

**ROLE OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND PUBLIC SERVICE
MOTIVATION ON PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEE'S ETHICAL
BEHAVIOR:
A MULTILEVEL INVESTIGATION**

A Research dissertation submitted to
Kathmandu University School of Management
In the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Management

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DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare this dissertation entitled “Role of Workplace Spirituality and Public Service Motivation on Public Service Employee’s Ethical Behavior: A Multilevel investigation” embodies the original research work that I carried out in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Management of Kathmandu University School of Management and that this dissertation has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree.

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September, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Ms Bhawana Tamrakar has completed her dissertation on “Role of Workplace Spirituality and Public Service Motivation on Public Service Employee’s Ethical Behavior: A Multilevel investigation” under my supervision and that her dissertation embodies the result of her investigation conducted during the period she worked as an MPhil candidate of the School of Management. The dissertation is of the standard expected of a candidate for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for course of MPhil and has been prepared in the prescribed format of the School of Management.

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APPROVAL

We have conducted the viva-voce examination of the dissertation “Role of Workplace Spirituality and Public Service Motivation on Public Service Employee’s Ethical Behavior: A Multilevel investigation” submitted by Bhawana Tamrakar and found the dissertation to be original work of the candidate and written according to the prescribed format of the School of Management. We approve the dissertation as the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Management.

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ABSTRACT

Unethical behavior among public service employees is engraved in the experience of every Nepali citizen and to wipe it out has been their unmet desire. Drawing upon the social cognitive theory and public service motivation, this study investigated the interplay between workplace spirituality, public service motivation and moral disengagement in shaping employee ethical behavior among public service employees. The study investigated the indirect relationship of workplace spirituality with employee ethical behavior through public service motivation. The study also examined the moderating role of moral disengagement in the mediated relationship of workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation. In addition, the study also explored cross level effect of collective workplace spirituality on individual public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior.

Data was collected from 635 public service employees working in 107 public service units spread across different federal ministries and different provincial government ministries of Nepal. Structured equation modeling using AMOS was used to ensure goodness of data (reliability and validity). Mediated moderation analysis using the PROCESS macro in SPSS was used to test proposed relationships. The data analysis demonstrated that workplace spirituality positively influences employee ethical behavior of public service employees. The study found a partial mediating effect of public service motivation in the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior. Moderating effect of moral disengagement in the indirect relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation was also found significant.

Mixed model analysis in SPSS was used to investigate the cross level effect of collective workplace spirituality on individual public service motivation and individual

employee ethical behavior. Among the data collected from 107 organizations, only 61 public service organizations had more than five respondents. Cross level investigation was done in the datasets of these 61 public service organizations. A weak significant effect of organizational level variable on the individual public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior was found. However, the influence of collective workplace spirituality on individual public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior was not found significant in the nested data structure.

The finding of the study confirmed application of the workplace spirituality in generating employee ethical behavior in the public service sector. The study further reinforced social cognitive theory in Nepali context. The main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating the mediating role of public service motivation in the indirect relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior among public service employees. Implications of the study findings stresses on the importance of behavioral intervention above formulation of laws and bylaws for ensuring employee ethical behavior in the public service sector. The study finding reinforced the need of reforming the human resource process in the public service system in order to enable employees experience workplace spirituality and build public service motivation among public service employees. As workplace spirituality has a direct relationship with employee ethical behavior, the study emphasized on creating an environment where employees can experience spirituality, understand meaning of work, realize connection with self, organization and higher self. The study also found an indirect relationship of workplace spirituality with employee ethical behavior through public service motivation. Thus the study findings imply the need of adopting measures to enhance both workplace spirituality and public service motivation. The report compiles some practical measures that public service organization and leaders in public service organizations can follow in order to ensure ethical behavior from public service

employees.

Limitations of the study highlighted included the need of more inclusive organizational level sampling for capturing real picture of public service system, qualitative study of ethics for in-depth understanding, and more comprehensive framework with additional variables for developing better understanding of the phenomenon.

