Ethical leadership style and organizational citizenship behaviour: Themediating role of employee work engagement

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ABSTRACT

Background: Ethical leadership plays a vital role in improving the employees' work engagement and has an effect on organizational citizenship behaviour. Despite the increase in awareness of ethical leadership in organizations, little attention has been given to this issue.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to draw on social exchange theory perspectives to examine the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour.

Methods: The study uses the cross-sectional design method and collected data from 321 employees working in the Public service Commission of Sierra Leone to test all hypotheses.

Findings: The study finds that ethical leadership facilitates employees to engage in their work and encourages them to strengthening their organizational citizenship behaviour. Importantly, employees' work engagement was found to positively mediate the effect of ethical leadership on organizational citizenship behaviour. Implications of the study and future research directions are also discussed.

Originality/Contribution: The paper extends ethical leadership theory by considering that work engagement serves as a cognitive motivational underpinning in support of the link between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour. The results provide new and deeper insights in explaining the impact of ethical leadership on organizational citizenship behaviour by strengthening the mediating role of work engagement.

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1.0   Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing theoretical variety in the ethical leadership (EL) literature that reflects a growing awareness of the prominence of a construct known as EL behavior. Previous studies have found that EL behavior can result in many positive outcomes, such as improved employee performance, trust in leaders, organization commitment, extra effort, job satisfaction, and affective commitment (e.g. Kuo, 2013; Avey et al., 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2011). This stream of research has provided valuable insights and highlighted the importance of EL, which has prompted many researchers to contribute to our present understanding of the nature of EL behavior.

Public sector workers are vital components of the public service commission, forming the largest group of professionals in the economy (Kattel, R., et al., 2014). As in many other countries, public sector workers in Sierra Leone are exposed to challenges such as heavy workload, undefined responsibilities, shortage of equipment, and low pay (Haja, Mohamed & Sophie, 2016), poor social status, and the difficulties of negotiating the gap between theory and practice (Haja, Mohamed & Sophie, 2016), all of which ultimately influence the provision of high quality service delivery (Haja, Mohamed & Sophie, 2016). These conditions require a willingness to perform tasks beyond the defined duties and responsibilities, a phenomenon referred to as the "concept of organizational citizenship behavior" in the related literature (Çavuş MF, Develi A. 2017; Becton et al., 2017).

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) consists of a collection of voluntary behaviors which are not part of the individual's formal duties. OCB is performed by the personnel without being directly considered by the formal progression system of the organization, yet, it leads to effective and improved fulfillment of organizational roles and responsibilities (Çavuş MF, Develi A. 2017). These include behaviors that employees voluntarily offer in accordance with their personal choices (Lim, B.T.; Loosemore, M. 2017). OCB is one of the most important factors in determining public sector workers' behaviors, attitudes, and interactions to provide high quality services (Lin et al., 2010). Altruism, conscientiousness, humility and courtesy, civic virtue, and sportsmanship are signs of the presence of OCB (Podsakoff, 1990). These behaviors may form on the basis of an ethical climate perceived directly or indirectly by the personnel (Çavuş MF, Develi A. 2017).

Moreover, earlier research points out that EL has a significant and potential association with several sustainable aspects of leadership effectiveness, which comprise of workers' engagement, job satisfaction, OCB, and the performance and commitment to the organization (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2009; Newman et al., 2014; Newman et al., 2015). Likewise, successful organizations regard employees' work engagement (WE) as one of the most important elements for their survival (Strom et al., 2014) and improved organizational performance (Kompaso, &Sridevi, 2010). Employees' WE is connected with positive institutional and individual outcomes, such as improvement of productivity and OCB, job satisfaction, and strengthening managerial efficiency and effectiveness (Blomme et al., 2015). In contrast, these individual and organizational outcomes decrease with employees' dis-engagement (Strom et al., 2014).

