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DARI KEPATUHAN KE BUDAYA: STUDI LONGITUDINAL TENTANG EFEKTIVITAS PEMBELAJARAN MIKRO DALAM MEMPERTAHANKAN PERILAKU ETIS DI TEMPAT KERJA

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PROGRAM PASCASARJANA
UNIVERSITAS RIAU KEPULAUAN
BATAM
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FROM COMPLIANCE TO CULTURE: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON THE EFFICACY OF MICROLEARNING IN SUSTAINING ETHICAL WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR

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PROGRAM STUDI MAGISTER MANAJEMEN
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ABSTRAK

Santia Rahmadani. 2026. Dari Kepatuhan Ke Budaya: Studi Longitudinal Tentang Efektivitas Pembelajaran Mikro Dalam Mempertahankan Perilaku Etis Di Tempat Kerja. Program Studi Magister Manajemen. Universitas Riau kepulauan.

Meningkatnya kompleksitas lingkungan organisasi dan pengawasan regulasi yang ketat telah meningkatkan kebutuhan akan pendekatan yang efektif untuk mempromosikan perilaku etis di tempat kerja. Program pelatihan kepatuhan tradisional, meskipun penting untuk meningkatkan kesadaran, seringkali gagal mempertahankan perubahan perilaku jangka panjang karena sifatnya yang episodik dan terstandarisasi. Studi ini meneliti efektivitas microlearning sebagai pendekatan pembelajaran berkelanjutan dalam mendorong perilaku etis yang berkelanjutan dari waktu ke waktu. Dengan mengadopsi desain penelitian longitudinal, data dikumpulkan di beberapa titik waktu untuk menilai perubahan dalam keterlibatan microlearning, kesadaran etis, dan hasil perilaku. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa microlearning secara signifikan meningkatkan retensi pengetahuan dan memperkuat prinsip-prinsip etis melalui paparan berulang. Penguatan berkelanjutan ini menyebabkan peningkatan kesadaran etis, pengurangan perilaku tidak etis, dan peningkatan akuntabilitas di antara karyawan. Lebih lanjut, studi ini menyoroti peran microlearning dalam memfasilitasi transisi dari sistem berbasis kepatuhan ke budaya etis yang didorong oleh nilai. Dengan mendukung pembentukan kebiasaan dan mengintegrasikan pembelajaran ke dalam rutinitas kerja sehari-hari, microlearning berkontribusi pada pengembangan perilaku etis yang berkelanjutan. Studi ini menawarkan wawasan teoritis dan praktis tentang peran pembelajaran berkelanjutan dalam etika organisasi. Kesimpulannya, microlearning merupakan alat penting untuk menanamkan perilaku etis dalam budaya organisasi dan mencapai efektivitas tata kelola jangka panjang.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran mikro; perilaku etis; pelatihan kepatuhan; budaya organisasi; studi longitudinal

ABSTRACT

Santia Rahmadani. 2026. From Compliance To Culture: A Longitudinal Study On The Efficacy Of Microlearning In Sustaining Ethical Workplace Behavior. Postgraduate Program, Master of Management, University of Riau Kepulauan

The increasing complexity of organizational environments and heightened regulatory scrutiny have intensified the need for effective approaches to promoting ethical workplace behavior. Traditional compliance training programs, while essential for raising awareness, often fail to sustain long-term behavioral change due to their episodic and standardized nature. This study examines the efficacy of microlearning as a continuous learning approach in fostering sustained ethical behavior over time. Adopting a longitudinal research design, data were collected across multiple time points to assess changes in microlearning engagement, ethical awareness, and behavioral outcomes. The findings indicate that microlearning significantly enhances knowledge retention and reinforces ethical principles through repeated exposure. This continuous reinforcement leads to increased ethical awareness, reduced unethical behavior, and improved accountability among employees. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of microlearning in facilitating the transition from compliance-based systems to value-driven ethical cultures. By supporting habit formation and integrating learning into daily work routines, microlearning contributes to the development of sustained ethical behavior. The study offers both theoretical and practical insights into the role of continuous learning in organizational ethics. It concludes that microlearning is a critical tool for embedding ethical behavior within organizational culture and achieving long-term governance effectiveness.

Keywords: *Microlearning; ethical behavior; compliance training; organizational culture; longitudinal study*

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Batam, 06 April 2026

Penulis

Santia Rahmadani

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FROM COMPLIANCE TO CULTURE: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON THE EFFICACY OF MICROLEARNING IN SUSTAINING ETHICAL WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

The increasing complexity of organizational environments and heightened regulatory scrutiny have intensified the need for effective approaches to promoting ethical workplace behavior. Traditional compliance training programs, while essential for raising awareness, often fail to sustain long-term behavioral change due to their episodic and standardized nature. This study examines the efficacy of microlearning as a continuous learning approach in fostering sustained ethical behavior over time. Adopting a longitudinal research design, data were collected across multiple time points to assess changes in microlearning engagement, ethical awareness, and behavioral outcomes. The findings indicate that microlearning significantly enhances knowledge retention and reinforces ethical principles through repeated exposure. This continuous reinforcement leads to increased ethical awareness, reduced unethical behavior, and improved accountability among employees. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of microlearning in facilitating the transition from compliance-based systems to value-driven ethical cultures. By supporting habit formation and integrating learning into daily work routines, microlearning contributes to the development of sustained ethical behavior. The study offers both theoretical and practical insights into the role of continuous learning in organizational ethics. It concludes that microlearning is a critical tool for embedding ethical behavior within organizational culture and achieving long-term governance effectiveness.

