

Standards of Behaviour and Performance in Nigerian Public Sector Using Mixed Method Approach

*OLANREWAJU, Yemisi Esther (FCNA)

*SANNI, Mubaraq (FCA)

*Aliu, Ismaila Daudu (ACA)

Department of Accounting and Finance, Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State, Nigeria

Abstract:- Continuous incidence of governance failures, fraud, corruption and inefficiencies necessitate increasing demand for public sector performance. Nigerian government is insensitive to the plight of the citizens to effectively generate and optimize the usage of available resources. All efforts established to delineate the actions and standards of behaviours of civil servants such as good leadership styles, code of conduct and integrity seem not to be in existence and these consequently affect the performance of the public sector. This study therefore, examined standards of behaviour and public sector performance. The study employed the two popular survey research instruments (questionnaire and interview) to collect data concurrently, analyse separately and merge results during interpretations. The target population for quantitative analysis is One Thousand and Fifty (1,050), Six (6) from each of the 175 MDAs in Nigeria as at December, 2018. Krejcie Morgan sample size determination was used in arriving at the 280 samples used in gathering quantitative data, ten (10) participants were purposively selected for the interviews. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysing the data; hypotheses were tested with Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Outcome indicated significant positive relationship between leadership quality, code of conduct and public sector performance, integrity is not significant. The conclusion from the study is that leadership styles in public sector influence performance and also adherence with the code of conduct. The study therefore recommends that Nigerian government should strengthen leadership styles in all MDAs and agencies saddled with code of conduct responsibilities be further strengthened to ensure efficient public service delivery in the Nigerian public sector entities.

I. INTRODUCTION

The unbroken incidence of collapse of governance, duplicity, misconduct and inefficiencies have become a paramount issue with respect to how fiscal discipline can check corruption to improve nations' performance [1]. The increasing demand for public sector performance in many countries reveals the nexus between the delivery of quality public services and good governance [2]. The growth of public sector governance control practices is seen as a tool of fiscal discipline and performance as touted by policy makers and academic researchers [1]. While much effort and success have been recorded towards the introduction of

governance control practices in the private sector across the globe, public sector governance control practices are still at the infant stage in many countries.

The public sector governance will serve as a managerial and control tool to improve the quality of service delivery. This energized IFAC Public Sector Committee to place governance high on their agenda coupled with growing internationalization, deregulation and integration of financial markets (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy - CIPFA and IFAC, 2013). The expansion of sophisticated financial instruments with the related hazards, adjustments in society's hope in organizations, limited financial disclosure and deficient auditors were among other reasons emphasized by [3] for development of governance control practices in public sector. Developed countries like United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia have reformed their public sector entities to enhance transparency and accountability [4-5]. Many efforts have been made to have a formal public sector governance control practices particularly on standards of behaviour by public officers.

In the Nigeria public sector, efforts like the introduction of the Code of Conduct Bureau -CCB, Courts, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission -EFCC, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission -ICPC etc. have been geared towards maintaining standards of behaviour for effective deployment of resources for better growth and poverty mitigation [6]. However, the more the institutions, the more the growth of corrupt practices and the resultant effect is endemic corruption in public sector entities [7]. This is a serious issue that impede the successful delivery of public service implying that Nigerian government is insensitive to the plight of the citizens to effectively generate and optimize the utilization of available resources for the benefit of Nigerians. This problem can only be addressed with an effective standards of behaviour that will improve the performance in public sector entities [7].

However, the absence of good leaders to impact others through their disposition, behaviour and administrative abilities, contribute to poor governance which is detrimental to the success of public sector entities [8]. All efforts established to outline the actions and behaviours of leaders, such as good leadership styles, code of conducts, integrity in creating and fostering standards of behaviour among civil servants seems not in existence. This poor conduct and inappropriate standards of behaviour increased

lack of trust and integrity among officers in the public sector entities [9]. Previous studies like [10-11] among others have employed leadership styles as a critical factor that improves organizational performance but [12] specifically requested future research to further explore other proxies of standards of behaviour.

