



## Local Government Administration in Nigeria: Exploring a 911 Situation through the lens of Ethical Leadership

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### Abstract

Local government administration remains a vital component within the federalism and unitary systems architecture anywhere in the world. For Nigeria, the conditions of local government administration in generic and specific terms are tales of reforms upon reforms. Thus, this paper using secondary documents examined local government administration in Nigeria within the context of ethical leadership. Engaging a robust literature review, this paper posits that ethical leadership could be the missing link and requires the popular 911 emergency approaches and advocacy. It deepens this interrogation using systems theory and creative federalism with one argument amongst others that intergovernmental relations as a system of transactions among the strata of government within the federal system that requires the overhaul of 'men' (ethical leadership) rather than the substantive system in place.

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**Keywords:** Accountability, Governance, Local government, Ethical leadership

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### Introduction

Local government was principally established by law to bring government closer to the people at grass root level and meet their local needs. Both pre and postindependence local government reforms in Nigeria were primarily undertaken to improve the quality of governance and the provision of public service. However, those in the helm of local government administration have failed to live up to their responsibilities (Agbakoba & Ogbonna, 2004; Ukiwo, 2006). Emeka (2004) observed the conditions of the rural people as he noted that "[the] gross inadequacy of such amenities as piped water,

transport facilities, electricity, and health facilities in the large part of rural Nigeria is a major opposing factor to the well-being of the rural population". The reason for these conditions is the lack of ethical and effective government leadership at a grassroots level and, implied, at all levels of government.

The public officials at the local level of government have engaged in unethical practices and behaviors with reckless abandon (Ekpo, 2008). The lack of ethical leadership by those in leadership positions in the local councils hinders the achievement of

good governance, which is the aim of local government reforms.

Historically, the local government in Nigeria has faced a lot of problems; it has been beset by limitations ranging from lack of autonomy-political, fiscal, dictatorial attitude of the central government, financial limitations and lack of good governance and ethical leadership, of course, among others. The native administration set up by the British colonial administration lacked the capacity to function without incessant interruption from the central colonial authority.

The establishment of regionalism in 1945 and the quasi-federal system in 1951 set the pace for a federal structure in the country. Yet, while during this period there was the existence of local authorities, their functions (rights) were not clearly defined but until 1976. It was the 1976 local government reform that set the pace for the establishment of an 'independent' third tier of government in Nigeria. This third tier of government has become the shadow of itself since it was unable to perform its constitutional duty in bringing the dividends of democracy down to the grassroot. Corroborating the above, Maddick (1963) cited in Adeyemi (2012) rightly observed that 'Local authorities provide the opportunity for local people to participate in local decisions and local schemes within the general national policies, and to act above all, as local centers of initiative conducive to development'.

### **Problem Statement**

It is a known fact that the crisis of leadership in the Nigerian public-sector, (ie. local government) is as a result of a lack of ethical practice and good governance among the leaders with trickle-down effects on citizens. Local government is purposely created to cater for local needs of the local populace thereby bringing development to their doorstep. However, the narratives have not changed given the expected deliverables.

Several reforms have been put in place to make local government responsive to the plight of its local citizens. Some scholars have observed that many people are increasingly concerned about the ethics and practices of their public officials (McCartney, 2010; Neil, 2010). This phenomenon is true within the context of the Nigerian Local Government system; the local citizenry are frustrated and disappointed with both the ethical conduct and governance performances of the officials, both elected and appointed (Agbakoba & Ogbonna, 2004). Indeed, the local government council officials have not been able to improve public service delivery and sustainable socioeconomic development as people anticipate. This failure to meet the expectations has caused erosion of trust and leadership confidence in the Nigerian local government councils (Agbakoba & Ogbonna, 2004).

