The Influence of Ethical Leadership on Employees' Behavior in the Public Sector, Case of Mali

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Final International University

July 2023

Girne, TRNC

The Influence of Ethical Leadership on Employees' Behavior in the Public Sector, Case of Mali

by

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A thesis submitted to the Institute of Graduate Studies in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master

in

Business Administration

Final International University

July 2023

Girne, TRNC

	FINAL INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY **INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

APPROVAL

Title: The Influence of Ethical Leadership on Employees' Behavior in the Public Sector, Case of Mali**.**

We certify that we approve this thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master Business Administration.

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ETHICAL DECLARATION

I, Mariam Niang, hereby, declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and it is my original work. I declare that I have followed ethical standards in collecting and analyzing the data and accurately reported the findings in this thesis. I have also properly credited all the sources included in this work.

Mariam Niang

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

The success of any organization depends on the behavior of its employees. To achieve this, good ethical values are required to stop negative behavior within the organization. The application of moral principles, convictions, and visions to behavior and decision-making is known as ethics in administration. The use of ethics in leadership raises performance standards, and frequently, there is a corresponding punishment or reward, which strengthens organizational ethics. "Influencing people through ethics" is the definition of ethical leadership. Given the preceding, this investigation aims to examine the influence of ethical leadership on employee behavior psychological safety, and counterproductive work behavior in the public sector in Mali. The methodology approach used is a sample of 293 employees of the company Malian Social Solidarity Fund (CMSS), data was collected in the workplace. To achieve the objectives of this study, quantitative research was used and SPSS software was used to conduct the statistical analysis of all data in this study. The results show that there is a positive impact between ethical leadership and psychological safety, and there is a negative impact between psychological safety, ethical leadership, and counterproductive work behavior. Additionally, the findings demonstrated that psychological safety mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior among employees.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, psychological safety, counterproductive work behavior

ÖZ

Herhangi bir organizasyonun başarısı, çalışanlarının davranışlarına bağlıdır. Bunu başarmak için, şirket içindeki olumsuz davranışları durdurmak için iyi etik değerler gereklidir. Ahlaki ilkelerin, inançların ve vizyonların davranış ve karar verme süreçlerine uygulanması, yönetimde etik olarak bilinir. Liderlikte etiğin kullanılması performans standartlarını yükseltir ve sıklıkla örgütsel etiği güçlendiren karşılık gelen bir ceza veya ödül vardır. "İnsanları etik yoluyla etkilemek" etik liderliğin tanımıdır. Öncekiler göz önüne alındığında, bu araştırma, etik liderliğin Mali'deki kamu sektöründe çalışan davranışı, psikolojik güvenlik ve verimsiz çalışma davranışı üzerindeki etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kullanılan metodoloji yaklaşımı, şirketin 293 çalışanından oluşan bir örneklem olup, Mali Sosyal Dayanışma Fonu (CMSS) verileri işyerinde toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amaçlarına ulaşmak için nicel araştırma kullanılmış ve SPSS yazılımı kullanılarak bu çalışmada tüm verilerin istatistiksel analizi yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar, etik liderlik ile psikolojik güvenlik arasında olumlu bir etki olduğunu ve psikolojik güvenlik, etik liderlik ve verimsiz çalışma davranışı arasında olumsuz bir etki olduğunu göstermektedir. Ek olarak, bulgular psikolojik güvenliğin çalışanlar arasında etik liderlik ile verimsiz çalışma davranışı arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık ettiğini göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etik liderlik, psikolojik güvenlik, ters etki yaratan çalışma davranışı

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMSS	Caisse Malienne de Solidarite Sociale
CWB	Counterproductive Work Behavior
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EL	Ethical Leadership
FIU	Final International University
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
p	Probability
PS	Psychological Safety
R²	R-Square
r	The Pearson Correlation Coefficient
ΔR^2	Delta R-Square
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Science
t	Test
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
%	Percentage

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, researchers have recognized that ethics has an important part in the development of good personalities among individuals for the success and prosperity of both communities and the people who make up them. In general, leaders must set ethical guidelines for those who follow them to address actions that are harmful to society and specific businesses (Aronson, 2001). Moral responses to questionable corporate conduct have resulted in a huge demand for ethical leadership under current economic conditions, and it is now a more expansive field to be explored (Trevino et al., 2006).

Many researchers have examined the notion of ethical leadership and are interested in its significance as an important component in improving employees' moral conduct (Neubert et al., 2009; Mayer et al., 2009; Brown et al., 2006; Sam et al., 2008). Researchers and practitioners focus on leadership's function to prevent unethical behavior in businesses (Brown et al., 2006; Sam et al., 2008). Brown et al. (2005, p. 120), offer a standard definition of ethical leadership, stating that "Ethical leadership is the manifestation of conventionally proper behavior through individual actions and interactions with others, and the transmission of conduct behaves to those who follow via interaction in both directions, support, and decision-making." Because most academics in the field have developed their empirical and theoretical studies on this idea, this is the best technique for presenting leadership and ethics in writing for academic purposes.

Researchers have used this phrase in papers such as (Piccolo et al., 2010; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Detert et al., 2007). Brown et al. (2005), created an ethical leadership scale that incorporates components of transformative (Bass, 1985), authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), and charismatic (Conger & Kanungo, 1998) leadership techniques. Leaders in diverse roles play an important role in fostering a long-term company culture in employees' minds and behaviors (Grojean et al., 2004). Theories of transformative and charismatic leadership, according to House, (1976) and

Bass, (1985), identify several means through which effects happen, and workers regularly notice these effects and their outcomes (Bandura, 1986).

Furthermore, ethical leadership research reveals that the way a leader behave is crucial for creating a productive outcome in enterprises (Koh & El'Fred, 2001; Petrick & Quinn, 2001; Trevino et al., 2003). In their study, Trevino et al. (2000) and Brown et al., (2005), defined two foundations of ethical leadership. The first was referred to as an example of morality, while the second was described as an ethical individual. Trevino et al., (2003) defined ethical traits, arguing that good leaders are moral persons who are credible, truthful, and honest. Brown et al. (2005) defined the moral person component of ethical leadership as viewers' perceptions of the leader's personality, personal attributes, and selfless drive. According to Trevino et al. (2000), the second pillar is that of an ethical manager who values morality in his aims. Brown et al. (2005) also proposed an ethical leadership moral manager component.

This aspect of ethical leadership argues that proactive role modeling has an impact on adherents' ethical and immoral behavior. Brown and Trevino, (2006) describe how they employ incentive and penalty strategies to hold followers accountable to pre-established norms. A leader should set a positive example for other people by displaying the highest standards of morals and behaving ethically in their day-to-day discussions, decisions, and acts (Toor et al., 2009). In the public sector, ethical leadership is crucial since it influences employee work practices. Ethical leadership has a positive and significant association with several aspects of the effectiveness of leadership, including employee psychological safety, counterproductive work behavior, motivation among workers, job fulfillment, efficiency, and engagement (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Newman et al., 2015; Ofori, 2009, Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009).

Regardless of these structured methods, it has not been thoroughly investigated how ethical leaders impact and motivate others (Avey et al., 2011; Mayer et al., 2012), and many researchers proposed that particular interest be paid to comprehending the way these essential operations worked in ethical leadership (Bouckenooghe et al., 2015; Newman et al., 2014; Newman & Sheikh, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2011).

