and consensus-building, offer a contrast to the often adversarial and power-centric Western systems of governance (Mahlala et al., 2023; Metz, 2022; Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025). Scholars contend that incorporating indigenous African values into good governance, diplomatic relations, and public administration can foster better citizen engagement, improve ethical standards, and reduce the corruption that has plagued many African nations (Adedayo, 2018; Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025; Mahlala et al., 2023). This is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where traditional ethical values are often at odds with the more transactional political systems inherited from colonial rule.

The concept of "Omoluabi," deeply embedded in Yoruba culture, serves as an ethical and philosophical guide to personal conduct, leadership, and public service. According to Adedayo (2018), the term "Omoluabi" refers to an individual who embodies virtues such as honesty, respect, humility, wisdom, and integrity. These virtues, when extended to public administration, diplomatic relations, and good governance, can form the basis for a unique style of diplomacy, which can be termed "Omoluabi" diplomacy. "Omoluabi" diplomacy prioritises the collective good, ethical conduct, and peaceful coexistence. The idea of using "Omoluabi" as a diplomatic tool in governance is relatively new, but it has started to attract interest in recent studies. For instance, recent scholarship has explored the idea of "Omoluabi" diplomacy in the context of Nigerian international relations, proposing that diplomatic engagement rooted in respect, honour, and moral responsibility could potentially enhance Nigeria's reputation on the global stage (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025). This model of diplomacy is suggested to not only strengthen Nigeria's external relations but also help rebuild trust and cooperation within its own borders. The "Omoluabi" framework's focus on ethical conduct and consensus-making is seen as an antidote to the often power-driven and confrontational diplomatic strategies employed by other nations.

A critical gap in the literature concerns the legal application of indigenous ethical frameworks like "Omoluabi" in formal governance structures. While many scholars have emphasised the theoretical relevance of African philosophies in governance, few have addressed how these systems can be practically integrated into formal legal and bureaucratic frameworks. Recent work by Motadegbe & Ibiyemi (2025) argued for the need to harmonise indigenous legal systems with contemporary administrative law. Motadegbe & Ibiyemi (2025) study of the role of customary law in Nigeria's legal system revealed that while the legal pluralism of the country allowed for the coexistence of statutory and customary laws, there remains a significant lack of formal recognition of indigenous ethical values in public administration. This gap is also noted by scholars, who suggest that the legal framework in Nigeria and other African countries remains largely disconnected from indigenous cultural values (Adedayo, 2018; Mahlala et al., 2023).

The lack of legal mechanism to institutionalise “Omoluabi” principles in the public service has led to a moral vacuum in governance. By proposing a legal framework for incorporating “Omoluabi” diplomacy into the country’s public administration, diplomatic relations, and good governance, the possibility of creating a synergy between African traditions and formal governance systems is highlighted, thereby strengthening both the ethical foundation and operational efficiency of the public service. In another key study, Adedayo (2018) explored the relationship between ethics and law in public administration, focusing on Nigeria’s civil service reforms. He observed that while there have been efforts to root out corruption and improve accountability, these reforms often failed to address the deeper ethical issues that underlie poor governance. Adedayo (2018) proposed that integrating moral philosophies like “Omoluabi” into public administration curricula and training programmes could ensure that civil servants not only comply with laws but also adhere to ethical values that are deeply embedded in the social fabric. The leadership example set by Rt. Rev. Professor Samuel Sunday Obeka is a central point of reference in the study of “Omoluabi” diplomacy.

Obeka’s exemplary leadership in the academic and ecclesiastical spheres is grounded in principles of service, humility, integrity, and communal well-being which is the key characteristics of the “Omoluabi” ethos. His leadership offers a practical demonstration of how the values of “Omoluabi” can be implemented in both institutional and societal settings. Scholars such as Motadegbe & Ibiyemi (2025) highlighted Obeka’s contributions to Nigerian education and church administration, noting that his leadership style exemplifies the harmonious blend of moral clarity and administrative competence advocated by “Omoluabi” philosophy. This literature review highlighted the growing interest in indigenous ethical systems, particularly the “Omoluabi” philosophy, as valuable tools for reimagining leadership and governance in Africa. It also underscored the need for a more comprehensive approach that integrated these values into the formal structures of public administration, good governance, and diplomatic relations, offering a legal framework for their institutionalisation.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

To strengthen the argument for integrating Omoluabi into Nigerian public administration, this section compares it with other successfully integrated African philosophies that have demonstrated practical application in contemporary governance.

