

# Effect of Personality Trait on Ethical Leadership in Selected Basic Schools in Ghana

Isaac Boakye, Martin Gyambrah

University of Applied Management, Ghana Campus, P.O. Box KN 2560 Accra

**Abstract-** The aim of the study was to examine the effect of the big five personality traits on ethical leadership using selected public basic schools within the Ayawaso district in Ghana. A total of 180 respondents consisting of leaders and subordinates were conveniently selected for the study. The leaders responded to a questionnaire concerning their personality traits while subordinates rated the ethical behavior of their leaders. Data collected was analyzed mainly using hierarchical regression analysis and independent sample t-test. Results indicated that, personality traits such as conscientiousness and extraversion had a positive effect on ethical leadership behavior after controlling for all other variables. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that leader conscientiousness accounts for the most variance in ethical leadership behavior. Also, there was no significant difference in ethical leadership behavior due to gender of leaders. A summary of the overall findings of the study are discussed as well as future directions for further study.

**Index Terms-** Ethical Leadership, Personality traits, Gender.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a huge role in helping organizations to meet their goals. The behaviour of leaders at various levels of an organization affects the conduct of subordinates, which is then translated into the achievement of positive or negative outcomes both in the long and short run life cycle of an organization. Hence, the behaviour of leaders has attracted the interest of management researchers (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Nelson & Treviño, 2007; Yukl, 2006). Leaders, by virtue of their status and position, have some form of power that is formally recognized, however, the negative use of this power can have rippling negative effect on the organization or nation at large. A striking case was when some public judges in Ghana were investigated and found guilty on accounts of various forms of corruption having turned the hands of the law to favor those who gave some gifts in the form of bribery in order to be set free from hideous crimes at the expense of the innocent, some resigned and others relieved off their capacity as state judges (Transparency International, 2015). Researchers have thus for years shown interest in the field of leadership, more specifically about such unethical behaviours of leaders (Grojean, Resick, Dickson, & Smith, 2004). So far as organizations are concerned, ethics is better addressed in the field of leadership because leaders have been described as those who are in the best position to set up the ethical tone within organizations and hence the study of ethics is very key (Kalshoven, 2010). In agreement to this assertion, Northouse (2010) opined that ethics is central to

leadership as it not only affects the behaviour of the employee but also the climate within the organization as well as shareholder and stakeholder perception of the organization. Ethical leadership is defined as the exhibition of those characteristics and virtues as expressed through one's relationship with others and as a result the expression of normatively appropriate conduct through a two way relationship (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Normatively appropriate conduct refers to acting in a manner that is generally expected of leaders in a workplace context; that is, leaders are expected to take responsibility for their actions as well as act fairly and justly applying rewards and punishments appropriately where it is due. Ethical leadership from this perspective according to Brown and Treviño (2005) has brought about a more understandable way of approaching the ethical leadership construct in research.

The social learning theory by Bandura (1977) pointed out that employees would exhibit the ethical climate that exist within an organization, this was emphasized by Brown et al. (2005) when they proposed that leaders who display ethical behaviours influence their followers not necessarily because they are leaders but because they hold a degree of credibility which tends to enhance model effectiveness. Other studies have also confirmed the impact supervisors' ethical or unethical leadership behaviour has had on subordinates' outcome such as conduct, role conflict and pro-social behaviours (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Zafar, 2013). There continues to be a great interest in the mass media and academic community about the ethical and unethical behaviours of leaders across the globe. Copious studies done so far on ethical leadership have shown positive correlations between ethical leadership and employee attitude and behaviour such as commitment, trust, employee in role performance, confidence on the job, psychological capital strength and organizational citizenship behaviour (Brown et al., 2005; Kalshoven, Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Piccolo, Greenbaum, & Eissa, 2012). Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest residents of the United States once highlighted that, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power" (Weiss, 2006, p. 32). However, just as other studies have somewhat neglected, we must not wait to see the consequences of unethical leadership practices before acting. Waiting to see how leaders who do not know how to handle power affect negatively the lives of others before we act would not be a prudent response.

Therefore, organizational researchers have seen the need to make enquiries into tools that can aid in predicting the behaviour of leaders within organizations (Fretwell, Lewis, & Hannay, 2013). That is, the possibilities that certain things could help to predict the behaviour of an individual. Some researchers have asserted that the study of personality characteristics in relation to

ethical behaviour could be one of the key antecedents to ethical leadership behaviour (Ashkanasy, Windsor, & Treviño, 2006). Thus, from the perspective of human personality traits, there could be some key traits in an individual that would make him act ethically or not. Diverse personality traits have been identified over the last 25 years by profound psychologists. However, a consensus has been built according to Digman (1990), in the last 25 years to describe human dimensions in five proportions or features. Following that, empirical studies have been conducted to further prove that the big five factor personality trait is stable across nationalities and cultures (Cobb-Clark & Schurer, 2011). Much of research into ethical leadership have used the big five personality trait as it has been observed to be culturally generalizable (Kalshoven, 2012; Marcus, Hoft & Riediger, 2006; Ones, Viswesvaran & Dilchert, 2005; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009).