According to Blau (1964) when a working group performs their job, which is beneficial or valuable for another group, then the other group will endeavor to reciprocate equally, in return. This will establish a reciprocal relationship between leaders and their followers (Strom et al., 2014). Consistently, employees feel more obliged and engaged in the organization when ethical leaders enable them with socio-emotional resources (Bormann, 2017). This may also increase the positive perceptions of employees for their leaders.

Applicable to the present study, only some empirical studies have demonstrated the association between EL and OCB through different mediators, such as organizational Justice (Amna, Sajjad, Imran, 2018),trust(Xu et al., 2016), organizational concern (Mo & Shi 2017), corporate social responsibility (Sadaf et al., 2018), organizational identification (Humphrey, A., 2012). More research is needed to develop a better comprehension of this relationship. Therefore, we proposed to further explore the impact of EL on OCB with different contexts in a non-western culture.

The studycontributes to the literature review in two different ways. Firstly, it enabled us to determine whether employees WE isstrengthened by EL within the institutions' culture, for example, to what extent is this EL successful in encouraging certain work behaviors in the government or public sector in Sierra Leone. Second, this research strengthens the present EL literature by seeking innovative contexts, which might have a distinct impact on followers' outcomes. We attempted to develop a contributory mechanism of how EL works through employee WE to promote OCB. Although, some other studies used different mediators to test this relationship, for example, organizational Justice (Amna, Sajjad, Imran, 2018) and trust (Xu et al., 2016), yet no research has explicitly investigated the relationships between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior using the above mentioned mediator that are specific in the African context.This paper therefore attempts to answer the following research questions:

O What is the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior?
O How can employee work engagement mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior?

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses the theories and hypothesis development. Section 3 describes the methodology of the study and elucidates the rationale behind it. Section 4 presents the data analysis and reports the empirical results from the public service commission located in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The paper concludes by mentioning implications, limitations and suggesting avenues for future research in Section 5.

2.0   Theories and hypotheses
2.1   Conceptual framework

The social exchange theory is one of the most widespread theoretical paradigms for understanding employee's behaviours in the workplace. Social exchange theory states that "mutual reciprocation is the most basic form of human interactions" (Blau, P.M., 1964). In the workplace, this theory speculates about interpersonal behaviours (the relationship between supervisor, co-workers and organization) in terms of the exchange of costs and rewards: for instance, if the employee perceives leadership behaviour as fair, in return, they also show more co-operative behaviour(Blau, P.M., 1964). In addition, studies also indicate OCB in terms of the exchange relationship (Organ, D.W., 1988).

Recent research in ethical leadership has focused on examining the process by which ethical leadership is linked to employees' in-role behavior, such as job performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011). It is noted that only a few studies have studied how ethical leadership is connected to extra-role behavior (e.g. Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009). This line of research provides helpful insight and accounts for the process of ethical leadership in determining organizational citizenship behaviour; however, few studies have considered intrinsic motivation to explain the process of ethical leadership as it relates to determining organizational citizenship behaviour, specifically, the role of work engagement as the mediating process of the aforementioned relationship. Work engagement is a motivational concept (Kuhnel et al., 2009) that has been referred to as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Salanova and Schaufeli, 2008). Brown et al. (2005) found that ethical leadership is related to increased employee motivation and more positive work attitudes. A leader with ethical values treats employees fairly and is considerate of their needs. This treatment enhances employee satisfaction and creates trust, thus increasing employee motivation and promoting work engagement. According to the work engagement model, engaged individuals work with greater intensity and exhibit higher levels of intrinsic motivation to perform their tasks. When employees exert more vigor and work with greater dedication and energy as they perform their tasks, they also tend to engage in behaviors that are more altruistic and virtuous (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010), which may enhance and widen their perceptions and responsibilities with regards to their work roles (Teh and Hongyi, 2012). In turn, these employees are more likely to exhibit proactive employee organizational citizenship behavior (Blader and Tyler, 2009). Hence, work engagement may serve as an important bridge between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior.

