UNETHICAL PRACTICES AS INHIBITING FACTORS TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW

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Abstract

The hospitality industry in Nigeria is on the rise, driven by a growing economy and cultural attractions. Ethical practices are central to this growth, with Kohlberg's theory of moral development providing a framework for understanding the industry's ethical journey. The global hospitality industry, comprising hotels, restaurants, and travel services, thrives on tourism, economic development, technology, and sustainability. Ethical practices are vital for trust and sustainability. Kohlberg's theory reveals three stages of moral development in the Nigerian hospitality sector:

1. Pre-conventional level: Businesses may prioritize self-interest, leading to practices like overpricing and hidden fees to maximize profit.

2. Conventional level: Inconsistent adherence to ethical standards results in variable service quality, impacting trust and customer satisfaction.

3. Post-conventional level: Achieving the highest moral level remains challenging, with corruption, labor issues, environmental neglect, and cultural insensitivity hindering ethical development.

It was concluded that unethical practices is a serious factor militating against the grwth and development of the hospitality business in Nigeria. Ethical inhibiting factors in Nigeria's hospitality industry include corruption, inconsistent standards, labor issues, environmental neglect, and cultural insensitivi ty. A commitment to ethical leadership, industry-wide standards, responsible resource management, and employee well-being is crucial to foster ethical growth and development. Regular monitoring and evaluation by regulatory agencies is recommended

Keywords *;Factors Growth, Hospitality, Industry,, Inhibiting, Unethical*

I.0   INTRODUCTION

Unethical business practices have plagued organizations in Nigeria, resulting in a high rate of unethical decisions made by organization leaders that affect both the organization and the society (Igbaekemen *et al.,* 2014). Unethical business practices continue to increase among organizations in Nigeria despite having ethical leadership skills and knowledge (Otusanya *et al*., 2015). According to Aboyassin and Abood (2013), several cases of unethical practices in Nigerian organizations were related to weak leadership and poor strategic vision. In 2016, over 665,000 employees left the hospitality industry (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Rotimi *et al*. (2013) suggested that unethical practices harm and obstruct economic growth. However, the authors did not address possible factors that may encourage unethical practices by leaders in Nigerian organizations. Before attempting a solution to end unethical practices in the organization by its leaders, it is imperative to identify factors that encourage or tempt its leaders to act unethically. What is not known are the factors that encourage or draw leaders to be involved in unethical practices despite having ethical leadership skills and knowledge.

In a developing nation like Nigeria, ineffective policies or weak monitoring of systems may offer a suitable environment for unethical practices. Kingshott and Dincer (2008) explored a different perspective and posited that one's psychological contract (PC) contributed to unethical practices by employees in public organizations. The PC is the unwritten mutual belief, perception, and obligatory expectations regarding each other duties and the mannerisms of its discharge (Rousseau, 1989). Negative work environments can foster unethical practice, suggesting a potential cultural effect within the organization that might encourage leaders to behave unethically or make decisions that overlook the range of expectations entrenched within the PC despite being aware of the moral and ethical expectations (Kingshott & Dincer, 2008). PC stimulates functional behavior among employees, a violation of which might lead to moral disengagement, thereby causing employees to engage in an unethical act to recover what they believe is due. Ntayi (2013), in his study, concluded that factors exist both singularly and interactively within an organization that predicts organization leaders' ethical identity.

Over the years, Nigeria has experienced emergent major character defects amongst workers inimical to the growth and development of the industry. Despite the participation and effort of the government in stimulating the economy sub-sector, the growth and development of these SEs have been slow and sometimes even stunted. The hospitality trade is faced with impediments that make it challenging to facilitate the achievement of strategic business plans for organizations investing in the industry.

Approximately 80% of fast-food restaurants launched in Nigeria in 2014 failed to persist for longer than 5 years because of a lack of survival strategies.

Wikipedia (2022) viewed the hospitality industry as a broad category of fields within the service industry that include lodging ,food and beverage , events planning, travel agency , tourism, hotels , restaurants , nite clubs, and bars.

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to understand factors that encourage unethical practices that affect the growth and development of the hospitality industry in Nigeria .The research question asked was ;What organizational factors encourage its leaders in Nigeria to be involved in unethical practices that affect the growth and development of the hospitality industry in Nigeria?