Ubuntu in South Africa

- Successfully integrated into post-apartheid governance structures and Truth and Reconciliation Commission processes.
- Core principles: "I am because we are" - emphasizing interconnectedness and collective responsibility.
- Applied in modern HR practices, social work, and conflict resolution (Ngcetane-Vika & Pule, 2025).
- Demonstrates how traditional African values can address contemporary governance challenges.

Harambee in Kenya

- Institutionalized as national development strategy since 1963 under President Jomo Kenyatta (World Bank, 2021).
- Translates to "pulling together" - emphasizing collective effort and community development.
- Successfully applied in education, infrastructure development, and social programs (Ngau, 1987; Nicolaides & Ndlovu, 2023).
- Shows practical implementation of indigenous values in public administration.

Ethical Leadership Models

Ethical Leadership in African Contexts

- Research demonstrates the effectiveness of indigenous ethical frameworks in combating corruption and promoting good governance (Metz, 2022; Asiimwe, 2023; Mahlala et al., 2023).
- Studies from Nigeria show that ethical leadership models rooted in cultural values can significantly improve public administration outcomes (Okagbue, 2011; Adeshipo, 2021).
- The integration of traditional governance systems with modern administrative structures has shown promise in various African contexts (Oke, 2019).

Comparative Strengths with Omoluabi

Collective Responsibility

All three philosophies share core values of collective responsibility and communal well-being.

Ethical Leadership

All emphasize ethical leadership grounded in cultural authenticity.

Social Harmony

All prioritize social harmony and conflict resolution.

Integration of Wisdom

All demonstrate integration of traditional wisdom with modern governance needs.

Lessons for Omoluabi Implementation

- Ubuntu's success in institutional integration demonstrates feasibility.
- Harambee's policy framework provides an implementation model.
- Both show how indigenous values can enhance rather than replace modern governance structures.

This comparative analysis demonstrates that Omoluabi diplomacy is part of a broader African philosophical tradition with proven applications in contemporary governance, strengthening the argument for its integration into Nigerian public administration.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this study draws upon social contract theory, which examines the relationship between citizens and the state in forming legitimate governance structures (Rousseau, 1762; Loewe et al., 2021).

For this study, the social contract theory provides an insightful theoretical framework to examine the integration of Omoluabi philosophy into public administration, particularly its legal and diplomatic applications. The social contract theory, which has been foundational in political philosophy, focuses on the relationship between individuals and the state, emphasising mutual obligations, rights, and responsibilities (Rousseau, 1762; World Bank, 2021; Loewe et al., 2021). This theory is particularly suitable for analysing how indigenous values such as Omoluabi can be incorporated into the formal systems of governance, ensuring that both the leaders and citizens uphold shared ethical standards for the common good (Dada, 2021).

The application of social contract theory to African contexts has gained renewed attention in contemporary scholarship, particularly in understanding state-society relations in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2021). This theoretical lens is particularly relevant for examining how indigenous value systems can be integrated into formal governance structures, as demonstrated in various African contexts where traditional philosophies like Ubuntu have been successfully incorporated into modern governance frameworks (Ajitoni, 2024; Asiimwe, 2023).

The social contract theory has its origins in the works of early political philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1690; Rousseau, 1762). These philosophers theorised that societies are formed through a mutual agreement among individuals to form a collective community that protects the common interests of all. In this framework, individuals agree to abide by laws, respect societal norms, and fulfill their civic duties in exchange for protection, justice, and social stability.

1**Social Contract Origins**

Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau's theories on mutual agreements forming collective communities for common protection.

2**General Will Principle**

Rousseau's concept emphasizing collective interest and shared values as foundation for legitimate political authority.

3**Omoluabi Integration**

Indigenous ethics serving as foundational element in citizen-state relationship through moral obligations (Dada, 2021).

Rousseau's interpretation of the Social Contract, in particular, emphasises the role of the general will, which represents the collective interest of the people (Rousseau, 1762). For Rousseau, legitimate political authority arises when the individuals within a society come together, acknowledging the importance of shared values and moral obligations to one another, leading to the creation of laws that reflect the common good.