In organizations, leaders influence followers by inducing a specific socio-cognitive principle of work engagement in the minds of employees (Higgins, 1997). Work engagement explains employees' attitudes toward and behaviors at work as resulting from their intrinsic motivations, which are induced by emotions and experiences. Several studies have found that work engagement acts as a critical triggering mechanism in creating an employee's attitude and behavior (De Cremer et al., 2009). In work engagement theory, employees are motivated by leadership behaviors that align with their ideal or ought selves, thereby either heightening or weakening work outcomes (De Cremer et al., 2009; Kark and Van Dijk, 2008). Ethical leadership behavior emphasizes moral standards; leaders promote their followers to seek their goals (Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009). Ethical managers perform in a fair, honest, and trustworthy manner and procedural justice is important to demonstrate one of the connotations of ethical leadership. As a result, employees under their ethical leadership will perceive the organization's procedures to be credible (Loi et al., 2012). This congruence in values will increase the likelihood of behavior engagement (Dewett and Denisi, 2007) and increase the willingness to exhibit citizenship behavior. These arguments seem to imply that work engagement will be evoked via supervisors' ethical leadership, thereby increasing positive work outcomes. However, in ethical leadership literature, the extent to which work engagement interacts with ethical leadership to predict citizenship behaviour is still unclear. Thus, one purpose of this study is to test a theoretical model that highlights the mediator mechanism of work engagement as it underlies the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour.

Therefore, based on the above discussion, it is conceivable that an employee who perceives leadership behaviours as fair is more likely to exceed his/her formal duties by exhibiting behaviours from which the entire organization ultimately profits.

2.2   Ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour

OCB can be defined as "the voluntary individual behaviour that is not included in the formal reward system of the organization, but enhances the organizational performance as a whole" (Organ et al., 2005). Such behaviours are considered as the most desirable behaviours for organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff et al.,

2011). Initially, psychological antecedents of OCB such as cognitive, effectual and contextual factors were the focus of interest for scholars (Organ et al., 2005). Later on, OCB was found to be related to employee's loyalty and identification. Moreover, OCB also assists organizational functioning and goal achievements (Podsakoff et al., 2011; Lim &Loosemore, 2017; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Similarly, leadership is considered as the basic factor that moulds organizational culture and work environment (Bohn, J.G., 2002). It is believed that subordinates are likely to perform what a leader stresses through his/her behaviour(Walumbwa et al., 2010). Past evidence reveals that when a leader act in accordance with his/her values and beliefs, he/she are more likely to accomplish high levels of performance and help others to achieve the same (Ryan, & Deci, 2001). In addition, scholars suggested that OCB-related behaviours can be developed through personality traits, attitude and inspiration (Luthans et al., 2007). OCB reveals individual's dispositional traits to be helpful, caring and cooperative (Luthan, F., 2011). Some researchers also indicate that personal traits are a valid forecaster for the occurrence and consistency of displaying OCBs (Ilies, Morgeson, &Nahrgang, 2005). Therefore, based on the above discussion, it is conceivable that ethical leadership plays an important role in effecting employees' OCB. Therefore, we hypothesized that:

H1: Ethical leadership is positively associated with OCB

2.3   Ethical leadership and work engagement

Work engagement is perceived as a unique motivation and conceptualized as the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles in terms of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy (Rich et al., 2010). Zhu et al. (2009) find that leadership is positively associated with work engagement. Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) suggest that leadership is positively related to employee work engagement. Thus, we rely on these research bases to examine and extend the motivational effect of leaders.

The leader is typically seen as playing an important role in the process of social influence in an organization (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010). The social information processing perspective, which presumes that individuals collect situational cues from their work environment that affect their motivation, explains the underlying influence through which ethical leadership would be expected to influence employee work engagement. For example, ethical leaders are likely to entrust employees with responsibility as a way to motivate them, to consider the developmental needs of their employees, and to increase employees' perception about the importance of their job. Such ethical leadership would increase the employee's sense of control, broaden an individual's responsibilities, and create a sense of psychological meaningfulness, thus inducing greater motivation and increased effort by employees (Piccolo et al., 2010). Previous studies have found that employees who are more absorbed and dedicated and who devote increased amounts of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy to their work are, consequently, more engaged in their work.