Another argument making the Big five a center of attention is that apart from being cross culturally generalizable, “integrity tests are not clearly distinguishable from the big five dimensions measures” (Kalshoven, 2010, p. 69). In a theoretical discussion, Brown and Trevino (2006) also found these three traits (Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) to be good predictors of a leader’s ethical behaviour. Hence, some studies that made enquiry into this relationship was aimed at predicting ethical leadership by using traits such as conscientiousness, neuroticism and agreeableness, excluding the other two traits (extraversion and openness to experience). For instance, Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) found out that there was a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical leadership, while traits such as neuroticism was negatively related to ethical leadership behaviour. In their study, they excluded traits such as extraversion and openness to experience based on the explanations given by Brown et al. (2005) that these traits were not linked to the ethical leadership construct. On the contrary, Bormann (2013) provided some theoretical debates and hence included these two traits, having found a significant positive relationship between ethical leadership and traits such as extraversion. Hence, the primary aim of the current study is to further contribute to the ongoing debate by further assessing theoretically and empirically about the effects each of the big five personality trait variables on ethical leadership. It is with this inquiry that this study aims to explore the process through which personality traits as defined in the big five relates to ethical leadership. In the nutshell, the overall aim of this study is to further test the relationship between ethical leader behaviour and the Big Five personality traits in some selected basic schools in the Ayawaso central sub metro district.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The increasing scandals and credit crisis in the global business have given rise to ethical leadership in recent times (Bello, 2012; Zafar, 2013; Monahan, 2012). In Ghana, issues of unethical leadership have had their say in the very fabric of businesses as well as the health and educational sector. For instance, a 2010 report by the World Bank revealed that Ghana was second to Chad when it came to the misappropriation of funds allocated to the health sector. Furthermore, the educational sector of the Ghanaian economy was charged with unethical

practices as it was listed third (3<sup>rd</sup>) out of a total of twenty-six countries in Africa on cases of mass corruption. More appalling was the fact that the country was ranked number one (1<sup>st</sup>) by the Transparency International (2013) when it came to the payment of bribes within schools in African countries. The issue of payments of bribes before admitting students into schools was an open secret (Transparency International, 2010) as a result of inadequate infrastructure to contain students and hence admission was for either the very intelligent or those capable of paying bribes (Ajayi, 2011). Furthermore, the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) officers of Ghana have reported and penalized more than three hundred cases from April 2010 through to 2015 about headmasters who have sexually assaulted pupils.

Despite the fact that the Ghana education service have emphatically stated in the section 28 of the Teachers Code of Conduct that the payment of bribes and other negative practices are highly unethical and come with sanctions (GES, 2008), this seems not to prevent headmasters from acting otherwise.

There is much literature on ethical leadership and how it affects businesses, however, far less is known empirically about the antecedents of ethical leadership. Studies into personality types as an antecedent of ethical leadership behaviour have utilized the big five personality trait due to its consistency and generalizability across cultures. However, studies conducted on the antecedents of ethical leadership have mostly used three of the big five personality traits (Conscientious, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) on the basis that the other traits have no bearing with the ethical leadership construct (Kalshoven, 2012; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). The purpose of this study was to further argue, theoretically and based on empirical findings, the importance of the other two traits (Extraversion and Openness to experience) and include them in testing for the relationship between ethical leadership and the five factor personality using the educational institution in Ghana, Ayawaso central sub-metro district as the case study. To fulfill this purpose, a quantitative study was performed collecting data from public basic selected schools in Ayawaso Central Sub metro district.