Therefore, the present study incorporates code of conduct and integrity as other tools of the standards of behaviour in public sector. However, there are very few studies in Nigeria that have proxied integrity for standards of behaviour in public sector. Consequently, this study examines the impact of standard of behaviour on the performance of Nigerian public sector by formulating three hypotheses to test the effect of standards of behaviour variables (Leadership style, code of conduct and integrity) on public sector performance. All the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of the Federal Government of Nigeria are covered by this study, it is believed that what obtains at the federal level is applicable to the entire country.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Conceptual Issues

Recent significant progress in the development of ethics in the civil service creates the need to concentrate on employees' behaviour [13]. [14] are of the opinion that organizations issue guidelines to employees for acceptable behaviours which are criterion for the formulation of policies and routine operations. [15] identified behaviours that can be classified as unethical in workplace, these includes sexual harassment of co-workers, lying whether to insiders or outsiders, stealing, abusiveness, work safety violation, work hours' falsification, and prejudice among others. An individual's standards of behaviour are functions of their psychological field experience and this can be subjective [16]. In this study, three important variables were employed for standards of behaviour in public service, they are leadership styles, code of conduct and integrity.

Leadership is complicated and varied, it concerns itself with affecting subordinates in a particular direction of organizational growth and renewal [17-18]. Effective leaders concern themselves with the execution of plans based on set agenda that can steer growth in teamwork, standards, well-being, and transformation [19-20]. Effective leadership styles in the public sector spurs productivity and good governance leading to better development; value for money; sound financial management and improved stakeholders' confidence (Eastern and Southern African Management Institute, 2014). [21] opined that the attributes of a good captain should include morals and values, integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. The captain also needs to be visionary, respectful, passionate, committed, kind, forgiving, just, courageous, loving, deep listener, inspired and inspiring,

authentic, multidimensional and amenable to change. This motivated [22] to conclude that decisions and actions for delivering sustainable quality public service are guided by leadership.

In everyday parlance, code of conduct is replaced with code of ethics but the conduct is usually specific while ethics is more general. Code of conduct prescribe bounds and proscriptions [23]. Code of conduct are mandates, regulations or concepts governing behaviour while code of ethics are general, uplifting batch and lone workers to exhibit and adopt particular characteristics such as loyalty, selflessness, honesty, objectivity, probity and integrity [23]. Code of ethics do not confront particular types of decisions but motivate the application of what can be termed 'virtues' [24]. However, the use of both code of conduct and ethics endeavour to promote desired behaviour and advance organizational efficiency [23]. Thus, code of conduct is useful for inculcating discipline in organizations and clarifying an organization's intention and expectations from its employees [25].

The design of code of conduct is purposeful, it is expected to guide the perception and beliefs of people in their decisions, and an indispensable means of ensuring appropriate behaviour from the personnel. Nigeria has a prescribed code of conduct for public officers enshrined in the fifth schedule of the Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria, 1999, the public sector also faces challenges of behavioural conformance [24]. The code of conduct is not an alternative to the terms of engagement, disciplinary or complaint procedures. It is for the management of employees' behaviour and to challenge others. It is expected that in the long run, it will bring about a reduction in indiscipline and grievances as they are effectively dealt with before they become part of the formal process [26].

Integrity relates with identified dependable actions, worth, technique, judgement, virtue, expectations and outcome as well as the standards of a person's character [27]. The concept of integrity is seen as individual honour, acting according to one's beliefs and values at all times. Integrity emphasizes the "wholeness" or "intactness" of a moral stance or attitude. Wholeness may also emphasize commitment and authenticity [27]. Integrity serves as a measure of willingness to adjust value system, maintain or improve consistency; some regard it as a virtue with accountability and moral responsibility as necessary tools for its maintenance. Integrity as a concept has been discussed not only in the field of ethics but also in organizational behaviour, human resource management, psychology as well as leadership [28]. It refers to not being corrupted, not being fraudulent and acting in accordance with moral values, standards and rules accepted by the organization and the society from the organizational behaviour point of view [28].