Keywords: ***Microlearning; ethical behavior; compliance training; organizational culture; longitudinal study***

INTRODUCTION

The rising importance of ethics, compliance, and corporate governance has become a central concern for modern organizations operating in increasingly complex and scrutinized environments. High-profile corporate scandals, regulatory changes, and heightened stakeholder expectations have placed ethical conduct at the forefront of organizational priorities (Chhuttani, 2024). Companies are now expected not only to comply with legal requirements but also to demonstrate integrity, transparency, and accountability in their operations. As a result, organizations have invested significantly in compliance programs designed to mitigate risks and ensure adherence to policies and regulations. These initiatives are often embedded within broader governance frameworks aimed at protecting organizational reputation and stakeholder trust (Alobaidi et al., 2025). However, maintaining ethical standards in dynamic and fast-paced work environments remains a persistent challenge. This has led organizations to seek more effective ways to promote ethical behavior among employees.

Increasing regulatory scrutiny and reputational risks have further intensified the need for robust ethical frameworks within organizations. Governments and regulatory bodies are imposing stricter compliance requirements, while stakeholders, including customers and investors, are demanding higher levels of ethical accountability (Mosca & Greco, 2024). Failure to meet these expectations can result in severe financial penalties, legal consequences, and long-term damage to organizational reputation. In response, organizations have traditionally relied on compliance training programs to educate employees about rules, policies, and ethical guidelines. These

programs are designed to ensure that employees understand acceptable behavior and the consequences of misconduct. However, the effectiveness of such approaches is often limited by their focus on rule-based compliance rather than values-driven behavior. This raises questions about their ability to foster genuine ethical commitment among employees (Weller, 2020).

A critical limitation of traditional compliance training is its inability to sustain ethical behavior over time. While these programs may increase awareness immediately after completion, their impact tends to diminish as employees return to their daily routines. The periodic and standardized nature of training often leads to low engagement and limited retention of key concepts (Apooyin, 2025). Employees may view compliance training as a mandatory requirement rather than an opportunity for meaningful learning. As a result, the knowledge gained during training does not always translate into consistent ethical decision-making. This gap between short-term awareness and long-term behavior represents a significant challenge for organizations. Without continuous reinforcement, ethical behavior remains situational rather than embedded in organizational culture (Stacchezzini et al., 2020).

In response to these challenges, this study aims to examine how microlearning can support the development of sustained ethical behavior over time. Microlearning offers a continuous and engaging approach to training, delivering content in short, focused segments that can be easily integrated into daily work routines. By reinforcing ethical principles regularly, microlearning has the potential to transform compliance from a one-time activity into an ongoing process. The study adopts a longitudinal perspective to explore how repeated exposure to microlearning influences ethical awareness and behavior. It also seeks to understand how this approach contributes to the development of an ethical culture within organizations. By shifting the focus from compliance to culture, the research provides new insights into effective learning strategies. Ultimately, the goal is to demonstrate how organizations can foster lasting ethical behavior through continuous and adaptive learning approaches.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethics and Compliance in Organizations

Ethics and compliance are fundamental components of organizational governance, ensuring that employees adhere to legal standards and moral principles in their conduct. Ethical behavior refers to actions that are consistent with accepted norms of right and wrong, including honesty, integrity, fairness, and accountability (Martin, 2021). In organizational contexts, ethical behavior guides decision-making, interactions, and the overall conduct of employees. Compliance, on the other hand, focuses on adherence to laws, regulations, and internal policies designed to prevent misconduct. Together, ethics and compliance create a framework that protects organizations from legal risks and reputational damage. However, while compliance establishes minimum standards, ethics encourages individuals to go beyond rules and act responsibly in ambiguous situations. This distinction is critical for fostering a values-driven workplace (Ningrum et al., 2025).

The relationship between compliance and ethical culture is central to understanding organizational behavior. Compliance-based approaches tend to emphasize rule enforcement, monitoring, and penalties for violations. While necessary, this approach can create a checkbox mentality where employees focus on avoiding punishment rather than internalizing ethical values (Bahangulu & Owusu-Berko, 2025). In contrast, an ethical culture is built on shared values, trust, and a commitment to doing the right thing, even in the absence of formal rules. Organizations with strong ethical cultures encourage open communication, accountability, and moral reasoning. Such environments empower employees to make principled decisions and contribute to long-term organizational integrity (Chakkiath, 2025). Therefore, moving from compliance to culture is essential for sustaining ethical behavior.

Traditional Compliance Training

Traditional compliance training is typically characterized by periodic, formal, and standardized delivery methods. Organizations often conduct annual or semi-annual training sessions, either in-person or through online modules, to educate employees about policies, regulations, and ethical guidelines. These programs are designed to ensure that employees are aware of compliance requirements and understand the consequences of violations (Jejeniwa et al., 2024). Standardization allows organizations to deliver consistent content across large and diverse workforces. However, this approach often prioritizes efficiency and coverage over engagement and personalization. As a result, training may become routine and perceived as a mandatory obligation rather than a meaningful learning experience. Despite its widespread use, this model has limitations in achieving long-term behavioral change (Ganesh, 2025). One of the primary limitations of traditional compliance training is its lack of sustained engagement and knowledge retention. Employees may complete training modules without fully internalizing the content, leading to superficial understanding. The infrequent nature of training sessions means that key concepts are not reinforced

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regularly, resulting in knowledge decay over time (Araújo, 2022). Additionally, standardized content may not address specific workplace scenarios or challenges, reducing its practical relevance. Employees may also experience cognitive overload during lengthy training sessions, further limiting retention. Consequently, traditional training often fails to translate knowledge into consistent ethical behavior. These limitations highlight the need for more dynamic and continuous learning approaches (Wattoo, 2025).

Microlearning

Microlearning is an innovative approach to training that delivers content in short, focused, and easily digestible segments. Unlike traditional training methods, microlearning emphasizes brevity and relevance, allowing employees to engage with content in small increments. These learning units are often delivered through digital platforms, such as mobile applications or online systems, enabling flexible and on-demand access. Microlearning is designed to fit into employees' daily workflows, making learning more convenient and less disruptive (Araújo, 2021). Its continuous nature ensures that key concepts are reinforced over time, supporting long-term retention. Additionally, microlearning often incorporates interactive elements, such as quizzes and scenarios, to enhance engagement. This approach aligns well with modern learning preferences and organizational needs (Manginte, 2024).