Organization leaders are believed to exert a strong influence on the ethical standards in organizations (Mayer *et al*., 2013), such that leaders are seen as role models and also suspected as the culprit, or at the least, an enabler of wrongdoing whenever ethical scandals exist in the organization. Researchers have examined the leader's processes for ethical decision-making and behavior; however, none has focused on understanding the factors responsible for unethical leadership practices in organizations in Nigeria (Bush & Glover, 2016).

Understanding the factors responsible for unethical leadership practices gained from this study may assist future leaders in being self-aware. Drawing from the principles of social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997), such self-awareness might lead to moral self-regulatory capacities. Leaders may then consciously engage in practices that focus on reducing or eliminating the existence of moral disengagement in organizations, thereby leading to positive social change. This study's findings may also be significant to managers by addressing employees' needs and the significant impact on their employee's performance in the hospitality industry. Improving motivation and performance creates avenues through which all the cost associated with lack of motivation can be avoided.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Over view

Lawrence Kohlberg's (1977) moral development theory is the conceptual framework for this study. Kohlberg (1977) posited that individuals cannot adequately distinguish between justice, mutual respect, and rights until late adolescence. Kohlberg referred to this concept as post-conventional reasoning. Kohlberg asserted that advances in one's moral thinking are connected to developing a child's logical

thinking and perspective-taking ability. According to Kohlberg, individual thinking processes are necessary but insufficient for moral growth (Jambon & Smetana, 2015). Jambon and Smetana (2015) agreed that Kohlberg's study on moral development cannot be underestimated. Hence, there is a need to understand the factors that encourage organizational leaders to be involved in unethical practices and the impact the leaders' moral development has on these factors.

2.2 Conceptual Framework Underpinning the Study

A conceptual framework is described by Landerer (2013) as a lens used in developing the knowledge for understanding the underlying paradigm of the research study. A concept is a symbolic statement describing a phenomenon or type of phenomenon. Parahoo (2006) explained the difference between a conceptual framework and a theoretical framework as a conceptual framework gathers concepts from various theories and findings to guide inquiry. Still, a theoretical framework is where a theory underpins research. The Lawrence Kohlberg's (1971) theory of moral development was adopted as the conceptual framework for this study. This theory is also known as the cognitive developmental theory of moralization.

2.3 Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg believed his stages represented the transformations that occur in a person's structure of thought regarding morality and moral thinking (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Kohlberg argued that an individual's movement through his stages should always be forward because each stage presupposes the understanding gained at previous stages. He also suggested that no individual will be guaranteed to reach the third and highest level (Kohlberg, 1971).

2.3.1 The Pre-conventional Level

Kohlberg's theory includes three levels and six stages. In the pre-conventional level, children are responsive to cultural rules and an understanding of right and wrong. This level is divided into two stages: the punishment and obedience orientation (Stage 1) and the instrumental relativist orientation (Stage 2). In Stage 1, physical consequences of action are the determinants of its goodness or badness regardless of the human moral meaning or value of these consequences. In Stage 2, right or moral action consists of what satisfies one's own needs and sometimes the needs of others. Reciprocity in this stage is defined not in terms of loyalty or justice but in terms of doing something for the other to receive something in return (Kohlberg, 1971).

2.3.2 Conventional Level

At this level, the individual maintains conformity and loyalty to personal expectations and social order. This level consists of two stages: the "good boy-nice girl" orientation (Stage 3) and the "law and order" orientation (Stage 4). In Stage 3, good behavior pleases and helps others. Individuals at this stage conform to stereotypical images of "natural" behavior. In Stage 4, moral behavior consists of doing one's duty, respecting authority, and maintaining the social order for one's own sake (Kohlberg, 1971).

2.3.3 Post-Conventional, Autonomous, or Principled Level

At the third level, an individual will try to define moral values that are valid and applicable apart from their authority figures and social group. This level has two stages: the social-contract legalistic orientation (Stage 5) and the universal ethical principle orientation (Stage 6). In Stage 5, the individual defines moral rightness in terms of individual rights and standards that society has critically examined and agreed upon. In Stage 6, the individual defines moral rightness by the decisions of conscience following self-chosen ethical principles. These principles are abstract and ethical rather than concrete and appeal to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency (Kohlberg, 1971).