### 1.3 Ethical Leadership

From the western tradition viewpoint, ethics can be traced as far back as the time of Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322). The concept of Ethics originated from the Greek word “ethos” which illustrates conduct or character. This refers to the kind of character an individual or society perceives as desirable. For the purpose of this study, ethical theories can be divided into two main streams, that is, theories about the conduct and theories about the character of the leader (Northouse, 2013). Furthermore, Northouse (2013) points out that two main ideas ought to be discussed when issues of ethical theories of conduct are discussed, these are the consequences of a leader’s action and the duty that governs what was done. These are referred in the field of ethics as utilitarianism and deontology respectively. These two theories have received much attention so far as debates in ethical decision making are concerned (Conway & Gawronski, 2013). According to the principle of deontology, what is ethical is due to the principle and not what surrounds it, that is, a leader according to deontology, ought to always exhibit what is generally termed

as good without compromise based on the conditions he finds himself in. However, it must be noted that decisions being described as good or bad is based on context and the context one finds himself in should play a huge role in the ethical decision they take. A critical assessment of the Brown and Trevino's (2005) definition of ethical leadership points out to a rather utilitarianistic approach to ethical leadership. According to utilitarianism, what is ethical depends on the condition one finds himself and ethical leadership will seek for the good of the many and not just the few satisfied. The term "normatively appropriate" conduct by Brown et al (2005, p. 120) refers to conducts that are expected (Zafar, 2013; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). What is expected although may be due to what one has always been doing, in this context, it means what one should do based on the situation at hand. For instance, a leader will not be ethical if he has to make an employee work up to the daily working hours considering complaints of illness and a negative sign of health, such a leader is expected to excuse the subordinate off duty and cover up even it means bending some rules.

The fact that ethical leadership is chiefly exhibited through relationship with followers means that it can be considered as a relational concept (Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen, & Six, 2009). That is, the ethicality of a leader is observed as they interact with their followers on a day to day basis. Ethical leadership can therefore be best assessed by the subordinates who relate with the leader hence it is argued as a social construct that demands more than one rater. Words such as "considerate", "trustworthy" and "morally upright" are a few of many good adjectives that have been used to define ethical leaders (Zafar, 2013). Ethical leaders are expected to be those who will not just make decisions based on principles but more so based on the situations they find themselves in and will seek to understand issues not just from their view point but also that of their subordinates, thus agreeable and conscientious, while not compromising fully their moral integrity. This needs more clarification; ethical leaders are expected to act as moral persons and moral managers which in sum leads to the making of ethical followers (Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000).

#### 1.4 The Social Learning Theory and Ethical Leadership

Brown et al. (2005), inferring from the social learning theory Bandura (1977), explained some causatives and aftermaths of ethical behaviours of leaders. The social learning theory explains why the perception of employees about the ethical or unethical behaviour of leaders is affected by the personality characteristics of the leader as well as situational influences. According to the social learning theory, the credibility of leaders plays a huge role in followers perceiving them as ethical leaders. The social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) supports the idea that followers learn and emulate the behaviours of leaders so far as those behaviours are credible and attractive to them. In other words, direct supervisor's behaviour impacts subordinate behaviour whether for the good or worse. That is, what is considered "desirable and attractive" is at the discretion of the followers considering the contest they find themselves.

From the social learning theory, certain personality characteristics in an individual informs his behaviour and thereby

attracts or repel others since people look outside for direction, guidance or imitation (Kohlberg, 1969; Treviño L. K., 1986). According to Bandura (1986), there's a great likelihood for ethical leaders to be models in their organizations since they have a combination of power and credibility which is attractive to subordinates. Hence being a model for followers goes beyond just being in power but also having the required desired personality characteristics. Furthermore, these characteristics are not just observed but also the ethical leader tends to communicate ethical values to subordinates in order to maintain focus in the midst of other messages such as winning at all cost mentality of most businesses.

#### 1.5 The Big Five Personality Dimensions

In his definition, Catell (1905-1998) refer to personality as that perceptive and social pattern that has immense stability for a period of time and cuts across diverse situations (Eswaran, Islam & Muhd Yusuf, 2011). Hence, it is plausible to assert that the personality of an individual can affect one's values and attitudes (Olver & Mooradian, 2003). The label "Big Five" was coined by Lewis Goldberg in the year 1976 and was linked purely with personalities in natural language although the term "Big Five Factor" has been used in recent times sign personality questionnaires (Eswaran, Islam & Yusuf, 2011). The five factor model of personality outlines five dimensions of personality traits labeled Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Openness to experience and Conscientiousness (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990).

##### Conscientiousness

Individuals with this personality trait are labeled to be assiduous, determined and very results oriented. Such individuals are seen to be unrelenting, structured, trustworthy, thorough and industrious (Digman, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1992; Mount & Barrick, 1995). Hence, leaders that exhibit more conscientiousness are likely to engage in certain actions that are acceptable in a group and would easily attract followers to work with. Also since conscientiousness is linked to following a set of codes, it means that a leader high on that trait will be highly ethical.