The advantages of microlearning extend to improved knowledge retention and higher levels of employee engagement. By presenting information in manageable chunks, microlearning reduces cognitive overload and makes it easier for employees to absorb and recall information. Frequent repetition and reinforcement help strengthen memory and support the application of knowledge in real-world situations (Review, 2022). Moreover, the interactive and flexible nature of microlearning encourages active participation, increasing motivation and interest. Employees are more likely to engage with content that is relevant, accessible, and aligned with their work context. Over time, this sustained engagement can lead to the development of habits and behavioral change (Efunniyi et al., 2024). As a result, microlearning is particularly effective in promoting continuous learning and reinforcing ethical behavior in organizations.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a longitudinal research design to examine how microlearning influences ethical awareness and behavior over time. A multi-wave or repeated-measures approach is used to capture changes in employees' learning engagement and behavioral outcomes across different time periods. This design allows for a more robust analysis of causal relationships compared to cross-sectional studies, particularly in understanding how continuous learning affects sustained ethical behavior. The sample consists of employees drawn from multiple departments or organizations, ensuring diversity in roles, functions, and organizational contexts. Data collection is conducted at several intervals, enabling the tracking of both short-term and long-term effects of microlearning interventions. This approach provides insights into how ethical awareness evolves and how behavioral patterns are reinforced over time. By observing the same participants across multiple time points, the study captures dynamic changes rather than static snapshots.

The study measures key constructs using validated instruments, including microlearning engagement, ethical awareness, and behavioral outcomes. Microlearning engagement is assessed through participation frequency, interaction with content, and perceived usefulness. Ethical awareness is measured by employees' ability to recognize and evaluate ethical issues, while behavioral outcomes focus on observable actions such as decision-making, reporting behavior, and adherence to ethical standards. The analytical approach involves longitudinal techniques such as regression analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM), or growth modeling to examine relationships and trends over time. These methods allow for the identification of patterns, mediating effects, and long-term impacts of microlearning. However, the study has certain limitations, including time constraints that may restrict the number of data collection waves. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as participants may overestimate their ethical behavior. Despite these limitations, the methodology provides a strong framework for understanding the sustained impact of microlearning on workplace ethics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Short-Term vs Long-Term Effects

The findings reveal a clear distinction between the short-term and long-term effects of learning interventions in promoting ethical behavior. Traditional compliance training tends to generate immediate improvements in knowledge and awareness, as employees are exposed to key policies and ethical guidelines in a concentrated format. This immediate learning effect is often reflected in improved test scores or short-term compliance with rules (Silva,

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2023). However, these gains are typically not sustained over time, as employees gradually forget the information due to a lack of reinforcement. The episodic nature of traditional training contributes to this decline, as learning is not integrated into daily work routines. Consequently, employees may struggle to recall or apply ethical principles when faced with real-world dilemmas. This highlights the limitation of relying solely on one-time training interventions (Silva, 2023).

In contrast, long-term retention is significantly enhanced through continuous learning approaches such as microlearning. By delivering content in small, repeated intervals, microlearning reinforces key concepts and strengthens memory over time (Silva, 2023). This repeated exposure helps employees retain information and apply it more effectively in their daily tasks. Over time, ethical knowledge becomes more deeply embedded, reducing the likelihood of knowledge decay. Additionally, continuous learning supports the transition from passive understanding to active application. Employees are more likely to internalize ethical principles when they are consistently reinforced (Ruchi Sharma, 2025). This demonstrates that sustained retention requires ongoing engagement rather than isolated training events.

Table 1. Matrix of Learning Effectiveness: Short-Term vs Long-Term Impact on Ethical Behavior

	Low Retention (Long-Term)	**High Retention (Long-Term)**
High Immediate Learning	Short-Term Compliance Focus	Sustained Ethical Learning
	- Traditional compliance training	- Microlearning interventions
	- Quick knowledge gains	- Reinforced knowledge over time
	- Low long-term application	- Strong long-term application
	- Knowledge decay	- Knowledge embedded in practice
Low Immediate Learning	Ineffective Learning	Gradual Development
	- Low engagement	- Slow but consistent improvement
	- Minimal awareness	- Continuous reinforcement
	- Poor behavior change	- Progressive internalization
	- No retention	- Building long-term habits

Table 1 illustrates the distinction between different learning approaches based on their immediate impact and long-term retention, highlighting the limitations of traditional compliance training and the advantages of microlearning. Traditional approaches are positioned in the high immediate learning but low retention quadrant, where employees quickly gain knowledge but fail to sustain it over time due to lack of reinforcement. In contrast, microlearning occupies the high immediate learning and high retention quadrant, demonstrating its ability to both enhance understanding and embed knowledge through continuous engagement (Anderson et al., 2024). The lower quadrants represent less effective learning scenarios, where either engagement or retention is insufficient to drive meaningful behavioral change. The matrix emphasizes that sustained ethical behavior depends not only on initial learning but also on ongoing reinforcement and application. It also highlights the importance of integrating learning into daily routines to prevent knowledge decay (Wickert et al., 2024). Overall, the table underscores the need for organizations to shift from episodic training models to continuous learning strategies to achieve long-term ethical outcomes.

Microlearning and Ethical Awareness

Microlearning plays a crucial role in enhancing ethical awareness by providing continuous reinforcement of ethical principles. Unlike traditional training methods, which are often delivered infrequently, microlearning ensures that employees are regularly exposed to ethical concepts and scenarios. This frequent engagement keeps ethical considerations at the forefront of employees' minds (Cseh & Crocco, 2020). Short, focused learning modules allow employees to quickly absorb and reflect on specific ethical issues relevant to their work. Over time, this repeated exposure strengthens their ability to recognize ethical dilemmas. Additionally, microlearning can be tailored to

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address real-world situations, making it more relevant and practical. As a result, employees develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of ethical behavior (Houdek, 2023). The longitudinal findings suggest that ethical awareness increases progressively over time with sustained microlearning engagement. Employees become more adept at identifying ethical risks and evaluating the consequences of their actions. This heightened awareness contributes to more informed and responsible decision-making (Chhuttani, 2024). Furthermore, continuous learning fosters a mindset where ethical considerations are integrated into everyday work activities. Employees are not only aware of rules but also understand the underlying values and principles. This shift from surface-level awareness to deeper understanding is critical for long-term behavior change. Over time, ethical awareness becomes a habitual aspect of decision-making (Alobaidi et al., 2025). This demonstrates the effectiveness of microlearning in building sustained ethical consciousness.