2.3.4 Evidence

Empirical evidence for Kohlberg's theory of moral development is mixed. To test his theory, Kohlberg presented participants with moral dilemmas and looked to see how people resolved the conflicts. The most well-known of these dilemmas is the Heinz Dilemma, in which a woman's husband breaks into a pharmacy to steal a life-saving drug for his dying wife. From these studies, Kohlberg (1981) concluded that there is a universal set of moral principles held by people in these various cultures because all cultures have similar sources of social interaction, role-taking, and social conflict, which require moral integration. He also found that moral judgment was positively correlated with age, socioeconomic status, IQ, and education (Colby *et al*., 1983).

2.3.5 Criticisms of Kohlberg

Kohlberg has received much criticism for his theory for having issues with reliability and validity in his studies and a lack of universality in culture and gender. Initially, Kohlberg's method of coding interviews yielded some sequence anomalies (Colby *et al.,* 1983). Other theorists and researchers have suggested that Kohlberg's theory is very much "Westernized" and, therefore, cannot be considered universal. Gilligan (1982) criticized Kohlberg for his use of mainly male participants and thereby having a male-biased theory. However, Kalshoven *et al*. (2013) explained that moral development theory relies on

continuing studies toward expressions of moral judgment. This made it a valuable framework for examining ethical and unethical behaviors among organizational leaders. Mayer *et al.* (2013) affirmed that leaders are thought to influence ethical standards strongly and followers see them as role models of the right ethical behavior in the organization. Kohlberg (1977) discovered that some aspects of moral development are reflective of cognitive development, while others appear to be socioemotional; Gibbs (2014) opined that age trends in cognitive development but not socioemotional stood across variations in children's nationalities, religion, or social class. Kohlberg used moral dilemmas that novelists and philosophers created, theorizing that probing the structure of an individual's moral judgments would reveal patterns of reasoning.

Carol Gilligan (1982) criticized Kohlberg's theory of justice as representing a male-oriented basis for conflict resolution. Gilligan developed her own theory of morality, consisting of masculine and feminine "moral voices." The masculine voice is logical and individualistic and therefore, protecting the rights of others and making sure justice is upheld are emphasized in moral decisions. The feminine voice is care-oriented and focuses on the needs of others and; therefore, protecting interpersonal relationships is highlighted in moral decision-making. Gilligan argued that Kohlberg's theory only emphasized the masculine voice and therefore did not extend to females (Gilligan, 1982). Gilligan also argued that Kohlberg's scoring system favors men, resulting in the appearance that women's moral reasoning is inferior to men's.

One potential explanation for Bruess and Pearson's (2002) favoritism is women's lack of educational opportunities during the Kohlberg studies. Bruess and Pearson (2002) also suggested that the moral orientation used by men and women may be related to the type of moral issues discussed (e.g. personal, impersonal, hypothetical, or real). For example, women's focus on interpersonal moral issues may aid them in thinking about moral dilemmas from a societal or post-conventional point of view. Overall, it seems that the issue of gender differences in moral development is complex, something not addressed much by Kohlberg himself.

Kohlberg has also received much criticism for articulating the moral values of only the middle class and the "Western world." Kohlberg stated that he thought that values varied from culture to culture but argued that his developmental sequence of morality was universal across cultures (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Kohlberg argued that whether an individual reached the third level depended on the perspective-taking opportunities of particular social environments. He suggested that individuals from less "complex"

cultures such as the semi-literate peasant village he studied, would not be expected to reach the highest stages in his theory. Snarey (1985) disagreed that cultural groups could be categorized as being complex based on whether or not some members reach stages five or six. He further argued that Kohlberg's theory held a monocultural bias with post-conventional reasoning being based solely on that of Western philosophers such as Kant. As a result, non-Western philosophies were not included in Kohlberg's scoring manual, and therefore, post-conventional moral reasoning was uncommonly seen within some of the cultures he studied.