##### Agreeableness

Agreeableness as a personality trait type entails qualities such as the likelihood of someone to relate in a group, to be understanding, honest and warm (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1987). The maintenance of social relationships has been identified as an outcome of individuals high on agreeableness (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Also, they are observed to be sensitive to the needs of their subordinates. This is in line with ethical leadership who are described as being caring to the needs of their subordinates. People that show more agreeable traits are likely to be able to get along with people in diverse situations and can be very effective team players of which are all critical for the success of every leader (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

##### Neuroticism

Neuroticism also referred to as emotional stability refers to the tendency of an individual to experience has some self-perceptions that can negatively affect one's image. With

neuroticism comes the likelihood to “experience negative emotions, such as anxiety and anger, more often and more intensely” (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009, p. 1278). Furthermore, leaders who are high on Neuroticism “are less likely to be perceived as ethical leaders as they will tend to be thin skinned and hostile to others”(Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 603)and this can greatly affect their relationships with people and also make them more difficult to be approached. Neurotics have been observed to be more self-protecting and hence can easily engage in conflicts as a result of this. Some researchers have identified neurotics as having a set of stimuli that elicits negative emotions and hence have been identified as people who are insecure (McCrae & John,1992; Terry, 2015).

### **Extraversion**

Extraversion as a personality trait associated with positive emotions. Whereas negative emotions are associated with neuroticism; extraversion is associated one being sociable and easy going. Extraverts are likely to communicate more in public places than introverts. Researchers have asserted that extraverts are more likely to perform as better sales people as compared to introverts or neurotics (Day, Schleicher, Unckless, & Hiller, 2002). This could mean that extraverts have a positive self-image both for themselves and others and hence find it not a difficult task socializing with others. Extraverts are vibrant, assertive and talkative (Bono & Judge, 2004). These appear very appealing and charismatic in nature.

### **Openness to Experience**

Traditionally, openness to experience has been conceptualized as culture, that is, the way one embraces another culture without stereotyping (Bono & Judge, 2004). This type of traits also relates to how makes decisions taking into account whether or she has learnt new or what he or she is exposed to. Being introspective, insightful, resourceful and creative is mostly linked to openness to expression (Bono & Judge, 2004). This means that individuals high on openness to experience can be open for ideas that may be different from their thoughts and this is a very helpful trait in group thinking and decision making. The idea of creativity is also very important in leadership and will play a major role.

## **II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The overall aim of this study will be to explore locus of control as a possible moderator in the relationship between Leader personality trait (five factor personality traits) and ethical leadership. To achieve this aim, the objectives of the study will be to:

1. Determine the personality trait variable that causes the most variance in ethical leadership.
2. Ascertain whether there is a significant difference in ethical leadership behaviour due to gender.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

This research conducted in some public basic schools in the Ayawaso central sub metro in Ghana employed the

quantitative approach to research. The study employed a cross-sectional survey where standard questionnaires were adapted for some of the variables (ethical leadership) to solicit for information from respondents with the intent of generalizing the results of the study to a larger population (Creswell, 2003). According to Creswell (2003), it is advisable to take into consideration the specific research problem the study seeks to address when choosing the research approach. Based on this premise, a study of this nature that sought to understand the best predictors (personality traits and locus of control) of an outcome (ethical leadership), the quantitative approach to research best suits it. Generally, quantitative research comprises of the use of statistical tools to assess a hypothesis as well as making enquiries into causalities.

### **Population and Sampling Technique**

The population for the study included the supervisors (headmaster and assistant) and subordinates (teachers) of all public basic schools within the Ayawaso central sub metro district. The Ayawaso district was chosen due to the nearness of the district to the researcher as well as the time and low cost of gathering data from respondents. The headmasters and the assistants act in leadership capacities in the various schools and can best be rated by their immediate subordinates who are the teachers. There are 37 public basic schools in the Ayawaso central sub metro district. The schools were chosen because they all belonged to the public sector and hence had a lot in common. The education sector was chosen for this study due to the ethical and unethical practices that continues to plague this sector. Issues of examination leakages plagued with corruption and the mass extortion in the form of bribes before admitting students have become an open secret as the country has been ranked number one on these malpractices among schools in Africa (Transparency International, 2010).

The study employed a multi stage sampling technique (convenience, simple random and purposive sampling technique) in selecting the respondents. Firstly, thirty (30) schools were chosen using the convenience sampling method, that is, those schools where the headmasters were willing to participate in the study were selected. Furthermore, sixty (60) supervisors (headmasters and assistants) per school were purposively chosen because they play supervisory roles in the schools and were the exact respondents needed to provide the researcher with the information needed. Based on this, teachers were chosen where headmasters were already selected. In all, a total of one hundred and twenty (120) teachers were selected using a simple random technique. Some of the selected schools include the Alajo 1 primary, Alajo 1 JHS, Alajo 2 primary and 2 JHS, Experimental 1 JHS, A.N.T, Experimental 2 JHS, Avenor JHS and Kwame Nkrumah JHS.