Employees who work in an ethical leadership environment are more inclined to experience mutual respect that goes beyond interpersonal trust, resulting in an

elevated degree of psychological safety (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Psychological safety is an important intermediary mediator between leadership and outcomes (Siemsen et al., 2009). It is the degree to which people believe their coworkers (e.g., managers) will not reprimand or misjudge them for taking risks. Psychological safety is defined as a person's ability to show their individuality and avoid any negative effects on their appearance, status, or occupation, allowing them to openly converse with themselves.

In his research, Edmondson discovered that building self-confidence is an important part of establishing PS and can also be a vital cause for staff members to express (Liang et al., 2012), communicate, and share information (Siemsen et al., 2009). Psychological safety may exceed any team member's confidence, especially in a team. Psychological safety relates to workplace safety in terms of preserving work relationships and open discussion. On the opposite side, uncertainty at work may result in emotions of stress, which can alter people's behaviors and feelings, eventually impacting both their mental and physical resilience and interfering with their work productivity.

Edmondson et al. (2004), argued that psychological safety is a condition in which there is an assurance of security in taking risks in work environments so that workers are willing to talk openly, for instance, when developing and executing innovative concepts. It is obvious that sometimes these innovative concepts are fraught with danger, and the possibility for failure is huge, thus they are rejected since they are deemed deviant behaviors. Regardless of the success or failure of new ideas expressed by employees, a psychological safety work environment is still required for employees to dare to express these new ideas while also daring to take risks.

Counterproductive work behavior can be defined as voluntary, possibly detrimental, or harmful actions that harm individuals or enterprises. Griep et al. (2018) and Spector and Fox, (2002, p. 270), for enterprises, counterproductive work behavior has inescapable difficulties and economic consequences. According to estimates, the associated expenses of counterproductive work behavior range between 17.6 (Hollinger & Langton, 2006) and 200 billion dollars (Govoni, 1992 cited in Griep et al., 2018). Given this fact, several experts have attempted to investigate and uncover the causes of counterproductive work behavior in enterprises. This is due to its

association with a variety of important places of employment and personal factors like dark triad personalities, psychological contract violation and organizational justice (Ying & Cohen, 2018), character characteristics (Van & De Bruin, 2018), colleague conduct (Moon & Hur, 2018; Ferguson, 2012), and human resource management practices (Samnani & Power, 2014).

In the same way, a meta-analytic analysis revealed that weak leadership predicted a proclivity for unproductive work conduct (Hershcovis et al., 2007). Particularly, amid diverse leadership techniques, when leaders behave ethically their followers avoid engaging in counterproductive work behavior like wasting time during breaks, absenteeism, and fraud (Bedi et al., 2016).

1.1 Problem Statement

As previously stated, there is numerous research on ethical leadership in Western Countries (Brown et al., 2006; Sama et al., 2008; Neubert et al., 2009; Mayer et al., 2009). Netherveless, as far as we are concerned, no study has been found exploring the influence of ethical leadership on employee behavior, psychological safety, and counterproductive work behavior in Mali. Therefore, this paper tries to fill the gaps and will be a value add and benefit for the enterprise, employees, and school.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Our aim to write this paper is to investigate the impacts of workplace misbehaviors on employees' work outcomes and to determine the significance of morals in an organization. Also, how organizational leaders should act because being a moral leader is critical for the enterprise's credibility.

1.3 Significance of the Study

It is the first investigation that looks into the effects of ethical leadership in Mali. This study is also crucial since it leads to the creation of a flourishing workplace environment, the strengthening of company image and trustworthiness, the promotion of worker and customer commitment, and the effectiveness in production.

1.4 Research Questions

Q1: Does ethical leadership positively affect psychological safety?

Q2: Does psychological safety negatively affect counterproductive work behavior?

Q3: Does ethical leadership negatively affect counterproductive work behavior?

Q4: Does psychological safety mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior?

1.5 Assumptions

In this investigation, the following assumptions are made:

1. All respondents completely comprehend the questions.

2. Respondents will provide truthful statements about their knowledge.

3. All of the results offered are unequivocal about the influence of ethical leadership on-employee behavior.

1.6 Definition of Key Terminology

Ethical leader behavior: Many leadership ways of acting have been considered ethical leadership attributes. Character and integrity, understanding of ethics, interpersonal relationships and community direction, encouraging, influencing, and inspiring, as well as managing accountability for ethics, were identified by Resick et al. (2006). Brown et al. (2005); De Hoogh and Den Hartog, (2008); Eisenbeiss and Brodbeck, (2014); Kalshoven et al. (2011) have discovered that ethical leadership ways of acting include behaving honestly and fairly, being consistent and showing integrity, encouraging others to do right things, taking care of people, allowing voice, and empower others.

Unethical leadership: Brown and Mitchell, (2010, p. 588) describe it as "actions and choices made by those in leadership positions that are illegal and/or contradict ethical principles, as well as those that impose procedures and frameworks that foster illegal.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Ethical Leadership and Psychological Safety

The term "leadership" has been defined in numerous ways. It is defined by Nelson, (2006) as "steps, methods, or procedures that influence, guide, and direct how individuals act in their workplace." Armstrong, (2003) defines leadership as "the ability to persuade people to voluntarily change their behavior to do the work assigned to them with the assistance of the team." Leaders provide leadership, encouragement, motivation, advice, and inspiration to achieve goals. They help to develop a vision and mobilize personnel around a single purpose.

Leaders now have the skills and information they need to make intelligent decisions and solve problems quickly. Leadership styles (servant leadership, authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and ethical leadership) have become a significant area of study in the management industry, and many scholars consider leadership style to be a key component in influencing how employees work in an organization (Wu, 2009). As a result, Bass et al. (2003) identified leadership style as an important predictor of an organization's effectiveness. Leadership has been presented as a significant motivation for business ethics (Carlson & Perrewe, 1995; Paine, 1996; Weaver et al., 1999; Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002). Much of this research has centered on the idea that a leader's actions and behaviors are important predictors of success.

Ethical leadership is described as doing the right action at the right moment for the right purpose. It refers to leaders who release confidence, honesty, and integrity. They also work to increase their consistency, predictability, and credibility. Consistency is synonymous with integrity because it entails doing what one says, following up, and following through in such a way that when one says something, he or she does it as well as follows up (Brown et al., 2005).

As a result, others frequently believe in such a person because his history shows that when someone says something, they usually follow through on it. Leaders who follow ethical principles are frequently regarded as communicating openly, well, and spontaneously, as well as being good listeners. People or followers with difficult issues

approach them because they know they will get a sympathetic ear. After all, they are usually likable (Brown & Trevino, 2006). A leader with ethics instills trust in those below him to convey even terrible news or challenges. They have been described as motivating, energetic, powerful, and courageous.

Brown and Trevino, (2006, p. 597) define ethical leadership as "a leader's honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness." A leader must embrace the components of integrity and honesty in leadership to bring transformation to an organization. An ethical leader is distinguished from an unethical leader by his or her honesty. Trustworthiness and openness are characteristics of a decent person's character. A leader must be honest and capable of demonstrating numerous actions beyond personal integrity to be effective in ethical leadership. Accountability for followers' moral behavior is one example, as is the continuous transmission of moral signals to followers (Valdesolo et al., 2017).

