Work Ethics and Public Service Delivery: A Review of Literature and Agenda for Future Research

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Abstract
Factors influencing the delivery of public sectors have been a major concern in developing countries. This is born out of the fact that ethical conducts of public servants aresignificant to the success of effective public service delivery. It is no longer news that there are dysfunctions in the Public Service in Nigeria leading to failure in service delivery. While studies have shown this, its relationship with work ethics requires further investigation. This study, therefore, aims at interrogating the relationship between work ethics and public service delivery. Data obtained from six academic databases such as google scholar, Scopus, peered reviewed journals, Jstor, Science Direct (Elsevier), Web of Science, ProQuest, and Sage were systematically reviewed. The result of the analysis revealed that there is relationship between work ethics and public service delivery.
Keywords: Ethics, Ethics, Public service, Public service delivery, Work ethics

Introduction
The delivery of services in the Nigerian public sector has been widely criticized (Abasilim, Gberevbie, and Ifaloye, 2017:109). Different problems based on unethical behaviour have been pointed out as some of things promoting good service delivery's inefficiency and ineffectiveness. It is seen that work ethic is an essential concept in today's businesses because employee behaviour strongly contributes to the success of an organisation in the international market. According to Gberevbie (2017: 189), organisations, irrespective of the sector they belong to, are set up to achieve specific goals and objectives. This calls for intense work ethics training to be imbibed by employees to realize these set-up goals and objectives effectively.
Work ethics, attitude, and value affect the performance of every organisation. This is because the most significant resource in any organisation is human factors. Any organization's success is linked to its employees' performance and is measured by assessing the outcome, which is the

service delivery.Values are "the foundation upon which individual morals and outlooks are constructed" (Bernard and Oyende, 2015:157).

Governments worldwide, including Nigeria, crave for various methods of providing good services to the people with fewer assets, transparency and accountability. Due to this, the objectives of public sectorsas regardsimproved delivery of services are elicited. With this, it serves as the government's most important mechanism through which plans are executed (Abasilim, Gberevbie and Ifaloye, 2017:109).

It is in line with the foregoing that this study intends to scrutinise the relationship between work ethics and public service delivery. Theoretically, this study will serve as a reference material and secondary source of data valuable to people, the public authority, local officials, private proprietors, individuals, scholars, researchers and human resources experts who are interested in future research. The paper is structured into introduction, literature review on work ethics and public service delivery, methodology, findings and discussions, recommendations and conclusion.

Conceptual Clarification

This section is focused on the definition of key concepts that are relevant to this study and basically the concept of work ethics and that of public service delivery deserves clarifications.

Concept of Work Ethics

Ethics is the adaptation of rules, regulations, standards code of conduct in a certain institution or profession known as Work Ethics. The concept of work ethics cannot be overemphasised in organisations, regardless of the sector they belong to. This is because to attain the success of any institution's goals and objectives, laid down rules and regulations are relevant for shaping employees' attitudes and behaviour within organisations (Gberevbie, 2017).

Work ethics is an important concept needed to be imbibed in any action and responsibility of a public servant (Abdullah and Halim, 2016).Human resource research has been a significant focus in promoting ethical conduct in organisations (Khan, Abbas, Gul, and Raja, 2015). A positive attitude is expected of employees to "guarantee effective, efficient and increase work productivity and good service delivery" (Abdullah and Halim, 2016:2). An individual approach, feeling, and principles towards organisational responsibilities are seen as the work ethics of such individuals, either positive or negative or productive or unproductive (Oyelade, 2017).

According to Heelas (2002), "work ethics of whatever variety involves the ascription of value to work. Work is valued as a means to some end." For instance, work ethics are commonly mentioned as a characteristic of good players in a sporting activity. Irrespective of the environment, work ethics is commonly connected with individuals who involve themselves in working hard and doing a good job. Tripathi (2014, p.1) views work ethics as a "set of values based on hard work and diligence." He also stated that work ethics are based on the belief that work has intrinsic meaning and the ability to develop one's character. Anastasia (2016) corroborated the views of Tripathi (2014) on work ethics because according to him, capitalism "emphasizes the importance of hard work and the negligible desire to change one's character.

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while thesocialist believes that the idea of "hard work" is deceiving the laborers in being faithful to the top classes and hard work is not essential, it is just a method to generate more finances for the elites" (Tripathi, 2014, p.1).