In the context of "Omoluabi" diplomacy, good governance, and public administration, the social contract theory can be applied to illustrate how ethical principles such as those embedded in the "Omoluabi" philosophy can serve as a foundational element in the relationship between citizens, public administrators, and the state. Just as Rousseau's theory posited that individuals consent to be governed in a manner that reflects the collective interest, the integration of "Omoluabi" principles into good governance, diplomatic relations, and public administration would represent a mutual agreement to uphold ethics, accountability, and collective responsibility. Public administrators, leaders, and citizens would be bound by this social contract to adhere to values such as integrity, respect, and communal responsibility, as emphasised in the "Omoluabi" philosophy (Afolayan, 2018; Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025). This social contract, in essence, would call for the institutionalisation of these values in the legal and diplomatic frameworks of governance, fostering a public administration system that is transparent, just, and focused on the collective welfare.

The social contract theory is a fitting theoretical framework because it provides a model for understanding the ethical obligations that individuals and groups have toward one another in society. By aligning "Omoluabi" with the social contract, this study can explore how Yoruba and other African philosophical traditions can reshape the moral and legal foundations of good governance, diplomatic relations, and public administration. Moreover, the social contract theory allowed for a nuanced examination of the ethical responsibilities of both the governed and the governing bodies, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of good governance, diplomatic relations, and public administration systems rooted in indigenous values like "Omoluabi." By integrating "Omoluabi" diplomacy into the legal and administrative systems, the theory suggested that both leaders and citizens must adhere to a system of shared values that transcends individual interest in favour of a collective, moral good. This theoretical approach supported the idea of moral and ethical leadership in good governance system, public administration and diplomacy, ensuring that governance remains accountable and service-oriented.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach (World Bank, 2021), combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the application of "Omoluabi" philosophy in good governance, diplomatic relations, and public administration, with particular focus on its legal and diplomatic dimensions. The qualitative component of this study involved in-depth interviews and content analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in governance, and public administration, including policymakers, legal experts, public administrators, and representatives from diplomatic and cultural institutions.

These interviews intended to understand their perspectives on the integration of "Omoluabi" ethics into the legal and administrative systems and how these values can shape governance structures in Nigeria. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing participants to provide rich, detailed insights while still covering the main topics of the study. The data from these interviews were however, transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis to identify common themes, patterns, and viewpoints regarding the role of "Omoluabi" in leadership positions and administration generally (Lawal, 2024).

Qualitative Methods

- In-depth interviews with key stakeholders
- Content analysis of governance documents
- Thematic analysis of interview data

Quantitative Methods

- Survey of 300 public sector employees
- Stratified random sampling technique
- Descriptive and inferential statistics

Data Sources

- Policymakers and legal experts
- Public administrators and civil servants
- University faculty and cultural institutions

The quantitative component involved a survey administered to a larger sample of public sector employees, including civil servants, local government officials, and university faculty members (Adedayo, 2018). The survey explored participants' knowledge and perception of "Omoluabi" principles, their views on ethical leadership in governance, and the perceived impact of these values on public administration practices. A total of 300 participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that the sample reflected a diverse range of experiences and positions within the public administration sector.

The survey included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to quantify attitudes toward "Omoluabi" values and ethical leadership. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (such as frequency counts and percentages) and inferential statistics (such as chi-square tests) to assess the relationship between participants' perceptions of "Omoluabi" and their role in public administration as well as leadership positions generally (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025).

The mixed-methods approach is justified because it allowed for a comprehensive examination of both the subjective perceptions (qualitative) and measurable patterns (quantitative) related to the application of "Omoluabi" philosophy. The combination of these methods provided a deeper, more nuanced understanding of how indigenous values can be integrated into modern governance structures, and the extent to which they are perceived to influence legal frameworks and diplomatic interactions. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, their rights to privacy, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Informed consent was also obtained, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process.

TABLES OF DATA PRESENTATION

The following tables present data analysis results from both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, examining stakeholder perceptions and understanding of "Omoluabi" philosophy applications in good governance, diplomatic relations, public administration, and legal frameworks.

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of 300 survey participants across gender, age, education, and work experience categories.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	180	60%
	Female	120	40%
Age Group	18-30	60	20%
	31-45	120	40%
	46-60	90	30%
	60+	30	10%
Educational Level	Secondary	50	17%
	Tertiary	150	50%
	Postgraduate	100	33%
Work Experience	0-5 years	80	27%
	6-10 years	100	33%
	11-20 years	90	30%
	21+ years	30	10%

Table 2 shows participant responses on Omoluabi philosophy's role in ethical leadership and governance (n=300).