Some studies have used the social learning perspective to account for how leaders affect employees work engagement. Ethical leaders provide employees with a role model and make personnel sacrifices. When ethical leaders are dedicated to their work, based on the social learning perspective, employees learn and emulate the behaviors of attractive role models, thereby evoking work motivation and energy in their work. We therefore propose that:

H2: Ethical leadership is positively associated with employee work engagement

2.4   Employee work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour

There are studies which have carried on to determine the relationship of employee engagement and OCB and proved to have a positive relationship. A study based on Thai organizations by Rurkkhum (2010) found that there exist a positive relationship between employee engagement and OCB. The author measured OCB based on 5 dimensions such as altruism, civic virtue, sportsmanship, courtesy and conscientiousness developed by Podsakoff et al (1990). Except courtesy, which indicated a weak relationship all the other variables such as altruism, civic virtue, sportsmanship and conscientiousness indicated a positive relationship with employee engagement. A similar study based on employees working in various sectors situated in Malaysia supported the finding wherein except courtesy all the other four constructs had positive relationship with employee engagement (Islam et al., 2012). Few other studies which supported the positive relationship are (Saks, 2006; Thayer, 2008; Thomas, 2011). From the reviews the following hypothesis was developed and was tested.

H3: Employee work engagement is positively associated with OCB.

2.5   The mediating role of employee work engagement

Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) state that ethical leadership behaviors convey high-moral standards to employees; an openness to input and fair treatment to followers. In doing so, employees see ethical leaders as honing them to be increasingly sharper; they trust that their leader is concerned about doing what is right, and they are thereby willing to risk reporting problems to their leaders (Brown et al., 2005). Consistent with this argument, past research has demonstrated that employees who perceive supervisors as displaying ethical leadership behaviors tend to engage in more voice behavior (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008).

Studies have also suggested that work engagement is a significant predictor of employee proactive behavior such as voice behavior (Blader and Tyler, 2009). When employees have physical, emotional, and psychological resources connected to their work, they are more likely to engage in proactive voice behavior. Several empirical findings have further suggested that work engagement has positive effects on employee's proactive behavior. For instance, Salanova and Schaufeli (2008), conducted one study in Spain and another in the Netherlands, and discovered that work engagement was positively correlated with proactive employee behavior. Moreover, Sonnentag (2003) administered daily surveys over five consecutive workdays and found that day-level work engagement positively shaped day-level proactive behavior. Accordingly, we expect that ethical leadership behaviors will be positively linked to work engagement. Due to the increase in engagement and meaningfulness, the employee is more inclined to contribute proactive suggestions and opinions to the organization (Blader and Tyler, 2009). Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4. Work engagement mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior.

Figure 1. Hypothesized research model
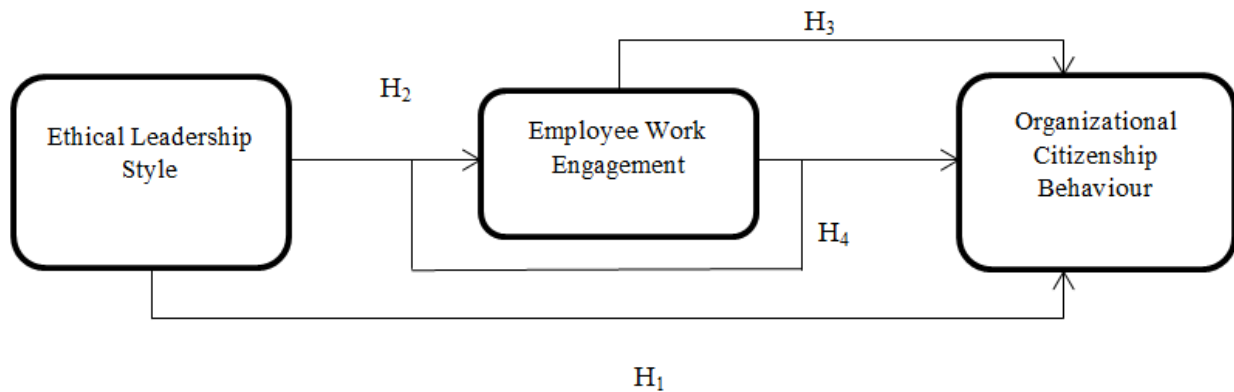
3.0   Method
3.1   Sampling method