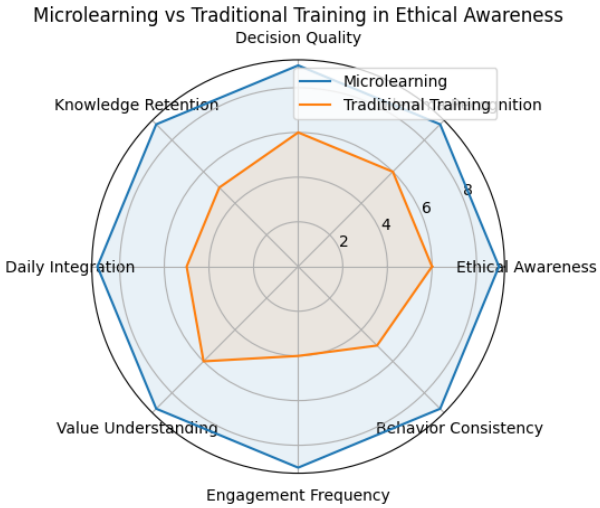


Figure 1. Double Radar Chart of Microlearning vs Traditional Training in Enhancing Ethical Awareness

The chart as presented in Figure 1 clearly illustrates that microlearning consistently outperforms traditional training across all key dimensions of ethical awareness. Microlearning shows strong performance in areas such as ethical awareness, dilemma recognition, knowledge retention, and daily integration, reflecting its continuous and reinforcing nature (Mosca & Greco, 2024). In contrast, traditional training demonstrates moderate impact, particularly weaker in engagement frequency and long-term behavior consistency. The largest gaps appear in knowledge retention and daily integration, highlighting the limitations of episodic learning approaches. The overlap between the two approaches in basic awareness suggests that both methods can introduce ethical concepts, but only microlearning sustains and deepens understanding over time (Weller, 2020). Additionally, the strong performance of microlearning in engagement frequency reinforces its role in keeping ethics top-of-mind. Overall, the figure emphasizes that continuous, bite-sized learning is more effective in building sustained ethical awareness and embedding ethical thinking into everyday decision-making (Apooyin, 2025).

Impact on Ethical Behavior

The study finds that microlearning has a significant impact on reducing unethical behavior within organizations. As employees receive continuous reinforcement of ethical principles, they are more likely to adhere to organizational standards and avoid misconduct. The frequent exposure to ethical scenarios helps employees anticipate potential risks and respond appropriately (Apooyin, 2025). This proactive approach reduces the likelihood of unethical actions, such as policy violations or unethical decision-making. Additionally, microlearning encourages employees to reflect on their behavior and consider the ethical implications of their actions. Over time, this reflection contributes to more consistent and responsible behavior. The findings suggest that continuous learning plays a key role in shaping ethical conduct (Stacchezzini et al., 2020). In addition to reducing unethical actions, microlearning also enhances accountability and reporting behaviors. Employees who are regularly engaged with ethical content are more likely to recognize and report unethical practices. This increased accountability strengthens organizational transparency and trust. Furthermore, microlearning can reinforce the importance of speaking up and provide guidance on how to report concerns (Martin, 2021). Over time, this creates an environment where ethical behavior

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is actively supported and reinforced. Employees feel more confident in addressing ethical issues, knowing that they are aligned with organizational values. This contributes to a culture of responsibility and integrity. Overall, microlearning not only prevents misconduct but also promotes proactive ethical engagement (Ningrum et al., 2025).

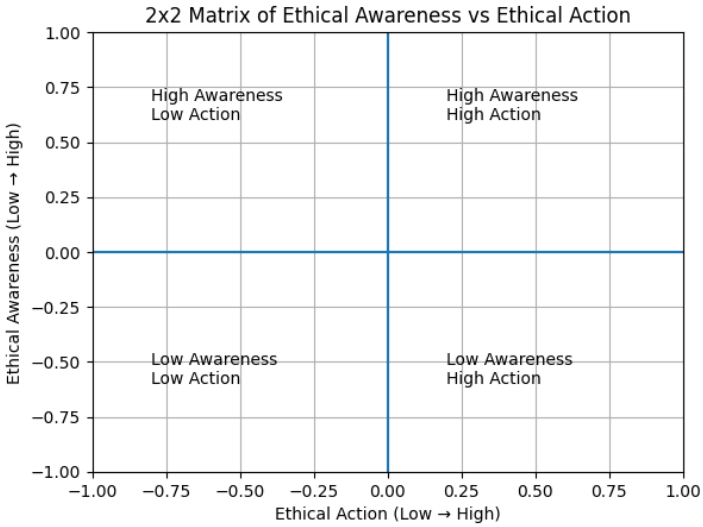


Figure 2. Matrix of Ethical Awareness and Ethical Action

The figure as shown in Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between employees' level of ethical awareness and their corresponding ethical actions, highlighting four distinct behavioral zones. The upper-right quadrant represents the ideal state, where high awareness is matched with high ethical action, indicating a strong ethical culture supported by internalized values and consistent behavior (Bahangulu & Owusu-Berko, 2025). In contrast, the upper-left quadrant reflects situations where employees understand ethical principles but fail to act accordingly, suggesting barriers such as fear, lack of accountability, or organizational pressure. The lower-right quadrant shows cases where employees act ethically without strong awareness, often due to rules or supervision, indicating compliance-driven rather than value-driven behavior (Chakkiath, 2025). The lower-left quadrant represents the most problematic zone, where both awareness and action are low, increasing the risk of misconduct. Overall, the matrix emphasizes that sustainable ethical behavior requires alignment between awareness and action, which can be effectively supported through continuous learning approaches such as microlearning.