### **Instruments of Data Gathering**

The ethical leadership behaviour of leaders was measured using the ethical leadership scale developed by Brown et al. (2005). Individual subordinates were asked to rate the ethical leadership behaviour of supervisors. The scale is a ten itemized scale with sample items such as "My leader listens to what employees have to say", "My leader disciplines employees who violate ethical standards" and " My leader conducts his/her

personal life in an ethical manner". Responses are arranged on a five point Likert scale of 1 to 5 as follows "*Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, strongly Agree = 5*".

The personality trait of supervisors was measured using the personality inventory scale by Gosling et al. (2003), a scale that has been proved to achieve higher convergence based on self and observer reports as well as has a higher test retest reliability (mean  $r=.80$ ) as compared to other personality scales such as five item personality inventory (FIPI). The scale is based on the works of Goldberg (1990). It is a ten item scale comprising of five dimensions making up the big five personality trait (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Openness to experience and Conscientiousness).

#### IV. FINDINGS

##### Descriptions of Participants

The study comprised of 60 supervisors. These supervisors were the various head teachers and their assistants, hence 30 head teachers and their respective assistants totaling up to 60. Out of the sixty supervisors, 18 were female while 42 were males, a percentage of 30 to 70 respectively. The average age of supervisors were 37 years ranging from 31 years to 50 years. In terms of their educational level, a majority of the supervisors were undergraduate degree holders contributing 55% of the total supervisors. Only two of the supervisors had their highest level of education to be the O level. As many as 23 supervisors had been at post in the same school between six to ten years while 37 of them were within their first five years as supervisors in those particular schools.

##### Preliminary Analysis

Before the main hypothesis of the study was tested, a number of preliminary statistical analysis were carried out to describe the sample selected for the study (for instance normality distribution, frequency, mean), that is, descriptive and summary statistics were tabulated. The data predictor variables were inspected for Multicollinearity, besides, issues of outliers and validity was also examined. Finally, the researcher also addressed how missing data was handled in the study and their impact to the overall findings if the study.

##### Handling Missing Data

A total of 120 subordinates responded to the questionnaire for measuring ethical leadership while 60 supervisors responded to the questionnaire for work locus of control and personality traits. After a detailed inspection of the questionnaires, it occurred that four subordinates left out an average of three questions on the ethical leadership scale. However, the overall missing data was very minimal. Since each subordinate's rating of ethical leadership behaviour was

computed based on an average of the items on the scale, any missing value was replaced with an average of the questions of subordinates on that particular item (Warner, 2008; Williams, 2015). Therefore, the missing data challenge faced did not hugely affect the analysis and results of the study.

##### Data Examination: Checking for Errors, Outliers and Testing Normality

Upon resolving issues of missing data as outlined above, other issues such as outliers needed to be inspected and sought out. One of the most important activities that should never be neglected in data analysis is data examination. Haier (2001) explained that though data examination could take much time, it enables the researcher to deal with the impacts of possible outliers, missing data due to wrong data entry or respondents' unwillingness to fill some part of questionnaire which could otherwise affect the results in some data analysis, mainly regression (Hair et al., 2010; Salkind, 2011). Since multiple regression was employed in the current study, it was prudent to assess some assumptions such as normality, enormous missing data, outliers that could impact the data, Multicollinearity and linearity. An outlier can be described as any score on a set of data with a different characteristic from the remaining data. Hair et al. (2010) described outliers as an abnormally high or low data figure on a variable. Issues of outliers were experienced with some of the variables, hence the impact of these outliers attracted attention, however, after a cursory comparison of the means of the respective variables, it was observed that the difference was not significant. Therefore, it is plausible to conclude that the outliers would not create much problems in the current analysis, hence those data were retained (Pallant, 2013).

The preliminary analysis prior to the main analysis was conducted in a three stage process. Firstly, the normality of the salient variables in the study were assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality based on the null hypothesis that the data is normally distributed. From the tables below, it can be inferred that the data was normally distributed and hence was fit for further analysis that involved the use of parametric tests such as mentioned before. As a result, all the variables in the data set were used in a regression and moderation analysis. Furthermore, other descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation of the study variables were conducted. This was followed by the Pearson correlation of the variables in the study. In order to justify data aggregation of ethical leadership at group level, inter rater reliability analysis using the kappa analysis on inter-class correlation as well as the kappa analysis was conducted. In order to ensure that the scales used for collection of data was internally reliable and consistent, an internal reliability analysis was conducted using the Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ). According to Nunnally (1978) opined that an alpha value of 0.70 or above constitutes a reliable scale.