The present research employed a cross-sectional design and collected data from 321 employees working in different departments at the Public Service Commission in the capital city of Freetown, Sierra Leone. The hypothesized research model is illustrated in Figure 1. The researchers visited different departments to highlight the importance of the research and encouraged employees to participate. Formal permission was given by every departmental head before data collection. A set of self-administered questionnaires was distributed among all the potential respondents (see Appendix I). In addition, the researchers assured the anonymity of responses to respondents.

Table 1.

Demographic characteristics of respondents.

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	235	73.21%
Female	86	26.79%
Age		
21-30	137	42.68%
31-40	105	32.71%
41-50	57	17.76%
Above 50	22	6.85%
Education		
Bachelor	187	58.26%
Master	121	37.69%
PhD	13	4.0%
Designation		
Staff Member	274	85.36%
Manager	47	14.64%
Tenure		
1-5 years	208	64.80%
6-10 years	73	22.74%
Above 10 years	40	12.46%

Total respondents	321	100%

By using a convenient sampling method, we distributed 500 questionnaires, but received 321 complete questions. The majority of respondents (187: 58.26%) held a bachelor's degree. About 42.68% of the respondents were aged 21–30 years. Most of the respondents (235: 73.21%) were male. The majority of the respondents (274: 85.36%) were working as staff member, and (14.64%) were working as managers. Finally, 64.8% of the respondents had 1–5 years of work experience.

3.2   Measurements

Ethical leadership: Ethical leadership was measured with the 10-item scale developed by Brown et al., (2005). Example items include: "My supervisor conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner", "My supervisor defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained" and "My supervisor listens to what employees have to say". The alpha of the scale was 0.863.

Employee Work Engagement (WE): WE was measured with the 9-item short version Utrecht WE Scale devised by Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006). Example item includes: "At my work, I feel bursting with energy", "At my job, I feel strong and vigorous" and "I am enthusiastic about my job". The alpha of the scale was 0.815.

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB): OCB was measured with the 8-item scale developed by Hayes (2013). Examples include: "I willingly give my time to help other staff members who have work-related problems" and "I show genuine concern and courtesy toward staff members, even under the most difficult business or personal situations." The alpha of the scale was 0.809.

3.3   Analytical technique

The variables of the study are ethical leadership, work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour therefore it required data collection from different departments at the Public Service Commission in the capital city of Freetown, Sierra Leone. The one important variance depends on cross sectional assessments which are notable through differentiating current inquiry with previous inquiry talking about Ethical Leadership. Methods such as longitudinal are perfect between cross sectional surveys that loosen the power of implications. Firstly data related to ethical leadership, work engagement and organizational citizenship was collected. Secondly descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were conducted.Finally, multiple linear regressions were done using SPSS (25) to test our main hypotheses and to confirm our mediation hypotheses; we used the process for SPSS Version 25 developed by Hayes (2013).

4.0   Results
4.1   Descriptive statistics

Means, standard deviations, and correlations, as summary statistics of all variables are presented in Table 2. EL was significantly and positively correlated with WE (r = 0.54, p< 0.01), and OCB (r = 0.47, p< 0.01).Moreover, WE was found positively correlated with OCB (r = 0.45, p< 0.01), as expected. Overall, these results present preliminary validation to support our main research hypotheses. These findings suggest that a supervisor's ethical leadership can facilitate a subordinate's work engagement. In addition, the higher the subordinate's work engagement is, the greater the subordinate's OCB.

