PERCEIVED WORKPLACE FAIRNESS, ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, DEMOGRAPHICS, AND ETHICAL BEHAVIORS

Foluso Philip Adekanmbi [*], Wilfred Isioma Ukpere [**]

* Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, College of Business & Economics, University of Johannesburg, South Africa
** *Corresponding author,* Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, School of Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa
Contact details: University of Johannesburg, P. O. Box 524 Auckland Park 2006, Johannesburg, South Africa

OPEN ACCESS

Abstract

This investigation examines the impacts of perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics on ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service. A sample was taken from ten local government areas of Oyo State, Nigeria. However, this investigation has utilized a survey study approach, where the researcher randomly dispersed questionnaires. Out of 500 questionnaires distributed, 452 were suitable for research and analyzed with the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 27). This paper suggests that female civil servants exhibit more ethical behaviors than their male counterparts (Lu & Lu, 2010). Also, older civil servants with higher educational qualifications, who are also at the highest job level, exhibited more ethical behaviors. This paper further established that perceived workplace fairness and ethical leadership significantly and positively impact ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector (De Schrijver Delbeke, Maesschalck, & Pleysier, 2010; Meyer, Sison, & Ferrero, 2019). Therefore, state governments should ensure good and sufficient communication amongst workers and managers in identifying and tackling the unfairness between employees' dedications/contributions and their rewards. They should also always establish an employee-fairness policy that suggests treating employees equitably, inspiring increasing ethical behaviors. In addition, state governments and other public organizations should groom leaders that inspire and exemplify ethical behaviors.

Keywords: Equity, Learning, Reciprocity, Ethics, Civil Servants, Oyo State, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethics is considered rules and standards that serve as supervisory principles for work corporations such as public service corporations. Ethics ensures behavioral compliance from every member of an organization, while its negation incurs full fury of the law (Adebayo, 2014). In the public sector and administration, ethics is referred to as written codes of conduct to protect shared values, for instance, fairness, responsiveness, accountability, public interest, and many more (Casimir, Izueke, & Nzekwe, 2014). Work organizations, governments, and researchers have been on the spot attributable to ethical scandals in recent years (Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014; Al Halbusi, Tehseen, & Ramayah, 2017). Owing to ethical concerns and problems in organizations and public service, for instance, the Nigerian public service, scholars generally have perceived that individual who exhibits unethical behaviors tends to concentrate on their individual goals and needs at the expense of companies (Schaubroeck, Lam, & Cha, 2007; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). Ethics as a concept is advancing in the public service sector. This sector in Nigeria faces innumerable problems, such as laziness, corrupt practices, public-funds misappropriation, cold attitude to their co-workers and work (Ogundele, 2011; Adebayo, 2014).

In the modern sense, fairness consists of equity, moral appropriateness, honesty, and impartiality (Polanyi & Tompa, 2004). Colquitt and Rodell (2015) have noted fairness as a general insight on suitability. This paper will interchangeably use fairness and justice. Thus, justice has become essential for leaders, managers, and work organizations. In recent times, injustice and unfairness within work organizations have been recognized as an issue of concern among human resource management and organizational psychology scholars. Hence, fairness has become a resounding topic in employees' whole working lives (Colquitt & Zipay, 2015). It is expected that leaders show a high moral value about attitudes, actions, and decision-making. They are also likely to deliver a high ethical-behavior level (Al Halbusi et al., 2020a). Ethical leaders are seen as character models as they exhibit high ethical behaviors and integrity within the work organization (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Therefore, followers imitate and embrace ethical leaders' standards-driven behaviors (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Ethics issues remain the main challenges threatening Nigeria's public service sector, as unethical behavior has been differently displayed. For instance, corruption and the lack of responsibility have been pervasively exhibited within Nigeria's public service sector (Beetseh & Kohol, 2013). Also, a few unethical behaviors such as bribery, fraud, nepotism, extortion, influence peddling, and embezzlement long existed within Nigeria's public service (Iyanda, 2012). The behaviors mentioned above seem to have been traditional within Nigeria's public service sector because they appear normal and acceptable to several citizens and civil servants (Fatile, 2013).

Within the current digital era, a few concerns are the issues of perceived workplace fairness and ethics. Gunz and Thorne (2020) indicated a concern about ethical considerations in the workplace, which is now known as a responsibility gap, which is the degree to which technology adoption leads to the abandonment of ethical obligation for the consequences of decisions by real people. Hence, the questions of how and to what degree technology impacts ethical behaviors of public servants must be vital. Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that workplace fairness justice significantly impacts employees' ethical perceptions and behaviors (Goergen, Pauli, Cerutti, & Perin, 2018).

Notably, minimal studies have been conducted to reduce unethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector (Iyanda, 2012) by investigating predictors such as perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics. Therefore, this investigation aims to add to the literature by looking into the impacts of perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics on ethical behaviors to suggest a helpful and pragmatic model to significantly encourage and increase ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector in the current digital era. To achieve the stated aim, the following research questions are germane to this investigation:

RQ1: Is there a significant impact of perceived workplace fairness on ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector?

RQ2: Does ethical leadership significantly influence ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector?

RQ3: Is there a significant effect of workers' demographics on ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector?

RQ4: Will perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics significantly and jointly influence ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector?

Furthermore, the current investigation applied the equity theory, social exchange theory, and social learning theory in investigating the influence of perceived workplace fairness and ethical leadership on ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector. However, the findings of this investigation are significant for the management of Nigeria's public service sector. It would help the state government in Nigeria in the different precise approaches to guarantee a noteworthy increase in the adoption and exhibition of ethical behaviors, increased perceived workplace fairness, and adoption of ethical leadership. Taking such a step would significantly help improve ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector.

Moreover, the current research adopted a cross-sectional survey approach. Questionnaires were handed out to participants to get their views on workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and ethical behaviors in their public service centers in ten local government areas of study. Survey forms were given to 500 civil servants, and data retrieved were analyzed and shown in tables. Nonetheless, the results of this paper indicated that female civil servants exhibit more ethical behaviors than their male counterparts within Nigeria's public service sector. Also, older civil servants with higher educational qualifications, who are also at the highest job level, exhibited more ethical behaviors. Furthermore, the current investigation

further established that perceived workplace fairness and ethical leadership significantly and positively impacted ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 analyses the methodology that has been used to conduct empirical research on the impacts of perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics on ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service. Section 4 provides the results of the paper. Section 5 discusses the obtained results. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The theories of perceived workplace fairness and ethical leadership

The fundamental focus of equity theory is on reward, thus, the purpose for fairness or unfairness in various circumstances within work organizations (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). The position of the equity theory is that employees compare their rewards with other employees in equivalent positions. Hence, employees feel motivated and satisfied at the notice or perception of fairness, justice, and equity, resulting in positive behaviors (Aswathappa, 2008). It has been generally noticed that employees are delighted at the feeling of some considerable measure of compensation or reward for their work efforts and contributions. So, suppose such employees perceive any form of injustice or unfairness in the reward they get from their organizations compared to their contributions. In that case, they express some dissatisfaction and eventually become hostile towards their organizations to reduce job satisfaction, lack motivation, and increase unethical behaviors (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). However, fairness is multidimensional as it involves perception. Therefore, employees are happy and satisfied when they perceive that their inputs are equally rewarded with outputs and are better inspired to discharge their duties more ethically and positively. However, when they perceive a mismatch between their inputs and the outcomes or reward, they become demotivated and more likely to exhibit unethical behaviors (Schultz & Schultz, 2010).