**Table 1.3: Normality and Cronbach Alpha test for study instruments**  
 Note: EL- Ethical leadership

**Cronbach Alpha, Normality test and Descriptive Statistics of Study- EL N=180**

Variables	Shapiro Wilk Statistic	Sig	Cronbach( $\alpha$ )	Mean	S.D
Ethical Leadership	.986	.128	0.81	3.82	1.25

**Table 1.4: Cronbach Alpha, Normality test and Descriptive Statistics of Study WLC N=180**

Variables	Shapiro Wilk Statistic	Sig	Cronbach ( $\alpha$ )	Mean	S.D
Work Locus of Control	.988	.193	.788	3.40	1.43

**Table 1.5: Cronbach Alpha, Normality test and Descriptive Statistics of Study PL N=180**

Variables	Shapiro Wilk Statistics	Sig	Cronbach ( $\alpha$ )	Mean	S.D
Extraversion	.992	.548	.708	2.98	1.26
Conscientiousness	.983	.065	.733	3.32	1.31
Agreeableness	.975	.248	.725	3.17	1.43
Openness to experience	.983	.530	.733	2.86	1.30
Neuroticism	.985	.643	.797	3.50	1.68

Note: WLC- Work locus of control

Note: PL- Personality trait

**Multicollinearity Testing of Study Variables**

Multicollinearity is regarded as one of the key assumptions to be examined within a set of predictor variables before running a regression analysis. Multicollinearity as an assumption is produced when “any single predictor variable is highly correlated with a set of other predictor variables” (Reyes, 2013, p. 39). Although the assumption of Multicollinearity of predictor variables can be assessed through a correlation matrix output, the researcher sought the need to assess this assumption using the

VIF and Tolerance rule as it is more robust than the correlation matrix (Hair, 1995). Using this rule, a tolerance level of less than .10 is considered an anomaly and requires further inspection whiles the Variance Inflation factor(VIF) is supposed to be less than 10 (De Vaus, 2002). Table 2.1 below indicates that for all the predictor variables (locus of control and personality trait) the VIF ranged from 1.160 to 1.384, hence this assumption was not violated. Thus this study did not experience Multicollinearity problems.

**Table 2.1: Multicollinearity Diagnostics of Predictor Variables**

Construct	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Conscientious	0.862	1.160
Neuroticism	0.857	1.166
Extraversion	0.744	1.345
Openness to experience	0.720	1.389

Agreeableness	0.821	1.218
Internal locus of control	0.795	1.257
External locus of control	0.840	1.191

**Justifying Data Aggregation of Ethical leadership Statistics**

A variety of research designs have proved that a single level analysis of some constructs are not without merits, however, some constructs are better assessed on a multi-level (Dixon & Cunningham, 2006). In other words, some social constructs are best assessed on the group level instead of individual assessment. To achieve this, data aggregation must be employed. Ethical leadership is considered as a social construct, that is, ethical leadership is viewed as best assessed by more than one rater instead of a single rater assessing the ethical behaviour of leaders. This would help take care of single measure biases. As a result, various studies in ethical leadership employed the group level ratings of ethical leadership behaviour (Kalshoven, 2010; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Asma, 2013). The

current study followed suit to rate ethical leadership on the unit level. That is, two subordinates rated one supervisor each per school. In order to justify data aggregation at the group level, the study employed the kappa analysis tool as well as the intra-class correlation. According to the analysis, a kappa value of above .06 is considered as acceptable level of agreement among raters in the social sciences (Wood, 2007). From the output below, it can be inferred that the kappa value (.63) satisfies considering the threshold, hence aggregating data at the group level is justified. Although the output reports a kappa significance (.000), this is not of interest to researchers, the interest however is whether the kappa value (.63) is high enough to be warranted use in research settings.

**Table 2.2: Kappa Analysis of Ethical Leadership Aggregation**

**Symmetric Measures**

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.631	.048	13.457	.000
N of Valid Cases		60			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis

**Table 2.4: Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for the predictive effect of personality traits variables on ethical leadership behavior**

Model		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>P</i>
1	(Constant)	1.752	.186		.020
	Conscientiousness	.379	.056	.661*	.006
2	(Constant)	.785	.308		.001
	Conscientiousness	.375	.051	.654*	.010
	Extraversion	.238	.064	.333*	.040
3	(Constant)	1.26	.354		.001

	Conscientiousness	.368	.049	.642*	.000
	Extraversion	.310	.068	.434*	.010
	Neuroticism	-.175	.072	-.230*	.039
4.	(Constant)	1.253	.349		.001
	Conscientiousness	.369	.049	.644*	.000
	Extraversion	.236	.080	.330*	.005
	Neuroticism	-.251	.084	-.329*	.044
	Openness to Experience	.154	.091	.223	.097
5.	(Constant)				
	Conscientiousness	.939	.341		.008
	Extraversion	.382	.054	.667*	.000
	Neuroticism	.194	.076	.272*	.013
	Openness to Experience	-.225	.079	-.295*	.076
	Agreeableness	.059	.091	.085	.519
		.199	.065	.290	.074

$R^2=0.437, 0.548, 0.592, 0.611$  and  $0.688$  for steps 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.  $\Delta R^2=0.111, 0.043, 0.020$  and  $0.057$  for steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.  $*p < 0.05$ .