Another criticism of Kohlberg's theory is centered around the idea that individuals do not always use moral reasoning in the same way for every situation (Krebs & Denton, 2005). Research has found that people tend to make lower-stage moral judgments when faced with more "real-life dilemmas" such as drinking and driving (Krebs *et al.,* 1991). One issue highlighted with hypothetical scenarios is that they tend to allow participants to philosophize about morality in ideal contexts for nonconsequential choices using fictional characters in a fictional moral dilemma. People may be tempted to play the philosopher if invited, though they will likely not be given this same opportunity daily (Krebs & Denton, 2005).

Another issue may be impression management, in that in Kohlberg's hypothetical scenarios, people make different moral decisions to impress different recipients (Johnson & Hogan, 1981). Other ways that real-life and hypothetical dilemmas differ is in real life. The decision maker usually shares a relationship with, has feelings for, or has a history of past interactions with their objects of moral judgments. Additionally, those who make the real-life moral decisions are usually involved in the moral conflict. As a result, the individual has a vested interest in the outcome.

Real-life scenarios also tend to elicit strong emotions, which could affect decision-making (Krebs & Denton, 2005). Additionally, individuals tend to make different kinds of moral judgments regarding themselves compared to moral judgments regarding others. Overall, it seems that individuals tend to retain old structures of moral judgment even after developing new ones. Sometimes, people may even act without moral reasoning and then retroactively invoke moral judgments to justify their decisions (Krebs & Denton, 2005).

2.4 Evolutionary Theory of Morality

Evolutionary psychological theories are concerned with the mental mechanisms that individuals inherit and the behavioral strategies these mechanisms contain. Narrow information segments activate these mechanisms and have input on the particular adaptive problems they were designed to solve. These

psychological mechanisms can also be transformed into output by a set of "if-then" rules. Evolutionary psychologists suggest that the form of judgments people make about their rights and duties would be expected to be more selfish than the judgments they make about the rights and duties of others. Individuals are motivated to advance their interests (Kreb & Denton, 2005). The authors hypothesized that the function of morality is to uphold fitness-enhancing cooperation systems. For example, people may use abstract judgments such as "honesty is the best policy" to induce recipients to uphold cooperation systems from which they will benefit (Krebs & Denton, 2005).

The most effective moral judgments should prescribe behaviors that foster the interests of senders as well as the interests of the recipients. In addition, it would be expected that people make the kinds of moral judgments with the greatest potential to foster their biological interests but also depend on the "if " conditions implicit in the problems they encounter. For example, those relatively equal in power should be more likely to make Stage 2 judgments to each other because that would uphold mutually beneficial deals. In contrast, influential members of groups should make Stage 1 judgments that force weaker members to obey authority to avoid punishment (Krebs and Denton, 2005).

2.5 Kohlberg's Stages from an Evolutionary Viewpoint

In Stage 1 of Kohlberg's theory, moral judgments prescribe obeying those who are more powerful to avoid punishment. Krebs and Denton (2005) argue that weaker group members can defer to those more powerful or suffer the consequences. Therefore, It is more adaptive for these members to submit to the authority of more dominant members to make the best of a bad situation and survive another day.

In Stage 2, moral judgments prescribe helping others and keeping promises so that that help will be returned to you one day. As described in evolutionary theory, those who reciprocate resources may gain more through gains in trade than those who do not (Trivers, 1971). It is thought that reciprocity is rooted in human psychological systems and has given rise to a sense of deserving, gratitude, indebtedness, righteous indignation, retribution, revenge, and vindictiveness, in addition to systems that instill a sense of fairness and justice (Trivers, 1971).

In Stage 3, there are two types of strategies. The first prescribes enhancing one's inclusive fitness by helping members of one's group, and the second prescribes conforming to moral norms. The adaptive benefits of the first strategy vary depending on the relationship between the helper and the recipient. Hamilton (1964) hypothesized that a decision rule evolved that induces individuals to help others when the coefficient of their relatedness is greater than the cost to the helper of helping, divided by the benefits to the

recipient. Therefore, these mechanisms direct individuals to favor helping relatives over nonrelatives, close relatives over distant ones, and more fecund relatives over less fecund relatives.