In explaining ethical leadership and its effects on organizational and employee behaviors, Brown and Treviño (2006) have reinforced two theories, namely the social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964) and the social learning theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1986).

The SET suggests that the rules of exchange or reciprocity determine several social relationships (Blau, 1964). Going by the SET, when followers or workers identify their leader as ethical and cares for their welfare and happiness, they get more inclined or inspired to be more devoted to exchanging such gifts with positive and ethical behaviors. In keeping with this position, the current research proposes that ethical leaders stimulate their followers' perception of equity and trust, making their subordinates reciprocate with positive and ethical behavior (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Furthermore, the SLT emphasizes the previous circumstances and results of ethical guidance. It proposes that people study the rules of proper behavior in two ways: through observing other people and personal experience (Bandura, 1986). Individuals primarily focus on and consider role models or reliable leaders (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders are seen as character models as they show excellent ethical behavior standards and integrity within work organizations (Brown et al., 2005). Consequently, followers imitate their ethical leader (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Hence, ethical leaders inspire ethical and appropriate behaviors within their followers. Therefore, this current investigation has adopted these two theories in investigating the impact of ethical leadership on workers' ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector.

2.2. The predictors of ethical behaviors

In organizational psychology, employees' perception of workplace fairness remains pertinent (Fujishiro, 2005). Kivimäki, Vahtera, Elovainio, Lillrank, and Kevin (2002) have proposed that perceived justice/fairness notably affects absenteeism attributable to ailment. Besides, Adekanmbi and Ukpere (2020) have indicated a significant influence of perceived workplace fairness on unethical behavior such as absenteeism among civil servants. De Schrijver et al. (2010) noted that participants within the public sector indicated a positive perception of workplace fairness and reported high ethical behaviors against those who stated a negative perception of workplace fairness. Some empirical investigations show that employees' positive perceptions of justice in their work make them less likely to pursue unethical behaviors (Chiu & Peng, 2008; Demir & Tütüncü, 2010). Similarly, Demir (2011) posited that perceived workplace fairness significantly reduces employees' unethical behaviors. Essien and Ogunola (2020) noted how important it is for Nigerian organizations to increase their workers' perceived workplace fairness, whether public, religious, private, non-governmental, among others. As much as organizations stand for what they stand for, they tend to identify more with such organizations, leading them to exhibit several positive work behaviors. Hence, to test the impact of perceived workplace fairness on ethical behaviors among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector, the current investigation proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Perceived workplace fairness significantly impacts ethical behavior among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector.

Investigations have indicated that ethical leadership significantly influences followers (Lu & Lin, 2014; Demetriou, Thrassou, & Papasolomou, 2018). Hence, ethical leaders have constructive individual attitudes and actively exhibit ethical conduct, influencing their followers or employees within work organizations (Meyer et al., 2019; Presbitero & Teng-Calleja, 2019). Ethical leadership focuses on building trust and fairness between leaders and their followers or the employees within work organizations. Hence, as employees perceive fair treatment by their managers, they conclude that such behavior towards them has excellent advantages to the entire organization. Consequently, it is unlikely that employees exhibit unethical

behaviors (Treviño et al., 2014). Leaders are an essential organizational component with a significant impact on followers' or employees' ethical behaviors. Recently, scholars have noted the influence of ethical leadership on employee ethical behaviors within work organizations (Neves, Almeida, & Velez, 2018; Al Halbusi et al., 2020b). Furthermore, investigations have indicated that ethical leadership significantly impacts employee ethical behavior (Brown et al., 2005; Toor & Ofori, 2009). Lin, Liu, Chiu, Chen, and Lin (2019) posited that ethical leaders' focus is on transactional efforts impacting the workers' ethical behavior. Also, investigations have noted the crucial role of ethical leaders in affecting employees' ethical behavior by their everyday communication with their subordinates. Hence, workers' behavior may change due to their leaders' guidance, fairness, and standards in the work organization (Lu & Lin, 2014; Neves et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2019). A study has established that ethical leadership reduces employees' tendency to exhibit unethical behavior (Moore et al., 2019). Also, Al Halbusi, Williams, Ramayah, Aldieri, and Vinci (2020b) indicated that ethical leadership impacts employees' ethical behavior. They further noted that the more an organization upholds an ethical leadership style, the more its employees behave ethically. The above-stated position, therefore, inspires the following hypothesis.

H2: Ethical leadership significantly affects ethical behavior among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector.

Swaidan, Vitell, and Rawwas (2003) showed that age significantly impacts ethical behaviors. They further argued that older participants tend to be more ethical. Also, Lindblom and Lindblom (2016) opined that age significantly predicts workers' ethical behavior. However, Lokman, Talib, Ahmad, and Jawan (2018) opined that age does not considerably affect ethical behavior. Concerning marital status, Swaidan et al. (2003) found a significant influence on ethical behavior. They further noted that married participants reject unethical behaviors more than their single counterparts. Besides, Auger, Burke, Devinney, and Louviere (2003) indicated that married employees are more likely to behave ethically than their single counterparts. On the other hand, Doran (2009) found no relationship between marital status and ethical behavior.