Keywords: *Workplace Spirituality, Public Service Motivation, Employee Ethical Behavior, Moral Disengagement*

ABBREVIATIONS

WPS	Workplace spirituality
PSM	Public service motivation
EEB	Employee ethical behavior
MD	Moral disengagement
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
AMOS	Analysis of Moments of Structures
SEM	Structural equation modeling
CIAA	Commission of the Investigation of Abuse of Authority
DF	Degree of freedom
GIF	Goodness of fit index
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
CFI	Comparative fit index
ICC	Intra-class correlation
RWG	Within group agreement

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Corruption in the Nepali public service sector is experienced frequently by Nepali citizens. Nepali citizens read news on corruption published in different national dailies almost every day. The news on shielding home minister amidst visa scam (The Kathmandu Post, May 2025), the news on corruption case in printing equipment purchase (The Rising Nepal, May 2024), the news on corruption case against the head of Bagmati Municipality, (Kantipur, April 2024), the corruption case against the employees of Nepal Telecommunication Authority (Kantipur, March 2024) are among few published in newspaper to reflect rampant corruption prevalent in Nepali public service system. Nepal has been ranked 107th among 180 countries in corruption index by Transparency International (The Kathmandu Post, January 2025). According to the bulletin of Commission of the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), 2081/82 BS, 7668 cases filed in the first trimester, 5756 cases in second trimester and 6479 cases in third trimester of 2080/81 BS included bribery (27%), fake certification (7%), unlawful gain (50%), illicit property gain (2%), tempering government revenue (1%) etc. and the estimated to amounts to 8,40,06,49,405 Nepali Rupees. The same bulletin reported 27,532 pending cases in court related to corruption in the public service system. Data reported in the annual report 2080/2081 B.S. of CIAA revealed an increasing trend of petitions filed from 25152 in the year 2076/77 B.S. to 36786 in the year 2080/81 B.S. Among the petitions filed in 2080/81 B.S., 27714 cases are resolved through screening and initial investigation. Among the petition, 48.71% lodged complaints, disciplinary actions were taken for 46.14% and suggestions for action were provided to concerned units for 1.79% cases while 3.36% were taken forward for detailed investigation.

These facts demonstrate the gravity of corruption evident in the Nepali public service system. Likewise, Gupta et al. (2018) reported rapidly growing cases of corruption in Nepali public sector. Gupta's study (2023) also substantiated the presence of deep rooted corruption in Nepali public service system. Khanal et al. (2022) also criticized Nepali public service system for the unprofessional, unethical, and corrupt behavior of its public service employees.

Attempts to create corruption free country was made as early as 1854 B.S. with the enactment of Muluki Ain (General Law or code) and later with a number of acts and regulations (e.g., Civil Service Act 1993, CIAA Act 2048 B.S., Anti-Corruption act 2059 B.S.) to guide the public service employees towards ethical actions and prevent them from indulging in corruption. The Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration was also established to manage the public service system. Regulatory frameworks were created through Civil Service Act, 2049 B.S., Civil Service Rules, 2050 B.S. etc. In addition, the Provincial Civil Service Acts (e.g. Bagmati Provincial Civil Service Act 2079 B.S., Lumbini Provincial Service Act 2080 B.S., Karnali Provincial Civil Service Act 2080 B.S.) were also enacted for defining structure, function and regulation of the public service system at provincial level.

Despite these sincere efforts, corruption prevalent in Nepali public service system remained a persistent challenge for all Nepali citizens. The weak legal and governance system in Nepal is believed to be largely due to the corruption across the public service system (Acharya, 2023). The impact of this weak system is manifested in the experience of service that the majority of the general public receive from the public service system. Thus resulting in a high level of dissatisfaction from the public service system. This strong dissatisfaction of the general public service recipient was

also captured in Pokharel et al. (2017). Thus, reduction of corruption from the public service system is the need of the land.

However, the situation cannot be generalized. Today, digitization of service has increased efficiency of service delivery and reduced probability of corruption. Giri (2019) opined increased possibility of good governance through digitization. Ghimire (2021) also found increased efficiency and reduced instances of bribery due to online service applications. In addition, there are public service employees who are committed to their responsibilities, are not involved in corruption, and are ready to devote themselves in true spirit to serve the larger population. A vast dissimilarity in the behavior of individuals working in the same public service system is evident. This signifies that the undesired conduct might not be the result of policies, rules and regulations. The answer might be in the behavioral aspect of public service system.