From a Kohlbergian perspective, moral change will always be upward, with no stage skipping under normal environmental conditions. Each individual will pass through each stage to reach the next stage in the sequence. It is also implied that a person's thinking will remain at a single dominant stage across varying content and situations, though using an adjacent stage is possible (Colby et al., 1983). In contrast, evolutionary theory would expect individuals to use the "stage" or mechanisms most useful in a given situation, dependent on environmental factors.

One should consider that evolutionary theory is not prescriptive but rather descriptive. Evolutionary theory only seeks to describe why. While Kohlberg focused his research on proximate causes, or how questions, this paper sought to focus on Unethical business practices that have plagued organizations in Nigeria, resulting in a high rate of unethical decisions being made by organization leaders, such that affect both the organization and the society (Igbaekemen et al., 2014). Notably, Kohlberg's theory of moral development does not seem to hold up across different cultures, genders, or contexts the way that the evolutionary model of morality may. Therefore, future research could focus on this psychological, evolutionary model of morality to make it more mainstream, as Kohlberg's theory is typically considered the most popular and well-researched.

2.6 Ethical Theories

Understanding organizational leaders' unethical behaviors in Nigeria requires understanding ethical foundations and theories on which leaders might base their decisions and behaviors. For example, Ünal et al. (2012) found that without a foundation of normative ethical theories, supervisors in organizations were more likely to engage in unethical behaviors. Without a firm foundation of ethical principles, leaders cannot apply ethical concepts to their leadership styles, often resulting in unethical behaviors. The theories that supported the conceptual framework for this literature review were teleological utilitarian ethics, deontological ethics, virtue (character-based) ethics, and justice ethics. These ethical approaches addressed many perspectives in organizational leadership, which provided a comprehensive examination of ethics in Nigeria's context of unethical leadership i

2.6.1 Teleological Utilitarian Ethical Theory.

Teleological ethics is a theory of morality in which individuals' sense of duty comes from what is desirable as the goal to be achieved, with the morality of decisions being based on the consequences that come from actions rather than the actions themselves (Burnes & By, 2012). Within this context, two approaches to teleological ethics are hedonism and utilitarianism. Hedonism relies on pleasure as a basis for good, while utilitarianism relies on achieving the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Kanungo, 2001). This ethical approach aligned effectively with transactional leadership, which attempted to bring satisfaction to the organization's most significant number of individuals (Abrhiem, 2012). This ethical approach is beneficial because it focuses on the good of the group rather than the individual (Masten, 2012). This focus is important for organizations because individuals need to work cooperatively for mutual organizational goals and objectives. Conversely, one potential drawback of this ethical approach is that it can be interpreted as the ends justifying the means (Masten, 2012).

In the context of ethical and unethical leadership, this can lead to leaders behaving unethically to accomplish specific organizational goals. For instance, an organization may use unethical business practices to improve financial outcomes. Within the context of teleological ethics, particularly from a utilitarian perspective, organizational leaders may focus on the financial outcomes of the business, such as sales records or production rates. This may be advantageous to achieve the financial and operational outcomes for the business but may overlook the needs of the employees in the process of achieving those outcomes.

2.6.2 Deontological Ethical Theory. Unlike teleological ethics, deontological ethics emphasize actions as morally good rather than the outcome of the actions (Chakrabarty & Bass, 2015). This ethical approach is usually based on institutional rules, laws, and other regulations as a foundation for behavior. Deontological ethics guide the ethical behavior of organizations based on institutional, legal, and social standards of acceptable behavior, while socially accepted norms help dictate and guide ethical actions in individuals and organizations (Chakrabarty & Bass, 2015). In a business context, deontological ethics focuses on duties to stakeholders, such as employees, customers, the business community, and others involved (Chakrabarty & Bass, 2015). Deontological ethics are, in this sense, the opposite of teleological ethics but equally important for understanding ethical practices within an organizational setting. This ethical approach includes specific behaviors of acts required, permitted, or forbidden (Alexander & Moore, 2012).

The deontological ethics approach is advantageous for organizational stakeholders because it governs organizational leaders' actions with far less emphasis on the outcomes of those actions. Under this ethical theory, leaders make decisions based on regulations and policies, such as those established within an organization, intending that the policies benefit the stakeholders. This approach among leaders can result in a strong company culture and satisfied employees. However, since this approach focuses on the processes and actions, rather than the outcomes from the actions, even ethical behaviors might cause unethical consequences for the organization. In deontological ethics, the means justify the ends.