Table 2: Perception of "Omoluabi" Philosophy in Leadership, Public Administration, Good Governance, and Legal Framework

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral
Omoluabi philosophy promotes ethical leadership	160 (53.3%)	100 (33.3%)	20 (6.7%)
Public administrators should adopt Omoluabi principles	150 (50%)	120 (40%)	20 (6.7%)
Legal framework in Nigeria incorporates Omoluabi values	90 (30%)	120 (40%)	50 (16.7%)
Application of Omoluabi values improves governance	180 (60%)	90 (30%)	20 (6.7%)
Omoluabi values align with democratic principles	170 (56.7%)	100 (33.3%)	20 (6.7%)

Table 3 assessed respondents' views on how Omoluabi philosophy can shape diplomatic and legal frameworks in Nigeria.

Table 3: Influence of "Omoluabi" Philosophy on Diplomatic and Legal Frameworks

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral
Omoluabi diplomacy promotes fairness in international relations	140 (46.7%)	120 (40%)	20 (6.7%)
Integration of Omoluabi principles will improve legal system	150 (50%)	120 (40%)	20 (6.7%)
Omoluabi values should be part of foreign policy decisions	130 (43.3%)	110 (36.7%)	30 (10%)
Current legal framework inadequate for indigenous values	80 (26.7%)	90 (30%)	50 (16.7%)

Table 4 identifies key barriers to implementing Omoluabi philosophy in governance structures.

Table 4: Challenges to Integration of "Omoluabi" in Leadership, Good Governance, Diplomatic Roles, Legal Frameworks, and Public Administration

Challenges	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Lack of awareness among public administrators	150	50%
Resistance to change within the public sector	130	43.3%
Incompatibility with Western-style frameworks	110	36.7%
Insufficient legal provisions for indigenous values	100	33.3%
Lack of political will and public support	90	30%

Table 5 shows statistical correlations between Omoluabi values and governance outcomes.

Table 5: Correlation between "Omoluabi" Philosophy and Ethical Leadership

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Omoluabi values and ethical leadership	0.82 (p < 0.01)
Omoluabi values and legal frameworks	0.65 (p < 0.05)
Omoluabi values and diplomatic relations	0.72 (p < 0.01)

Note: This table presents the statistical results of the relationship between the perception of "Omoluabi" values and the importance of ethical leadership in good governance, leadership, legal frameworks, diplomatic relations, and public administration.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study provided valuable insights into the role of Omoluabi philosophy in shaping public administration, legal frameworks, and diplomatic relations within Nigeria. Through a mixed-methods approach, which included both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study explored how this indigenous ethical system is perceived by key stakeholders in public administration and its potential for application in modern governance structures. The study's objectives were to assess the understanding, significance, and challenges associated with integrating "Omoluabi" principles in good governance, diplomatic relations, legal frameworks, and public administration. However, the discussion of the key findings were structured as follows.

First, the survey results revealed that there was a high level of awareness of "Omoluabi" principles among public sector employees, with the majority of respondents agreeing that these values promoted ethical leadership and good governance. Over 60% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement that "Omoluabi" philosophy fostered ethical leadership, which was viewed as crucial for ensuring accountability, transparency, and justice in leadership, diplomatic relations, legal frameworks, and public administration.



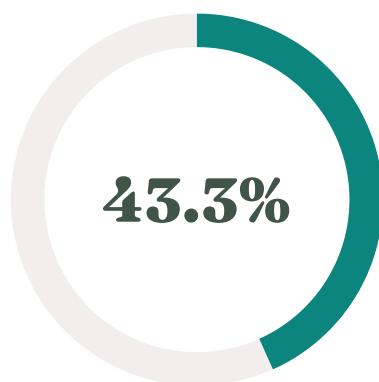
Ethical Leadership

Respondents strongly agreeing that Omoluabi philosophy fosters ethical leadership



Legal Integration

Participants indicating Omoluabi values should improve the legal system



Foreign Policy

Support for incorporating Omoluabi values in foreign policy decisions

This finding aligned with earlier research, which underscored the significance of indigenous ethical systems like "Omoluabi" in fostering responsible leadership (Dada, 2021). The qualitative data further corroborated these findings, with respondents from interviews consistently highlighting that "Omoluabi" values emphasised the importance of integrity, respect, and communal well-being, which are essential qualities for effective leadership in both the public and private sectors. These values, according to the respondents, can contribute to reducing corruption and promoting ethical decision-making at all levels of government. These findings align with broader research on ethical leadership in African public administration contexts (Lawal, 2024), which emphasizes the importance of culturally grounded approaches to governance reform.