From Compliance to Culture

The transition from compliance to culture represents a fundamental shift in how organizations approach ethics. Traditional compliance systems focus on enforcing rules and ensuring that employees meet minimum standards. While this approach is necessary, it often leads to a reactive mindset where employees act ethically only to avoid penalties (Jejeniwa et al., 2024). In contrast, a culture-driven approach emphasizes internalized values and shared responsibility for ethical behavior. Microlearning supports this transition by continuously reinforcing ethical principles and integrating them into daily work practices. Over time, employees begin to see ethics not as an obligation but as an integral part of their role. This shift encourages more authentic and consistent ethical behavior. As a result, organizations can move beyond compliance toward a more sustainable ethical culture (Ganesh, 2025).

Repetition and habit formation play a critical role in this transformation. Microlearning leverages the power of repetition to reinforce ethical concepts and behaviors over time. As employees repeatedly engage with ethical content, these behaviors become more automatic and ingrained. Habit formation ensures that ethical decision-making becomes a natural response rather than a conscious effort. Additionally, continuous reinforcement helps align individual behavior with organizational values (Araújo, 2022). This alignment strengthens the overall ethical climate and promotes consistency across the organization. Over time, ethical behavior becomes embedded in the organizational culture. This demonstrates that sustained learning is essential for transforming compliance into a deeply rooted ethical culture (Wattoo, 2025).

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CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that microlearning represents a significant advancement in the way organizations promote and sustain ethical workplace behavior. Unlike traditional compliance training, which often produces short-term awareness without lasting impact, microlearning provides continuous reinforcement that strengthens knowledge retention and behavioral consistency over time. The findings highlight that frequent, focused learning interventions help embed ethical principles into daily work practices, making them more relevant and actionable. By enhancing ethical awareness and reducing knowledge decay, microlearning enables employees to make more informed and responsible decisions. Additionally, the study shows that sustained engagement with ethical content contributes to reduced misconduct and increased accountability. These outcomes underscore the importance of shifting from episodic training models to continuous learning approaches. Ultimately, microlearning serves as a powerful tool for aligning employee behavior with organizational values.

From a broader perspective, the study emphasizes the transition from compliance-driven systems to culture-driven ethical environments. Microlearning supports this transformation by fostering habit formation and integrating ethical considerations into everyday decision-making. As employees repeatedly engage with ethical content, they move beyond rule-following toward internalizing organizational values. This shift not only enhances individual behavior but also strengthens the overall ethical climate of the organization. However, the effectiveness of microlearning depends on factors such as organizational support, leadership commitment, and the relevance of learning content. Future research should explore these moderating variables and examine how microlearning can be tailored to different organizational contexts. Additionally, further longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into long-term behavioral change. Overall, the findings suggest that organizations can achieve sustainable ethical behavior by embedding continuous learning into their culture.

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FROM COMPLIANCE TO CULTURE: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON THE EFFICACY OF MICROLEARNING IN SUSTAINING ETHICAL WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

The increasing complexity of organizational environments and heightened regulatory scrutiny have intensified the need for effective approaches to promoting ethical workplace behavior. Traditional compliance training programs, while essential for raising awareness, often fail to sustain long-term behavioral change due to their episodic and standardized nature. This study examines the efficacy of microlearning as a continuous learning approach in fostering sustained ethical behavior over time. Adopting a longitudinal research design, data were collected across multiple time points to assess changes in microlearning engagement, ethical awareness, and behavioral outcomes. The findings indicate that microlearning significantly enhances knowledge retention and reinforces ethical principles through repeated exposure. This continuous reinforcement leads to increased ethical awareness, reduced unethical behavior, and improved accountability among employees. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of microlearning in facilitating the transition from compliance-based systems to value-driven ethical cultures. By supporting habit formation and integrating learning into daily work routines, microlearning contributes to the development of sustained ethical behavior. The study offers both theoretical and practical insights into the role of continuous learning in organizational ethics. It concludes that microlearning is a critical tool for embedding ethical behavior within organizational culture and achieving long-term governance effectiveness.

Keywords: *Microlearning; ethical behavior; compliance training; organizational culture; longitudinal study*

INTRODUCTION

The rising importance of ethics, compliance, and corporate governance has become a central concern for modern organizations operating in increasingly complex and scrutinized environments. High-profile corporate scandals, regulatory changes, and heightened stakeholder expectations have placed ethical conduct at the forefront of organizational priorities (Chhuttani, 2024). Companies are now expected not only to comply with legal requirements but also to demonstrate integrity, transparency, and accountability in their operations. As a result, organizations have invested significantly in compliance programs designed to mitigate risks and ensure adherence to policies and regulations. These initiatives are often embedded within broader governance frameworks aimed at protecting organizational reputation and stakeholder trust (Alobaidi et al., 2025). However, maintaining ethical standards in dynamic and fast-paced work

environments remains a persistent challenge. This has led organizations to seek more effective ways to promote ethical behavior among employees.

Increasing regulatory scrutiny and reputational risks have further intensified the need for robust ethical frameworks within organizations. Governments and regulatory bodies are imposing stricter compliance requirements, while stakeholders, including customers and investors, are demanding higher levels of ethical accountability (Mosca & Greco, 2024). Failure to meet these expectations can result in severe financial penalties, legal consequences, and long-term damage to organizational reputation. In response, organizations have traditionally relied on compliance training programs to educate employees about rules, policies, and ethical guidelines. These programs are designed to ensure that employees understand acceptable behavior and the consequences of misconduct. However, the effectiveness of such approaches is often limited by their focus on rule-based compliance rather than values-driven behavior. This raises questions about their ability to foster genuine ethical commitment among employees (Weller, 2020).