Furthermore, Ross and Robertson (2003) found that gender significantly impacts workers' ethical behaviors in their study. They further noted that women are more ethical than men, supporting Alatas, Cameron, Chaudhuri, Erkal, and Gangadharan (2009) finding that women are less tolerant of corruption. Lindblom and Lindblom (2016) opined that gender is a factor that significantly impacts ethical behavior. In a similar vein, Lu and Lu (2010) indicated that females tend to be more ethical than males. In contrast, Keller, Smith, and Smith (2007) revealed no significant difference between genders impacting ethical behavior. In addition, Lokman et al. (2018) indicated no significant difference in male and female ethical behavior, as they both have approximately equal predispositions to behave ethically and unethically. Also, Bell et al. (2011) found religion a significant

predictor of ethical behavior. Moreover, Swaidan, Cloninger, and Nica (2006) noted that education level significantly predicts ethical behavior. They further indicated that individuals with advanced levels of education would be less prone to exhibiting unethical behaviors than their counterparts with lower levels of education. In contrast, Jonck, van der Walt, and Sobayeni (2019) indicated that the highest academic qualification did not significantly influence ethical behavior. Yamin (2020) noted that demographics, such as age, work experience, and gender, significantly and positively influence ethical behavior. In their study, Jonck et al. (2019) found that only gender and job tenure significantly impacted ethical behavior out of the demographics under investigation. Also, Bolman and Deal (2017), as stated by Grigoropoulos (2019), indicated that age and level of education significantly impact ethical behaviors. They further posited that the younger and the less educated the individual is, the higher they tend to make wrong choices or exhibit unethical behaviors. Going by previous research about the impacts of workers' demographics on ethical behaviors, a hypothesis about ethical behavior in Nigeria's public service is proposed below:

H3: Workers' demographics significantly impact ethical behaviors among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector.

In addition, the above literature review prompted the hypothesis stated below:

H4: There is a joint influence of perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics on ethical behavior among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This investigation could be conducted with a quantitative or mixed method. A qualitative method collects, analyzes, and interprets non-numerical data, while a mixed-method combines qualitative and quantitative methods into one study. However, the current research adopted a cross-sectional survey approach. Survey forms were handed out to participants to test the current research hypotheses and collect data about their views on workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and ethical behaviors in their public service centers in the local government areas of study. Survey forms were given to 500 civil servants from ten local government areas (Lagelu, Olorunsogo, Oyo West, Ibadan North, Ido, Ibarapa East, Akinyele, Atiba, Oluyole, Ibadan South-West) of Oyo State. Data retrieved were analyzed and shown in tables. However, this investigation put the ethical matters associated with measuring, gathering, and keeping private data into consideration. Therefore, intentional participation was stimulated. Altogether, 452 questionnaires were recovered and deemed suitable to use. The retrieved data was cleansed and analyzed with the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 27), and the current study conducted reliability analyses in achieving the measuring scale's local reliability.

This paper's survey form has the following segments (see Appendix):

Section A: Workers' demographics. This segment has the participants' demographics, for example,

gender, age, religion, marital status, education qualification, and job level.

Section B: Perceived workplace fairness scale (POFS). This part of the questionnaire had a 14-item measuring instrument modified from Donovan, Drasgow, and Munson (1998) to quantify the perceived workplace justice amongst public workers. This instrument has a Yes/No response format, and the authors noted a 0.76 Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient score. Nonetheless, the present study has reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.88.

Section C: Ethical leadership scale (ELS). This section measures the participants' perception of ethical leadership within their work organizations; through an ethical leadership-measuring instrument developed by Brown et al. (2005). This measuring tool has 10 items and a 5-point Likert response format, reaching "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree". The instrument developer indicated a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.95, and in this paper, a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.92 was achieved.

Section D: Ethical behavior scale (EBS). This paper measured workers' perceived ethical behaviors within their work organizations using a 16-item measuring scale modified from a prior study (Lu & Lin, 2014). This scale has two proportions, namely, judicial and normative ethical behaviors. Items one to ten measure the normative ethical behaviors, while eleven to sixteen measure the judicial ethical behaviors. This scale has a 5-point Likert response format. Lu and Lin (2014)

stated that the judicial dimension had a 0.89 reliability coefficient while the normative dimension reported a 0.94 reliability coefficient. However, in the current research, the reliability coefficient of the judicial measurement is 0.85, while the normative dimension is 0.88.

However, the current research floated a pilot study in detecting any possible difficulties in advance to authenticate the scale's effectiveness.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 below indicates that 236 of the participants were male, while 216 participants were female. In addition, the dispersal of participants by age group meant that more participants were between 35–49 years old (253; 56.0%) after that, participants who were 20–34 years old (128; 28.3%), and participants at the age of 50 years old and above (71; 15.7%). Furthermore, the findings revealed that 208 respondents were single, 207 were married, and 37 were divorced. Also, Table 1 showed that 100 (22.1%) respondents were Ordinary National Diploma holders, 197 (43.6%) participants were Higher National Diploma holders, 92 (20.4%) were Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Science licensed, and 63 (13.9%) were Master of Education/Master of Science holders. The current results added that 101 participants were on job level 6, 279 — level 7-9, and 72 — level 10 and above.

Table 1. Demographic variables

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	236	52.2
	Female	216	47.8
	Total	**452**	**100.0**
Age	20–34	128	28.3
	35–49	253	56.0
	50 and above	71	15.7
	Total	**452**	**100.0**
Marital status	Single	208	46.0
	Married	207	45.8
	Divorced	37	8.2
	Total	**399**	**100.0**
Religion	Islam	144	31.9
	Christianity	290	64.2
	Others	18	4.0
	Total	**452**	**100.0**
Educational qualification	Ordinary National Diploma	100	22.1
	Higher National Diploma	197	43.6
	Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Science	92	20.4
	Master of Education/Master of Science	63	13.9
	Total	**452**	**100.0**
Job level	Level 6	101	22.3
	Level 7–9	279	61.7
	Level 10 and above	72	15.9
	Total	**452**	**100.0**

Source: Authors' fact-finding.

4.2. Inferential statistics

Table 2 showed that perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics (marital status, age, gender, educational qualification, religion, and job level) significantly and jointly impact civil servants' ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector (R = 0.982, R² = 0.964, F = 1489.991, p < 0.01). The p-value is

sufficient. These findings showed that perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics significantly and jointly impacted a 98.2% variance in ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector. Thus, the hypothesis (*H4*) is confirmed that there is a joint influence of perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics on ethical behavior among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector.

Table 2. Multiple regressions presenting the joint impact of the predictors on ethical behaviors

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	F	Sig.
1	0.982ᵃ	0.964	0.964	1489.991	0.000ᵇ

Notes: ᵃ indicates the regression value of the predictors: (Constant), ethical leadership, job level, educational qualification, religion, gender, age, marital status, perceived workplace fairness. ᵇ indicates the level of significance.

Moreover, the model shown in Table 3, stipulates that outside the workers' demographics (for example, marital status, age, gender, religion, educational qualification, and job level) tested, only gender, age, educational qualification, and job level significantly impact the variance in ethical behavior at $\beta = 0.026$, t = 2.639; p < 0.01; $\beta = -0.029$, t = -2.928; p < 0.01; $\beta = 0.022$, t = 2.349; p < 0.01, $\beta = 0.022$, t = 2.271; p < 0.01, respectively. The p-value is adequate. These results suggest that gender contributed about 2.6%, age 2.9%, educational qualification 2.2%, and job level 2.2% variance in ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector. The negative relationship shows that civil servants' ethical behavior decreases with older age. On the other hand, the positive relationship indicates that civil servants' ethical behavior increases with gender, educational qualification, and job level. Therefore, the hypothesis (*H3*) that workers' demographics significantly impact ethical behaviors among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector is confirmed.