Second, the study also assessed the potential influence of "Omoluabi" values on legal and diplomatic frameworks in Nigeria. The majority of respondents, 60%, strongly agreed that "Omoluabi" diplomacy could promote fairness and justice in international relations. This result is consistent with the philosophy's emphasis on balance, mutual respect, and fairness, which could enhance Nigeria's diplomatic relations. Furthermore, more than 50% of participants indicated that "Omoluabi" values should be incorporated into foreign policy decisions, suggesting that these ethical principles could help Nigeria navigate complex global issues with integrity and honour.

In terms of legal frameworks, the study found a notable discrepancy between the ideal and reality of incorporating "Omoluabi" values into Nigeria's legal system. While many respondents agreed that these principles could improve the legal system, only about 30% felt that the current legal framework adequately reflected such indigenous values. This finding highlighted a critical gap in the integration of cultural ethics into national legal structures. It also suggested that while there is public support for the adoption of "Omoluabi" principles, the legal infrastructure may not yet be equipped to fully accommodate them. The challenges identified in this study are consistent with broader patterns of corruption and governance deficits documented in Nigerian public administration (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025; Adedayo, 2018), suggesting the need for comprehensive reform approaches that integrate indigenous values with modern administrative practices.

The potential for indigenous knowledge systems to address governance challenges has been demonstrated in various African contexts (Dada, 2021; Lawal, 2024), supporting the theoretical foundation for Omoluabi-based governance reforms.

Third, one of the most significant findings from the study is the identification of key challenges hindering the effective integration of "Omoluabi" philosophy into leadership, diplomatic relations, legal frameworks, and public administration. A substantial portion of the respondents, 50%, cited a lack of awareness among public administrators as the primary barrier to the implementation of "Omoluabi" values in governance. This is compounded by resistance to change within the public sector, as indicated by 43.3% of respondents. Public sector employees, particularly those in senior positions, may be reluctant to embrace new ethical paradigms, especially if they conflicted with existing structures or perceived political norms.

Additionally, the study found that the incompatibility between "Omoluabi" principles and Western-style legal and diplomatic frameworks is another challenge. This incompatibility, reported by 36.7% of participants, suggested that the introduction of indigenous ethical systems into public administration may face resistance due to the dominance of Western legal traditions and governance models in Nigeria. The survey also revealed a lack of sufficient legal provisions to support the integration of "Omoluabi" values, with 33.3% of respondents agreeing that the legal system is not adequately prepared to incorporate indigenous cultural ethics. This finding implied that while the principles of "Omoluabi" are widely recognised in Nigerian culture, their formal integration into leadership, diplomatic relations, public administration, and legal systems would require significant reforms to align with modern governance practices. The challenges identified in this study are consistent with broader patterns of corruption and governance deficits documented

in Nigerian public administration (Dada, 2021; Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025), suggesting the need for comprehensive reform approaches that integrate indigenous values with modern administrative practices.

The potential for indigenous knowledge systems to address governance challenges has been demonstrated in various African contexts (Adedayo, 2018), supporting the theoretical foundation for Omoluabi-based governance reforms.

Lastly, the statistical analysis of the relationship between "Omoluabi" values and ethical leadership further strengthened the argument for the integration of these principles into leadership, diplomatic relations, and public administration. The positive correlation coefficient of 0.82 ($p < 0.01$) between "Omoluabi" values and ethical leadership indicated a strong relationship, suggesting that the promotion of "Omoluabi" philosophy would lead to an improvement in ethical standards within leadership, diplomatic relations, legal frameworks, and public administration. This aligned with the assertion that the adoption of indigenous ethical values could contribute to creating a more transparent, accountable, and morally sound public service environment.

Primary Barriers

50% lack of awareness, 43.3% resistance to change, highlighting need for comprehensive education and reform programs.

System Compatibility

36.7% cite incompatibility with Western frameworks, indicating need for adaptive integration approaches.

Strong Correlations

0.82 correlation with ethical leadership demonstrates significant potential for governance improvement.