Psychological safety in the workplace is an environmental condition that enables individuals with enough assurance and reliability to be innovative (Gong et al., 2012). Kahn, (1990) defined psychological safety in his engagement model as "the feeling of being allowed to display and employ oneself without fear of unfavorable consequences to one's self-image, status, or job" (p. 708). Kahn, (1990) further stated that psychological safety in the workplace reflects helpful administration, clarified duties, and liberty in self-expression.

Psychological safety upholds the assumption that dangerous acts, like using one's voice, won't result in personal injury (Detert & Burris, 2007). Edmondson, (1999, p. 354) defined the concept as the "shared belief that a group is secure for interpersonal risk-taking." Psychological safety represents others' perception that they won't be penalized for unfavorable outcomes. It is defined as an environment that fosters mutual respect and confidence. People are at ease in this environment (Edmondson, 1999; Liu et al., 2015).

Furthermore, recent research has revealed that when employees observe interpersonal behaviors such as charitable behavior, support, loyalty, and compassion demonstrated by moral leaders in their job teams, increased levels of enjoyment, involvement, trust, and collaboration may ensue (Mayer et al., 2012). Workers are more likely to get involved in social risk-taking and display trust and mutual regard

with coworkers when they work under ethical leaders (Mayer et al., 2012). Psychological safety, stated by Edmondson, (1999), is a mental condition distinguished by respect for one another and trust between individuals, in which workers are confident being themselves and engaged in social risk-taking.

Ethical leadership will have an impact on employees' psychological safety in work environments. Ethical leaders, by definition, demonstrate normatively suitable behavior through their behaviors and interpersonal connections with staff members in the work environment (Brown et al., 2005). They also demonstrate responsiveness to society and caring by signaling to workers that the leader's primary focus is their best interests (Brown et al., 2005).

Therefore, ethical leadership is critical in influencing employees' psychological safety. People can express themselves freely in such an environment. In the same way, leaders motivate followers to share their thoughts and withdraw barriers to doing so, establishing an environment of strong psychological trust. If followers trust their leader, they will take risks because they feel the leader will not penalize them if unfavorable outcomes occur. As a result, there is a link between ethical leadership and psychological safety (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009).

According to social learning theory, we wanted to shed light on the effect of ethical leadership through certain characteristics of the ethical employee and manager (Brown et al., 2005). Based on social learning theory, ethical leaders' behaviors may "trickle down" to followers, encouraging people who experience the behaviors to act in a fairly uniform fashion toward other employees (Mayer et al., 2012; Quade et al., 2017). According to social learning theory, a person can learn about specific activities by seeing them. Ethical leadership explains and debates with employees what ethical behavior is and works in the best interests of the employees (Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, when ethical leaders communicate with their employees transparently and openly, mutual admiration and interpersonal confidence are fostered both between the leader and those who follow and between the followers themselves (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009).

There has been numerous research undertaken to study the meaning of the phrase ethical leadership to proximate observers of leaders (Trevino et al., 2000). Ethical leaders are thought to be ethical, fair in their decision-making, and legitimate

in their personal life. They reduce individuals' anxieties about the uncertainty of the job and organizational behavior by being compassionate, trustworthy, transparent, and honest, as well as acknowledging the need of adhering to strong ethical ideals. Employees that have sufficient faith in their leaders are keener to follow ethical norms and are also willing to take risks (Hoyt et al., 2013). People who are seen to be fair in their dealings with others. Workers in this situation notice the leader's actions and use them as a reference (Stouten et al., 2013). Specifically, social learning theory illuminates how ethical leadership affects workers' positions and draws moral behavior from them (Ardichvili et al., 2009; Kirkman et al., 2009).

According to the literature discussed above and social learning theory, this thesis proposes:

H1: Ethical leadership has a significant positive impact on psychological safety

2.2 Psychological Safety and Counterproductive Work Behavior

A favorable atmosphere at work allows workers to share expertise, which affects enhancing psychological safety. The worker's sense of being emotionally secure and comfortable at work is known as psychological safety (Edmondson, 2004). When the worker views the atmosphere to be psychological safety, they openly discuss their views and worries, feel free to provide suggestions, and work out training requirements to perform successfully and accomplish objectives. It is different when the job circumstance is unforeseeable, full of confusion, and can even threaten the worker's safety; may become depressed, experience emotional disorders, and can ultimately affect the physical and psychological resilience of the individual, which may cause problems with productivity at work if left unchecked and may result in counterproductive work behavior in workers.

Psychological safety is defined as a shared view among members of a work unit that it is safe for them to participate in interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999). This article employs a one-dimensional scale of psychological safety. According to Edmondson, both personal and institutional variables can influence psychological safety in an organization. Psychological safety entails more than just perceiving and experiencing high levels of interpersonal trust; it also refers to a work environment marked by mutual respect, in which employees feel comfortable expressing their differing viewpoints (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009).

Concerning voice behavior, this can be considered risky behavior. Employees consider interpersonal hazards (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Duan, 2011). For example, people may be concerned that their voice behavior may be misinterpreted or retaliated against by their colleagues and bosses, resulting in a breakdown in relationships (Dutton et al., 1997; Milliken et al., 2003). Status may suffer as a result.

Psychological safety plays an important role in determining how such risks are evaluated (Detert & Burris, 2007). Specifically, when employees perceive a high level of psychological safety, this will dampen their assessment of negative risks associated with voice behavior. For this reason, psychological safety is regarded as one of the necessary preconditions for employee voice behavior to occur (Ashford et al., 1998; Detert & Burris, 2007; Liang et al., 2012).

 Researchers have focused on counterproductive work behavior because of its significant negative influence on workplaces, which causes a rise in work stress, turnover of employees, and low performance (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Penney & Spector, 2005). Counterproductive work behavior displays responses to ongoing pressure at workplaces as a strategy to deal with the frustration caused by conditions at work (Spector & Fox, 2005).

Counterproductive work behavior can be also defined as "intentional behavior aimed at causing harm to the enterprise and its members" (Spector & Fox, 2002: 269). Organizational disagreement, delaying work, stealing corporate property, and wasting time and resources are all instances of 'destructive' acts (Kesler, 2007). For an enterprise's conduct to be categorized as counterproductive work behavior, it must be purposeful, harmful, and illegal (Marcus & Schuler, 2004). According to studies, counterproductive work behavior that endangers the enterprise and the general well-being of its staff is common. For example, it has been reported that 58% of female employees may encounter harassment, and 24% may face sexual bullying. Furthermore, it was shown that 25% of employees in the United States lose their employment as a result of internet misuse. Furthermore, theft occurs in practically every business. During the same period, counterproductive work behavior is believed to inflict significant economic loss (Mount et al., 2000).

Others aggregate and investigate similar behaviors under various aspects, in addition to studies that examine counterproductive work behavior independently as

aggressiveness, stealing, or absenteeism (Spector et al., 2006). Raver, (2004), for example, counterproductive work behavior in two sub-dimensions: 'interpersonal' and 'organizational'. Workers' bad-intentioned and hurtful conduct toward other workers is classified as the former, while negative behavior towards the entire organization is defined as the latter.

The primary forms of counterproductive work behavior in the workplace are illicit use of information, assets, time, absenteeism, racism, keeping apart, inefficiency, assets misuse, verbal and physical aggression, mistrustfulness, social pressure, mobbing, and harassment (Foldes, 2006; Seçer, 2007).