Furthermore, Table 3 stipulates that perceived workplace fairness significantly and positively impacts civil servants' ethical behavior change within Nigeria's public service sector at $\beta = 0.640$, t = 17.867; p < 0.01. The p-value is adequate. Thus, this paper shows that perceived workplace fairness contributed about 64% influence on variance in civil servants' ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector. Similarly, the current results indicate that ethical leadership significantly and positively impacts the variance in civil servants' ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector at $\beta = 0.339$, t = 9.674; p < 0.01. The p-value is sufficient. Therefore, this paper suggests that ethical leadership contributed about 33.9% influence on the change in civil servants' ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector. In addition, as stated above, the positive relationships show that workers' ethical behaviors increase with their perceived level of workplace fairness and ethical leadership adoption level. Thus, the stated hypotheses (*H1* and *H2*), namely, perceived workplace fairness significantly impacts ethical behavior among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector, and ethical leadership has a significant effect on civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector, are confirmed.

Table 3. Coefficients

Influencers	B	β	t	Sig.	95.0% confidence interval for B		R	R²	F (8,443)	p
					Lower bound	Upper bound				
(Constant)	-18.516		-14.625	0.000	-21.004	-16.028				
Gender	0.517	0.026	2.639	0.009	0.132	0.902				
Marital status	0.221	0.014	1.343	0.180	-0.102	0.544				
Age	-0.451	-0.029	-2.928	0.004	-0.754	-0.148				
Religion	0.009	0.000	0.043	0.965	-0.384	0.402	0.982	0.964	1489.991	<0.01
Job level	0.368	0.022	2.271	0.024	0.049	0.686				
Educational qualification	0.231	0.022	2.349	0.019	0.038	0.425				
Perceived workplace fairness	2.284	0.640	17.867	0.000	2.032	2.535				
Ethical leadership	0.500	0.339	9.674	0.000	0.398	0.601				

Notes: Dependent variable: Employees' ethical behavior.

Table 4 shows that gender difference notably impacts ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector. The change in score between male civil servants and female civil servants is t (450) = -5.304, p < 0.05, two-tailed with the female public workers (M = 34.47, SD = 10.98) recording higher mean than male public workers (M = 29.54, SD = 8.51). These results further suggest that female civil servants in Nigeria's public service sector significantly exhibit more ethical behavior (M = 34.47) than their male counterparts (M = 29.54). Thus, gender significantly impacts ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector.

Table 4. Summary of the t-test analysis showing the impact of gender on ethical behavior

Dependent variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Employees' ethical behavior	Male	236	29.5424	8.51246	450	-5.304	<0.05
	Female	216	34.4769	10.98241			

Table 5 below shows the results of a one-way between-groups ANOVA, which was carried out to examine the impacts of age, educational qualification, and job level on ethical behavior. The investigation's participants were split into three groups according to their age (20–34, 35–49, and 50 and above), and a significant variance at the p < 0.05 level in ethical behavior occurred amongst the three age groups: F (2, 451) = 10.102, p < 0.05. Also, Table 5 indicates that respondents were split into four groups of academic qualification (Ordinary National Diploma, Higher National Diploma, Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Science, and Master of Education/Master of Science). A significant

change at the $p < 0.05$ level in ethical behavior occurred amongst the four academic qualification groups: $F(3, 451) = 20.196$, $p < 0.05$. Furthermore, Table 5 shows that respondents were also split into three groups according to their job level (level 6, level 7–9, and level 10 and above), and a significant variance at the $p < 0.05$ level in ethical behavior occurred amongst the three job level groups: $F(2, 451) = 6.878$, $p < 0.05$.

Table 5. One-way ANOVA (age, educational qualification, and job levels)

Dependent variable: Employees' ethical behavior					
Age groups					
	Sum of squares	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between groups	1968.073	2	984.037	10.102	0.000
Within groups	43738.447	449	97.413		
Total	45706.520	451			
Educational qualification groups					
	Sum of squares	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between groups	5444.936	3	1814.979	20.196	0.000
Within groups	40261.584	448	89.870		
Total	45706.520	451			
Job level groups					
	Sum of squares	*df*	*Mean square*	*F*	*Sig.*
Between groups	1358.717	2	679.359	6.878	0.001
Within groups	44347.803	449	98.770		
Total	45706.520	451			

By carrying out a post-hoc assessments test, Table 6 substantiates a significant variance amongst the mean scores of the age group of 20–34 ($M = 33.47$, $SD = 9.38$), the age group of 35–49 ($M = 32.42$, $SD = 10.57$), and the age group of 50 and above ($M = 27.18$, $SD = 7.91$). Table 6 also establishes a substantial variance between the mean scores of the educational qualification group of Ordinary National Diploma holders ($M = 34.22$, $SD = 8.60$), the educational qualification group of Higher National Diploma holders ($M = 29.34$, $SD = 9.50$), and the group of civil servants with Master of Education/Master of Science ($M = 39.09$, $SD = 10.15$). Nevertheless, no significant variance exits between the mean scores of the group of Higher National Diploma holders ($M = 29.34$, $SD = 9.50$) and the group of civil servants with Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Science ($M = 29.92$, $SD = 9.86$). Furthermore, Table 6 confirms a noteworthy variance amongst the mean scores of the job level group of civil servant at level 6 ($M = 33.23$, $SD = 9.60$), the group of civil servant between level 7–9 ($M = 30.60$, $SD = 9.77$), and the group of civil servants on level 10 and above ($M = 35.04$, $SD = 10.99$).