According to Omisore and Adeleke (2015, p.158), work ethics refers to "a set of principles relating to morals, especially as they apply to human conduct." They also pointed out that work ethic is all about an ethically right attitude, good and acceptable in the sight of the majority people in an organisation, group, community, or society, and various conduct that has grown into a set of public norms generally. This can be traced to the fact that ethics and morals are slightly different in terms of meaning, even though they are often used interchangeably. Morality involves a person's belief system. At the same time, ethics reveals society's expectations of acceptable behaviour. This acknowledges that ethical practices are "naturally shaped in social settings like Churches, places of work, and so on" (Kott, 2012, p.1). It is expected for individuals to comply with the ethical rules known as the code of conduct in most places.Omisore (2015) believes that work ethics involve both morals and values of a society, community, and group, which brought about his view of work ethics. According to him, workplace ethics are ingrained. It emerges from inside, and the display of individual work ethics comes from his values, which is dependent on such individual experience, environment, influences from parents, teachers, friends, family, and so on. Therefore, work ethics can be influenced by "organisational training, coaching, and motivation" (Omisore, 2015, p.157)

The view of work ethic has also been seen by some scholars from employee's perspectives. Ushie and Agba (2015: 118) sees it as the "involvement of personal accountability and responsibility of an employee on a work done." Reeves (2015) sees it as when an act of will to get a job effectively and timely done without any complain and a good work ethic depends on honesty, responsibility, personal integrity, and teamwork. Agi (2017:2) identifies work ethics as "principles to be followed by workers in a workplace in which they earn salary and wages for." He stated that these principles entail everything that surrounds the kind of work each employee does, such as; dress codes, working conditions, working relationships, working hours, work permits, teamwork, working order, justification of salaries/wages, etc. With this, it is seen by Kumara and Dutta (2019, p.33) as "employee's accountability and responsibilities toward their assigned duties advocated by the organisation."

Owuor, Nyambegera and Wainaina (2020, p.9) see it as a "link to behaviouralism. It involves the behaviourial approach of employees and the involvement of moral positivism towards doing a great job through loyalty, honesty, and compassion."According to various Nigerian public service ethical conduct (Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, the Civil Service Rules, and Financial Regulations),the ethical standards are Discipline, Honesty, Loyalty, Courtesy, Courage and Tact" (Omisore, 2015:161). It is seen by Velasquaez (2011:38) as "the code of conduct governing public officials that enables them to obey the right standards, thus prompting organisational productivity level and the resulting profitability level."

Organisational work ethics helps in "disciplining workers and gives them an environment of honesty, fairness, and integrity" (Hayat, Shakeel and Chen; 2021:22). A worker who exhibits good working ethics in an ideal organisation is usually picked for better positions, promotions and great opportunities. In contrast,workers who don't exhibit good working ethics are regarded

as those who have failed to give fair value for the salary being paid to them by their employees. Therefore, they won't be promoted or given great opportunities (Rahman, 1956; Omisore, 2015). One method to educate workers on ethical matters is through ethical awareness or training programs(Kumara and Dutta 2019:34). This is because, in every organisation, ethical conduct is properly executed and must be implanted by all workers of the environment (Palchoudhary, 2016). Asadi (2010) stated that the ethical value of an organisation should be dependent on two (2) things, that is; the community culture ethics and the professional ethics (Al-Nashash, Panigrahi and Darun, 2018), e.g., medical, engineering and lecturing.

With all the views above, work ethics can be generally seen as the various ethical principles expected by the general public, a community, a state and employers of labour internally and externally about the value of an organisation for its employees and stakeholders. It can also be seen as moral standards controlling an organisation to attain good conduct and socio-economic development in an organisation, and punishable under law, that is legally binding, thereby creating various legal and administrative measures to direct or co-ordinate the behaviour of a man in a working environment, (working environment is a setting, where a variety of different behaviours and practices are expressed and communicated) especially in the society and it has to do with how people perform their jobs, which may be seen as ethical or immoral.Where such ethical behaviour is displayed in any organisation, the "enhancement of service delivery of the organisation rises and the administrative, financial and economic aims are achieved" (Aluko and Adesopo 2015:86). While examples of work unethical behaviours are: absenteeism, lateness and practices that result in community dissimilarities (Robinson and Bennett, 2000). "In any organisation where these practices are widespread, the outcome will be poor service delivery" (Aluko and Adesopo 2015, p.86).