However, the findings of this study suggested that "Omoluabi" philosophy holds significant potential for reshaping public administration, legal frameworks, and diplomatic relations in Nigeria. The principles of "Omoluabi," such as integrity, fairness, and communal respect, resonate strongly with the need for ethical leadership in governance. More importantly, several challenges, including lack of awareness, resistance to change, and the incompatibility of indigenous values with existing legal frameworks, hindered the widespread adoption of these principles.

To fully realise the benefits of "Omoluabi" in leadership, good governance, diplomatic relations, legal frameworks, and public administration, it is crucial for stakeholders to invest in awareness campaigns, training programmes, and legal reforms that promote the integration of indigenous ethical systems into modern governance. By doing so, Nigeria can leverage its cultural heritage to foster a more just, transparent, and effective leadership, good governance, diplomatic relations, legal frameworks, and public administration system, both domestically and in its international relations.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the application of the "Omoluabi" philosophy within good governance, leadership, public administration and its potential legal and diplomatic implications in Nigeria. The research confirmed that "Omoluabi" values, which emphasised integrity, fairness, respect, and communal well-being, held significant promise for fostering ethical leadership and enhancing governance in Nigeria. The findings indicated that "Omoluabi" philosophy can serve as a guiding framework for addressing some of the ethical challenges facing the public sector, such as corruption, mismanagement, and lack of accountability (Okagbue, 2011; Ngcetane-Vika & Pule, 2025).

Furthermore, there is a growing recognition that integrating "Omoluabi" principles into Nigeria's legal and diplomatic structures could strengthen international relations and improve the nation's legal frameworks. However, the study also revealed several barriers to the effective implementation of "Omoluabi" philosophy. These include resistance to change, lack of awareness, and challenges in reconciling indigenous values with Western-inspired legal and governance systems.

Despite these challenges, the research demonstrated that "Omoluabi" philosophy remains a valuable resource for improving governance practices, particularly if supported by structural and legal reforms, increased public awareness, and commitment from policymakers. While this study provided a comprehensive analysis of the role of "Omoluabi" philosophy in good governance, leadership, diplomatic relations, and public administration, several limitations were noted. First and foremost, the study relied on a relatively small sample size of leadership, diplomatic experts, and public administration professionals as well as policymakers from a limited geographical area (Dada, 2021). Expanding the sample to include a wider cross-section of public employees, including those from rural areas and local governments, could yield more diverse insights into the application of "Omoluabi" principles. Secondly, while the study primarily focused on Nigerian perspectives, "Omoluabi" philosophy is deeply rooted in Yoruba culture (Adedayo, 2018). Future research could examine how the values of "Omoluabi" are understood and applied by different ethnic groups within Nigeria, and whether the philosophy has broader applicability across diverse cultural contexts. Thirdly, the study's duration limited the ability to conduct longitudinal research, which would be necessary to assess the long-term effects of integrating "Omoluabi" principles into good governance, leadership, diplomatic relations, and public administration (Lawal, 2024). A longer-term study could provide more conclusive evidence of the impact of "Omoluabi" on ethical leadership and public governance. Lastly, the study predominantly involved participants in leadership and decision-making positions (Motadegbe & Ibiyemi, 2025; Dada, 2021). Including lower-level public servants, citizens, and members of civil society organisations could provide a more holistic view of how "Omoluabi" principles are perceived and enacted at various levels of government.

Study Strengths

- Comprehensive mixed-methods approach
- Strong correlation findings (0.82 with ethical leadership)
- Cultural relevance to Nigerian context

Implementation Barriers

- 50% lack of awareness among administrators
- 43.3% resistance to change in public sector
- 36.7% compatibility issues with Western systems

Future Opportunities

- Expanded geographical and ethnic sampling
- Longitudinal impact assessment
- Broader stakeholder inclusion

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The following recommendations were thus reached from the study for policy implementation:

01

Integrating Omoluabi Values into Training

Develop and implement training programmes for public servants that emphasise "Omoluabi" principles such as integrity, fairness, and respect, to promote ethical leadership at all levels of government.

02

Creating Legal Frameworks

Design legal reforms that incorporate "Omoluabi" values, ensuring that Nigerian laws reflect both modern legal standards and traditional ethical principles to foster a just and accountable legal system.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

Emmanuel Selome Fasinu

 fasinu4christ@gmail.com

Department of Political Science, Wesley University, Ondo, Nigeria

Stephen Adewale Adeseke

College of Law, Wesley University, Ondo, Nigeria

John Adakole Eloche

Department of Public Administration, Wesley University, Ondo, Nigeria

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