



conduct, investigate alleged ethics violation and oversee ethics training programmes.

**Keywords:** Ethics, morality, leadership and democratic governance

## **Introduction**

The aspect of ethics and morality in good governance suggests legality of government action, nationality in policy and decision making evolving source of responsibility, ensuring accountability, strengthening work, commitment, creating excellence, motivating the enthusiasm of individuals and facilitating organizational goal(Land and Herocleoas, 2010).

In every social setting (human grouping), one is saddled with the responsibility to plan, organize, coordinate and harmonize, influence, direct and guide the affairs and activities of the people toward attaining the vision and mission of such group efficiently and effectively. Before a person is regarded a leader and highly considered to be morally and ethically fit for the responsibility, he or she sees to the realization of the goals of such social system. For leaders to attain success, they must imbibe ethics in their conduct; and fairness in dealing with issues. Armstrong and Stephens (2005: 35) supports that, “leaders set the direction and get people to follow them, adding that, leadership is a means of direction. Leadership is about inspiring individuals to give their best to achieve desired results, gaining their commitment and motivating them to achieve defined goals”.

Today, ethical leadership is more important than ever, this is because the world is more transparent and connected than it has ever been. The actions and philosophies of organisations are currently scrutinised by the media and the general public. This coincides with the massively increasing awareness and interest among people in corporate responsibility and oher related concepts, such as fair trade, sustainability, social and community responsibility. The modern

leaders need to understand and aspire to lead people and achieve greatness in all these areas.

One of the most fundamental problems facing Nigeria is leadership (Chukwu, 2009). Chinua Achebe opined that, the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely bad leadership (Shobayo, 2009). Leadership is the bane of Nigeria (Yusuf, 2009). Without good leadership, it would be difficult to address the problem confronting the nation. Furthermore, investigations have shown that from 1999 to date, Nigeria have lost hundreds of millions through overpriced contracts and bribes to projects through connivance with the country's leaders both in public and private sectors (Smith and Komisar, 2009). According to Abubakar (2008), poor leadership and corruption have created a dilemmatic situation in Nigeria, where virtually all sectors are not functioning properly. Bola (2008) asserts that, lack of good governance is dragging Nigerian masses into deep poverty on a daily basis.

From the foregoing, one can describe Nigerian leaders as parents who do not care about the wellbeing of their children and having been entrusted with the present and future of Nigerians, they are ridiculing the trust in them by their subjects.

### **Research Problem**

The government reform was initiated and carried out by a military administration. Gboyega (2003) observed that, the military plant to use local government as a preparatory and testing ground for democratic governance. The reform intends to bring the Nigeria system at par with other democratic societies and projects an ideal prototype. Olaripekan (1998) and Kheman (2004) observed that since 1954, Nigeria has been politically constituted as a federal unit with both the federal and state governments sharing the responsibility for providing mainly social services but could not reach out to the grassroots due to lack of morality and ethical behavior in public offices which frustrates the purpose of delivering democracy in democratic governance in the society and Nigeria at

large. Therefore, this study examines ethics and morality in leadership and democratic governance in Nigeria with a theological perspective.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions suggested and raised in the study provided a better understanding of the concept of ethics and morality and its role in achieving good governance in public organizations:

1. Are government officials ethical in their conduct and performance?
2. To what extent do public officers promote ethics and morality in their practices?
3. How does ethical leadership influence good governance?

### **Research Methodology**

This paper used secondary data from relevant literature. The study examines the theological perspective of ethics and morality in leadership and governance in Nigeria. The researcher discovered that, Nigerian leaders are ridiculing trust in the system of governance in Nigeria.