Concept of Public Service Delivery

Public service in any society is a "significant pillar in molding the nation's development and strength because it is created as an engine to process, carry out and extend the duty of the public authority as well as conveying satisfactory support of the citizens and executing government detailed arrangements" (Oni, Oni and Gberevbie, 2015:13). "In Nigeria, public services according to the1999 constitution are the federation services in any dimension in respect of the Federal Government" (Abasilim and Edet, 2015:34).It works through Ministries, Departments, and Agencies to deliver services" (Abasilim, Gberevbie and Ifaloye, 2017:109).An activity of a state that deals with the "interaction between the government and citizens is seen as public service" (Eneanya, 2018:2).Eneanya (2018) further classifies it as an institutional arrangement adopted by the government in providing goods and services to its citizens.It is also viewed as a government agency loaded with the obligation of executing the public's will (Osawe, 2017).In providing services to the people of every nation, public service is significant (Igbuzor, 2017). Public service is the way by which the government can carry out its duties safely and effectively.In providing and allocating public amenities across society, public service plays a critical role. They help the government of a given country to provide "peace, order and good governance" (Dorcas, 2018:33).An ideal government's primary concern is 'how reasonable and

adequate public services would be rendered to all citizens irrespective of their financial status (Prado-Lorenzo, 2013).

Public service delivery is the method of addressing citizen's requirements through swift and effective actions. This indicates the government-citizen communication such that the need of the citizens is timely met, making the citizens a key player (Oronsaye, 2010). Ohemeng (2010:115) views public service delivery as "doing more with less, empowering citizens, enhancing transparency and holding public servants accountable."Public service delivery help to "define public organisation activities that help meet the need of the people and enhance the living standard of citizens through health care facilities, security, water, infrastructure, public transport and electricity" (Excellence-Oluye, Gberevbie and Ibietan 2019:1329). It is concerned with delivering fair public services to people with minimal capital and fostering public servant openness and responsibility. Due to this, the priority of public sectors in terms of delivering quality services comes into perspective. This is because it is the primary mechanism by which government programs are executed. Still, when it comes to the form and manner in which services are provided, the Nigerian public service has received criticism(Abasilim, Gberevbie and Ifaloye, 2017).

Nigeria is Africa's most populous region with over one hundred and eighty million (180, 000, 000) people and 47% of the total West African population (World Bank, 2018), which has over three hundred (300) ethnic groups (Rasul & Rogger, 2018). As a country that operates a federal government system, each group has an independent public service that delivers services based on the constitutional arrangement (Lawan, Ajadi, Kayode and Yaru, 2020:5). Every organisation that is "part of implementing government policy decisions and public services delivery is referred to as public sector" (Ihemeje and Afegbua, 2020:62). "It has been seen that the high level of service delivery in a private sector can't be kept side by side with the level of decay in public sectors" (Lawan, Ajadi, Kayode, and Yaru, 2020:5) and this has resulted in the high rate of poverty, poor access to education and health services, inequality as well as a widened gap between the citizens and government thereby creating public trust gap (Abdulkareem, 2015). Due to this, various reformshave been carried out to shape public sectors into more output- and consumer-driven mode (Ikeanyibe, 2016; Okon, 2015).

Therefore, the difference between public service and public service delivery is that public services are "tools that link the government to the citizens and vice-versa, while the delivery of this public services brings about the feasibility of this link of the government with the citizens that enables the quality assessment of this service" (Eneanya, 2018:1). With all the views above, Public service delivery can be generally seen as the provision of constitutional need of citizens by public officials which ought to be timely, fairly, adequate, effective and transparent. Under this term, citizens are seen as a priorities.The successful execution of the country's laws is known as public service delivery.It can also be described as the process of responding to citizens' needs in a timely and efficient manner. "In the traditional form of public administration, service delivery is encircled with paper-based long procedures that make the citizen dissatisfied with the services because of several problems such as delay in the service, corruption and centrally located offices" (Karim, 2015:49).