It is against this backdrop the paper sought to explore the phenomenon of ethical leadership for an in-depth understanding of how it could lead to promoting good governance at the local level in Nigeria. Although, several studies had been conducted in respect of inability of local government to serve the purpose of which they were created, but such studies dwelled much on issues of lack of financial and political autonomy, interference by the state government amongst other things.

Therefore, this study focuses on ethical leadership driven by good governance as a panacea in making local government system viable and agent of development in Nigeria. The paper attempted to answer the following questions as the study unfolded.

1. To what extent are local government officials ethical in their conduct and performance?
2. How does the existence of ethical leadership impact on good governance in the local government?

## Conceptual Clarification

The purpose of this section is to scrutinize, analyze, and synthesize relevant literature concerning ethical leadership. The section includes an in-depth literature review on conceptual frameworks of ethical leadership, which will provide a better and deeper understanding of the phenomenon of ethical leadership in an organization. The purpose of this work was to comprehend profoundly the ethical leadership construct and how it could foster good governance in Nigerian local government system. The section provides information regarding the following sub themes:

### The concept local government

Local Government has been variously defined by scholars and practitioners or administrators alike. These various definitions have been subsumed under two broad approaches as reflected in the literature. The first approach which is usually adopted in comparative studies, regards all sub-national structures below the central government as local government (UNO, 1962: 89; Alderfer, 1964 cited in Mishack, 2011; Global Forum on Local Development, 2010:7). A major criticism of this approach is that not all sub national structures below the central government possess the essential characteristics or features of local government. The second approach to the definition of Local Government which is the one adopted in this paper describe it by certain defining characteristics (Obikeze & Obi, 2003; UNO, 1961:11; Mawhood, 1993 cited in Akindele, 1995).

These attributes are essential to distinguishing it from all other forms of local institutions and also to ensure its organizational effectiveness (Mawhood, 1983 cited in Akindele, 1995). For instance, Obikeze & Obi (2003) defines local government as “a unit of government below the central, regional or state government established by law to exercise political authority, through a representative council

within a defined area”. This definition did not stipulate the method of constitution of the representative council, that is, whether they should be selected or elected. The United Nations office for public administration (1961:11) defines local government as:

A political sub- division of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exert labour for prescribed purpose. The governing body of such an entity is elected or locally selected.

Despite the wide appeal or acceptance of the latter definition, it has some flaws. First, the power of the local government to “exert labour” creates an impression of its tendency to resort to forced labour which is unacceptable in modern times. Second in the definition that is the governing body of a local government can be “locally selected” is faulty. It implies that in the case of Nigeria for instance, all the Caretaker Committees (of management) and Sole Administrator system instituted by the various past military administrators and even some serving state governors can pass as local government, “whereas in actual fact, such appointed bodies are mere brands of local administration” (Okoli, 2005). The definition of Local Government as contained in the *Guideline for the Reform of Local Government in Nigeria* (1976:1) aptly captures the essential features of local government. According to the “Guidelines:

Local government is government at the local level exercised through representative council established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas. These powers should give the councils substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff and institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas, and ensure, through active participation of the people

and their traditional institutions that local initiatives and response to local needs are maximized. Implicit in the above definition are certain salient or distinguishing features of local government which are also well articulated in the work of the 19th century political philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville (1969), as well as in Whalen (1969) and Mawhood (1983) cited in Bello-Imam (1996). These include:

(i) **Localness:** Local government is the lowest tier of government; it is government at the grassroots or local level.

(ii) It has a legal existence enshrined in the constitution. This protects it from arbitrary actions of higher authority. As a legal entity, it can sue or be sued and has a perpetual succession.

(iii) It enjoys substantial autonomy. This implies that although local governments are creations of the state or federal government, and therefore, are subject to state or federal government control in certain areas, nevertheless, "they enjoy a reasonable degree of independence in administrative and financial affairs" (Bleas, 2010:13). For example, "the local governments enjoy considerable autonomy in the preparation of annual estimates or budgets, the hiring, control and discipline of their own staff subject to a certain upper limit and the execution of certain projects" (Okoli, 2005:19).