2.6.3   Virtue Ethical Theory. Virtue ethics is what it says it is. In contrast to the deontological ethics theory, which emphasizes duties and rules, or the consequentialism approach that emphasizes consequences of actions, virtue ethics focuses on moral character (Crisp, 2015; Hursthouse, 2012). Where teleological ethics centers on the outcomes and deontological ethics center on the actions, virtue ethics focuses on the person (Hursthouse, 2012). In virtue ethics, individuals ask what type of person they should be rather than what actions they should take or what goals they should achieve (Hursthouse, 2012). Within this context, the actions taken by the individual are insignificant if the individual is ethical and morally upright.

Virtue ethics gets less attention within the organizational context than teleological and deontological ethical approaches. This may be because the teleological and deontological approaches emphasize the relationship between the leader as a stakeholder and the organization, whereas virtue ethics focuses exclusively on the leader. Virtue ethics does not place great significance on the leaders' relationship with the organization, suggesting less applicability of virtue ethics in the corporate world (Audi, 2012). Because virtue ethics approach is beneficial to the organization under the assumption that the organizational leader is ethical and will make ethical decisions on behalf of the organization. However, since this approach does not emphasize consequentialism, organizational leader utilizing the virtue ethics approach might not act in the organization's best interests. Despite that, virtue ethics may become the measure of organizational ethical practices (Fontrodona, Sison, & de Bruin, 2013).

2.6.4   Justice Ethical Theory: The justice ethical approach can be understood through John Rawls's (2009) theory of justice, which blends justice, virtue, and ethics which is highly applicable to the business world. According to Rawls (2009), "The goal is to present a conception of justice, which generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar theory of the social contract as found in Locke, Rousseau, and Kant (p.10)." Within the context of the social contract, the applicability to the

business world can be seen in the justice ethics approach. The purpose of the social contract is to have an understanding among the people working together that they are working toward the same goals and objectives, which should strengthen the ability of the individuals to work as a team (Rawls, 2009).

From a leadership perspective, justice ethics can be applied to how leaders treat their teams and the decisions made to contribute to the ideals and principles of justice to achieve organizational success (Rhodes, 2012). Even in a global business world, which includes its unique challenges, justice ethics, particularly when viewed as a virtue, can lead to ethical decisions because of the desire to achieve justice for stakeholders (Dierksmeier & Celano, 2012). Besides, a justice ethics approach often includes a moral obligation to achieve justice (Yoon, 2011). An organizational leader may feel obligated to behave a certain way to achieve justice for stakeholders. In this way, justice ethics are aligned with teleological ethics, which focus on outcomes rather than the actions taken to achieve the outcomes.

2.6.5 Unethical Leadership Behavior

For many organizational leaders, the best solution to an ethical dilemma is to have a predetermined role, objective principle, and principle reformulated as corporate policy (Yammarino et al., 2013). This sets clear expectations for leaders' behaviors and employees in the organization. Bishop (2013) described ethical behavior as a reflection process and a communal exercise that concerns the moral behavior of individuals based on an established and expressed standard of individual values. Zheng and Mirshekary (2015) concluded that ethical behavior is required for all organizational leaders. Employees' ethical behaviors tend to show higher validity than knowledge-based measures (Zheng & Mirshekary, 2015). Blair et al. (2014) were convinced that the standard for behavior in business should not differ from the standards that apply outside of the work environment.

Charalabidis (2012) noted that ethics has traditionally involved applying principle-based reasoning and philosophy that connects to the complex problems associated with conducting business. Organizational leaders are expected to lead by example and be the authority to approach when an ethical dilemma occurs. That explains the conclusion by Hassan et al. (2013) that organizational leaders have a responsibility to uphold the highest standards of ethical behavior. Responsibility indicates that organization leaders are most at fault for ethical or unethical corporate behavior. Individuals can be responsible, and not organizations (Stanaland et al., 2011). Pot (2011), elaborating on the work of Drucker (1960) titled The Matters of Business Ethics, concluded that business ethics does not exist. Still, contemporary business ethics is a form

of what he considered casuistry. Several situational factors influence a leader's decision toward unethical practices (Drucker, 1960). Leaders may make bad decisions when deciding on performance, unethical issues, or interpersonal conflict (Yao et al., 2014). The need to develop conceptual clarity about unethical practices and the breadth of the context of ethical challenges is inevitable (Hassan et al., 2013).