Therefore, in line with the literature review, the hypothesis below is proposed for this study:

H2: Psychological safety has a significant negative impact on counterproductive work behavior

2.3 Ethical Leadership and Counterproductive Work Behavior

Ethical leadership is a mindset that promotes the well-being of staff in the workplace. Workplace well-being is associated with ethical leadership, trust, and support from the enterprise.

Ethical leadership has a favorable impact on trust among employees (Taşlyan et al., 2016, p. 2541). Tuna and Boylu, (2016) discovered that receiving workplace support productively influences positive emotional well-being in the workplace, whereas receiving departmental assistance adversely affects negatively employees' well-being at work. Furthermore, they discovered that perceiving organizational support affect positively the level of removal, stealing, and abuse characteristics, all of which are aspects of unproductive work behavior.

Ethical leaders can set a good example for others and resist temptations along the way. The worth of character and values, the reality of ethical leadership is a lot more complex, and the stakes are far higher. Similarly, Freeman and Stewart, (2006), defined an ethical leader as someone with the "right value" and "strong character" who sets an example for others and resists temptation. Ethical leaders are stakeholders in organizations that strive to fulfill their domain's purpose, vision, and value without sacrificing self-interest. Within an awareness of ethical ideals, ethical leaders

exemplify the organization's and constituents' purpose, vision, and values. They link the organization's aims to the goals of its internal employees and external stakeholders.

However, positive relationships with all organizational stakeholders are the gold standard for all organizational initiatives, according to ethical leaders. The most essential predictors of organizational performance are high-quality relationships based on respect and trust. Trust, respect, integrity, honesty, fairness, equity, justice, and compassion are just a few of the core concepts that ethical leaders should comprehend. The leader should understand that by living by these fundamental values, a human enterprise can develop and endure (Berghofer & Schwartz, n.d). Ethical leaders should prioritize moral ideals and fairness in decision-making, examine the external consequences of organizational decisions, and convey tees how their activities at work contribute to the organization's overall goals.

Ethical leaders help people find meaning in their work and guarantee that corporate decisions are based on moral ideals (Piccolo et al., 2010). Ethical leaders are constantly striving to incorporate moral concepts into their ideas, attitudes, and actions; they are dedicated to a higher cause, prudence, pride, patience, and perseverance (Khuntia & Suar, 2004).

Counterproductive work behavior is a kind of worker conduct in the workplace that can compromise an organization's goals and interests. Counterproductive work behavior can take many forms, such as workplace bullying, workplace aggression, sabotage, substance abuse, sexual harassment, fraud, theft, tardiness, and absenteeism. Such kinds of conduct not only influence the quality of work produced by those who are engaged in Counterproductive work behaviors but may also negatively impact productivity.

Counterproductive work behavior, on the other hand, is always subject to ethical leadership and specific organizational moral beliefs. Every organization has ethical leaders that reflect the business and its customers' objectives, vision, and values while also knowing ethical ideals. They link the enterprise's aims to the interests of its inside employees and outside stakeholders while considering moral issues. Furthermore, they define the enterprise's goals and values to workers in such a way that it inspires people to choose corporate achievement over their ego. As a result, the

fundamental value proposition of the interaction between ethical leadership and other stakeholders is to interact ethically.

Counterproductive work behaviors are those that are intended to hurt the enterprise and its people (Martinko et al., 2002, p. 37). Sackett, (2002, p. 5), furthermore, defines unproductive work behaviors as knowing activities that are averse to the lawful objectives of the organization.

By Le Roy et al. (2012, p. 1342), such practices, generally, produce conscious and systematic hurt to the organization and its stakeholders. Counterproductive work behaviors are those that directly target the organization and its members (management team, colleagues, suppliers, customers, and so on), are knowingly showing up, and the intent to cause damage is either obvious or hidden (Spector & Fox, 2002). Industrial sabotage is counterproductive to work behavior. In simple terms, it is the conduct of workers who do not complete their tasks by conducting themselves in a way that stops the enterprise from functioning efficiently. In the context of the enterprise dimension, counterproductive work behavior is undesirable behaviors directed at the entire organization as well as its goals and purposes.

Workers' poor perceptions of the work environment cause them to engage in counterproductive job activities (Kanten & Ülker, 2014, p. 24). Contrary, a leader's grasp of management influences his or her behavior, attitude, and conduct, which contributes to the rise or decline of the enterprise's success (Uche & Timinepere, 2012, p. 200).

As a result, there is a possibility that workers associated with the organization of a leader who uses ethical and righteous actions in the enterprise can bring beneficial outcomes to the organization (such as demonstrating an engagement to the organization, creating a feeling of collective being part of something, and not engaging in counterproductive behaviors).

Through counterproductive work behavior, an indirect association was discovered between ethical leadership and employee attitude. More specifically, the recent study's results show that unproductive work behavior mediated the relationship between ethical leadership and employee attitude. Employee attitude was influenced partially by the style of the managers, and partially by the bad working behavior of employees. Our findings are congruent with the results of Elçi et al. (2013), who

showed that the existence of ethical leaders who contributed in both direct and indirect ways to build an ethical climate reduced workers' counterproductive work behavior. Furthermore, Newman et al. (2015) claimed a negative link between ethical role clarity leadership and employee misbehavior was higher when workers experienced stronger levels of ethical role clarity leadership.

On the contrary, a leader's management style does not support employees' individual goals, restricts them to take part in decision-making, and is not viewed as just results in isolation (Ceylan & Sulu, 2010, p. 67). Isolation, additionally, might enhance detrimental actions within a company.

As a result, employees who view a style of leadership that leads to their favorable and personal objectives are anticipated to demonstrate positive behaviors and attitudes, whereas staff who perceive a negative leadership style are likely to show detrimental actions (Kanten & Ülker, 2014, p. 25).

Liu et al. (2012) investigated the association between ethical leadership and unproductive work habits and discovered that ethical leadership aids to restrict followers' organizational aberrations. The worker's counterproductive work behavior has decreased as ethical leadership pursues moral practice more and more.

Kessler et al. (2013) investigated the impact of leadership on disagreements between employees and unproductive workplace behavior. Based on the study's results, leadership style, and interpersonal conflict influence a person's negative feelings, which eventually results in counterproductive work behavior.

In their study investigating the effect of ethical leadership activities on workplace equity and counter-organizational productivity work behaviors, Yeşiltaş et al., (2012) found that there is a negative relationship between the conduct of ethical leaders and variation behaviors and that ethical leadership tasks decrease variance conduct.

According to Mayer et al. (2009), ethical leadership is associated with less unproductive job conduct. Similarly, Avey et al., (2011) established a negative relationship between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior.

Surprisingly, Detert et al. (2007) discovered no significant relationship between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior. In public sector

organizations, ethical leadership enhances subordinates' readiness to disclose ethical troubles, boosts organizational engagement, and decreases absenteeism (Hassan et al., 2010). As a result, ethical leaders seek to reduce the happening of unethical actions by fostering an ethical workplace.

Social Learning Theory by Bandura, (1977), is one of the most important scientific contributions of the best-living psychologist. Social Learning Theory has demonstrated strong predictive capacity in a variety of life situations, including career success (Akers, 2017; Ruggie, 2017;), health-related behavior (Ruggie, 2017), domestic violence (Murrell et al.,2007), counterproductive work behavior (Akers, 2017; Ruggie, 2017).