(iv) It exists within a defined territory.

(v) Local government exercises its authority over a given population.

(vi) It exercises specific powers and performs certain functions as enshrined in the constitution (as is the case in Nigeria) or statutes.

(vii) The council is composed of "elected representatives of the local people" (Ezeani, 2004:28; Olisa, et. al. 1990:101; Ola, 1984:78; Blair 1977:13-

14). Implicit in this feature is that "local government... cannot be ruled by local notables, by traditional or hereditary rulers, some special elites or such people, as a matter of right" (Okunade, 1988:8). Furthermore, "local government is not reconcilable with the running of local affairs by local men nominated for the purpose by the central (or state) government" (Nwabueze, 1982:8).

(viii) Local government is usually divided into departments, divisions and units, which facilitate the accomplishment of its goals, objectives and functions. It is important to state here that adequate provisions were made to safeguard most of these features in both the Guidelines on the 1976 Local government reforms in Nigeria and in the 1979, 1989 and 1999 Constitutions (Ezeani, 2004). local government is therefore a level of government established by law and aptly represented by elected council through the local electorates with specific powers and functions within a defined area.

### **Ethical leadership**

Ethical leadership from social learning perspective, Ferrazzi (2006 :120) defined ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through conceptualizing personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to the followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making". In this definition, Brown et al. enumerated the constitutive components of ethical leadership. Ethical leaders (a) demonstrate appropriate conduct such as honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and cares, in their behavior and model such to followers; (b) make ethics a salient factor; communicate unambiguously about ethics, and provide followers with just interpersonal process to express his views; (c) reward ethical conduct and discipline or punish the disobedient ones; and (d) make decisions based on



principles and justice. Ferrazzi's (2006) concept of ethical leadership corresponds to what Clack (2015) regarded as two essential pillars for ethical leadership. Clack (2015) argued that those who are perceived as ethical leaders are characterized as moral both personally and in their roles as leaders. They also encourage accountability with a reward system. Ferrazzi's (2006) ethical leadership concept is broader than the leadership of others in perspective. Like all other models with ethical perspective, it includes "attributes such as integrity, trustworthiness, fairness, concern for others, and behaving ethically" which Clack, (2015) regarded as characteristics of a moral person (Boris, 2015: 3).

In addition to these attributes, Ferrazzi (2006) argued that ethical leaders are expected to employ transactional efforts to influence their followers to behave ethically, which depicts what Clack, (2015) referred to as a moral manager (Boris, 2015; Clack, 2015). Clack (2015) identifying the ethical leadership components stated, ethical leadership represents the leader's proactive efforts to influence followers' ethical and unethical behavior. Moral managers make ethics an explicit part of their leadership agenda by communicating ethics and values message, by visibly and intentionally role modeling ethical behavior, and by using the reward system (rewards and discipline) to hold followers accountable for ethical conduct. Ethical leadership as conceived by Ferrazzi (2006) is exercised by leaders who demonstrate both the characteristics of a moral person and moral manager. Ethical leaders lead by example, and they are able to communicate and enforce ethics and practice in their organizations, implying that ethical leaders' conduct and decisions are grounded in ethical values and ideals, and at the same time they ensure that their followers, too, are ethical in their actions and decisions to enhance the common good. The aspects of

communication and enforcement of ethics practice among the followers are what distinguishes the ethical leadership construct from the other leadership models with an ethical dimension.

### **Good governance**

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) (n.d.) identified eight major characteristics or principles of good governance: accountability, consensus orientation, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusiveness, participation, responsiveness, rule of law, and transparency.