Corruption is an act of transgression by an individual (Jain, 2001; Banerjee et al., 2012). Thus, corruption in the public service system can also be attributed to the behavior of public service employees. Thus, attempting to understand corruption attracts our attention towards understanding behavior of public service employees.

Every human behavior is preceded by its intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980), where a number of internal and external factors shape the intention (Stead et al., 1990). Identification of those factors responsible for shaping intentions for employee ethical behavior among public service employees can be important in order to understand employee unethical behavior prevailing in the public service system. Many attempts have been made to identify reasons for the employee unethical behavior among public service employees and found a number of reasons for the employee unethical behavior. For example, Lim Choi (2007) found factors like length of service, service grade can lead to unethical behavior and internal attributes like compassion can be

responsible for employee ethical behavior. Bhattarai and Gupta (2023) found that service receivers themselves are responsible for employee unethical behavior of public service employees. Meanwhile, Bandura (1986, 1989, 1990) suggested that individuals form their ethical standards that guide them to behave ethically or unethically. Thus, self-awareness and higher sense of connection with self, community and universe raises the ethical standard of individuals (Tiwari & Pathak, 2018). Other studies (e.g., Naseer et al., 2020) also suggested that workplace spirituality experienced by individuals developed high ethical standards among individuals.

From another perspective, behavior demonstrated by an individual is largely guided by his/her internal motivation (Ditto et al., 2009). Perry and Wise (1990) suggested that public service employees demonstrate a unique type of motivation known as public service motivation. The public service motivation enables public service employees to attain a higher level in moral development, thus encouraging them to behave ethically (Lim Choi, 2004). Further, Ripoll and Ballart (2020) also found that public service logic imparts ethical judgments that lead to employee ethical behavior. Earlier on, Perry et al. (2008) also found that workplace spirituality that an individual experiences can be a cause for public service motivation. In other words, the experience of spirituality by an employee at his/ her workplace influences him/her to demonstrate a higher level motivation to serve the public (Hassan et al., 2022; McGhee & Grant, 2008).

On the other hand, motivation for and awareness on ethical behavior is not sufficient. Many times individuals voluntarily indulge in inappropriate behavior despite being cognizant of that the behavior is unethical (Bandura, 1999). Why do individuals fall into such behavioral traps? Bandura (1999, 2012) suggested that moral

standards of an individual can be highly selective. An otherwise ethical person might indulge in bad, corrupt and unethical behavior without self-guilt if he/ she rationalizes his/her unethical behavior in different ways like advantageous comparison, diffusion of responsibility etc. (Bandura, 2015). Hence, moral disengagement can reduce the intention for employee ethical behavior generated by public service motivation (Bandura, 2015). Thus, moral disengagement can also play a role in determining intention for employee unethical behavior among the public service employees.

Thus, this study intends to explore whether the employee ethical behavior among public service employees is shaped by the interplay among workplace spirituality, public service motivation, and moral disengagement.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, there is substantial increase in research linking workplace spirituality with employee behavior (Barik & Nayak, 2024). Many researchers have used workplace spirituality to explain employee ethical behavior. Tiwari and Pathak (2018) developed a theoretical framework to relate workplace spirituality with employee ethical behavior. Researchers (Nair & Sivakumar, 2018; Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020) found that workplace spirituality fosters ethical climate in organization. Ethical climate in organization in turn can be a prerequisite for employee ethical behavior (Deshpande, 1996). However, Ayoun et al. (2015) could not find association of workplace spirituality with ethical aspects of employees like moral intensity, ethical perceptions, ethical judgment and ethical intention. Thus a confusion in the relationship between workplace spirituality and individual morality is seen in literature.