B. Theoretical Background

➤ Agency Theory

The fundamental theories and models relating to governance keep on evolving, beginning with the agency, extending into stewardship, stakeholder, resource dependency, political or institutional, legitimacy and social contract theories [29]. Agency theory concerns itself with the so called 'agency problem', the disconnect between ownership and management which has been the dominant theoretical perspective of study on governance arrangement [30]. Agency theory highlights the hunt for the mode of engagement that best guide the agreement between the principal and the agent. The principal and the agent are deemed to be acting in accordance with logical reasoning driven by self-interests that allow minimizing the costs of the [31]. The problem of agency comes about as a result of goals incongruence and information asymmetry, risk preferences and planning horizon by the parties [32].

The biggest challenge of the principal is to ensure that the agents will fulfil their interest. [32] argues that the most efficient contract model is based on the behaviour of the agent; otherwise, the contract must be based on the delivery of results. Using agency theory to study relations within the state, [33] analysed three types of agency relationships that must be considered: the state and private economic agents; citizens and politicians; and between politicians and the public apparatus, that is, bureaucracy. This latter relationship inevitably implies the delegation from the state to the bureaucracy of the services that the government must render to the citizens, taking into account that delegation of an activity is the basic condition for the occurrence of the agency relationship [32]. To [34], a fundamental tension then occurs between delegation of tasks, political control and accountability to civil society.

The agency theory ensures that the standards of behaviour support an effective accountability that enhances the performance of public sector in terms of good public service delivery to the citizens [35]. This theory buttresses the importance of leadership in any sector and that the establishment of good leaders in the public sector is key. Good leadership positively influences job performance, employees' satisfaction and shows how public agencies perform better. Functional leadership can advance team work, standard and security, and innovation to achieve positive outcomes. The theory exposes the importance of external oversight function in monitoring the behaviours and actions of public office holders to act in the best interest of the public.

C. Empirical Review

Three constructs viz-a-viz leadership qualities or styles, code of conduct and integrity were employed for standards of behaviour by this study. Previous studies on these constructs are empirically reviewed from developed and developing countries as well as Nigeria. A study on the relationship between integrative leadership and performance in the United States of America –USA public sector was conducted by Moynihan and Ingraham (2004)

who surveyed 50 States. The study focussed on how leaders choose, promote, institutionalize and use public management system. It was found that the type of leaders in place influences performance. Also from USA, Abatecola *et al.* (2012) examined the effect of leaders on public sector productivity looking at school principals. The study hypothesized the importance of leadership using data that provide information on institutional outcomes. It was revealed that there is significant variation in the value addition to students based on the quality of principals.

[47] conducted a study on leadership style and employees' performance in Tehran province using Cochran method to sample 277 from a population of 1000. Questionnaires on leadership style and employees' performance were used for the collection of data that were analysed using Pearson correlation. It was revealed that transformational and pragmatic leaders impact on staff performance, the impact of the former being higher. Development of oriented and pragmatic- oriented leaders has positive impact on employee performance. In line with the above, Asencio (2016) studied leadership, trust and organizational performance in the public sector. The study used survey data collected from US Federal employees to find out whether workers' trust in leaders moderates the relationship between transactional and transformational leadership behaviours and organizational performance. Positive relationship was found to exist between both leadership behaviours and also that performance and the trust of the employees in their leaders have positive significant relationships.

[49] carried out a research on the impact of leadership style on Thailand's public sector using Ordinary Least Square. The multivariate regression results brought to limelight that the three variables used for leadership in addition to controls, impacted significantly on organizational performance explaining 83% variation. Similarly, [48] looked into the influence of leadership styles on employees' job satisfaction in Malaysia using two hundred executive volunteers from public sector organizations. It was revealed that both transactional and transformational types of leadership have direct relationship with public sector performance, the former being stronger with job satisfaction and adjudged to be appropriate for public sector management.