2.6.6 Ethics and Organizational Culture

Ethical leadership affects an organization's culture (Shin, 2012) and could be examined in several ways. A company's performance outcomes can be an effective way to examine the ethical practices of its leadership (Kim & Brymer, 2011). Tsai (2011) studied the relationship between leadership practices, organizational culture, and job satisfaction. Ethical leadership establishes a culture of ethical practices (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012). That ethical culture can be incorporated into the company's overall business strategy (Orlitzky et al., 2011). Incorporating ethical leadership culture into the company's overall strategy formalizes and institutionalizes ethical practices, which creates accountability for stakeholders to adhere to ethical policies and regulations. For instance, Groves and LaRocca (2011) studied ethical leadership and attitudes toward corporate social responsibility, finding that transactional leadership is a practical approach to stakeholders' views on corporate social responsibility. However, the company culture, including employee relationships, can also affect ethical behaviors and decision-making (Tilley *et al.*, 2012)

2. 7   Emperical Review

The review of the literature showed several consequences of unethical practice among leaders in organizations, as well as exposed the challenges confronting leadership, no previous literature was found on the factors responsible for unethical leadership practices in organizations in Nigeria (Bush, & Glover, 2016; Nwosu, 2016). This showed a gap in what is known about leadership, and this gap needs to be investigated to effectively address the problem of unethical practices by leaders in Nigerian organizations. Based on the examination of current literature conducted for this study, the primary gap is the lack of research dedicated to understanding the factors within the organizational context that encourage leaders in Nigeria organizations to be involved in unethical practices despite having ethical leadership skills and knowledge.

Nwosu (2016) suggested that lack of institutional, legal framework and industry representation are some challenges confronting leaderships in Nigeria. Institutional legal frameworks for organizations serve

a wide range of functions. Within the context of unethical practices are two primary benefits of legislation: expectations and accountability. The legislation creates expectations for organization leaders for operations and practices.

Due to increased emphasis on globalization and its importance in today's business world, leaders are expected to learn continuously on the job while performing their duties. Organizations are taking on an increased role in the development and implementation of regulation because, they have such an important role in the influence. of society, which influences politics (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). These expectations from organizations helped guide the organizational strategy, such as in developing innovative products (Wu, 2011). For many organizations, regulations are the minimum of what is done. However, in business ethics, organizational leaders implement corporate responsibility policies that move beyond the requirements of the law (Norman, 2012). This is not always the case, but when organizations want to improve their reputations, corporate responsibility and governance is one way it is accomplished.

Despite the previous research on challenges confronting leadership, no previous literature was found on the factors responsible for unethical leadership practices in organizations in Nigeria (Adisa *et al.,* 2014). The lack of previous research challenged the organization because organizations rely on evidence as a foundation for strategy and policy formulations. Even the most innovative approaches to organization strategies are built on justification from research. Without research, organization leaders would be forced to develop and implement strategies by trial and error. In the context of preventing unethical practices by organizations, if the factors that encourage or temp its leaders to be involved in unethical practices are not known, the organization cannot effectively develop strategies to prevent them

.3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Literature Search Strateg

Literature relevant to the subject matter were assembled from peer-reviewed journal articles, Conference proceedings and books from s online library, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Dissertations and Theses-Full Text databases, Academic Search Complete, Emerald Management, Sage Premier, Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, Thoreau, EBSCOhost, PsycARTICLES, Science Direct, PsycINFO,

Political Science Complete, and ProQuest Central. Conceptual amd theorstical frame works were used to esplain the unethical practices in the hospitality industry

4.0 Discussion of Ethical Inhibiting Factors in Nigeria's Hospitality Industry

The Nigerian hospitality industry is experiencing significant growth, underpinned by a burgeoning economy and the allure of the nation's cultural attractions., according to Gloria (2024) the hospitality industry has contributed substantially to national development However, this growth is not bereft of ethical inhibiting factors that need careful consideration. These inhibiting factors can be comprehensively understood through the lens of Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, which comprises three levels of moral development, each relevant to different facets of the industry's ethical challenges.