### **Dimensions of good governance**

**Participation:** Participation as a principle of good governance involves conducting free and fair elections, ensuring that all citizens have a voice in their local public affairs and that all the stakeholders are involved in the decisions-making process in matters that pertain to their lives (Agbokaba & Ogbonna, 2004). The 1976 local government reforms in Nigeria provided for political participation of local people in their local governments (Ogogo, 2004). Evidence regarding political participation, for example, shows that Nigerians are still under the shadow of long years of military dictatorship; many are still skeptical and thus unenthusiastic in getting involved with government affairs.

Ibim, (2001) observed that about 40% of Nigerians turn out in national and local elections. He further noted that about "70% of citizens of voting age did not vote in the 1999 presidential election". Moreover, between 75 to 90% did not vote in any of the state and local government elections in the same year. Rigging of elections and other fraudulent election practices are factors contributing to nonparticipation of many in any elections in Nigeria. Nigeria has a very poor record of conducting free and fair elections in the three levels of government.

The elections are always marred with rigging and fraud. The Human Right watch (2007 p.15) reported that 2004 elections in 774 local government councils were flawed with “violence, intimidation, and fraud”. Aside this, almost all ruling parties in Nigeria, at the local government elections most times ‘win’ in contrast to other levels of elections (i.e. Presidential, National legislative Assembly, governorship and state legislative constituencies).

**Accountability:** Accountability is an important element of good governance (Ishiaki, 2005). “It is an integral part of government and public management” (Kwame, 2006: 651). Accountability involves being answerable for decisions or actions, often to prevent the misuse of power and other forms of inappropriate behavior (Ishiaki, 2005). Awotokon (2005:298) noted the connection between transparency and accountability as he asserted that a “government that is transparent is also likely to be accountable”. Some researchers posited that accountability is a vital feature of modern democratic governance (Betts, 2010; Ishiaki, 2005; Awotokun, 2005). Betts, (2005) stated that democracy is of no value if the office holders are not held accountable “for their actions and omissions, for their decisions, their policies, and their expenditures”. Public officials have a moral duty to be accountable in how they used the authority and public resources given to them (Osaghe, 2005). Thus, accountability refers to the obligation public officials have to render a report on how they used the public resources and as they also answer for their failure to meet the stated performance objective (Jerry, 1996). It also refers to a system in public institutions where by public office holders are held accountable “for their behavior, actions, and decisions” (Awotokun, 2005: 298). Thus, ethical practice is an important requirement for maintenance of accountability in the public sector and even the organized private

sector. **Transparency:** Abdulhamid and Chima (2015) defined governmental transparency as the ability to know what government is doing or activities of government. Awotokun (2005:296) observed that transparency in government means that “reliable, relevant, and timely information about the activities of government is available to the public” UNESCAP (n.d.) revealed that transparency involves free availability and accessibility of information to the people affected by government’s decisions. Consequently, some researchers have argued that free access to information is the key element of governmental transparency (Sagay, 2001; Abdulhamid and Chima, 2015). Sagay (2001:114) remarked that accountability has insignificant value if it is not seen done “by those to whom the public service is accountable” Hence, transparency is a vital factor in good governance; the public officials have the obligation to provide information about the activities of government to the public (Sagay, 2001).

Transparency in government helps to reduce uncertainty and control corruption among public officials (Awotokun, 2005). Transparency in Nigerian local government administration will contribute a great deal to improving the quality of governance and delivery of goods and services. Awotokun (2005:296) noted three dimensions of transparency in government operations in African government. The first involves mostly behavioral aspects, which warrants “clearly established conflict-of-interest rules for elected and appointed officials, a transparent regulatory framework, open public procurement and employment practices, a code of conduct for public officials, and freedom-of-information requirements.” The second dimension involves “the provision of reliable information on the government’s economic policy intentions and forecasts.” The third

dimension entails the obligation to provide “detailed data and information on government operations, including the publication of comprehensive budget and other planning and policy documents”. Enforcement of transparency in the local government system in Nigeria requires moral leaders who are committed to ethics and practice in the councils.