Therefore, the current results suggest that the group of 50 and above ($M = 27.18$, $SD = 7.91$) of the age groups are more likely to exhibit consistent ethical behavior than other age groups within Nigeria's public service sector. This is because initial results indicated a negative impact of age on ethical behavior ($\beta = -0.029$, $t = -2.928$); hence, the group with the lowest mean score would exhibit more ethical behavior. Also, the results suggest that the group of civil servants with Master of Education/Master of Science ($M = 39.09$, $SD = 10.15$), which has the highest mean score amongst the educational qualification groups, will exhibit more ethical behavior than other groups. The same goes for the job level groups where the group of civil servants on level 10 and above ($M = 35.04$, $SD = 10.99$) shows more likelihood of displaying more ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector, as it has the highest mean score amongst other groups.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics

Dependent variable: Employees' ethical behavior								
	N	*Mean*	*SD*	*Std. Err.*	*95% confidence interval for mean*		*Minimum*	*Maximum*
					Lower bound	*Upper bound*		
Age groups								
20–34	128	33.4766	9.38919	0.82990	31.8343	35.1188	20.00	48.00
35–49	253	32.4269	10.57136	0.66462	31.1180	33.7358	19.00	56.00
50 and above	71	27.1831	7.91077	0.93884	25.3106	29.0555	19.00	44.00
Total	452	31.9004	10.06702	0.47351	30.9699	32.8310	19.00	56.00
Educational qualification groups								
Ordinary National Diploma	100	34.2200	8.60535	0.86054	32.5125	35.9275	23.00	50.00
Higher National Diploma	197	29.3452	9.50041	0.67688	28.0103	30.6801	19.00	56.00
Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Science	92	29.9239	9.86194	1.02818	27.8816	31.9663	19.00	46.00
Master of Education/Master of Science	63	39.0952	10.15162	1.27898	36.5386	41.6519	23.00	54.00
Total	452	31.9004	10.06702	0.47351	30.9699	32.8310	19.00	56.00
Job level groups								
Level 6	101	33.2376	9.60432	0.95567	31.3416	35.1336	22.00	48.00
Level 7–9	279	30.6057	9.77087	0.58497	29.4542	31.7573	19.00	56.00
Level 10 and above	72	35.0417	10.99480	1.29575	32.4580	37.6253	19.00	54.00
Total	452	31.9004	10.06702	0.47351	30.9699	32.8310	19.00	56.00

5. DISCUSSION

The current findings showed that perceived workplace fairness significantly and positively impacts ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector. This position infers that the more fairness civil servants perceive within Nigeria's public service sector, the more ethical they become. As earlier elucidated, the role of the equity theory is that employees compare their rewards with other employees in equivalent positions. Hence, employees feel motivated and satisfied at the notice or perception of fairness, justice, and equity, resulting in positive behaviors (Aswathappa, 2008). The fundamental focus of equity theory is on return or reward; therefore, the purpose for fairness or unfairness in various circumstances within work organizations (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). Thus, this paper corroborates the view of the equity theory regarding the impact of perceived workplace justice on ethical behavior. This paper validates Adekanmbi and Ukpere's (2020) work, which has indicated a significant effect of reduced perceived workplace fairness on unethical behavior such as absenteeism among civil servants. It also supports De Schrijver et al.'s (2010) view that public service participants indicated a positive perception of workplace fairness and reported high ethical behaviors against those who noted a negative perception of workplace fairness. The current results also corroborate Demir and Tutuncu's (2010) study, which shows that employees' positive perceptions of justice in their workplace make them less likely to pursue unethical behaviors. The results also support Demir's (2011) position that perceived workplace fairness reduces unethical behaviors.

In addition, the current findings have established that ethical leadership significantly and positively influences ethical behaviors among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector. This position implies that civil servants are more ethical when their managers/leaders adopt and often exhibit ethical leadership within Nigeria's public service sector. As earlier noted, the SET proposes that when followers or workers sense their leader as ethical and cares for their welfare and happiness, they get more inclined or inspired to be more devoted to exchanging such gifts with positive and ethical behaviors. In keeping with this position, ethical leaders inspire their followers' feelings of justice and trust, making them reciprocate with positive and ethical behavior (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviňo, 2006). Also, as earlier indicated, the SLT emphasizes the previous circumstances and results of ethical leadership. It proposes that people study the rules of proper behavior in two traditions: by observing other people and through personal experience (Bandura, 1986). Individuals commonly focus on and consider role models or reliable leaders (Brown & Treviňo, 2006). Ethical leaders are seen as character models as they show excellent ethical behavior and integrity within the organization (Brown et al., 2005). Consequently, followers imitate and assume their ethical leader

(Brown & Treviňo, 2006). Hence, ethical leaders inspire ethical and appropriate behaviors within their followers. This paper, thus, validates the positions of the SET and SLT regarding the impact of perceived workplace fairness on ethical behavior.

Furthermore, the current results support Meyer et al. (2019) and Presbitero and Teng-Calleja (2019), which opine those ethical leaders, have constructive individual attitudes and actively exhibit ethical conduct, influencing their followers or employees within work organizations. The current results also support Toor and Ofori's (2009) that ethical leadership notably impacts employees' ethical behavior. The present findings also confirm Lin et al.'s (2019) view that ethical leaders focus on transactional efforts affecting the workers' ethical behavior.

Moreover, this paper posits that the gender of the civil servants significantly and positively impacts their ethical behaviors with Nigeria's public service sector. Thus, female workers exhibit ethical behaviors more than their male counterparts. Also, the current findings suggest that the age of civil servants significantly and negatively influences their ethical behavior within Nigeria's public service sector. Hence, the older the workers are within Nigeria's public service sector, they exhibit more ethical behaviors. Besides, this paper reports that workers' educational qualification and job level within Nigeria's public service sector significantly and positively impact their ethical behaviors. Thus, the higher their academic qualifications and job level, the more ethical they become. This paper, hence, confirms the position of Lindblom and Lindblom (2016), who opined that gender is a factor that significantly impacts ethical behavior. It also corroborates the view of Lu and Lu (2010), who indicated that females tend to be more ethical than males. However, this paper could not support Keller et al. (2007) and Lokman et al. (2018). They revealed no significant difference between genders impacting ethical behavior, indicating no significant difference in male and female ethical behavior, as they both have approximately equal predispositions to behave ethically and unethically. This paper further corroborates Lindblom and Lindblom (2016), who opined that age significantly predicts workers' ethical behavior. It also confirms Swaidan et al. (2006), which states that education level significantly indicates ethical behavior. Individuals with higher education levels would be less likely to exhibit unethical behaviors than their counterparts with lower levels of education. It, however, could not confirm the position of Jonck et al. (2019), which indicated that the highest academic qualification did not significantly influence ethical behavior.