Mavhungu and Bussin (2017) anchoring on the mediatory role of motivation in the relationship between leadership and performance, surveyed the importance of the individual level of performance in the public sector. A cross-sectional survey was used to collect quantitative data from 65 employees of departments affected by the intervention. It was confirmed by this study that a relationship exists between leadership and performance in the public sector and that motivation plays a mediatory role between Perceived Leadership Styles and Individual Job Performance. This area had been overlooked in public sector performance, the revelation will be of assistance to managers for improved performance.

[11] studied leadership and management in Indian Emerging Economy's public sector because of its significant contribution to the growth and economic development of countries. Forty-two senior public sector managers from 12 states were interviewed to explore the key challenges they face. Three key challenges emerged: political interference and lack of autonomy, rigid rules and HR practices, and lack of employee motivation. Topmost leadership qualities that emerged are positive leader personality, communication skills, change- and relation-oriented behaviors, HR skills, and decision-making. Staffing, training and development and performance management emerged as the top priorities of HR departments of PSUs. Public-service motivation, job security and work environment were the top reasons for continuing to work in PSUs for Indian leaders.

Uwa, Akpaetor and Johnson (2018) examined ethical compliance and organizational profitability of telecommunication companies in Nigeria. Ethical compliance was measured by integrity, customers' value and fairness. The descriptive survey design was used to collect data from 384 respondents selected using Walpole's sampling from an infinite population. The data were analysed with SPSS. The results revealed that there is a positive impact on profitability by ethical compliance.

One of the primitive studies on code of ethics was that of [50] who supported the theory of the positive code of ethics and financial performance. The study spanning over a period of 25 years demonstrated the relationship through classification of the results of sixty-two studies, into three categories viz: positive, negative and no effect/inconclusive. Thirty-three (33) results found a positive relationship, twenty (20) negative and nine (9) results were found with no relationship or inconclusive results. Also in the same vein, Curtis (1998) examined the relationship between code of ethics and financial performance of public companies in the United States and found that companies publicly committed to following a code of ethics code as an internal control strategy achieved significantly higher performance in both financial and non-financial terms.

Abatecola *et al* (2012) in Italy conducted a panel study between 2000-2008 to examine the relations among Corporate Governance, Code of Conduct and Profitability of listed Public corporations using secondary data. The data were analysed with descriptive statistics, performance was assessed using standard ratios, the results were inconclusive. Significant relationships were seen to exist between corporate governance and performance though conflicting. The researchers recommended further studies in the area. On the impact of code of conduct on public sector performance, other study attempted a comparative study on code of ethics and conducts in the public services of Tanzania and South Africa. They used secondary data in gathering the required information. The study revealed that code of ethics and conducts influence public sector performances in both countries.

[52] evaluated the performance of Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) in combating corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector. The study adopted the system's theory as a framework using quantitative and qualitative data. The data collected through the questionnaire were analysed through the use of tables, frequency counts and percentages. The hypotheses were further tested using the chi-square statistics which served as an important ingredient for measuring their performance. The qualitative data from the interviews, observations and other secondary data were descriptively analysed. The study found that the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal have not performed adequately in executing their mandate because of the administrative structure and legal framework establishing them coupled with inadequate government's will to enable the organizations excel. Lack of executive capacity and other material resources were identified as constraints though not significant enough to affect their overall performance.