**Effectiveness and Efficiency Principle:**

An efficient public service is fundamental to government (Ogbakoba & Ogbonna, 2004), aiming at fulfilling its obligations to the people. The civil service is mainly for policy implementation in government; it follows that if it is inept and corrupt, the administration will fall short in fulfilling its obligations to the people (Ogbakoba & Ogbonna, 2004). This principle of good governance requires local officials to galvanize all the administrative apparatus available toward producing positive outcomes that meet the aspirations and interests of the public while making the utmost use of available resources. To be effective and efficient toward achieving the goals of local government, the council’s administrators must ensure that skilled and qualified men and women are employed to take charge of the business of their councils. Emeka (2004) remarked that many local governments in Nigeria lack skilled and experienced personnel to execute and supervise their development projects; the resultant effects are mismanagement and waste of limited resources. The need for professionalism in public service is “to ensure effective and efficient delivery of public services and to combat bureaucratic corruption at the local government level in Nigeria” (Ibim, 2001: 74), as well as to consolidate salaries and emoluments at the local level to global and national standards. Put figuratively, “what is good for the geese is also good for the gander”, if a strategy for anti-corruption in Federal Ministries,

Agencies and Departments (MDAs) is enhanced wages/salaries and emoluments, then the local government career personnel and political actors deserve a better deal. Even to attain that required responsiveness as explained further.

**Responsiveness:** Good governance also requires that the government is responsive to the needs of citizens. Responsiveness entails that government agenda and policies are to be focused on citizens’ needs and interests; it implies integrating citizen demands in the decision-making and resource allocation in the light of citizen needs (Adeyemi, 2012: 126). Responsiveness in a practical sense means that “public services are delivered and requests and complaints are responded to within a reasonable timeframe” The Nigerian local authorities cannot be responsive unless they are committed to serving the needs of the citizens. Responsive local public officials, while engaging citizen participation, carefully articulate those policy agendas that promote socioeconomic and human development of the citizenry. Responsive local administrators listen to the concerns and complaints of people and endeavor to provide channels for addressing them. Responsiveness also entails that the council is effective in providing public goods and services. Ethical codes and rules help to check against wrongful use of public resources for personal or private interest. Osaghae (2005:183) succinctly expressed this point as he stated that “public servants are not simply professional because of their expertise, but also because of adherence to high moral standards”. Both expertise and ethics are vital and crucial in public service for good governance outcomes.

**Rule of Law:** The achievement of good governance in the form of government, particularly a democratic government, requires the existence of the rule of law, which demands impartial enforcement of the established just and fair laws, and the existence of impartial and incorruptible

judiciary and law enforcement agents (UNESCAP). Nyewusira (2011) observed that “the adoption of the right legal framework and of the necessary legislation and the predictable and consistent implementation of the law are crucial to address the destructive effects of official corruption”. The rule of law requires compliance by individual and groups of people, citizens or noncitizen, public official or private member of society

(Lawan&Oladunjaye, 2010). With the rule of law in place, public leadership is obligated to comply with the constitution of the country, keep the laws, and the regulations of the public service. Public officials found wanting as far as compliance with the law is concerned face the consequences the law prescribes.

Rule of law is a fundamental condition for the establishment of good government (Nyewusira, 2011); no sustainable development is possible without it. When public officials are not held accountable for their dishonesty and corrupt conduct, it “undermines the trust and confidence of the people that government can do well and advance the public interest” (Nyewusira, 2011). The growing interest in and popularity of democracy around the globe today is based on belief and conviction that democratic governance is “the most critical vehicle to fulfill individual aspirations, articulate interests and nurture the civil society” (Agagu, 2005: 2).