At the pre-conventional level, some businesses may prioritize self-interest above all else. Consequently, they resort to unethical practices such as overpricing, hidden fees, and subpar services. These actions are driven by maximizing profit without adequate concern for the ethical implications, potentially leading to a lack of trust among customers.

At the conventional level, the hospitality industry grapples with inconsistencies in adhering to ethical standards. These variations can result in a lack of uniformity in service quality and customer experiences. The absence of a common ethical baseline and standards can harm the industry's reputation and ability to foster trust among its patrons.

Finally, the industry faces its most pronounced ethical challenges at the post-conventional level. Corruption is pervasive, and unethical practices such as bribery for licenses and favorable treatment are prevalent. This is supported by the reports of Ejigbo *et a*l (2023) and Adejoh *et al*,(2023) that corruption is prevalent in all facetsv of the Nigerian life and has sliowed down the growth and development of many organizations , the civil/public service and Nigeria as a whole The absence of consistent standards and the persistence of unethical labor practices, such as inadequate wages and poor working conditions, compound the ethical landscape's complexity. Environmental neglect and a lack of cultural sensitivity add additional layers to the industry's ethical inhibiting factors Gabriel and Nathan (2024) reported a link between culture and the hospitality industry.

5.0   Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, the growth and development of the hospitality industry in Nigeria are accompanied by a myriad of ethical inhibiting factors that demand critical attention. Kohlberg's moral development theory provides valuable insights into the ethical challenges at all three levels of moral development - pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. The issues of corruption, inconsistent standards, labor concerns, environmental neglect, and cultural insensitivity have ramifications that extend beyond immediate ethical concerns. These factors damage the industry's reputation and hinder its long-term growth and sustainability.

5.2 Recommendations for Ethical Growth and Development

A host of recommendations can be put forth to foster ethical growth and development within the Nigerian hospitality industry, considering the complex ethical inhibiting factors. Here, we delve into each recommendation in more detail, expanding upon the strategies to address these challenges:

1. **Ethical Leadership:** Ethical leadership fosters a culture of integrity within the industry. Industry leaders should exemplify ethical behavior and set the standards for others to follow. Establishing codes of ethics and values-driven leadership programs can help instill these principles throughout the industry. Moreover, leaders must prioritize ethical decision-making and promote a culture of openness and transparency.

2. **Industry-Wide Standards:** The industry should strive to develop a unified code of ethics that all businesses operating within the hospitality sector adhere to. This code would encompass ethical standards, guidelines for responsible and sustainable business practices, and mechanisms for monitoring compliance. Industry associations and governing bodies can play a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining these standards.

3. **Resource Management and Sustainability:** Sustainable and ethical business practices should be championed across the sector. This involves comprehensive waste management strategies, energy-efficient technologies, and an unwavering commitment to environmental conservation. These initiatives can significantly reduce the industry's carbon footprint and ecological impact, demonstrating a commitment to ethical responsibility.

4. **Employee Well-being:** Prioritizing the well-being of employees is not only ethically sound but also crucial for retaining skilled and dedicated staff. This involves ensuring fair wages, comprehensive benefits, and safe and pleasant working conditions. Employee engagement programs and professional development opportunities can further demonstrate the industry's commitment to its workforce.

5. **Cultural Sensitivity and Community Engagement**: The hospitality industry must prioritize cultural sensitivity and community engagement, especially in diverse cultural contexts. This requires a deep understanding of local customs and traditions, respect for cultural diversity, and active involvement in community development initiatives. Establishing cultural training programs for staff and adopting practices that respect local cultural sensitivities can significantly enhance the industry's ethical standing.

By implementing these recommendations, the Nigerian hospitality industry can align itself with global ethical standards and demonstrate its commitment to ethical growth and development. The ethical landscape is not merely a moral imperative but also a strategic advantage in an increasingly competitive global marketplace, ensuring the industry's long-term sustainability, trustworthiness, and appeal to consumers.

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