Linking the code of conduct with integrity in Malaysia, [53] conducted a case study on Integrity among Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) based in United Kingdom using an Ethical Perspective. This study assessed the current level of integrity among RMP officers. Data collected from 189 RMP revealed that respondents perceived all of the situations given in the questionnaires as serious problems, thus showing that they have high integrity among RMP. The finding from the study reveals that overall integrity level of RMP officers must be at high level in order to restore and build trust and integrity in public institutions. Also in Malaysia, [53] measured the relationship between the current status of the practice of good governance and integrity in Malaysia public sector. Structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 109 heads of departments in 24 federal ministries. Descriptive statistics, regression and structural equation model were used for data analysis. It was revealed that strategic planning, audit and fraud control are factors of good governance and have significant positive relationship with integrity in Malaysian public sector.

[54] studied the Conflict between the Pursuit of Integrity and Performance in Public Procurement used procurement as proxy for public sector performance. A multitasking agency model was used to analyze the interactions between integrity and performance in public procurement. The study showed that coercive measures on the procurer is unproductive. However, oversight and sanctions are likely to improve performance though with less discretion. These findings challenged some beliefs about the effectiveness of rigid rules and procedures in fighting corruption and improving public procurement performance as well as public sector performance.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey research design which involves enquiring from a large number of people about their behaviours, attitudes, and opinions in order to establish the relationships existing between phenomenon [36]. Structured questionnaire and semi structured interviews were employed to collect data concurrently, analyse the two sets of data separately and merge the results during interpretations. This approach is called convergent parallel of mixed method. The target population for quantitative analysis is 1050 Six (6) top officers from each of the 175 MDAs of the Federal Government of Nigeria as at December, 2018 (The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019). The sample size of 280 was selected from this population based on “Small Sample Techniques” [37] using stratified sampling technique.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the 10 respondents for qualitative data gathering based on the personal judgment of the researcher. The quantitative data were descriptively analysed using frequency, mean, maximum, minimum and standard deviation. The study also conducted preliminary tests like normality, multicollinearity, reliability and validity of the data before using the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypotheses.

The present study adapts the framework developed and modified it in order to incorporate integrity and code of conduct as part of the constructs that enhance standards of behaviour which were also supported in agency theory. Therefore, the following models were developed:

$$\text{Public Sector Performance} = f(\text{Standard of Behaviour}) \dots\dots\dots 3.1$$

This was enlarged to reveal all the variables used to measure each of the parameters.

$$\text{Public Sector Performance} = f(\text{Leadership, code of conduct, integrity}) \dots\dots\dots 3.2$$

This can be transformed into the following linear equations:

$$PF = f(LD, CC, IN) \dots\dots\dots 3.3$$

$$PF = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LD_{jt} + \beta_2 CC_{jt} + \beta_3 IN_{jt} + \mu \dots\dots\dots 3.4$$

The performance of public sector entities reflects the efficiency and effectiveness of MDAs in Nigeria. Therefore, the study enquired from participants to indicate the extent to which their MDAs have performed, based on the questions adapted from [38]. The three constructs, leadership, code of conduct and integrity were used to operationalize standards of behaviour. The checklist adapted from [39] was used to measure leadership quality. To measure code of conduct and integrity, IFAC checklist was employed.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

A. Preliminary Assessment of data and Descriptive Statistics

Out of the 280 questionnaires distributed, 230 were retrieved, 27 of these were rejected, 75% remaining is adequate and above the 30% considered sufficient for surveys (Sekaran, 2003). The general demographic data of respondent depicts that 15 (7.4%) of the respondents are between age 30-40 years, 82 (40.4%) 41-50 years, 59 of the respondents representing 29.1% are in the age bracket of 51-60 years. More than 60.0% of the respondents are within the age of 40 years and above. Impliedly, all the respondents are mature and responsible. By gender, 112 (55.2%) are males while the remaining 91 (44.8%) are females, a reflection of staff distribution along gender line in the Nigerian public sector.