### **Leadership Ethics and Good Governance: The nexus**

The public service is important and crucial for enhancing good governance. The United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN, 2000) remarked that public service functions as an administrative structure through which government carries out its policy decisions and policy implementations. The standard of governance and its outcomes in any government reflect the caliber of officials that constitute the administrative

force. A good and efficient administration is equally a responsive one; it takes cognizance that the purpose and obligation of government is to protect peoples’ rights and promote their individual and collective well-being as human beings (UNPAN, 2000). Good governance is conceptualized here to mean government capacity to discharge its responsibilities in an effective, transparent, accountable, responsible, and just manner (Awotokun, 2005). Good governance in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), as in other corners of the world, hinges “on many factors such as sound leadership, encouraging grassroots participation in the governing process, accountability and transparency of government, among others” (UNPAN, 2000, p. 37). Such sound leadership could only be guaranteed by men and women of moral integrity who understand the importance and the role of ethics and practice in the leadership process toward achievement of the common good. Khalil (2011) underscored the importance of ethics as a fundamental and crucial factor for effective political leadership in local government. Ethical leadership has long been linked with good government, though the bureaucratization of modern government has placed more emphasis on managerial efficiency than on ethics (Idike, 2006).

Aristotle emphasized the need of ethical public administrators for good governance of the state (Gboyega, 1987). Many scholars concur that the widespread unethical conducts and scandals in both public and private sectors is the outcome of the negligence of ethics and practice by organizational leadership (Awotokun, 2001; Akinsanya, 2004; Arowolo, 2005; Idu, 2013). Arowolo (2005:3), for example, noted that “most people are dismayed with the state of affairs. They are sick of the deception, cheating, and corruption. People don’t know who, or what, to trust”. However, Ajayi (2000) observed that good governance, which



is crucial to democratic government, is dependent on ethical leadership of government officials. Also, some international bodies like the UN, the World Bank, the OECD, and Transparency International have emphasized the importance of ethical practice among government officials and have linked ethical leadership with good governance.

Therefore, they have taken the initiative to encourage member states and establish projects to combat and eliminate corruption and promote ethical practices in their public administration (Ekpe, Ekpe & Daniel, 2013). Though, in contrast several Transparency International reports on Nigeria have been challenged by the central Nigerian government.

Furthermore, the DPADM (2007) noted that the public is demanding higher standards of ethics, transparency, and accountability in the public sector. DPADM also argued that ethics, transparency, and accountability are the prerequisite values of good governance and sustainable development that support and encourage responsive public policy and high levels of public sector performance. Similarly, Awotokun (2005:385) noted the statement of the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that “good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development”. The president of the African Development Bank (AFDB,) stated that, “Good government underpins sustainable development and poverty reduction in the longer term”. The quest and demand for good governance is based on the conviction that it is the ideal and necessary to surmount “the socio-economic and political impediments to development that have rocked, especially the developing world for decades” (Kwame, 2016: 651). The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, 2014) identified eight major characteristics or

principles of good governance: accountability, consensus orientation, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusiveness, participation, responsiveness, rule of law, and transparency. For the purpose of this study, the following principles of good governance which includes: participation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness, and rule of law has been elaborated on to provide further information on how each informs governance within the context of Nigerian local governments and government in general. Ethical leadership driven by good governance might probably prove to be the long awaited remedy to leadership crisis bedeviled the third tier of government and render it incapacitated in bringing the desire development at the grass root level. The question to ask is why does local governments in most advance democracies are more proactive and as serve as a panacea to grass root development? The situation is different in sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) where almost all decentralized unit is struggling to provide dividends of democracy.