Social learning theory provides the structure to comprehend the relationship between ethics, leaders, and their success. According to Social Learning Theory, individuals learn behavior from their work environment through observation, imitation, and modeling. Although, people acquire through direct experience but also by looking at the behaviors and consequences of others. Bandura, (1977) refers to this form of vicarious action as learning without direct experience. Leaders affect followers' ethical behavior by modeling, which is a sort of behavior reenactment, according to Khokhar and Rehman's 227 social learning theory (cf. Bandura, 1986; p. 50). Individuals or leaders with strong hierarchical ranks in the company and the capacity to manage rewards, he claims, have a significant influence on modeling efficacy (p. 207). It also implies that an individual's behavior at work is determined by perceptions of what most others do in a social setting (like perceived descriptive norms) and perceptions of what most others approve or disapprove of in a social setting (perceived injunctive norms).

In connection to counterproductive work behavior, Ames et al. (2000), hypothesize that when work-based referent others do not accommodate the use of alcohol at work, persons are less likely to use it. According to Blanchard and Henle, (2008), perceived injunctive norms are likewise associated with mild internet loafing. Frone and Brown, (2010) explored the link between workplace substance use standards and workplace drug usage. They discovered a substantial positive link between perceived descriptive norms and workplace drug usage. Similarly, Crane and Platow, (2010) observe that employees who believe their referent individuals (e.g.,

coworkers/colleagues) participate in deviant behaviors, such as sexual harassment and voicing unhappiness, are more inclined to engage in such deviant behaviors.

Along similar lines, research has demonstrated that perceived social norms may explain counterproductive work behavior (Bobek et al., 2013; Henle & Pitts, 2010; Luna & Shih Yung, 2013; Bamberger & Biron, 2007). Given the widespread acceptance of social learning theory in a variety of life contexts, the core principle of social learning is that individuals acquire behavior from their work-based referent others through observation and imitation.

According to the literature review discussed above and the social learning theory, this investigation proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Ethical leadership has a significant negative impact on counterproductive work behavior

2.4 Psychological Safety, Ethical Leadership, and Counterproductive Work Behavior

Psychological safety is the mental state in which employees feel free to "show and employ themselves without fear of negative consequences to one's self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990 p. 708).

Similarly, Edmondson and Lei characterized it as an employee's shared belief about whether it is safe to take interpersonal risks in the workplace (presenting their thoughts, questions, and concerns). It represents a safe setting marked by a high level of interpersonal trust and a work environment marked by mutual respect, in which people may freely express their differences and generate new ideas without fear of being wounded, embarrassed, or condemned. In other words, employees who have a high level of psychological safety are less likely to be afraid of being negatively influenced when they express their ideas.

A psychological safety working environment promotes worker welfare more than an unsafe working environment because workers feel comfortable, able to avoid outside influences and impediments, and unfettered in voicing their voices (Burke et al., 2006). Employees can be comfortable expressing themselves and raising their voices in a safe setting, knowing that their conduct won't be impacted.

The significance of psychological safety as a conciliator in the correlation between helpful management and employee well-being was investigated by Erkutlu and Chafra, (2016). According to the study's findings, psychological safety mediated the association.

Members of organizations assess what they stand to gain or lose before speaking. Psychological safety is defined as the assumption that risky acts, such as using one's voice, will not result in personal injury (Detert & Burris, 2007). This concept was defined by Edmondson (1999, p. 354) as the "shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking." Psychological safety represents members' perception that they will not be penalized for unfavorable outcomes. This notion is defined as an atmosphere based on trust and mutual respect. People are at ease in this environment (Edmondson, 1999; Liu et al., 2015).

People can express themselves freely in such an environment. In this regard, leaders encourage followers to share their thoughts and remove barriers to doing so, establishing an environment of strong psychological trust. If followers trust their leader, they will take risks because they feel the leader will not penalize them if unfavorable outcomes occur. As a result, there is a link between ethical leadership and psychological safety (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009).

According to social learning theory, employees study leaders in their work environment and learn and mimic their conduct. Ethical leaders have a strong moral character and exhibit characteristics such as responsibility, care, honesty, and fairness in their work. Such leadership creates a good example for followers. That is, followers, observe what the leader says and does and apply what they notice to their colleagues in the same way. As a result, ethical leaders demonstrate high moral, ethical, and fair standards, which impact employees' attitudes and behaviors, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Psychological safety, according to Edmondson, is a psychological state defined by mutual respect and interpersonal trust, in which individual employees feel at ease and engage in interpersonal risk-taking.

As a result, when an individual has trusting and supportive interpersonal ties with his coworkers, he is more likely to feel psychologically comfortable and will openly vocalize and convey fresh ideas. Employees may be encouraged to innovate if they perceive a safe environment. As a result, this research posits, based on social

learning theory, that psychological safety may be a potential mediator of the relationship between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior.

A leader's behavior, in particular, sets a stunning example of how followers should behave, and it is seen to be critical to affecting followers' psychological safety since it plays a vital role in directly influencing organizational members' perceptions. According to Edmondson, Kramer, and Cook's research, three behaviors that leaders can specifically promote for employee psychological safety are making themselves available and approachable, explicitly asking team members for their opinions and feedback, and modeling openness and fallibility. Mutual respect and trust are generated when ethical managers communicate with their employees in an organization with honesty and transparency, both between the leader and followers and among the followers themselves.

Furthermore, ethical leaders demonstrate genuine concern for their employees, respect their followers' interests, and do everything possible to provide them with instrumental and emotional assistance. To summarize, highly ethical leaders play a critical role in fostering mutual respect and trust among organizational members, and an organizational climate of mutual respect and trust will aid in improving employees' psychological safety. Furthermore, ethical leaders are regarded to have characteristics such as altruism, high ethical standards, honesty, and commitment, and employees feel more psychologically secure while expressing new ideas inside the firm. As a result, we anticipate that ethical leadership will play an essential role in promoting employee psychological safety.

Based on what has been discussed so far and the theory, this study proposes:

H4: Psychological safety mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior.

Figure 1

Proposed Conceptual Model
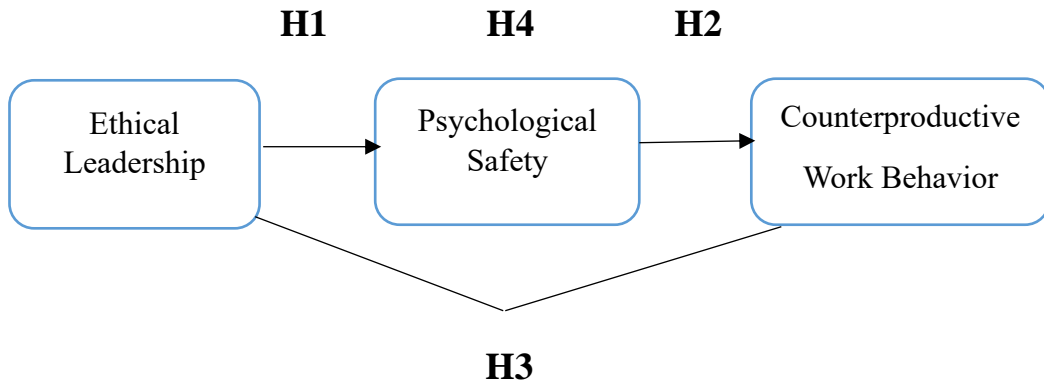
CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

To collect and analyze data for the current study thesis, a quantitative research approach was employed by the researcher. The research process is discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.1 Research Design and Proposed Model

The current research attempts to examine the relationship between ethical leadership, and counterproductive work behavior through the mediation effect of psychological safety. A quantitative research approach was conducted among employees in the public sector in Mali to test the proposed hypotheses. The data collected for this research was between May and June 2023.