Table 2.

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ethical leadership	3.64	0.84	1.00						
Work Engagement	3.27	0.53	0.54**	1.00					
OCB	3.55	0.71	0.47**	0.45**	1.00				
Age	32.73	4.62	0.05	0.42*	0.07	1.00			
Tenure	7.82	1.35	0.31*	0.15	-0.04	-0.13	1.00		
Education	1.86	0.34	0.27*	0.06	0.02	0.12	0.08	1.00	
Designation	1.33	0.27	0.06	0.09	-0.06	-0.08	0.17	0.14	1.00

Note: N = 321; * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01 (2-tailed).

4.2   Hypothesis testing

We conducted multiple linear regressionsusing SPSS (25) to test our main hypotheses. The results in Table 3 present the effects of the control variables (age, Tenure, education and designation) and the independent variable (ethical leadership) on the dependent variables (OCB). As stated, our study also tested the impact of control variable on OCB and found positive and significant effects of education ($\beta = 0.257$, p < 0.05) and tenure ($\beta = 0.329$, p < 0.01), while age ($\beta = -0.124$, p > 0.05) and designation ($\beta = -0.144$, p > 0.05) have insignificant effect on OCB.The results presented in Table 3further reveal that ethical leadership is positively and significantly associated with OCB ($\beta = 0.286$ p < 0.01), hence fully supporting Hypothesis 1.

Table 3.

Regression results

Variables	OCB				
	B	S.E	β	t	Prob.(Sig.)
(constant)	0.837	0.289		2.899	.007***
Age	-0.124	0.093	-0.317	-1.330	.241 ns
Tenure	0.329	0.069	0.354	4.761	.000***
Education	0.257	0.125	0.276	2.063	.041**
Designation	-0.144	0.216	-0.088	-.664	.507ns
Ethical leadership	0.286	0.074	0.248	3.882	.000***
F			246.511		.000***
R2			0.236		
Adjusted R2			0.175		

Note: Entries are unstandardized coefficients (B), standardized coefficients (β), and standard errors (S.E.), ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, ns = non-significant

4.3   Mediation

To confirm our mediation hypotheses, we used the process for SPSS Version 25 developed by Hayes (2013). To examine the direct effect of ethical leadership on OCB and the mediating effect of employee WE, we chose Model 4 from the template of the process. We used a 95% bias correct confidence interval with 5000 bootstrapping sample estimates.

In Hypothesis 4, we predicted the mediating effect of employee WE on the relationship between ethical leadership and OCB. The results shown in Table 4 reveal a positive and significant association between ethical leadership and WE (β = 0.625, p< 0.01) which give support to the acceptance of hypothesis 2; in addition, WE is positively and significantly associated with OCB (β = 0.373, p< 0.01), hence supporting our Hypothesis 3 and fulfilling the condition for the acceptance of hypothesis 4.

Table 4.

Mediating effects

Path	Unstandardized Coefficient				Bootstrapping	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	Sig	LLCI	ULCI
IV→M(a)	0.625	0.180	3.464	0.000***	0.473	0.569
M→DV(b)	0.373	0.102	3.642	0.000***	0.261	0.519
IV→M→DV(c')	0.192	0.060	3.203	0.000***	0.018	0.297
IV→DV(c)	0.306	0.043	7.092	0.000***	0.216	0.472
Indirect effects	0.246	0.056			0.131	0.298

Note: IV denotes independent variable (ethical leadership), MV denotes mediating variable (work engagement), and DV denotes dependent variable (OCB).

4.4   Discussion

In this study, we investigated the positive effect of ethical leadership on OCB, as well as the mediating effect of employee WE in the context of the public sector in an African country,Sierra Leone. We found a positive association between ethical leadership, employeeWE and OCB. In addition, we also found a positive mediating effect of employee's WE upon examining the relationship between ethical leadership and OCB. The theoretical and practical implications of the study are discussed below.