Methodology

This study applied a qualitative systematic review research design. This is a suitable design for this study as it involves the collection, analysis and interpretation ofdata, derived from secondary sources(Kitchenham, 2004). This design deals with the provision of a substantive overview and contribution of current knowledge about a concept or topic (Zawacki-Richter, Kerres, Bedenlier, Bond,and Buntins, 2020).
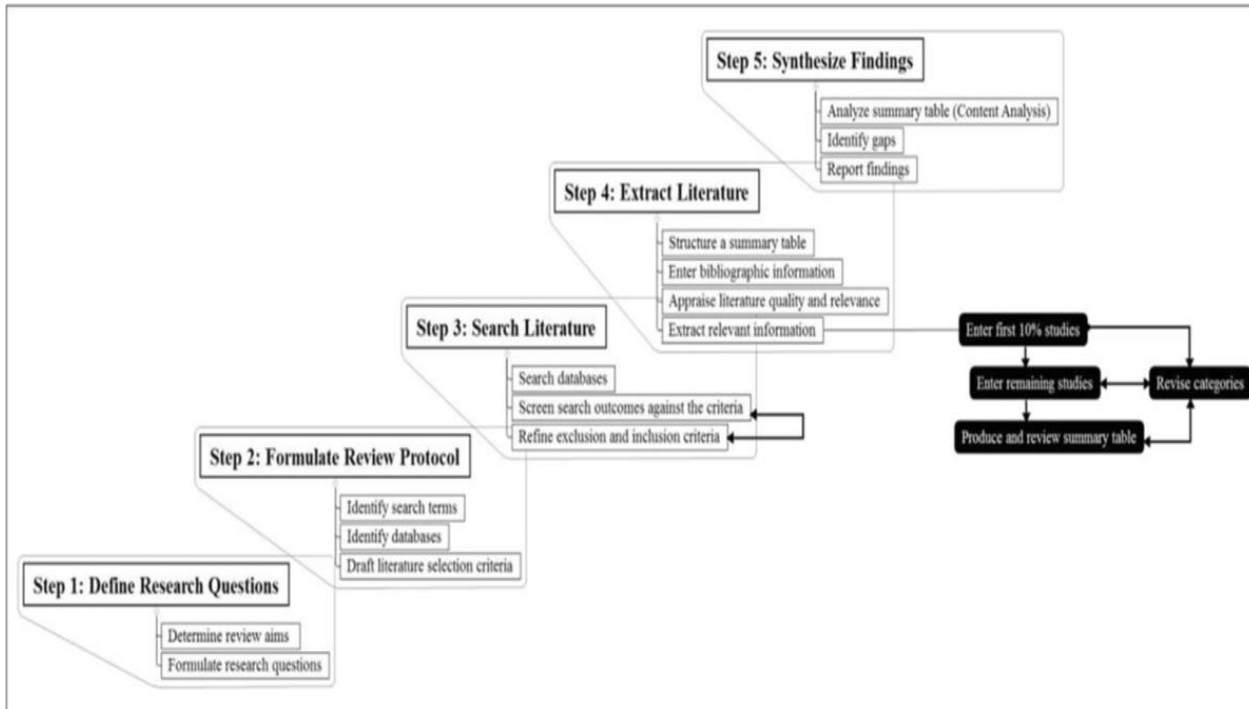
Source: Pickering and Byrne (2014)

This study is descriptive in nature. Descriptive designs enable one to account, describe, review and authenticate the nature, activities and state of work ethics and public service delivery as one can analytically assess facts and data regarding the subject matter (Oni, Oni, Ibietan, and Deinde-Adedeji, 2020). This method was adopted because the goal is the critical interrogation of relevant literature to engender further research.

This involves secondary research data collected from six academic database such as google scholar, Scopus, peered reviewed journal, Jstor, Science Direct (Elsevier)Webof Science, ProQuest, and Sage that were systematically reviewed to ensure comprehensiveness. Fifty percent of the data used for this study were between the years '2015-2021'.

Records identified through databased with the search "work ethic and public service delivery"	1,550,132
Records screened after irrelevant and duplication removed	136
Records excluded	44
Eligible studies used	92

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Findings and Discussions

The diagram above confirms that there is a connectivity between Work ethics and service delivery, though, the impact and importance of work ethics on service delivery cannot be overemphasized, it is, therefore, essential to know that these two concepts has been deliberated upon by different scholars but yet to be merged as one.