The overall model produced an R-squared of 0.47 which indicates that the model is fit for prediction (Field, 2005). From the results of the analysis above, it has been revealed that leader conscientiousness ( $\beta=.661, p < .05$ ) and extraversion ( $\beta=.333, p < .05$ ) was positively related to ethical leadership behaviour. Leader conscientiousness contributed to a 44% variance in ethical leadership while extraversion caused an 11% change in ethical leadership behaviour. On the contrary, as expected, neuroticism ( $\beta= -.175, p < .05$ ) was negatively related to ethical leadership, however, it contributed to just 4.3% change in ethical leadership behaviour. Openness to experience ( $\beta= .223, p > .05$ ) and agreeableness ( $\beta=.290, p > .05$ ) neither had any significant influence nor relationship with ethical leadership as argued in literature. From the analysis, hypothesis 1a and 1d was fully supported even after controlling for the effects of other traits. Hypothesis 1b was partially supported while hypothesis 1c and

1e would not be supported. The main aim for using this analysis was to identify the most significant contributor to ethical leadership after all other traits have been statistically controlled for. From the analysis, it appears that after controlling for all other traits, conscientiousness appeared to be the trait that causes the greatest significant variance in ethical leadership followed by extraversion. In the nutshell, the hypothesis (2) that leader conscientiousness will account for more variance in ethical leadership behaviour than all other traits was fully supported.

#### Gender and Ethical Leadership

In order to ascertain whether leaders' ethical behavior differs due to their gender, an independent sample t-test was computed using male and female leaders as the test groups. The results have been displayed below:

**Table 14:**  
**Independent Sample T-test output for gender and ethical leadership**  
**Group Statistics**

	Gender of leaders	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Ethical Leadership	Male	39	6.7788	.88596	.14187
	Female	21	7.0238	.81645	.17816

\*p is not significant @ .05 level of significance

### Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	(2-Mean Difference)
Ethical Leadership	Equal variances assumed	.370	.545	-1.049	58	.298	-.24496
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.076	44.076	.288	-.24496

From the output table above it can be inferred that there is no statistically significant difference in the ethical leadership behaviour ( $t_{(58)} = -1.049, p > .05$ ) of male leaders ( $M = 6.78, SD = 0.89$ ) and female leaders ( $M = 7.02, SD = 0.82$ ). That is, there is enough statistical evidence to conclude that the hypothesis two is valid. Hence hypothesis two was supported.

### V. DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicated that personality variable such as extraversion and conscientiousness was positively related to the ethical behaviour of leaders in the study. On the other hand, neuroticism was negatively related to ethical leadership behaviour. The study also revealed that openness to experience was unrelated to the ethical leadership construct. The results of the study show much correspondence with the findings of Kalshoven (2010) and Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009). In his study (Kalshoven, 2010), after controlling for all other personality variables, it was only conscientiousness and extraversion that was related to the ethical leadership construct. However, traits such as openness to experience and agreeableness was unrelated to the ethical leadership construct. Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) on the other hand found a negative relationship between Neuroticism and ethical leadership whiles observing a positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical leadership. On the contrary, Bormann (2013) after propounding an integrative model of ethical leadership realized a positive and significant relationship between ethical leadership and extraversion. This was supported in the current study. It must be noted that perception of ethical leadership is not independent of one's culture setting (Judge, 2002), that is, the change in setting could result in the diverse results found between extraversion and other traits such as agreeableness and ethical leadership. This implies that universality of what is ethical could be quite ambiguous, for if ethicality should be defined then to what extent is something ethical and how does it relate to one's culture? Should culture play a role in understanding what ethics is?

As expected, conscientiousness was positively related to leader ethical behaviour. Leaders who are thoughtful of others and have others interest in mind rather than themselves end up being perceived as ethical, on the other hand, leaders who are shy and unstable are likely to be perceived as unethical because their behaviour cannot be predicted. The uniqueness of this study so far as the first and second hypothesis is concerned is the rather large effect of conscientiousness on ethical leadership. This is because previous studies have realized a rather low variance in

ethical leadership due to conscientiousness (Kalshoven, 2012; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). A critique by Bormann (2013) revealed that this could be as a result of a methodological approach to most studies conducted on personality traits and ethical leadership. In the nut shell, leaders who are high on conscientious traits have a very high probability of being perceived as ethical and hence would reap the consequences of ethical leadership behaviour.