### Theoretical Framework

Ethical leadership still remains a burgeoning area in the field of academic inquiry (Iles & Macaulay, 2007). It is discussed as part of the broader field of leadership and has touched upon a variety of theoretical bases (Dorasamy, 2010; Schoeman, 2012). In view of this, Burns's (1976) transformational leadership and Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership cited in Ferrazzi (2006) were the primary leadership theories underpinning this study. Burns (1978) formulated and exposed a new concept in leadership study, otherwise known as transformational leadership. The transforming leader's relationship with followers is the type that is grounded in a mutual moral relationship. It is a leadership

model that seeks to elevate both the leader and the led “to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978 p. 20). As such, it emphasizes the importance of moral and human values in leadership (Kalwies, 1988), and it is considered to have developed a higher ethical and moral understanding within leadership study (Iles & Macaulay, 2007). The transformational leadership accords ethics a prominent position in its process. Greenleaf (1977) formulated and expounded the servant leadership style. This model puts the needs, welfare, and well-being of followers first (Greenleaf, 1977). From this perspective, the primary purpose of leadership is to serve the interest of the followers; this is particularly crucial in public administration for advancing the public interest.

Normative ethical principles provide the foundation for ethical analysis and evaluation of human judgment and actions as they provide the perspectives and directives for making ethical decisions. In other words, they provide the road map for making ethical value decisions in the face of ethical dilemma. The importance of ethics in leadership cannot be overemphasized. This is informed because leadership is the vital catalyst for the promotion of good governance. Ethical practice by leaders enables them to base their decisions and actions primarily on policies that are beneficial to the people. No leadership model in government can appropriately promote good governance without a strong ethical component.

Despite the recognition of the importance and centrality of ethics to leadership among much extant leadership literature, especially with the highly publicized scandals of public officials, ethical leadership remains a terrain that is under researched (O’Connell & Bligh, 2009). Ferrazzi (2006) remarked that leadership should be the major source of ethical guidance in the work place, but little is known about ethical leadership. However, some authors recognized that ethical leadership is still in its developmental stage

(Dorasamy, 2010; Chteni & Shindika, 2017). This shortfall of research in ethical leadership is obvious in the public sector, and it has an impact on this study because most of the ethical leadership literature utilized in this study is from the private business sector.

Ethical leadership research becomes scarce in the context of the Nigerian public sector. As a result, this paper explored mostly ethical leadership study done in other fields, precisely in the private business sector to understand how the leadership concept could be employed in Local Government to achieve good governance outcomes. Still, it is pertinent to stress that this idea does not affect the validity or credibility of the study because any leadership paradigm developed in one sector can be employed in another sector without affecting the underlying principles that underpin the concept. Ferrazzi (2006:118) attempted to lay a foundation for a systematic academic study of an ethical leadership construct, so they set out to put forth “the necessary conceptual and empirical groundwork that might advance knowledge about ethical leadership”.

## Conclusion

Ethical leadership is a very important component of government, in order to ensure effective public service delivery. Hence, good leadership is always interpreted as effective when the people appointed to leadership positions are able to achieve organizational goals. Leadership is not about an individual or a position, but a moral connection between the people founded on trust, responsibility, commitment and a shared vision of the public goods. Ethics is about how one distinguishes between rights and wrongs or good and evil, which is what leader should always consider when leading people. Good ethics in leadership improves service delivery. Therefore, going by what leadership and ethics entails, this paper could rightly submit that local government in Nigeria is in an emergency situation as it lacks

components of good governance and ethical leadership.

For local government to serve and actualized the purposed of which it was created, good governance alone cannot provide the appropriate response until accompanied by ethical leadership. Nigeria leaders lack ethics in conducting government business as evidence in the number of corruption cases against public and political leaders which has become a grand norm in the country rather than the exception. Imbibing ethical behavior is not only important in governance but remains the key factor for effective public service delivery. A number of countries and public institutions in the world, especially in Africa, do not have ethical leaders who make the needs of the public a priority. Even the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) has not performed enough to checkmate unethical behavior in the public service.

Another angle seen in the intergovernmental dynamics of federal-state-local government relations, State governments have not been called to accountability as the State-Local government joint accounts for local government funds remain the exclusive of the state government.

By and large, the poor service delivery and unethical conduct amongst government institutions can only be minimized to a certain level if the govern and the governed will eschewed unethical behavior and imbibe good ethical behavior as there is a correlation between ethical behavior and good governance.

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