3.2 Population and Sampling

This quantitative study was conducted on employees in the public sector in Mali. The study was conducted face-to-face. The researchers used the convenience sampling technique. Survey questionnaires were distributed among employees for data collection. Before the main data collection, twenty employees were selected for a pilot study to confirm the understandability of the questionnaires and to minimize errors that can happen in the data collection process. Based on the feedback gathered, a few items were fixed.

The questionnaire was originally in English. The researcher then translated them into French; then again back into English. This was done to assure that there are no discrepancies in the questionnaire. It also reflects the accuracy and equivalence of the target text, which is a commonly used quality assessment tool in cross-cultural research (Brislin, 1970).

The researcher provided a cover letter at the beginning of the questionnaire. The cover page of each questionnaire included such information to reduce the risk of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The cover letter was assuring the respondents about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. More precisely, statements such as "There are no right or wrong answers in this

questionnaire", "Any sort of information collected during our research will be kept confidential" and "Participation is voluntary" were included in the cover letter.

In this study, 400 questionnaires were distributed. Among these 293 were returned to the researcher. Six questionnaires were removed due to missing responses, giving a response rate of 72%. Table 1 provides information about the respondents.

As can be seen in Table 1, 174 out of 293 survey participants are female, making up 62.5% of the study sample. As presented in Table 1, the majority of the respondents (48.1%) are between the ages of 30-40.

The vast majority of respondents have bachelor's degrees (62.5%), 22.2 % had master's degrees and the rest had high school degrees of 7.2 percent. 93.5 of the respondents have tenures of five years or below. The rest have 6.5% tenure above five years.

Table 1

Sample Demographics

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	110	37.5
Female	183	62.5
Total	293	100

Age	Frequency	Percent
20-30	68	23.2
30-40	141	48.1
40-50	73	24.9
More than 50	11	3.8
Total	293	100

Table 1 (continued)

Sample Demographics

Education level	Frequency	Percent
High school	21	7.2
Bachelor	183	62.5
Master	65	22.2
Other	24	8.2
Total	293	100

Organization tenure	Frequency	Percent
1-5	55	18.8
1-6	132	45.1
11-15	87	29.7
More than 15	19	6.5
Total	293	100

Nationality	Frequency	Percent
Malian	293	100

3.3 Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection

This study is based on a quantitative survey using a self-administered questionnaire. All measurement items were adopted from existing literature and former empirical studies. Ethical leadership was adapted from the study of (Brown et al., 2005) with a 5 Likert scale (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree). The psychological safety scale was adapted from the study of (Edmondson 1991). Measurement items have a 7-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree). Finally, the counterproductive work behavior scale was taken from (Spector et al., 2006) with 5 Likert scales (1= never; 5= every day. Table 2 shows the constructs and scale items.

Table 2

Constructs and Scale Items

Ethical Leadership	My supervisor listens to what employees have to say
	My supervisor disciplines employees who violate ethical standards
	My supervisor conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner
	My supervisor has the best interest of the employee's mind
	My supervisor makes fair and balanced decisions
	My supervisor can be trusted
	My supervisor discusses organization ethics or values with employees'
	8. My supervisor sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics
	9. My supervisor defines success not just by results but also by the way that they are obtained
	When making a decision, my supervisor asks "What is the right thing to do"?
	My supervisor makes sure that employees are promoted in the organization because they show ethical behavior.
	My supervisor acknowledges the ethically valued behavior of employees.
	My supervisor provides rewards to employees for ethically good behavior.

My supervisor's decisions have a positive influence on the well-being of the organization and other stakeholders.
My supervisor reprimands employees who show ethically flawed behavior.
The observation of my supervisor's ethical behavior inspires employees to resolve ethical problems in principled ways.
My supervisor's reactions reflect his/her moral belief.
Employees find it difficult to solve ethical problems when the leader is away.

Table 2 (continued)

Constructs and Scale Item

	If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.
	Members of this team can bring up problems and tough issues.
Psychological Safety	Members of this team sometimes reject others for being different.
	It is safe to take a risk on this team.
	It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.
	No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
	Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.
	Purposely wasted your employer's materials/supplies.
	Complained about insignificant things at work.
Counterproductive Work Behavior	Told people outside the job what a lousy place you work for.
	Came to work late without permission.
	Stayed home from work and said you were sick when you weren't.
	Insulted someone about their job performance.
	Made fun of someone's personal life.
	Ignored someone at work.
	Started an argument with someone at work.
	Insulted or made fun of someone at work.

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CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

4.1 Preliminary Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS) was used for data analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was employed using principal components analysis, with Varimax rotation to determine if they represent the distinct concepts of interests. Reliability analysis was used to check whether the measurement scales are reliable. Finally, regression analysis was used to test the proposed hypotheses and to investigate the influence of ethical leadership on employee behavior, counterproductive work behavior, and psychological safety.

Preliminary data analysis is conveyed to designate the number of respondents.

4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Table 3 shows that the KMO value is 0.930, exceeding the suggested cut-off value of .60 (Kaiser, 1974). Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity 8803.175 (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance ($p < 0.00$). Thus, the data is considered appropriate for factor analysis.

Table 3

KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.824
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4424.395
	Df	231
	Sig.	.000

All measures were subjected to exploratory factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted for establishing the relationship between measured variables in a data set and the latent factors that explain the covariation between these measured variables (Allen, 2017).

The initial results demonstrated that 9 items from ethical leadership measures produced a distinct dimension. Therefore, they were removed from the measurement items. Additionally, 3 items from psychological safety produced a distinct dimension; hence, removed from the measurement items. Finally, 1 item from counterproductive work behavior produced a distinct dimension and was thus removed from the measurement items. The final results indicated that all items were loaded on their underlying dimensions. Table 4 represents the factor loading of each of the variables in this study. Table 4 also represents that all items were loaded beneath their underlying variables with magnitudes ranging ranged from 0.876 to 0.531. According to the data, 9 items were loaded under CWB, 9 items were loaded under ethical leadership, and 4 items were loaded under psychological safety. All Eigenvalues were greater than 1.0. In short, there was evidence of convergent validity.