Going by the current results, this paper has achieved the study's aim: to suggest a helpful and pragmatic model to significantly encourage and increase ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector. Hence, the model is presented in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Empirical model of achieving and sustaining ethical behaviors among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector
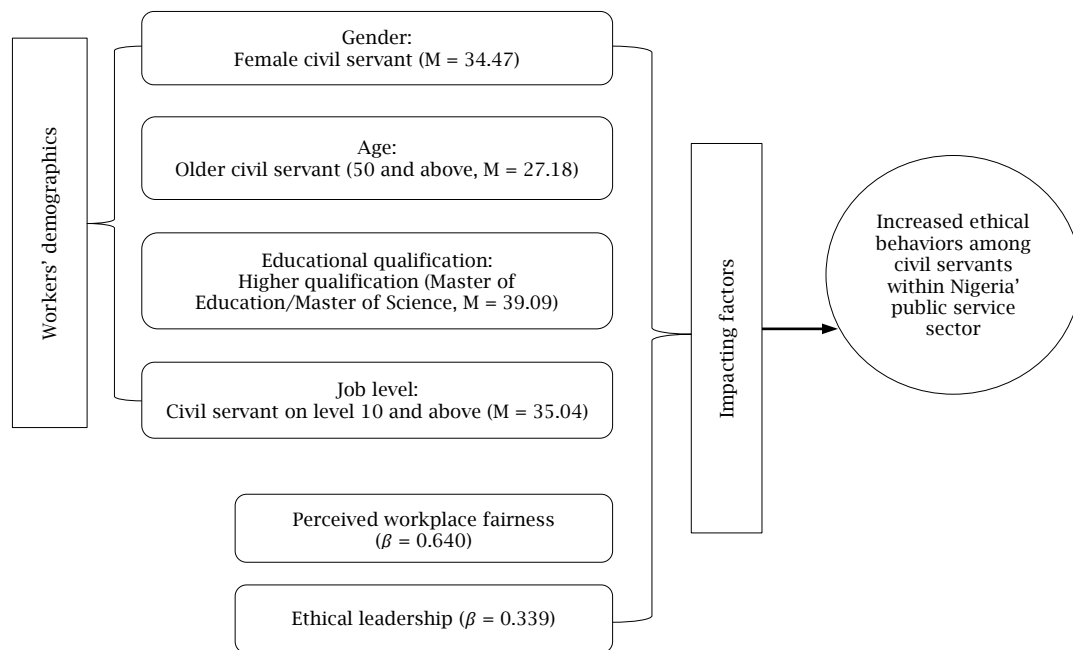
Source: Authors' findings.

6. CONCLUSION

The current investigation concludes that ethical leadership, perceived workplace fairness, and workers' demographics account for significant variance in ethical behaviors among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector. Therefore, these stated factors have been established as predictors of ethical behaviors among public workers within Nigeria's public service sector. Furthermore, the current investigation concludes that demographic factor (gender) significantly impacts the civil servants' ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector. It concludes that female government workers exhibit more ethical behaviors than their male counterparts. Also, the current study concludes that demographic factor (age) significantly and negatively influences ethical behaviors among civil servants within Nigeria's public service sector. Older workers engage in ethical behaviors more than their younger counterparts. Moreover, this paper concludes that educational qualification and job level significantly and positively impact civil servants' ethical behaviors within Nigeria's public service sector. Civil servants with higher academic qualifications and on a higher job level will exhibit ethical behaviors more than their co-workers who have lower educational qualifications, which are on a lower job level. This paper has contributed meaningfully to leadership roles in looking into organizational matters, for example, attaining a notable increase in ethical behaviors within the public service sector of a developing economy. Therefore, the subsequent suggestions are helpful.

The current investigation suggests that the state governments should ensure good and sufficient communication amongst workers and managers to identify and tackle the unfairness between employees' dedications/contributions and their rewards. The above suggestion could be attained by observing regular surveys of employees' worries, which helps to guarantee suitable interventions. Also, the government needs constantly to establish an employee-fairness rule that suggests how employees are to be treated equitably, thereby inspiring an essential rise in ethical behaviors. Supervisors who show ethical leadership abilities such as honesty and justice, highlight ethical values, support and compensate ethical employees, and become models of ethical behavior tend to encourage ethical behaviors amongst their followers and workers. Hence, this paper recommends that state governments and other public organizations groom leaders who inspire and exemplify ethical behaviors. Furthermore, for further study, this paper suggests a qualitative empirical study to achieve a clearer understanding of the perceptions and feelings of the public service workers on the subject matter. Such in-depth qualitative inquiry could divulge issues that would enable a more detailed operationalization of the concepts linked to workers' ethics.

Moreover, this paper is with some limitations. Firstly, the current sample was restricted to the public service workers across local government areas of Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, a future investigation should look into employees in other states and sectors of Nigeria. This will ensure the generalizability of the findings. Second, the current research adopted a cross-sectional survey design.