### **Concepts of ethical and moral leadership**

Leadership and governance are the social and moral activities of leaders. These two concepts define the relationships and responsibilities of all leaders within the context of creation order, such as, families, communities, institutions, organizations and nations. Creation orders are what God instituted at creation, for example, marriage and family is the first and basic human institutions. God appoints elders, leaders, rulers, governors and administrators and also puts them to lead, rule, govern and administer the affairs of human institutions (Kunle, 2014). God delegates his authority and power to all appointed leaders on the basis that they would be held accountable at two levels: (1) accountability at the level of humanity and human institutions and social order; and (2) accountability to God and his creation order (Enegho, 2018). From human practice of leadership and governance, accountability has often been enforced at the human level, but

not at the divine and creational levels. Ujah (2010) asserts that, human beings have set up checks and balances to deal with the human level of leadership and governance. But we must go beyond the definitions and principles of leadership and governance as found in various religions, culture, philosophies and politics. Leadership and governance are endowed with authority and power, and all of these moral qualities are rooted in the sovereignty and lordship of God (Ujah, 2010).

The world does not exist for only one moment. It exists as a continuum of time and any definition of leadership must recognize that leadership is not an event that occurs in a second, but it is a comprehensive process that takes time. While an act of leadership may appear episodic, for true leadership to occur, it must be built on series of actions that produce a very useful range of results. Ethical leadership is understanding your core values and having the courage to live them in all parts of your life in service of the common good.

Many executives and business thinkers believe that, ethical leadership is simply a matter of leaders having good character. By having “the right values” or being a person of “strong character,” the ethical leader can set the example for others and withstand any temptations that may occur along the way. Without denying the importance of good character and the right values, the reality of ethical leadership is far more complex and the stakes are much higher.

Sharp (2005) opined that, leaders are first and foremost members of their own organizations and stakeholder groups. As such, their purpose, vision, and values are for the benefit of the entire organization and its key stakeholders. Leaders see their constituents as not just followers, but rather as stakeholders striving to achieve that same common purpose, vision, and values. These follower and stakeholder constituents have their own individuality and autonomy which must be respected to maintain a moral community. Ethical leaders embody the purpose, vision, and values of the organization and of the constituents, within

an understanding of ethical ideals. They connect the goals of the organization with that of the internal employees and external stakeholders.

Leaders work to create an open, two-way conversation, thereby maintaining a charitable understanding of different views, values, and constituents' opinions (Timothy, 2004). They are open to others' opinions and ideas because they know those ideas make the organisation they are leading better.

### **Characteristics of ethical and moral leaders**

In today's turbulent world, ethics and values are present at a number of levels for executives and managers—leaders who devote their time and energy to leading the process of value creation. This broader concept of ethical leadership empowers leaders to incorporate and be explicit about their own values and ethics. Armstrong and Stephen (2005) suggest the following frameworks for developing ethical leadership. It is based on the observations and readings of both popular and scholarly business, political and religious literature. These ten facets of ethical leaders offer a way to understand ethical leadership:

- i. ***Articulate and embody the purpose and values of the organization:*** It is important for leaders to tell their compelling and morally rich story, but ethical leaders must also embody and live the story. This is a difficult task in today's business environment where everyone lives in a fishbowl—on public display. So many political leaders fail to embody the high-minded stories they tell at election period, and more recently, business leaders have become the focus of similar criticism through the revelations of numerous scandals and bad behaviours. Some CEOs in today's corporations are really ethical role models for the people in the society.
- ii. ***Focus on organizational success rather than personal ego:*** Ethical leaders understand their place within the larger network of constituents and stakeholders. It is not about the leader as an individual, it is about something

bigger—the goals and dreams of the organization. Ethical leaders also recognize that value is in the success of people in the organization.