Table 4

Factor Loadings

Item	Counterproductive Work Behavior	Ethical Leadership	Psychological safety
CWB7	.876		
CWB10	.863		
CWB5	.861		
CWB6	.852		
CWB9	.845		
CWB8	.800		
CWB2	.775		
CWB1	.748		
CWB4	.575		
EL8		.760	
EL5		.732	
EL7		.718	
EL4		.700	
EL1		.676	
EL9		.606	
EL6		.603	
EL3		.545	
EL2		.531	
PS6			.812
PS1			.803
PS2			.758
PS7			.729

Table 5

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Initial Eigenvalues				Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Factor	Total	% of variance	cumulative%	Total	% of variance	cumulative%
1	7.102	32.280	32.280	7.102	32.280	5.979
2	3.802	17.281	49.561	3.802	49.561	4.015
3	2.917	13.259	62.820	2.917	62.820	3.827
4	.911	4.141	66.961			
5	.888	4.038	70.999			
6	.795	3.612	74.611			
7	.722	3.282	77.892			
8	.622	2.826	80.718			
9	.574	2.610	83.328			
10	.527	2.398	85.726			
11	.467	2.122	87.848			
12	.433	1.969	89.817			
13	.364	1.654	91.471			
14	.343	1.558	93.029			
15	.300	1.365	94.394			
16	.253	1.150	95. 545			
17	.244	1.109	96.653			
18	.209	.951	97.604			
19	.182	.828	98.432			
20	.152	.693	99.125			
21	.110	.499	99.624			
22	.083	.376	100.000			

4.3 Reliability

Reliability is used to evaluate the quality of research. It indicates how well a method, technique, or test measure something. Reliability is about the consistency of a measure (Middleton, 2020). In an attempt to have internal consistency, the relative Cronbach's alpha level of measurement scales should be over .70 (Cronbach, 1951).

Ranging from 0.931 to 0.846 all measures proved to be reliable since all coefficient alphas were above the commonly accepted cut-off values of 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 6 shows that the scales used in the study have good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values reported as follows: Ethical Leadership (0.850), Psychological Safety (0.846), and Counterproductive Work Behavior (0.931).

Table 6

Reliability

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Ethical Leadership	.850	9
Psychological Safety	.846	4
Counterproductive Work Behavior	.931	9

4.4 Correlation

Table 7 represents the means, standard deviation, and correlation of study variables. Since all correlations among study variables are significant the first three conditions for a mediation analysis as outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) are met. Ethical leadership has a positive significant correlation with psychological safety ($r = 0.305^{**}$). This shows that the first condition is met. The second condition is also met because psychological safety has a negative significant correlation with counterproductive work behavior ($r = -0.213^{**}$). Since ethical leadership has a negative significant correlation with counterproductive work behavior ($r = -0.241^{**}$) the third condition is likewise met.

Table 7

Mean and Standard Deviation and Correlation

Variables	1	2	3
1. Ethical Leadership	1.000		
2. Psychological Safety	0.305**	1.000	
3. Counterproductive Work Behavior	-0.241**	-0.213**	1.000
Mean	3.85	4.93	1.75
Standard Deviation	0.65	1.51	0.86

Note: composite scores for each variable were computed. All correlations are significant at $p < 0.01$** and $p < 0.05$* except role ambiguity and work-family conflict (one-tailed test)

4.5 Regression

Regression analysis allows researchers to analyze relationships between one independent and one dependent variable (Sarstedt & Mooi., 2014). Hierarchical regression analysis was executed to investigate the proposed model and to test the hypotheses for a significant relationship between job-related anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and negative emotions. Regression analysis is also used to check the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion in the relationship between job-related anxiety and negative emotions.

Multicollinearity happens when independent variables in the regression model are highly correlated to each other (Wu, 2020). Through linear regression, it can be recognized by checking the Tolerance values and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). All variables had a Tolerance value higher than .10 and a VIF value below 10. The results did not reveal any issues with multicollinearity.

Ethical leadership has a positive significant correlation with psychological safety ($r = 0.305$**). This shows that the first condition is met. The second condition is also met because psychological safety has a negative significant correlation with counterproductive work behavior

The results concerning direct and mediation effects are demonstrated in Table 8.

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Ethical leadership has a significant positive effect on psychological safety (β= 0.305, p< 0.000, t= 5.466). Therefore, hypothesis H1 is supported. The results also indicate that psychological safety has a significant negative effect on counterproductive work behavior (β= -0.213, p< 0.000, t= -3.713). Therefore, hypothesis H2 is supported. The results additionally indicate that ethical leadership has a significant negative effect on counterproductive work behavior (β = -0.241, p < 0.000, t= -4.236). Therefore, hypothesis H3 is supported.

As demonstrated in Table 8 the inclusion of psychological safety in step 2, increases the explained variance by 2.1 %. The negative effect of ethical leadership on counterproductive work behavior is still significant despite the inclusion of psychological safety in the model. In this case, psychological safety partially mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior. Therefore, hypothesis H4 is supported.

Table 8

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Direct and Mediating Effect

Independent variable	Standardized regression weight	
	Counterproductive Work Behavior	
	Step 1	Step 2
Ethical Leadership	-0.241*	-0.194*
Psychological Safety		-0.153*
F	17.95	6.723
R² at each step	0.058	0.079
Δ R²		0.021
Ethical Leadership ⟶ Psychological Safety ⟶		Counterproductive Work Behavior

Note: The variance inflation factors (VIF) did not show any problems of multi-collinearity. The results are significant at p < .10.

Table 9

Results of the Proposed Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Results
H1: Ethical leadership has a positive impact on psychological safety	Accepted
H2: Psychological safety has a negative impact on counterproductive work behavior	Accepted
H3: Ethical leadership has a negative impact on counterproductive work behavior	Accepted
H4: Psychological safety mediates the relationship between EL and CWB	Accepted

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

5.1 Discussion

Through the mediation effect of psychological safety, we attempted to identify the link between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior. It contends that such a link is critical to improving workplace quality culture, objectives, and aims, as well as adapting to national and global difficulties. As Caisse Malienne de Solidarite Sociale (CMSS) in Mali shifts its focus regarding organizational development and quality improvement, leadership development in the public sector is essential for transforming and increasing employee performance, affecting how they act, assisting employees in achieving one's growth, and thus impacting the process of turnover.

Moreover, to further clarify the association between the factors mentioned above, the current study also made use of the Social Learning Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and results from earlier research. The study provided insight into the influence of ethical leadership on employees' behavior along with the connection between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior via the mediation effect of psychological safety, utilizing data gathered from workers in Mali.

According to our findings, ethical leadership has a positive impact on psychological safety. Therefore, in CMSS when ethical leaders communicate with their employees transparently and openly, with mutual respect they can feel safe and express themselves freely.

It is critical in an organization for employees to use their voices safely. Voice refers to a risk-taking position since it contains an appraisal of the situation. Employees will speak as long as they believe they are safe (Avey et al., 2012; Van Dyne et al., 2003). Psychological safety is defined as the assumption that risky acts, such as speaking in public, would not result in personal harm (Detert & Burris, 2007). The organization is distinguished by a good climate characterized by mutual respect in which members are not scared to make mistakes (Liu et al., 2015). People can freely express their differences in such an environment. Leaders play an important part in demonstrating followers' interests and views, as well as reducing barriers that prevent them from speaking loudly (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). Leaders who behave

honestly and equitably, show interest in their followers, can be attentive, and foster an atmosphere of trust, in which staff can engage in risky activity (Detert & Burris, 2007).

The findings of the investigation reveal that psychological safety has a significant negative impact on counterproductive work behavior. This indicates that in CMSS when the job situation is unanticipated, full of confusion, and can even threaten the worker's safety; they may become depressed, experience emotional disorders, and can eventually affect the individual's physical and psychological resilience, which may cause problems with productivity at work if left unchecked and may result in counterproductive work behavior in workers.

Our research also revealed that ethical leadership has a significant negative impact on counterproductive work behavior. In CMSS leaders who employ ethical and fair acts can benefit the organization by exhibiting participation, generating a sense of collective, being part of something, and not engaging in detrimental practices.