A critical limitation of traditional compliance training is its inability to sustain ethical behavior over time. While these programs may increase awareness immediately after completion, their impact tends to diminish as employees return to their daily routines. The periodic and standardized nature of training often leads to low engagement and limited retention of key concepts (Apooyin, 2025). Employees may view compliance training as a mandatory requirement rather than an opportunity for meaningful learning. As a result, the knowledge gained during training does not always translate into consistent ethical decision-making. This gap between short-term awareness and long-term behavior represents a significant challenge for organizations. Without continuous reinforcement, ethical behavior remains situational rather than embedded in organizational culture (Stacchezzini et al., 2020).

In response to these challenges, this study aims to examine how microlearning can support the development of sustained ethical behavior over time. Microlearning offers a continuous and engaging approach to training, delivering content in short, focused segments that can be easily integrated into daily work routines. By reinforcing ethical principles regularly, microlearning has the potential to transform compliance from a one-time activity into an ongoing process. The study adopts a longitudinal perspective to explore how repeated exposure to microlearning influences ethical awareness and behavior. It also seeks to understand how this approach contributes to the development of an ethical culture within organizations. By shifting the focus from compliance to culture, the research provides new insights into effective learning strategies. Ultimately, the goal is to demonstrate how organizations can foster lasting ethical behavior through continuous and adaptive learning approaches.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethics and Compliance in Organizations

Ethics and compliance are fundamental components of organizational governance, ensuring that employees adhere to legal standards and moral principles in their conduct. Ethical behavior refers to actions that are consistent with accepted norms of right and wrong, including honesty, integrity, fairness, and accountability (Martin, 2021). In organizational contexts, ethical behavior guides decision-making, interactions, and the overall conduct of employees. Compliance, on the other hand, focuses on adherence to laws, regulations, and internal policies designed to prevent misconduct. Together, ethics and compliance create a framework that protects organizations from legal risks and reputational damage. However, while compliance establishes minimum standards, ethics encourages individuals to go beyond rules and act

responsibly in ambiguous situations. This distinction is critical for fostering a values-driven workplace (Ningrum et al., 2025).

The relationship between compliance and ethical culture is central to understanding organizational behavior. Compliance-based approaches tend to emphasize rule enforcement, monitoring, and penalties for violations. While necessary, this approach can create a checkbox mentality where employees focus on avoiding punishment rather than internalizing ethical values (Bahangulu & Owusu-Berko, 2025). In contrast, an ethical culture is built on shared values, trust, and a commitment to doing the right thing, even in the absence of formal rules. Organizations with strong ethical cultures encourage open communication, accountability, and moral reasoning. Such environments empower employees to make principled decisions and contribute to long-term organizational integrity (Chakkiath, 2025). Therefore, moving from compliance to culture is essential for sustaining ethical behavior.

Traditional Compliance Training

Traditional compliance training is typically characterized by periodic, formal, and standardized delivery methods. Organizations often conduct annual or semi-annual training sessions, either in-person or through online modules, to educate employees about policies, regulations, and ethical guidelines. These programs are designed to ensure that employees are aware of compliance requirements and understand the consequences of violations (Jejeniwa et al., 2024). Standardization allows organizations to deliver consistent content across large and diverse workforces. However, this approach often prioritizes efficiency and coverage over engagement and personalization. As a result, training may become routine and perceived as a mandatory obligation rather than a meaningful learning experience. Despite its widespread use, this model has limitations in achieving long-term behavioral change (Ganesh, 2025).

One of the primary limitations of traditional compliance training is its lack of sustained engagement and knowledge retention. Employees may complete training modules without fully internalizing the content, leading to superficial understanding. The infrequent nature of training sessions means that key concepts are not reinforced regularly, resulting in knowledge decay over time (Araújo, 2022). Additionally, standardized content may not address specific workplace scenarios or challenges, reducing its practical relevance. Employees may also experience cognitive overload during lengthy training sessions, further limiting retention. Consequently, traditional training often fails to translate knowledge into consistent ethical behavior. These limitations highlight the need for more dynamic and continuous learning approaches (Wattoo, 2025).

Microlearning

Microlearning is an innovative approach to training that delivers content in short, focused, and easily digestible segments. Unlike traditional training methods, microlearning emphasizes brevity and relevance, allowing employees to engage with content in small increments. These learning units are often delivered through digital platforms, such as mobile applications or online systems, enabling flexible and on-demand access. Microlearning is designed to fit into employees' daily workflows, making learning more convenient and less disruptive (Araújo, 2021). Its continuous nature ensures that key concepts are reinforced over time, supporting long-term retention. Additionally, microlearning often incorporates interactive elements, such as quizzes and scenarios, to enhance engagement. This approach aligns well with modern learning preferences and organizational needs (Manginte, 2024).

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The advantages of microlearning extend to improved knowledge retention and higher levels of employee engagement. By presenting information in manageable chunks, microlearning reduces cognitive overload and makes it easier for employees to absorb and recall information. Frequent repetition and reinforcement help strengthen memory and support the application of knowledge in real-world situations (Review, 2022). Moreover, the interactive and flexible nature of microlearning encourages active participation, increasing motivation and interest. Employees are more likely to engage with content that is relevant, accessible, and aligned with their work context. Over time, this sustained engagement can lead to the development of habits and behavioral change (Efunniyi et al., 2024). As a result, microlearning is particularly effective in promoting continuous learning and reinforcing ethical behavior in organizations.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a longitudinal research design to examine how microlearning influences ethical awareness and behavior over time. A multi-wave or repeated-measures approach is used to capture changes in employees' learning engagement and behavioral outcomes across different time periods. This design allows for a more robust analysis of causal relationships compared to cross-sectional studies, particularly in understanding how continuous learning affects sustained ethical behavior. The sample consists of employees drawn from multiple departments or organizations, ensuring diversity in roles, functions, and organizational contexts. Data collection is conducted at several intervals, enabling the tracking of both short-term and long-term effects of microlearning interventions. This approach provides insights into how ethical awareness evolves and how behavioral patterns are reinforced over time. By observing the same participants across multiple time points, the study captures dynamic changes rather than static snapshots.