REFERENCES

1. Adebayo, A. O. (2014). Ethics towards secure computing environment. *Journal of Computer Science, 1*(2), 1–7. Retrieved from http://www.researchjournali.com/view.php?id=511
2. Adekanmbi, F. P., & Ukpere, W. I. (2020). Individual substance abuse, perceived workplace fairness, and organisational factors as predictors of absenteeism among civil servants in Oyo state. *Psychology and Education, 57*(5), 309–323. Retrieved from http://www.psychologyandeducation.net/pae/index.php/pae/article/view/46/44
3. Al Halbusi, H., Tehseen, S., & Ramayah, T. (2017). The impact of organizational justice on the ethical leadership under the moderating influence of perceived support: A conceptual study. *Malaysian Journal of Business and Economics, 4*(1), 46–64. Retrieved from https://cutt.ly/CPY9bqq
4. Al Halbusi, H., Williams, K. A., Mansoor, H. O., Hassan, M. S., & Hamid, F. A. H. (2020a). Examining the impact of ethical leadership and organizational justice on employees' ethical behavior: Does person-organization fit play a role? *Ethics & Behavior, 30*(7), 514–532. https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2019.1694024
5. Al Halbusi, H., Williams, K. A., Ramayah, T., Aldieri, L., & Vinci, C. P. (2020b). Linking ethical leadership and climate to employees' ethical behavior: The moderating role of person-organization fit. *Personnel Review, 50*(1), 159–185. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-09-2019-0522
6. Alatas, V., Cameron, L., Chaudhuri, A., Erkal, N., & Gangadharan, L. (2009). Gender, culture, and corruption: Insights from an experimental analysis. *Southern Economic Journal, 75*(3), 663–680. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2325-8012.2009.tb00925.x
7. Aswathappa, K. (2008). Motivation in action. *Human Resource Management,* 399–401.
8. Auger, P., Burke, P., Devinney, T. M., & Louviere, J. J. (2003). What will consumers pay for social product features? *Journal of Business Ethics, 42*(3), 281–304. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022212816261
9. Bandura, A. (1986). Fearful expectations and avoidant actions as coeffects of perceived self-inefficacy. *American Psychologist, 41*(12), 1389–1391. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.12.1389
10. Beetseh, K., & Kohol, B. (2013). Challenges of ethics and accountability in Nigeria civil service: Implication for counseling. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 9*(2), 18–23. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-0921823
11. Bell, R. L., Guyot, W., Martin, P. H., & Meier, R. J. (2011). The power of religion, upbringing, certification, and profession to predict moral choice. *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues, 14*(1), 1–24. Retrieved from https://cutt.ly/GPY9jeP
12. Blau, P. M. (1964). Justice in social exchange. *Sociological Inquiry, 34*(2), 193–206. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1964.tb00583.x
13. Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (6th ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119281856
14. Brown, M. E., & Treviño, L. K. (2006). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly, 17*(6), 595–616. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.10.004
15. Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 97*(2), 117–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.03.002
16. Casimir, K. C. A., Izueke, E. M., & Nzekwe, I. F. (2014). Public sector and corruption in Nigeria: An ethical and institutional framework of analysis. *Open Journal of Philosophy, 4*(3), 216–224. https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2014.43029
17. Chiu, S.-F., & Peng, J.-C. (2008). The relationship between psychological contract breach and employee deviance: The moderating role of hostile attributional style. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 73*(3), 426–433. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.08.006
18. Colquitt, J. A., & Rodell, J. B. (2015). Measuring justice and fairness. In R. S. Cropanzano & M. L. Ambrose (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of justice in the workplace* (pp. 187–202). Oxford University Press. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199981410.013.8
19. Colquitt, J. A., & Zipay, K. P. (2015). Justice, fairness, and employee reactions. *Annual Review Organizational Psychology Organizational Behavior, 2*(1), 75–99. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111457
20. De Schrijver, A., Delbeke, K., Maesschalck, J., & Pleysier, S. (2010). Fairness perceptions and organizational misbehavior: An empirical study. *The American Review of Public Administration, 40*(6), 691–703. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074010363742
21. Demetriou, M., Thrassou, A., & Papasolomou, I. (2018). Beyond teaching CSR and ethics in tertiary education: The case of the University of Nicosia, Cyprus (EU). *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development, 14*(1–2), 97–122. https://doi.org/10.1504/WREMSD.2018.089079
22. Demir, M. (2011). Effects of organizational justice, trust, and commitment on employees' deviant behavior. *Anatolia, 22*(2), 204–221. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2011.597934
23. Demir, M., & Tütüncü, Ö. (2010). Ağırlama işletmelerinde örgütsel sapma ile işten ayrılma eğilimi arasındaki ilişki [Relationship between organizational deviance and turnover intentions in hospitality businesses]. *Anatolia, 21*(1), 64–74. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/atad/issue/16799/174499
24. Donovan, M. A., Drasgow, F., & Munson, L. J. (1998). The perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment scale: Development and validation of a measure of interpersonal treatment in the workplace. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 83*(5), 683–692. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.83.5.683
25. Doran, C. J. (2009). The role of personal values in fair trade consumption. *Journal of Business Ethics, 84*(4), 549–563. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9724-1
26. Dugguh, S. I., & Dennis, A. (2014). Job satisfaction theories: Traceability to employee performance in organizations. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 16*(5), 11–18. https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-16511118
27. Essien, E., & Ogunola, A. A. (2020). Workplace fairness and organisational citizenship behaviour: Implications for Nigerian employees. *Islamic University Multidisciplinary Journal (IUMJ), 7*(1), 111–124. Retrieved from https://iuiu.ac.ug/journaladmin/iumj/ArticleFiles/41281.pdf
28. Fatile, J. O. (2013). Ethics and performance in the Nigerian public sector. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences, 2*(10), 132–151. Retrieved from https://garph.co.uk/IJARMSS/Oct2013/13.pdf

29. Fujishiro, K. (2005). *Fairness at work: Its impacts on employee well-being* (Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University). Retrieved from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=osu1117142039 &disposition=inline

30. Goergen, C., Pauli, J., Cerutti, P., & Perin, M. (2018). The organizations. Justice, trust and retaliatory attitude: A study in a company the metal-mechanic sector. *Cuadernos de Administración, 34*(62), 33–49. Retrieved from http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/cuadm/v34n62/0120-4645-cuadm-34-62-00033.pdf

31. Grigoropoulos, J. E. (2019). The role of ethics in 21st century organizations. *International Journal of Progressive Education, 15*(2), 167–175. https://doi.org/10.29329/ijpe.2019.189.12

32. Gunz, S., & Thorne, L. (2020). Thematic symposium: The impact of technology on ethics, professionalism, and judgement in accounting. *Journal of Business Ethics, 167*, 153–155. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04404-4

33. Iyanda, D. O. (2012). Corruption definition, theories, and concepts. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, 2*(4), 37–45. https://doi.org/10.12816/0002257

34. Jonck, P., van der Walt, F., & Sobayeni, C. N. (2019). Demographic predictors of work ethics in a South African sample. *African and Asian Studies, 18*(4), 325–341. https://doi.org/10.1163/15692108-12341434

35. Keller, A. C., Smith, K. T., & Smith, L. M. (2007). Do gender, educational level, religiosity, and work experience affect the ethical decision-making of U.S. accountants? *Critical Perspectives on Accounting, 18*(3), 299–314. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2006.01.006

36. Kivimäki, M., Vahtera, J., Elovainio, M., Lillrank, B., & Kevin, M. V. (2002). Death or illness of a family member, violence, interpersonal conflict, and financial difficulties as predictors of sickness absence: Longitudinal cohort study on psychological and behavioral links. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 64*(5), 817–825. https://doi.org/10.1097/00006842-200209000-00015

37. Lin, C.-P., Liu, N.-T., Chiu, C.-K., Chen, K.-J., & Lin, N.-C. (2019). Modeling team performance from the perspective of politics and ethical leadership. *Personnel Review, 48*(5), 1357–1380. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-07-2018-0277

38. Lindblom, A., & Lindblom, T. (2016). Investigating the links between sociodemographic factors and the acceptance of unethical behavior: A survey in Finland. *Nordic Journal of Business, 65*(3–4), 4–17. Retrieved from http://njb.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Lindblom_Lindblom.pdf

39. Lokman, A., Talib, A. T., Ahmad, Z., & Jawan, J. (2018). The influence of demographic factors on the ethical behaviours of supporting officers in the immigration department of Malaysia. *Journal of Administrative Science, 15*(2), 56–62. Retrieved from https://jas.uitm.edu.my/images/2018_DEC/JAS4.pdf

40. Lu, C.-S., & Lin, C.-C. (2014). The effects of ethical leadership and ethical climate on employee ethical behavior in the international port context. *Journal of Business Ethics, 124*(2), 209–223. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1868-y

41. Lu, L.-C., & Lu, C.-J. (2010). Moral philosophy, materialism, and consumer ethics: An exploratory study in Indonesia. *Journal of Business Ethics, 94*(2), 193–210. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0256-0

42. Meyer, M., Sison, A. J. G., & Ferrero, I. (2019). How positive and neo-Aristotelian leadership can contribute to ethical leadership. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne Des Sciences De l'Administration, 36*(3), 390–403. https://doi.org/10.1002/cjas.1511