Gesturing about other members of the organization, organizational disagreement, delaying work, stealing enterprise property, and wasting time and resources are all examples of 'destructive' behavior (Kesler, 2007). A correlation exists between our findings and the ones of Elçi et al., (2013), this article demonstrates the existence of ethical leaders who helped to promote the creation of an ethical climate in both direct and indirect ways to reduce workers' counterproductive work behavior.

Kessler et al., (2013) evaluated the effect of leadership on employee conflicts and unproductive workplace conduct. According to the study's findings, leadership style and conflict between teammates impact a person's feelings, which leads to counterproductive work behavior. Finally, the results of this study show that psychological safety is the process by which ethical leadership produces counterproductive work behavior. The results we obtained demonstrate that when leaders act ethically, CMSS employees feel safe and comfortable.

A psychologically safe workplace supports employee well-being more than an unsafe working environment because employees feel more at ease, can resist outside influences and barriers, and are free to express themselves (Burke et al., 2006). Employees can feel confident expressing themselves and raising their voices in a safe environment, knowing that their behavior will not be impacted.

5.2 Limitations

It is noteworthy to recognize the limitation of the current study, which highlights the need for further studies. Even though our research provides meaningful results for understanding the influence of ethical leadership on employee behavior, counterproductive work behavior, and psychological safety, still like other studies our research also has some limitations that need to be considered.

First and foremost, the self-reported assessments in this study raise concerns about common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, steps have been taken to reduce the influence of this prejudice by ensuring the anonymity of responses, which should reduce social desirability biases.

Furthermore, the information used in this study was acquired from a single national organization in the public sector, which may differ from other enterprises in terms of features also this investigation used only the quantitative method not the qualitative method and it includes only the public sector, not the private ones.

The study's results cannot be extrapolated to other cultural contexts with more effective resources and legislative frameworks that may minimize workplace misconduct because this issue is rarely discussed in Mali. The study's main objectives are to investigate how ethical leadership affects employee behavior and to give pertinent data that could help guide employees' behavior.

5.3 Future Studies

The study investigates the influence of ethical leadership on-employee behavior in the public sector. Other approaches, such as interviews and observation, could be used in future studies instead of surveys (Crosby & Bryson, 2018). As a result of the creation of a broader idea of ethical leadership, a new and complementary is possible to create and test measurement scale. This may also allow for comparative studies across countries and cultures.

The long-term study design will offer support or verification for the current conclusion. Further research might require a comparison of self-reported and other assessed workplace ethics measures because our study only used self-reported data to see whether there are differences in how important this misconduct is, and if so, what its possible causes and effects may be.

Other variables, such as psychological distress, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and pleasant emotion at work, could be investigated as mediators between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior, and psychological safety in future investigations.

Future research should investigate the moderating impact of demographic traits such as gender, age groups, and personality in the link between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behavior, as well as psychological safety.

Furthermore, the research is not thorough because it only includes the public sector and not the private ones. As a result, future studies should extend the sample to include more businesses with a diverse range of features to generalize the findings. Furthermore, future studies may collect data at multiple time points, with a larger sample size, to better address the issue of common method bias.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Survey Questionnaire

You are invited to participate in a survey that is investigating the impacts of workplace misbehaviors on employees' work outcomes.

This research was composed by Mariam NIANG, an MBA student of Final International University, and supervised by Assist. Prof. Dr. Taraneh FOROUTAN.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be used only for academic purposes.

The survey's duration is approximately 7 minutes and participation is voluntary. By starting the survey, you are accepting to give consent for the evaluation of your responses. If you feel any concern or discomfort, you are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. In such a case, the use of the information you provide will only be possible with your consent.

Your sincere, thoughtful answers are kindly requested.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Mariam NIANG

Do you accept to participate in the study: ☐Yes   ☐No?

Age: ☐20-30 years.   ☐30-40 years   ☐40-50 years   ☐ Above 50

Gender: ☐Male   ☐Female

Education level: ☐High school   ☐Bachelor   ☐Master Ph.D.   ☐ Others

Organization tenure: ☐1-5 years   ☐6-10 years   ☐11-15 years   ☐more than 15 years

Nationality:

SECTION B:

Variables study

Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers, what is expected from you is to choose the best option from the alternatives offered to show your opinions.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5
1. My supervisor listens to what employees have to say					
2. My supervisor disciplines employees who violate ethical standards					
3. My supervisor conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner					
4. My supervisor has the best interest of employees' mind					
5. My supervisor makes fair and balanced decisions					
6. My supervisor can be trusted					
7. My supervisor discusses organizational ethics or values with employees					
8. My supervisor sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics					
9. My supervisor defines success not just by results but also by the way that they are obtained					

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10. When making a decision, my supervisor asks What the right thing to do is".

11. My supervisor makes sure that employees are promoted in the organization because they show ethical behavior.

12. My supervisor acknowledges the ethically valued behavior of employees.

13. My supervisor provides rewards to employees for ethically good behavior.

14. My supervisor's decisions have a positive influence on the well-being of the organization and other stakeholders.

15. My supervisor reprimands employees who show ethically flawed behavior.

16. The observation of my supervisor's ethical behavior inspires employees to resolve ethical problems in principled ways.

17. My supervisor's reactions reflect his/her moral beliefs.

18. Employees find it difficult to solve ethical problems when the leader is away.

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Slightly disagree

4. Neutral

5. Slightly agree

6. Agree

7. Strongly agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. If you make a mistake on this team, it is often held against you.		[		[	[		[
2. Members of this team can bring up problems and tough issues.		[		[	[		[
3. Members of this team sometimes reject others for being different.		[		[	[		[
4. It is safe to take a risk on this team.		[		[	[		[
5. It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.		[		[	[		[
6. No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.		[		[	[		[
7. Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.		[		[	[		[

Please indicate how often you experience the following statements.

1. Never

2. Once or twice

3. Once or twice per month

4. Once or twice per week

5. Every day

Item	1	2	3	4	5
1. Purposely wasted your employer's materials/supplies.					[
2. Complained about insignificant things at work.					[
3. Told people outside the job what a lousy place you work for.					[
4. Came to work late without permission.					[
5. Stayed home from work and said you were sick when you weren't.					[
6. Insulted someone about their job performance.					[
7. Made fun of someone's personal life.					[
8. Ignored someone at work.					[
9. Started an argument with someone at work.					[
10. Insulted or made fun of someone at work.					[

Appendix II: FIU Ethics Committee Approval

İÇ YAZIŞMA / INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM

ULUSLARARASI
FINAL ÜNIVERSITESI

Gönderilen/To: Mariam Niang

Tarih/Date: 26/04/2023

Gönderen/From: Prof. Dr. Hüseyin YARATAN
Rector

Ref/Sayı:100/050/REK.001

Konu/Subject: About ethical approval

In line with the decision taken at the Ethics Committee meeting on April 26th, 2023, it was decided that your study was ethically and scientifically appropriate.

Distribution: Chair of the Ethics Commitee

Ethics Committee Decision:

Decision No 2023/013/03:
Mariam Niang's application to the Ethics Committee titled "The influence of ethical leadership on employee behavior in public sector", a proposed study to be carried out under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr Taraneh Foroutan was discussed. The proposed research was found ethically and scientifically appropriate with the justification, purpose, approach and methods stated in the application

SK/HY