The study measures key constructs using validated instruments, including microlearning engagement, ethical awareness, and behavioral outcomes. Microlearning engagement is assessed through participation frequency, interaction with content, and perceived usefulness. Ethical awareness is measured by employees' ability to recognize and evaluate ethical issues, while behavioral outcomes focus on observable actions such as decision-making, reporting behavior, and adherence to ethical standards. The analytical approach involves longitudinal techniques such as regression analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM), or growth modeling to examine relationships and trends over time. These methods allow for the identification of patterns, mediating effects, and long-term impacts of microlearning. However, the study has certain limitations, including time constraints that may restrict the number of data collection waves. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, as participants may overestimate their ethical behavior. Despite these limitations, the methodology provides a strong framework for understanding the sustained impact of microlearning on workplace ethics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Short-Term vs Long-Term Effects

The findings reveal a clear distinction between the short-term and long-term effects of learning interventions in promoting ethical behavior. Traditional compliance training tends to generate immediate improvements in knowledge and awareness, as employees are exposed to key policies and ethical guidelines in a concentrated format. This immediate learning effect is often reflected in improved test scores or short-term compliance with rules (Silva, 2023). However, these gains are typically not sustained over time, as employees gradually forget the information due to a lack of reinforcement. The episodic nature of traditional training contributes to this decline, as learning is not integrated into daily work

routines. Consequently, employees may struggle to recall or apply ethical principles when faced with real-world dilemmas. This highlights the limitation of relying solely on one-time training interventions (Silva, 2023).

In contrast, long-term retention is significantly enhanced through continuous learning approaches such as microlearning. By delivering content in small, repeated intervals, microlearning reinforces key concepts and strengthens memory over time (Silva, 2023). This repeated exposure helps employees retain information and apply it more effectively in their daily tasks. Over time, ethical knowledge becomes more deeply embedded, reducing the likelihood of knowledge decay. Additionally, continuous learning supports the transition from passive understanding to active application. Employees are more likely to internalize ethical principles when they are consistently reinforced (Ruchi Sharma, 2025). This demonstrates that sustained retention requires ongoing engagement rather than isolated training events.

Table 1. Matrix of Learning Effectiveness: Short-Term vs Long-Term Impact on Ethical Behavior

	Low Retention (Long-Term)	**High Retention (Long-Term)**
High Immediate Learning	Short-Term Compliance Focus	Sustained Ethical Learning
	- Traditional compliance training	- Microlearning interventions
	- Quick knowledge gains	- Reinforced knowledge over time
	- Low long-term application	- Strong long-term application
	- Knowledge decay	- Knowledge embedded in practice
Low Immediate Learning	Ineffective Learning	Gradual Development
	- Low engagement	- Slow but consistent improvement
	- Minimal awareness	- Continuous reinforcement
	- Poor behavior change	- Progressive internalization
	- No retention	- Building long-term habits

Table 1 illustrates the distinction between different learning approaches based on their immediate impact and long-term retention, highlighting the limitations of traditional compliance training and the advantages of microlearning. Traditional approaches are positioned in the high immediate learning but low retention quadrant, where employees quickly gain knowledge but fail to sustain it over time due to lack of reinforcement. In contrast, microlearning occupies the high immediate learning and high retention quadrant, demonstrating its ability to both enhance understanding and embed knowledge through continuous engagement (Anderson et al., 2024). The lower quadrants represent less effective learning scenarios, where either engagement or retention is insufficient to drive meaningful behavioral change. The matrix emphasizes that sustained ethical behavior depends not only on initial learning but also on ongoing reinforcement and application. It also highlights the importance of integrating learning into daily routines to prevent knowledge decay (Wickert et al., 2024). Overall, the table underscores the need for organizations to shift from episodic training models to continuous learning strategies to achieve long-term ethical outcomes.

Microlearning and Ethical Awareness

Microlearning plays a crucial role in enhancing ethical awareness by providing continuous reinforcement of ethical principles. Unlike traditional training methods, which are often delivered infrequently, microlearning ensures that employees are regularly exposed to ethical concepts and scenarios. This frequent engagement keeps ethical considerations at the forefront of employees' minds (Cseh & Crocco, 2020). Short, focused learning modules allow employees to quickly absorb and reflect on specific ethical issues relevant to their work. Over time, this repeated exposure strengthens their ability to recognize ethical dilemmas. Additionally, microlearning can be tailored to address real-world situations, making it more relevant and practical. As a result, employees develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of ethical behavior (Houdek, 2023).

The longitudinal findings suggest that ethical awareness increases progressively over time with sustained microlearning engagement. Employees become more adept at identifying ethical risks and evaluating the consequences of their actions. This heightened awareness contributes to more informed and responsible decision-making (Chhuttani, 2024). Furthermore, continuous learning fosters a mindset where ethical considerations are integrated into everyday work activities. Employees are not only aware of rules but also understand the underlying values and principles. This shift from surface-level awareness to deeper understanding is critical for long-term behavior change. Over time, ethical awareness becomes a habitual aspect of decision-making (Alobaidi et al., 2025). This demonstrates the effectiveness of microlearning in building sustained ethical consciousness.



Figure 1. Double Radar Chart of Microlearning vs Traditional Training in Enhancing Ethical Awareness

The chart as presented in Figure 1 clearly illustrates that microlearning consistently outperforms traditional training across all key dimensions of ethical awareness. Microlearning shows strong performance in areas such as ethical awareness, dilemma recognition, knowledge retention, and daily integration, reflecting its continuous and reinforcing nature (Mosca & Greco, 2024). In contrast, traditional training demonstrates moderate impact, particularly weaker in engagement frequency and long-term behavior consistency. The largest gaps appear in knowledge retention and daily integration, highlighting the limitations of episodic learning approaches. The overlap between the two approaches in basic awareness suggests that both methods can introduce ethical concepts, but only microlearning sustains and deepens

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understanding over time (Weller, 2020). Additionally, the strong performance of microlearning in engagement frequency reinforces its role in keeping ethics top-of-mind. Overall, the figure emphasizes that continuous, bite-sized learning is more effective in building sustained ethical awareness and embedding ethical thinking into everyday decision-making (Apooyin, 2025).