- iii. ***Find the best people and develop them:*** This task is fairly standard in different models of leadership. Ethical leaders pay special attention to finding and developing the best people, precisely because they see it as a moral imperative—helping them to lead better lives that create more value for themselves and for others. Finding the best people involves taking ethics and character into account in the selection process.
- iv. ***Create a Live Conversation about Ethics, Values and the Creation of Value for Stakeholders:*** In organizations that have a live conversation about ethics and values, people hold each other responsible and accountable about whether they are really living the values. And, they expect the leaders of the organization to do the same. Bringing such a conversation to life means that people must have knowledge of alternatives, must choose every day to stay with the organization and its purpose because it is important. Making a strong commitment to bringing this conversation to life is essential to do if one is to lead ethically.
- v. ***Create mechanisms of dissent:*** Many executives do not realize how powerful they are because of their positions. In a company that takes its purpose or values seriously, there must be mechanisms of pushing back to avoid the values becoming stale and dead. Indeed, many of the current corporate scandals could have been prevented if only there were more creative ways for people to express their dissatisfaction with the actions of some of their leaders and others in the companies. The process of developing these mechanisms of dissent varies by companies, by leadership styles, and by culture, but it is a crucial leadership task for value creation in today's business world.
- vi. ***Take a charitable understanding of others' values:*** Ethical leaders can understand why different people make different choices, but still have a strong grasp on what they would do and why. Having spent twenty-seven (27) years in

South African prisons, Nelson Mandela was still able to see the good in his jailers. After one particularly vicious jailer was being transferred away from Robbins Island because of Mandela's protest and push back, the jailer turned to Mandela and stated "I just want to wish you people good luck." Mandela interpreted this statement charitably as a sign that all people had some good within them, even those caught up in an evil system. Mandela felt that it was his responsibility to see this good in people, hence the need to bring it out.

vii. ***Make tough calls while being imaginative:*** Ethical leaders inevitably have to make a lot of difficult decisions, from reorienting the company's strategy and basic value propositions to making individual personnel decisions such as working with employees and exiting the organization. Ethical leaders do not attempt to avoid difficult decisions by using an excuse of: "I'm doing this for the business." The ethical leader is consistently "doing the right thing" and "doing the right thing for the business."

viii. ***Know the limits of values and ethical principles they live by:*** All values have limits, particular spheres in which they do not work. The limits for certain values, for instance, may be related to the context or the audience in which they are being used. Ethical leaders have an acute sense of the limits of the values they live by and are prepared with solid reasons to defend their chosen course of action. Problems can arise when managers do not understand the limits of certain values.

ix. ***Frame actions in ethical terms:*** Ethical leaders see their leadership as a fully ethical task. This entails taking seriously the rights claims of others, considering the effects of one's actions on others (stakeholders), and understanding how acting or leading in a certain way will have effects on one's character and the character of others. There is nothing amoral about ethical leaders, and they recognize that their own values may sometimes turn out to be a poor guidepost. The ethical leader takes responsibility for using sound moral judgment.



x. ***Connect the basic value proposition to stakeholders' support and societal legitimacy:*** The ethical leader must think in terms of enterprise strategy, not separating “the business” from “the ethics.” Linking the basic of the enterprise with the way that value gets created and society’s expectations is a gargantuan task. But, the ethical leader never hides behind the excuse of “It’s just business.”

Ethical leadership is about “raising the bar,” helping people to realize their hopes and dreams, creating values for stakeholders, and doing these tasks with the intensity and importance that “ethics” connote. That said, there must be room for mistakes, for humor, and for a humanity, that is something missing in our current leaders. Ethical leaders are ordinary people who are living exemplary lives towards making the world a better place. Ethical leaders speak to us about our identity, what we are and what we can become, how we live and how we could live even better.

### **Democratic governance in Nigeria**

Governance is increasingly being recognized as an essential component of sustainable and equitable development. There are many ways in which good governance contributes to economic development (Lucas, 2009). Governments make decisions on macroeconomic and social policy that have a direct impact on the long-term health of the economy. Governments provide critical goods and services, such as infrastructure, health and education that determine the competitiveness of the economy. Governments foster an enabling environment for private sector growth and regulate structures that balance objectives of growth and equity. Governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development (Lucas, 2009).

Governance can also be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups

articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable as well as promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in a society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in policy and decision-making over the allocation of development resources (Lan, 2019).

According to Richardson (2008), governance has three legs: economic, political and administrative. Economic governance includes decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies. It clearly has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life. Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy. Administrative governance is the system of policy implementation. Encompassing all three, good governance defines the processes and structures that guide political and socio-economic relationships.