A bibliometric review by Raamkhumar et al. (2023) presented a thematic evolution of workplace spirituality. The evolution map demonstrated that the larger

share of map was occupied by employee attitude related variables in 2006-2010, leadership related variables in 2011-2015, and organizational citizenship behavior related studies in 2016-2023. The map exhibited a small share of studies on ethical leadership in 2022-2023 and only a limited number of studies relating workplace spirituality with individual employee ethical behavior. The lack of sufficient empirical evidence demonstrating the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior demonstrated that relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior is a neglected area.

Studies in the context of the public service system have found linkage between workplace spirituality and employee wellbeing (Hassan et al. 2022), commitment (Mahakud & Gangai, 2015), engagement, performance (Alqhaiwi, 2023) etc. However, empirical evidence of workplace spirituality leading to employee ethical behavior in the public service sector was not found. Thus the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior in the context of public service employees is found to be a neglected application area of the literature.

Past researchers have linked employee ethical behavior with public service motivation of public service employees. A systematic study by Lee et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between public service motivation and ethics of public service employees. The paper found public service motivation promotes employee ethical behavior like whistleblowing and discourage employee unethical behavior like corruption. Other studies have also found that public service motivation positively increases employee ethical behavior and lowers employee unethical behavior. For example, Abdelmotaleb and Saha (2019) found a relationship of public service motivation with organizational citizenship behavior; Lee and Kim (2024) concluded public service motivation is responsible for innovative behavior among employees in public service

organizations. However, Christensen and Wright (2018) concluded that public service motivation does not always lead to employee ethical behavior. Reviewing ethical outcomes of public service motivation, Lee et al. (2023) found paucity of empirical evidence to explain impact of public service motivation on employee ethical behaviors. Thus the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior found to be confusing in literature.

Further, past literature focused on the impact of public service motivation on attitude, behavior of public service employees, suggesting organizations to induct employees with higher public service motivation. However, these studies largely ignored possible antecedents responsible for developing public service motivation among public service employees.

Researchers (e.g. Hassan et al., 2022) found workplace spirituality positively influences public service motivation. Likewise, researchers (e.g. Christensen et al., 2018) concluded that public service motivation positively influences employee ethical behavior of the employees. Thus, it can be argued that workplace spirituality generates public service motivation which in turn boosts employee ethical behavior. That is workplace spirituality could directly as well as indirectly influence employee ethical behavior in organizations. It is thus plausible to argue that workplace spirituality can indirectly affect employee ethical behavior through public service motivation. However, no previous studies have investigated the mediating role of public service motivation on the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior among employees, especially in the context of the public service sector. To the knowledge of researcher, no past studies examined the mechanism through which workplace spirituality affects employee ethical behavior among public service employees.

Bandura (2015) suggested that individual characteristics like moral disengagement can encourage an otherwise ethical person to demonstrate unethical behavior. Thus, moral disengagement is likely to dampen the positive influence of public service motivation on employee ethical behavior in the organization. Empirical evidence of the moderating role of moral disengagement has not been identified in the context of public service employees. To the knowledge of researcher no past studies examined boundary conditions in the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior.

Moreover, the workplace spirituality experienced by an individual, though an individual phenomena, is shaped by the organization and team characteristics the individual is working with (Otake-Ebede et al., 2020). Therefore, to consider workplace spirituality as purely individual phenomena may not be a true assumption, which may result in clustering effects. Therefore, it is also necessary to examine the influence of spirituality not only at individual level but also influence from the group/organization level. Sufficient empirical evidence demonstrating impact of workplace spirituality at organization or unit level (that is collective workplace spirituality) was not found. Thus, impact of collective workplace spirituality, workplace spirituality at organization or group level, on individual employee behavior is a neglected area in literature.

To address the gaps in literature highlighted above, this study intends to find answers the following questions:

Does moral disengagement moderates the indirect relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation? Does collective workplace spirituality influence individual public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior? Does collective

workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between individual workplace spirituality and public service motivation? Does collective workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior?

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate factors responsible for generating intention for employee ethical behavior among public service employees. The specific objectives are:

- To investigate whether workplace spirituality has a relationship with employee ethical behavior among public service employees.
- To investigate whether public service motivation mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior among public service employees.
- To investigate whether moral disengagement moderates the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior.
- To investigate whether moral disengagement moderates the mediated relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation.
- To investigate whether workplace spirituality at organization level (collective workplace spirituality) has a significant impact on public service motivation of public service employees.
- To investigate whether workplace spirituality at organization level (collective workplace spirituality) has a significant impact on individual employee ethical behavior.