Work ethics has proven to be a good analysis of service deliveries in public sectors according to Ikotun (2004). He argues that work ethics can result in high standards of service quality and that incorporating work ethics will assist organisations to bring about good effective service delivery. Studies have shown that Nigeria's public service has struggled with questions of honesty, openness, and responsibility since independence. It is observed by Adegoroye (2005) that the lack of ethical and legal practices in almost every area of daily life has been linked to the failure of administrations in Nigeria throughout history.

According to Adegoroye (2005), the military's inability to comprehend legal and ethical values led to a series of military coups that damaged all segments of Nigerian society. Also, he saw how this reflected on the school system's failure, increased violence, health-care abuse, and a general public-service culture of greed, indiscipline, and corruption. "The consequential effect of cooperating on standards is that everyone in the society becomes the ultimate loser", (Aluko and Adesopo, 2015:82).

The above explanation shows how important the public service needs to be involved in strong work ethics to provide an effective service. It is remarkable to note that after the whole control processes introduced to guarantee a principled public service structure today, public service ethics still appears or seems to have been set aside. "Bribery and corruption, nepotism, embezzlement, bestowing of favours on relations and friends, moonlighting, partiality, absenteeism, late coming to work, abuse of public property, leaking and or abuse of government information have become the norm" (Aluko and Adesopo 2015:83).

Ikotun (2004, p.70) states that the "Nigeria government expresses grave concern about Nigerian Public Officers' general attitude to work and the attitude of public officers to work in all public sector organisation leaves much to be desired." It is said that the affiliated effect of this is that the public has become extremely critical of the public service and they are losing faith in its ability to deliver quality service (Williams, 2002). He continues in his explanation that government programs' success or failure, to a large extent, rests squarely on the shoulders of the public officers. If the public officers embrace a negative work attitude and are involved in corruption, it is doubtful that Nigeria's general public will enjoy the dividends of democracy (Williams, 2002).

Raga and Taylor (2005, p.26) look at public officials' accountability and openness in terms of decision-making under the concept of work ethics in bringing about service delivery transparency. Public officials are to be opened to the people stating reasons for every action and decision they make. This coincides with Omotoso's (2014) view of work ethics and public service delivery, using accountability and public trust as a parameter, stating that "actions and duties taken by public officials are to be transparent and accountable to the citizens which automatically brings about public trust." To Vigoda-Gadot (2006), it does not only bring about

public trust but also generates a positive perception of citizens and also citizens satisfaction as the assessment in his research done was based on the point of view of citizens' behaviours as clients or customers of the bureaucratic machinery. Raga and Taylor (2005) also spotted how accountability can be a helping ground to public officials during an ethical dilemma in bringing about good service delivery, as according to them,

> ethical code of conduct, adherence to accountability principles, and appropriate training can make a difference in the ethical dilemmas of public officials, particularly concerning effective and efficient service delivery… An ethical code of conduct is necessary to guide the public official in public service rendering to the community and safeguard against unfair demands by the community. This conduct leads to the promotion of a positive image of the public service.

Another aspect of some literature looks at various unethical challenges resulting in a negative service delivery faced by a public official are ethical dilemma and nepotism (Adeyemi, 2016), fraud and corruption, as according to Lawton and Doig (2008), fraud and corruption are two broad concepts that are parented by ethical challenges limiting expected good service delivery and unethical administrative ethics, which is seen as the wrongful application of moral principles to the conduct of official responsibilities and duties in an organization (Davies and Egbuchu, 2019).

In addition, Beetseh and Kohol (2014) generally look at the positive attribute as courtesy, loyalty, integrity, respect, confidentiality, neutrality, discipline, and accountability, upholding the tenets of efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity in the public sector. Employees' integrity, self-discipline, and organizational values are also positive attributes identified by scholars (Ibrahim and Yakubu, 2019; Sullivan, 2020). Coming from the professional point of view, Aoyagi and Portenga (2010) identifies professional boundaries, confidentiality, and self-regulation as tools that public officials need to imbibe in performing their official duties using performance as a tool in measuring its service delivery

The concept of ethical leadership is a term that scholars has not neglected under the relationship between work ethics and public service delivery. Ethical Leadership is one problem faced in Nigeria (Beetseh and Kohol, 2014). When the government, who are the leaders of the country and the formulator and implementor of the rule of law, are seen as corrupt officials, embezzlers of public funds, and unethical individuals, the people suffer for it. There need to be visionary, capable, responsible, and ethical leadership that automatically attracts ethical decision-making (Beetseh and Kohol, 2014; Lawton, Rayner and Lasthuizen, 2013). According to Jordan (2013), ethical leadership in this concept attracts not only ethical decision-making but also attracts ethical innovation. It ethically innovates ways to improve public service delivery as a segment of good public management.