Richard (2008) asserts that governance encompasses the state, but it transcends the state by including the private sector and civil society organizations. What constitutes the state is widely debated. Here, the state is defined to include political and public sector institutions. The private sector covers private enterprises (manufacturing, trading, banking, cooperatives and so on) and the informal sector in the marketplace. Some say that the private sector is part of civil society, but the private sector is separate to the extent that private sector players influence social, economic and political policies in ways that create a more conducive environment for the marketplace and enterprises.

Civil society, lying between the individual and the state, comprises individuals and groups (organised or unorganised) interacting socially, politically and economically - regulated by formal and informal rules and laws. Civil society organisations are the host of associations around which society voluntarily organises. They include trade unions; non-governmental

organisations; gender, language, cultural and religious groups; charities; business associations; social and sports clubs; cooperatives and community development organizations; environmental groups; professional associations; academic and policy institutions and media outlets. Political parties are also included, although they straddle civil society and the state if they are represented in parliament (Edward et al, 2006).

The institutions of governance in the three domains (state, civil society and the private sector) must be designed to contribute to sustainable human development by establishing the political, legal, economic and social circumstances for poverty reduction, job creation, environmental protection and the advancement of women. The challenge for all societies is to create a system of governance that promotes, supports and sustains human development, especially for the poorest and marginalized (Edward, et al, 2006).

Without effective leadership and good governance at all levels (private, public and civil organisations), it is arguably virtually impossible to achieve and to sustain effective administration, to achieve goals, to sustain quality and deliver first-rate services. The increasing complexities and requirements arising from the constant change in society, coupled with the constant push for higher levels of productivity, require effective and ethical leadership. Good governance and effective-ethical leadership are the essential requirements for an organisation to be considered successful in the eyes of all stakeholders in the 21st century (Terry and Susan, 2005).

Good corporate governance is important for developing countries towards alleviating problems of governance and leadership, especially concerning housing, health, education, unemployment and low economic growth (Sharpe, 2005). To be able to address these problems, developing countries require large-scale investments from overseas and local investors. Without good governance and effective-ethical leadership, such investments are less likely to be made.

### **Theological foundations for ethical and moral leadership**

In adjudging or assessing the quality of leadership or governance, the most important ingredient is usually missing, that is, the moral character of leaders. This moral character is derived from the nature, character and attributes of God. If it is derived from the universe of common sense, then it is inferior and limited. The model for leadership is not of a few human being, but God himself.

There is no authority or power that man has that is not delegated from God (Rom 13). If God is both the final ruler and final Judge, it means that all those exercising leadership authority and power do so only as subordinates under God's rule and administration. No human being who is under God's sovereignty, authority, power and rule can misbehave without incurring God's wrath and judgment. He holds the place and position of leadership or rule only in trust under God. He must apply and implement God's universal moral laws in leadership. This is not an option, but a must, if there would be peace, harmony, blessings and prosperity in one's jurisdiction of leadership.

Leadership is a serious business which commands God's absolute interest and attention because this affects His creatures. In Biblical history, we see that nations or people were prosperous because of their godly leaders or rulers. On the contrary, nations or people were judged and punished by God because of their ungodly and wicked leaders. Turaki (2015, 239) opines that, "the moral decadence of nations, people, or social institutions is usually as a result of their ungodly and wicked leaders and rulers."

According to Turaki (2015), there is a need to consider several aspects of the character, qualifications and quality of a leader. Prominent among them are: (1) godliness (2) the moral life-style exhibited by Jesus and the Apostles; and (3) the spiritual qualities and qualifications. This is what all effective leaders must cultivate and nurture in their private and public life. This is the first moral step that any leader needs to take. The inner being, habits of the heart and motives must be built solidly upon the foundations of God's word and moral laws.