The second objective sought to ascertain whether there is a difference in ethical leadership due to gender of leaders. This objective was developed in accordance with the propositions of Brown et al. (2002) who proposed that due to some characteristics that are inherent in women which differs from men; that is, women tend to take decisions based on care and are very emotional, on the other hand men are justice conscious and take decisions that reflect what should be rightly done without so much thoughts about how the other party would feel. However, the result of this current study presupposes that there is no statistically significant difference in ethical behaviour due to gender of leaders. This supports the findings of Balasubramanian and Krishnan (2012) who investigated a similar relation based on the theory proposed by Gilligan (1982) which posits that since men have some characteristics that are contrary to ethical values, they are less likely to be ethical as compared to women, that is, women have been described to the thoughtful, emotional and caring and hence would make decisions that are influenced by these traits. Furthermore, women have been described as being more conscientious than males in leadership positions, a personality trait that is mostly linked to ethical leadership (Kalshoven, 2012; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009) than extraversion which is typical of men. Nonetheless, the perception of ethical leadership on the part of subordinates is also influenced by other organizational conditions and other influences like self-monitoring (Brown et al., 2005). According to Bedeian and Day (2004), leaders who show more concern in making themselves liked or to fit into the shoes of followers are likely to sacrifice some ethical values in order to make them appealing to their followers, followers who are able to identify this attitude may have different perceptions about the leader and may interpret that as weakness. That is, although men and women share different characteristics, there are other influencers of being perceived as ethical which could be more significant than gender characteristics.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study sought to contribute to the field of ethical leadership by exploring the effects of the big five personality traits. More specifically, the study sought to ascertain the moderating effect of locus of control as proposed by Brown et al. (2005) in a theoretical study. Using a sample from some selected schools in the Ayawaso central sub metro district, the analysis revealed that after controlling for all of the sub constructs of the personality traits, it was only conscientiousness that appeared to be significant to ethical leadership, that is, conscientiousness had a positive effect on ethical leadership. The second research question sought to ask whether there was a significant difference in ethical leadership due to gender. It turned out that there was no significant difference in ethical leader due to leaders' gender. A moderation analysis established that apart from personality trait of conscientiousness, locus of control did not significantly moderate the relationship between the other personality traits and ethical leadership. That is, a leader high on conscientiousness and locus of control is likely to portray high ethical behavior as compared to one low on conscientiousness. Leaders who show less emotional stability (neuroticism) were more likely to engage in unethical acts.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that certain types of personality traits are able to elicit ethical leadership behavior among leaders within an organization. The study specifically used some public schools within the Ayawaso central sub metro as the case study.

Based on the benefits of ethical leadership to organizations, organizations should look for leaders who are less likely to be distracted when on the job. Furthermore, leaders who are to occupy very important positions within organizations should display very high level of morality and must be willing to sacrifice their personal interest for the interest of the common good of the many. What this implies is that organizations should organize leadership training programs that concentrate on training the right personality traits into leaders as it would affect their behavior towards overall success. From the findings of the study, it can be inferred that organizations should work on making their leaders internally controlled, such leaders will own up for their actions and would not push blames to other individuals. Such leaders would display a high degree of accountability which augers well for increased performance.

## VIII. FURTHER STUDIES

Based on the identified limitations to the study, some future studies could look at some perspectives. For instance, a longitudinal study of personality traits and ethical leadership could be examined to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, Brown et al. (2005) opined in a theoretical review that factors such as the moral intensity of issues as well as the ethical context of the organization could influence ethical leadership behavior, hence future studies could look at how these factors influence personality traits in predicting ethical behavior of leaders. Coupled with this, according to Hofstede (2001), the culture

setting one finds himself in affects the behavior of such individuals. Hence in predicting ethical behavior future studies could make enquiries into how the power distance culture could look at how power distance culture influences the perception of employees regarding the behavior of their leaders. Furthermore, some studies have found an insignificant relationship between moral judgement and feeling, more studies seems warranted in understanding how internal locus of control affects ethical leadership behavior.

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#### AUTHORS

**First Author** – Isaac Boakye, University of Applied Management, Ghana Campus, P.O. Box KN 2560 Accra  
**Second Author** – Martin Gyambah, University of Applied Management, Ghana Campus, P.O. Box KN 2560 Accra