Also, of all the 203 respondents, 7 (3.5%) are on grade level 13, 54 (26.6) grade level 14, 54 (26.6) grade level 15, 49(24.1) grade level 16 and 39 (19.2%) grade level 17. This shows that clear representation of all staff from tactical to strategic level. It is expected that this will yield robust responses. The study also reveals that 84 (41.4%) of the respondents are HND/Degree holder; 83 (40.9%) are Master’s degree holders and 34 (16.7%) are with Doctorate degree. This level of academic qualification is expected to influence their corporate behaviour in the service. The work experience shows that the highest number of the respondents 72 (35.5%) have a work experience between 16 -20 years. 68 (33.5%) had 11-16 years’ work experience, 43 (21.2%) had 6 -10 years, 10 (4.9%) had 1-5 years, while only 10 (4.9%) had over 21 years of work experience. This implies that 70% and above have spent more than 10 years in service and are expectedly experienced.

Ninety-five - 95 (47%) of the respondents work in the federal ministries while 108 (53%) are in the federal agencies, this shows that the Nigerian public sector officers from MDAs are duly represented. Generally, the demographic data indicates that all the respondents are versatile and possessed the pre-requisites to provide the required answers to the questions in the questionnaires. Regarding the qualitative analysis through interview, the researcher proposed interviewing ten (10) Nigerian public sector’s officers but the researcher interviewed 6, 60% response rate and clearly above the average.

The descriptive statistics revealed that integrity has the highest mean score (M = 4.493, SD = 0.261) while leadership style and code of conduct recorded very close figure of (M = 4.464, SD = 0.124) and (M = 4.462, SD = 0.163) respectively.

B. Assessment of PLS-SEM Path Model Results

Two-step processes are used in assessing and describing PLS SEM results, the measurement and the structural models. The measurement model examines

reliability and validity; reliability of individual item, reliability of the internal consistency, and convergent and discriminant validities. The summary of the assessment of measurement model is presented in Table 1.

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability	AVE	Discriminant Validity
Public sector Performance	PSF1	0.774	0.767	0.524	Yes
	PSN3	0.658			
	PSN5	0.734			
	PFN7	0.765			
	PFN9	0.716			
Objectivity, Integrity & Honesty	IN2	0.796	0.814	0.594	Yes
	IN4	0.741			
	IN6	0.774			
Code of Conduct	CC2	0.791	0.815	0.595	Yes
	CC4	0.732			
	CC6	0.791			
Leadership Quality	LD2	0.802	0.770	0.530	Yes
	LD4	0.701			
	LD6	0.760			
	LD8	0.608			

Table 1:- Summary of the Assessment of Measurement Model
Source: Author’s Computation (2019)

From the above table, individual item reliability was assessed by examining the outer loadings of each construct’s measure [40]. Following the rule of thumb for retaining items with loadings between .40 and .70 [40] items presented loadings below the threshold of 0.40 were deleted and those retained had loadings between 0.608 and 0.802. Composite reliability was also used to ascertain the internal consistency of measures as it provides a less biased estimate to Cronbach Alpha’s coefficient and does not under or overestimate the scale reliability [41]. From Table 4.1, the composite reliability coefficient of each latent constructs ranged from .767 to .815, exceeding the minimum acceptable level of 0.70.

The evaluation of the convergent validity was done with the value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each latent construct. The AVE values ranged from 0.608 to 0.802, they are >0.50 indicating adequate convergent validity [42]. Also, a comparison of the correlations among the latent constructs with the square roots of AVE was done to ascertain discriminant validity in line with [43]. The outcome showed adequate discriminant validity. The square roots of the AVE are greater than the correlation amongst latent constructs.