Impact on Ethical Behavior

The study finds that microlearning has a significant impact on reducing unethical behavior within organizations. As employees receive continuous reinforcement of ethical principles, they are more likely to adhere to organizational standards and avoid misconduct. The frequent exposure to ethical scenarios helps employees anticipate potential risks and respond appropriately (Apooyin, 2025). This proactive approach reduces the likelihood of unethical actions, such as policy violations or unethical decision-making. Additionally, microlearning encourages employees to reflect on their behavior and consider the ethical implications of their actions. Over time, this reflection contributes to more consistent and responsible behavior. The findings suggest that continuous learning plays a key role in shaping ethical conduct (Stacchezzini et al., 2020).

In addition to reducing unethical actions, microlearning also enhances accountability and reporting behaviors. Employees who are regularly engaged with ethical content are more likely to recognize and report unethical practices. This increased accountability strengthens organizational transparency and trust. Furthermore, microlearning can reinforce the importance of speaking up and provide guidance on how to report concerns (Martin, 2021). Over time, this creates an environment where ethical behavior is actively supported and reinforced. Employees feel more confident in addressing ethical issues, knowing that they are aligned with organizational values. This contributes to a culture of responsibility and integrity. Overall, microlearning not only prevents misconduct but also promotes proactive ethical engagement (Ningrum et al., 2025).

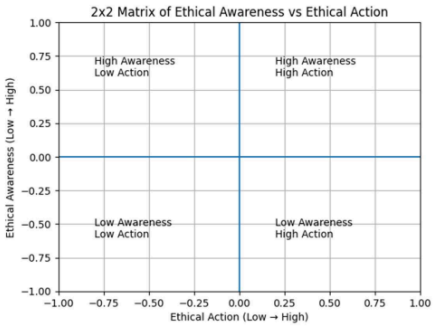


Figure 2. Matrix of Ethical Awareness and Ethical Action

The figure as shown in Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between employees' level of ethical awareness and their corresponding ethical actions, highlighting four distinct behavioral zones. The upper-right

quadrant represents the ideal state, where high awareness is matched with high ethical action, indicating a strong ethical culture supported by internalized values and consistent behavior (Bahangulu & Owusu-Berko, 2025). In contrast, the upper-left quadrant reflects situations where employees understand ethical principles but fail to act accordingly, suggesting barriers such as fear, lack of accountability, or organizational pressure. The lower-right quadrant shows cases where employees act ethically without strong awareness, often due to rules or supervision, indicating compliance-driven rather than value-driven behavior (Chakkiath, 2025). The lower-left quadrant represents the most problematic zone, where both awareness and action are low, increasing the risk of misconduct. Overall, the matrix emphasizes that sustainable ethical behavior requires alignment between awareness and action, which can be effectively supported through continuous learning approaches such as microlearning.

From Compliance to Culture

The transition from compliance to culture represents a fundamental shift in how organizations approach ethics. Traditional compliance systems focus on enforcing rules and ensuring that employees meet minimum standards. While this approach is necessary, it often leads to a reactive mindset where employees act ethically only to avoid penalties (Jejeniwa et al., 2024). In contrast, a culture-driven approach emphasizes internalized values and shared responsibility for ethical behavior. Microlearning supports this transition by continuously reinforcing ethical principles and integrating them into daily work practices. Over time, employees begin to see ethics not as an obligation but as an integral part of their role. This shift encourages more authentic and consistent ethical behavior. As a result, organizations can move beyond compliance toward a more sustainable ethical culture (Ganesh, 2025).

Repetition and habit formation play a critical role in this transformation. Microlearning leverages the power of repetition to reinforce ethical concepts and behaviors over time. As employees repeatedly engage with ethical content, these behaviors become more automatic and ingrained. Habit formation ensures that ethical decision-making becomes a natural response rather than a conscious effort. Additionally, continuous reinforcement helps align individual behavior with organizational values (Araújo, 2022). This alignment strengthens the overall ethical climate and promotes consistency across the organization. Over time, ethical behavior becomes embedded in the organizational culture. This demonstrates that sustained learning is essential for transforming compliance into a deeply rooted ethical culture (Wattoo, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that microlearning represents a significant advancement in the way organizations promote and sustain ethical workplace behavior. Unlike traditional compliance training, which often produces short-term awareness without lasting impact, microlearning provides continuous reinforcement that strengthens knowledge retention and behavioral consistency over time. The findings highlight that frequent, focused learning interventions help embed ethical principles into daily work practices, making them more relevant and actionable. By enhancing ethical awareness and reducing knowledge decay, microlearning enables employees to make more informed and responsible decisions. Additionally, the study shows that sustained engagement with ethical content contributes to reduced misconduct and increased accountability. These outcomes underscore the importance of shifting from episodic training models to continuous learning approaches. Ultimately, microlearning serves as a powerful tool for aligning employee behavior with organizational values.

From a broader perspective, the study emphasizes the transition from compliance-driven systems to culture-driven ethical environments. Microlearning supports this transformation by fostering habit formation and integrating ethical considerations into everyday decision-making. As employees repeatedly engage with ethical content, they move beyond rule-following toward internalizing organizational values. This shift not only enhances individual behavior but also strengthens the overall ethical climate of the organization. However, the effectiveness of microlearning depends on factors such as organizational support, leadership commitment, and the relevance of learning content. Future research should explore these moderating variables and examine how microlearning can be tailored to different organizational contexts. Additionally, further longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into long-term behavioral change. Overall, the findings suggest that organizations can achieve sustainable ethical behavior by embedding continuous learning into their culture.

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