Morality and ethics are, first of all, internalized and built solidly from the inside, at the level of motives and dispositions. Then morality and ethics are displayed from the outside, that is, at the level of acts and deeds. Thus, the inside, heart, character and motives of all effective leaders must be morally and spiritually built on solid foundations of God's morality and His word. Otherwise, leadership or governance stands upon common-sense and wisdom alone. Leaders must have certain moral and spiritual qualities and qualifications that can make them effective and transformational. In view of the foregoing, there are some basic principles and the theological qualifications for every leader (Turaki, 2005), these include:

- ***A leader must have a good moral character:*** The study of the moral attributes of God becomes the moral foundations of building a good moral character. The moral character of God are internalized and thereby become the habits of the heart. Our inner moral and spiritual transformation takes place in the heart where our minds are being renewed and transformed by the branding moral qualities of God's character and attributes.
- ***A leader must be committed:*** This quality of a leader is related to God's attributes of faithfulness. Commitment is rooted in the faithfulness of God.
- ***A leader must be a person of integrity:*** If people are going to follow someone, whether into battle or in business or ministry, they want assurance that their leader can be trusted. They want to know that, he or she will keep promises and follow through with commitments. The Biblical virtue of integrity points to a consistency between what is inside and what is outside, between belief and behavior, our words and ways, our attitudes and actions, our values and practices.
- ***A leader must be accountable:*** Great leaders are always open in accountability for everyone to scrutinize them. Apart from their life testimony of morality, they have periodic financial account presentation. With these, their audience will be motivated and impacted to build in them; morality, trust, confidentiality, loyalty and transparency.

## **Conclusion**

Ethics and leadership for good governance must recognize pluralism of values and diversity of motivations (Rawls, 1971). Ethical leaders consider their subordinates or followers before themselves, but on the contrary, most leaders in Nigeria consider themselves, family members and friends before probably their constituents. Administrative responsibility should therefore be dispensed with equity by granting the same freedom and opportunities to others that one claims, by telling the truth, fulfilling promises, distributing to everyone what is due, and employing valid incentives or sanctions to all without fear or favour.

While good governance requires mass participation in the decision making process of a country towards integrating the existence and fate of others, leadership should ensure that ethical norms and behavioural ideals should not be imposed but freely embraced; motivation should not be reduced to coercion but grow out of natural commitment; and the search for truth not be stifled but rather questioning and creativity should be encouraged. Followers should not be mere means to self-satisfying ends for leaders but should be treated as ends in themselves. Becoming an ethical leader is relatively simple. It requires a commitment to examining your own behaviour and values, and the willingness and strength to accept responsibility from your actions on yourself and others (Peterson and Ferrel, 2004).

Good governance and leadership are concerned with the good and prosperity of the society as a whole (Richardson, 2008). Unfortunately, the model of leadership and governance in Africa has disappointed and betrayed people's trust. The attitude of selfishness, unending desire for power and money have been very pervasive. With this kind of governance and leadership, little wonder economic growth and development has eluded major parts of Sub-Sahara Africa especially after independence.

### **Way Forward**

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following suggestions were made:

1. That all executive officers should imbibe ethics and morality in their leadership. We also recommend that management should provide ethics training constantly not only to executive officers but also to the entire employees of the organization.
2. That management should employ a full-time ethics officer who will proffer advice on ethical issues to top management, disseminate a code of conduct, investigate alleged ethics violations and oversee ethics training programmes.
3. Organizations should have in place leadership development programmes, and strengthen such programmes by adding the idea of ethical leadership.
4. Without the ability to challenge authority, there can be no such thing as true ethical leadership; therefore, leaders should allow constructive and healthy challenge of authority. Management should hire, develop and promote those people who will embrace the ethical standard.
5. That Nigerian leaders should emulate the leadership uprightness exhibited by Urzua, the Chilean Miners shift-supervisor, who was trapped underground with his 32 subordinates for about 70 days. As a leader of the team, he was more concerned about his subordinates. During the rescued mission he had to see to the rescued of all his men before himself; that is a typical example of an ethical leader.

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