Constructs	Items	PSP	NI	CC	LD
Public Sector Performance	PSP1	0.774	0.178	0.194	0.225
	PSN3	0.658	0.012	0.140	0.173
	PSN5	0.734	0.069	0.116	0.089
Objectivity & Integrity	IN2	0.104	0.796	0.384	0.141
	IN4	0.071	0.741	0.404	0.212
	BN20	0.115	0.774	0.386	0.265
Code of Conduct	CC2	0.181	0.336	0.791	0.399
	CC4	0.130	0.331	0.732	0.273
	CC6	0.174	0.491	0.791	0.264
Leadership Quality	LD4	0.211	0.168	0.231	0.802
	LD6	0.174	0.211	0.322	0.760
	LD8	0.095	0.256	0.442	0.608

Table 2:- Cross Loading and Factor Loadings
Source: Author’s Computation (2019)

The results of the structural model which include an assessment of the significance of the path coefficient, an evaluation of the R-squared values, determination of the effect size, establishing the predictive relevance and examining the moderating effect to rate the relationship between standard of behaviour and public sector performance are presented as follows:

Hypotheses	Beta	Standard Error	T Statistics	P Values
Code of Conduct -> Public Sector Performance	0.241	0.091	2.645	0.016
Integrity -> Public Sector Performance	0.001	0.088	0.010	0.992
Leadership -> Public Sector Performance	0.160	0.073	2.207	0.032

Table 3:- Structural Model (Standard of Behaviour and Public Sector Performance)

Source: Author's Computation (2019)

The results of from Table 3 indicate that leadership quality has a significant positive relationship with public sector performance ($\beta = 0.160$, $t = 2.21$, $p < 0.032$), supporting the hypothesis that standards of behaviour impact on public sector performance. It was revealed that code of conduct and public sector performance ($\beta = 0.241$, $t = 2.65$, $p < 0.016$) was also in support of the hypothesis while integrity has no significant relationship with public sector performance, $\beta = -0.001$, $t = 0.010$, $p < 0.992$. Therefore, not supporting the hypothesis.

The effect size (f^2) is the strength of a specific exogenous variable on endogenous variable(s) measured by the coefficient of determination (R^2) [42]. These coefficients described by [44] are as follows: 0.02 weak, 0.15, moderate and 0.35 of strong effects (table 4).

Variables	Effect size (f^2)	Decision
Code of Conduct	0.08	Weak
Leadership Quality	0.03	Weak
Integrity	0.01	None

Table 4:- Effect Size (f^2)

Source: Author's Computation (2019)

As indicated in Table 4, f^2 for leadership quality and code of conduct showed 0.03 and 0.08 respectively indicating a weak effect but for integrity, there is no effect. In conclusion, the effect sizes of the three exogenous latent variables on public sector performance can be considered as weak and none [44]. The result of predictive relevance (Q^2) measured through a cross-validated redundancy is presented in Table 5.

Variables	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 = (1-SSE/SSO)$
Public Sector Performance (PSP)	890.000	714.675	0.028

Table 5:- Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Source: Author's Computation (2019)

The predictive relevance of this model is suggested, the cross-validation redundancy measure Q^2 for all variables is greater than zero [42 & 45].

C. Discussion of Findings

Based on the quantitative data collected by means of questionnaire on the relationship between standards of behaviour proxied with leadership quality, code of conduct, integrity and Nigerian public sector performance, PLS-SEM revealed that leadership quality has a significant positive relationship with public sector performance at 5% level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that a unit increase in the leadership quality influences the public sector performance by 16%. The responses from interview also support the result of quantitative analysis. Auditor General of federation said

that "leaders must be in position to give adequate directions in line with laid down rules and regulations". This was equally supported by the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Planning that: "Good leadership quality helps in shaping the attitudes of the follower. e.g. when you as a leader is already at work by 7:30, then your subordinate will also be punctual". "If the leadership is not upright and trustworthy, it will have a large say on the character and conducts of their followers (Director of Audit Parastatals). This, in turn, enhances the performance of public service.

The findings are also in line with the study of [46] who concluded that integrated leadership style particularly, impact the performance of public organization and federal sub-agencies positively and significantly. [10] see the emergence of leadership in the public sector as a domain

that is distinctive, free and essential in public administration and performance. In order to improve public sector performance, [47] concluded that development and pragmatic- oriented leaders have positive impact on the output of public employees' performance which in turn improves performance as reported in this study. This also relates to the findings of [48] ,both revealed that transactional and transformational leadership behaviour and employee trust in leaders are positively associated with organizational performance.