This study extends our knowledge on employees' perception of ethical leadership towards OCB and its underlying mechanism, adding a contribution to the literature of leadership and employees' WE in two distinct ways. First, ethical leadership has become the focus of attention among scholars due to its positive and significant effects on employees, as well as on organizational performance (Avey et al., 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2011) and calls for more empirical work (Lim &Loosemore 2017; Çavuş&Develi, 2017; Bormann, 2017; Amna et al., 2018). The current study fills this gap by exploring the relationship between ethical leadership and OCB in the context of the public sector in Sierra Leone, and we found a positive association between ethical leadership and OCB. Moreover, our results are consistent with the past research findings (Avey et al., 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2011). In addition, studies have suggested the positive effect of employees' WE on OCB (Rurkkhum, 2010; Rich et al., 2010). This study also examined the effect of employees'WE on OCB and found a positive effect of employees WE on OCB.

In addition, drawing on social exchange theory (Blau,1964), we argue that an employee who perceives leadership behaviour as fair is more likely to exceed his/her formal duties by exhibiting behaviours that ultimately benefit the whole organization. The addition of social exchange theory makes a significant theoretical contribution to the psychological literature, as it is widely used to explain the studied relationship.

Second, Rich et al., (2010) suggest a positive mediating effect of employees' WE on the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance. However, research that has examined the mediating effect of

employees' WE between ethical leadership style and OCB have remained unexplored. We explored this gap and found a positive mediating influence of employees' WE on the relationship between ethical leadership and OCB.

5.0   Implications
5.1   Theoretical implication
There are some theoretical implications in this paper as it extends ethical leadership theory by considering that work engagement serves as a cognitive motivational underpinning in support of the link between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour. The results provide new and deeper insights in explaining the impact of ethical leadership on organizational citizenship behaviour by strengthening the mediating role of work engagement.

This proves the theoretical expectations and hypothesis of this study. This study will enhance and facilitate the further researches aiming to evaluate the ethical leadership effect over the behavior of employees. Theory of ethical leadership has grown considerably since its initial conceptualization, yet the vast majority of studies done in the area rarely upon a question or a research framework: how do the models of ethical leadership affect the organization with pros and cons. On contrary, there are rarely researches aiming to determine the ways, with which ethical leadership could influence citizenship behaviour. This point of view will be fruitful and meaningful propose for the further researches.

5.2   Managerial implication
This study has some useful implications for practitioners. Firstly, this research proved ethical leadership (EL) to be an influential factor that enhances employees' level of work engagement and indicates its crucial role to establish a healthy work environment where the employees become more courageous and engaged with their organization.

Second, as the outcomes of the current research showed the indirect influence of ethical leadership on OCB through work engagement, it is imperative for the managers and the supervisors to learn and seek all possible causal-chain relationships between ethical leadership and the employees' OCB, which may enhance organizational success. Therefore, we recommend that organizations put greater emphasis on proper training and developmental programs for their leaders. As a result, the reciprocal relationships will be established between leaders and their followers, which may lead to greater commitment to the organization. Additionally, it will enable the leaders to identify the direct and indirect effects of ethical leadership in the psychological processes related to work engagement and employees' OCB.

5.3   Limitations and further research direction
The current study also has several limitations and future suggestions. First, the cross-sectional study design was applied for data collection; to avoid the uncertainty of a causal relationship, future research may apply a longitudinal study design to this studied model. Second, the current study is limited to only one sector, the public sector, so it is suggested that the study be extended to another workplace setting. Third, this study was conducted in Sierra Leone context; future studies should be conducted by examining the model in other developing countries to increase the findings' generalizability. Finally, future research is encouraged to consider other organizational variables such as happiness, work ethics and psychological wellbeing while focusing on ethical leadership and employees' WE.

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