43. Moore, C., Mayer, D. M., Chiang, F. F. T., Crossley, C., Karlesky, M. J., & Birtch, T. A. (2019). Leaders matter morally: The role of ethical leadership in shaping employee moral cognition and misconduct. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 104*(1), 123–145. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000341

44. Neves, P., Almeida, P., & Velez, M. J. (2018). Reducing intentions to resist future change: Combined effects of commitment-based HR practices and ethical leadership. *Human Resource Management, 57*(1), 249–261. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21830

45. Ogundele, K. (2011, November 16). CJN rejects plea-bargain for corrupt politicians, officials: Condemns Holding Charge. *The Nation.* Retrieved from https://issuu.com/thenation/docs/november_16__2011

46. Padilla, A., Hogan, R., & Kaiser, R. B. (2007). The toxic triangle: Destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments. *The Leadership Quarterly, 18*(3), 176–194. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.03.001

47. Polanyi, M., & Tompa, E. (2004). Rethinking work-health models for the new global economy: A qualitative analysis of emerging dimensions of work. *Work, 23*(1), 3–18. Retrieved from https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15328458/

48. Presbitero, A., & Teng-Calleja, M. (2019). Ethical leadership, team leader's cultural intelligence and ethical behavior of team members: Implications for managing human resources in global teams. *Personnel Review, 48*(5), 1381–1392. https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-01-2018-0016

49. Ross, W. T., Jr., & Robertson, D. C. (2003). A typology of situational factors: Impact on salesperson decision-making about ethical issues. *Journal of Business Ethics, 46*(3), 213–234. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025563624696

50. Schaubroeck, J., Lam, S. S. K., & Cha, S. E. (2007). Embracing transformational leadership: Team values and the impact of leader behavior on team performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(4), 1020–1030. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.4.1020

51. Schultz, D., & Schultz, S. E. (2010). *Psychology and work today* (10th ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003058847

52. Swaidan, Z., Cloninger, P. A., & Nica, M. (2006). The relationship between age, education, gender, marital status, and ethics. *Business Research Yearbook: Global Business Perspectives, 13*, 52–57. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/2981701/THE_RELATIONSHIP_BETWEEN_AGE_EDUCATION_GENDER_MARITAL_STATUS_AND_ETHICS

53. Swaidan, Z., Vitell, S. J., & Rawwas, M. Y. (2003). Consumer ethics: Determinants of ethical beliefs of African Americans. *Journal of Business Ethics, 46*(2), 175–186. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025068902771

54. Toor, S.-u.-R., & Ofori, G. (2009). Ethical leadership: Examining the relationships with full range leadership model, employee outcomes, and organizational culture. *Journal of Business Ethics, 90*(4), 533–547. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0059-3

55. Treviño, L. K., den Nieuwenboer, N. A., & Kish-Gephart, J. J. (2014). (Un)ethical behavior in organizations. *Annual Review of Psychology, 65*, 635–660. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-113011-143745

56. Yamin, M. A. Y. (2020). The relationship between right ethical behavior perspective, demographic factors, and best ethical performance. *International Review of Management and Marketing, 10*(1), 27–39. https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.9100

APPENDIX. QUESTIONNAIRE

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Auckland Park Kingsway Campus
Corner Kingsway & University Road
P. O. Box 524
Auckland Park
Johannesburg, 2006

Dear Respondent,

The current researcher designed this study to investigate the impacts of perceived workplace fairness, ethical leadership, and workers' demographics on ethical behaviors within the public service sector. The information of participants will be anonymous, as they are not required to provide their names. Under firm obligation, the researcher maintains strict confidentiality over all information collected; hence, the researcher will observe such duty. So, these conditions of anonymity and privacy allow you to answer freely and honestly. The questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes to complete. Besides, respondents may withdraw from the research and skip questions they do not want to answer. By answering the questionnaire, respondents consent to participate in the study. Thank you for your cooperation.

Dr. F. P. Adekanmbi

Section A: Workers' demographics

This section of the questionnaire covers background or biographical questions. For each question, please select the response applicable to you. Where a written response is required, please write in your answer.

1. Gender	
Male	1
Female	2
2. Age	
20–34	1
35–49	2
50 and above	3
3. Marital status	
Single	1
Married	2
Divorced	3
4. Religion	
Islam	1
Christianity	2
Others	3
5. Educational qualification	
Ordinary National Diploma	1
Higher National Diploma	2
Bachelor of Education/Bachelor of Science	3
Master of Education/Master of Science	4
6. Job level	
Level 6	1
Level 7–9	2
Level 10 and above	3

Section B: Perceived workplace fairness scale (POFS)

Please read each statement carefully and use the scale to select the option that best applies to you.

S/N	Items	Yes (1)	No (2)
1	Employees are praised for good work.		
2	Supervisors yell at employees.		
3	Supervisors play favorites.		
4	Employees are trusted.		
5	Employees' complaints are dealt with effectively.		
6	Employees are treated like children.		
7	Employees are treated with respect.		
8	Employees' questions and problems are responded to quickly.		
9	Employees are lied to.		
10	Employees' suggestions are ignored.		
11	Employees' hard work is appreciated.		
12	Supervisors threaten to fire or lay off employees.		
13	Employees are treated fairly.		
14	Co-workers treat each other with respect.		

Section C: Ethical leadership scale (ELS)

Please read each statement carefully and use the scale to select the option that best applies to you.

S/N	Items	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Undecided (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1	My supervisor listens to what employees have to say.					
2	My supervisor disciplines employees who violate ethical standards.					
3	My supervisor conducts his/her work in an ethical manner.					
4	My supervisor has the best interests of employees in mind.					
5	My supervisor makes fair decisions.					
6	My supervisor can be trusted.					
7	My supervisor discusses business ethics or values with employees.					
8	My supervisor sets an example of how to do things the right way in.					
9	My supervisor defines success not just by results but also by the way that they are obtained.					
10	When making decisions, my supervisor asks, "what is the right thing to do?"					

Section D: Ethical behavior scale (EBS)

Please read each statement carefully and use the scale to select the option that best applies to you.

S/N	Items	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Undecided (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1	I take responsibility for my errors.					
2	I give credit to those who deserve it					
3	I use company services appropriately and not for personal use.					
4	I am open about my errors.					
5	I conduct only company business on company time.					
6	I do not give gifts/ favors in exchange for preferential treatment.					
7	I keep confidential information confidential.					
8	I take the appropriate amount of time to do a job.					
9	I report others' violations of company policies and rules.					
10	I lead my subordinates to behave ethically.					
11	I am careful with company materials and supplies.					
12	I request reimbursement only for allowed expenses.					
13	I come to work unless I am sick.					
14	I refuse gifts that are offered for preferential treatment.					
15	I take only the allotted/ assigned personal time (lunch hour, breaks).					
16	I complete time/quality/quantity reports honestly.					