The findings of the study concurred with who established that a relationship exists between leadership and public sector performance. This assists managers to make strategic improvements on performance using available information. However, [11] in their study revealed the emergence of three key managerial challenges in the management of public sector. These are political interference and lack of freedom, unbending requirements and practices by HR, and lack of incentives to employees. Top influential leadership qualities are positive personality, ability to communicate, attitude that are change oriented and relation-oriented, managerial abilities and decision-making. [49] also concurred that variables of leadership impact significantly on organizational performance explaining up to 83% of the variation. Kelidbari *et al* (2016) also confirmed that that ethical leadership is significant to performance. Surprisingly, all the studies reviewed on leadership reported relationships that are positively significant with performance of public sector as claimed in the agency theory that in any organization, leadership is indispensable. Moreover, that its development is essential, it has impacts on performance and employees' satisfaction.

The result of PLS-SEM also revealed a significant positive relationship between code of conduct and public sector performance at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the study rejected the null hypothesis. This implies that a unit compliance with code of conduct will increase the public sector performance by 24% and vice versa. The conclusion is in line with the responses from Director of Audit of Parastatals that *"Code of conduct helps to shape the moral uprightness of the citizens. If it is seriously implemented, corruption will reduce e.g., the case of the Chief Justice of the Federation"*. *"However, the inadequacy of code of conduct in the public sector has resulted in increased violation of law and orders, mismanagement and embezzlement in the public sector, as stated by Director of Planning, monitoring and evaluation"*. He added that: *"At the state level the head of service instituted sometimes last year, what we call quality assurance committee which was supposed to be monitoring staff's behaviour but unfortunately the committee did not take off, I was a member. It was supposed to be domesticated by each MDA"*.

The finding concurred with the study of [50] who found that thirty-three earlier studies reported the existence of positive relationship between code of conducts and performance. [51] also agreed that ethics have strong influence on performance. On code of ethics and conducts in the public services of Tanzania and South Africa, the study affirmed that both influence performances in the two countries. This however contradicts the conclusion of [52], he found that the performance of the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal is inadequate because of the established structure of administration, deficient government's will, lack of executive capacity and other material resources all of which were identified as constraints though not significant enough to affect her overall public sector performance. The conclusion that code of conduct influences public sector performance is also supported by the agency theory which ensures that the standards of behaviour bring about an effective accountability that improves public sector performance.

Integrity is the third variable employed in assessing the relationship between standards of behaviour and performance in the public sector, the outcome is that integrity is not significantly related with public sector performance. This implies that the public officers' integrity does not significantly influence their performance. The response by the Auditor General of Federation however, is contrary to this. He was of the opinion that *"the code of conduct has influence on public sector performance. In fact, it has a lot because people who have integrity will always maintain that integrity, and they will contribute more positively"*. Other participants agreed that *integrity and objectivity influence public sector performance because all officers are expected to maintain objectivity and integrity and conducts free of conflicts of interest in the performance of their service*. This was also supported by [53] who found that good governance has positive significant relationship with integrity in the public sector of Malaysia.

The findings of [53] contradict the findings of this study, they concluded that the Royal Malaysian Police officers, exhibit high level of integrity in effort to restore and boost trust and integrity in public establishments. This makes [54] to conclude that pressures on procurer is counter intuitive, his findings challenged the notion that hard line posture is useful in the war against corruption and growth in procurement and performance of the public sector.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Drawing from the findings of this study, it concluded that leadership style influences public sector performance, adherence with the code of conduct by public officers enhances performance. Therefore, it recommends that leadership styles in all government MDAs in Nigeria should be strengthened to ensure efficient public service delivery, agencies saddled with code of conduct responsibilities should further be strengthened to guarantee functional delivery of public goods and services.

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