In a different manner, few researchers were of the perspective that for public servants to adhere to the code of conduct of their respective offices, there is a need to train, coach, motivate them and set up a body that rewards good behaviour and/or punishes bad behaviour and by doing this, sanity, better and equitable service delivery will be achieved (Omisore and Adeleke, 2015; Adewusi, 2016). Therefore, it is seen that employees' work ethics affects the organisation's service delivery. This is because the performance and services are tied down to actions taken by

every worker in an organisation (Omisore, 2015:158). Public officials are required to carry out their obligations by the law and their professional, ethical standard, as they ought not to allow their interest conflict with the position they occupy (e.g., accepting unethical gifts) and also ensure the management and the effective and resourceful use of public funds, properties and facilities (The Nigeria 1999 Constitution as amended; Chigudu, 2015:107).

A positive attitude is expected of employees to guarantee effective, efficient, and increased work productivity and good service delivery (Abdullah and Halim, 2016:2). An individual approach, feeling, and principles towards organisational responsibilities are seen as the work ethics of such individuals, which can either be positive or negative or productive or unproductive (Oyelade, 2017:73).

The effectiveness, efficiency, and timely productivity of any nation's healthcare service delivery for example are based on the work ethical standard with the combination of financial and human resources. The saying health is wealth is a requirement for not just for personal productivity but also national development, as a country ought to invest significantly in their health sectors for a country to have healthy citizens by providing quality equipment, ethical and adequate workers, easy access, and affordable medical services for citizens (Daniel and Tormusa, 2016:4). In line with the forgoing, Zadeh, Kahouei, Cheshmenour and Sangestani (2016) argue that ethical standard taken by health workers helps improve the satisfaction of patients, quality services, management and planning of activities in the hospital, it increases productivity, strengthens teamwork conscience, and also bring compensation for ethical workers and organisational morale. It reduces organisational damage, dissatisfaction, discrimination and injustice.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The general impression of the work of scholars reviewed on ethics and public service delivery establishes a conclusion that the major concern of public administration in developing countries is the public services ethical practices (Sebola, 2018). "It is no longer news that there are dysfunctions in the Public Service in Nigeria leading to failure in service delivery" (Igbuzor, 2017:4). It is seen that "Nigerians today are faced with tremendous public service ethical crisis because of the high level of personal greed, conflict of interest and laziness amongst public officials which has affected all spheres of life (personal, public, economic, social, political and moral life) greatly" (Dorcas, 2018:33). The study sought to understand the relational pattern between work ethics and service delivery and it also buttresses the understanding of work ethics and service delivery.It equallysought to identifynumerous academic researches on different ideal ethical practices of the public services and also unethical practice displayed by public servants leading to ineffective and inefficient public service delivery.

The gap identified in this study is the limited research done by researchers and scholars on the mechanism of public servants work ethics that engenders effective public service delivery as most researchers focuses more on the means to an end instead of the mean to a means to an end. Although, suggested ways in combatting unethical practices in the public services were stated by scholars but upon all this, the "suggestion has been ineffective and this is most

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especially because of those who ought to respect and implement them has undermined them without the fear of victimisation and other various challenges" (Sebola, 2018: 57)

In view of the above, the following recommendations are put forward:

a. There should be adequate research on mechanisms in enhancing public servants work ethics in bringing about employees' growth and effective service delivery.

b. Organisations should consider the fact that for them to provide a good and effective service delivery to the citizens of Nigeria, their work ethics have to be a thing of both the lower level and also the higher-level staff, that is; top officers in public sectors should show good examples.

c. Self-discipline should occur not only among or within the lower staffs but also the higher-level staffs. And to be able to achieve this, one must have secret agencies working among them and also one should encourage the public to make use of their device in terms of snapping or videoing wrong ethical manners.

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