- To investigate whether workplace spirituality at organization level moderates the relationship between workplace spirituality and public service motivation.

Significance of the Study

Nepali public service system has developed dozens of rules, regulations, laws, bylaws so that the public service employees behave ethically and can ensure proper corruption free service to the public service recipients. However, over the years, the experience of the public service recipients has not improved despite these regulations. In other words, framing and enforcing rules and regulations could not ensure employee ethical behavior in the public service sector. Considering the above context, the present study intends to present the possibility of a behavioral intervention to ensure employee ethical behavior among public service employees. The study intends to investigate the possible role of workplace spirituality, public service motivation and moral disengagement on shaping employee ethical behavior of public service employees. The findings will be useful in designing behavioral interventions to encourage public service employees towards ethical behavior thus ensuring corruption free public service.

Organization of the Report

This report is divided into mainly three sections. The first section includes preliminary pages such as title page, acknowledgment, and table of contents. Consequently, the second section includes the body of the research in five chapters and finally the third section includes references and appendices.

Under section two, which is categorized into five chapters, the first one discusses the introduction, problem statement, research questions, objectives and significance of the study. The second chapter includes a detailed literature review of all the variables of the study, their relationships, theories related to them and also

discusses existing empirical studies. Moving on, the third chapter highlights a comprehensive explanation of research design and methodology. This includes description of adopted research design, population of the study, sampling design and size, measurement instruments used, data collection procedures and data analysis methods. Then, the fourth chapter showcases the results of the study and acceptance or rejection of hypotheses.

Finally, findings, summary, discussions, practical and theoretical implications, and limitations of this study are elaborated in chapter five.

CHAPTER-2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the study variables and the interrelationship between the variables. The section explores literature on the variables: workplace spirituality, public service motivation, employee ethical behavior and moral disengagement. Using past research literature, the chapter explains the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior, the mediating role of public service motivation in the relationship and the moderating role of moral disengagement in the mediated relationship. The chapter also explains the effect of collective workplace spirituality on the individual public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior.

Employee ethical behavior

Concept and Definition

Dewey (2022) defined ethics as a science of conduct. While, Krishnamurthy (2011) said ethics is learning right or wrong and doing the right thing. The terminology “ethical behavior” is derived from the Greek word "ethos" meaning character or custom (Dewey, 2022). Sims (1992) defined ethical behavior as morally accepted good and right behavior. In the same line, according to Ferrell et al. (2016), ethical behavior is an action that is consistent with principles of morality and integrity that involves being honest, fair, accountable, and respectful to others. The common thread in the different definitions is rightness. However, the right is also fluid (Krishnamurthy, 2011). Individuals have their own judgment for right behavior and are also guided by the situation. Thus the same individual demonstrates ethical behavior and unethical behavior in different situations, while under the same circumstance different individuals behave ethically and unethically.

Understanding why human beings behave the way they do (ethically or unethically) has been one of the most challenging issue for researchers from ancient times. Ethics has taken a prominent position in different ancient literature like Vedic, Greek, Chinese and Buddhist. These ancient philosophical teachings have taught human beings moral principles and guided them for ethical behavior and right conduct emphasizing on justice, honesty, duty, compassion, spiritual values and similar ethos.

Ancient Hindu texts like Mahabharata, Arthasastra, Manusmriti have shown human beings a dutiful path (Nandram et al., 2022). Radhakrishnan (1914) summarized ethics in the essence of Vedanta. Ethical behavior according to Vedanta is unselfish behavior with active engagement that is guided by justice, humanity, conscience and righteousness promoting universal love, respect and equality (Radhakrishnan, 1914). The Bhagavad Gita preaches to perform dharma (duty or an ethical action) without attachment to the results, aligning with universal moral laws (Radhakrishnan, 1948). According to Meena (2005), Manusmriti emphasized on roles and responsibilities of leader or ruler in ensuring righteous behavior in society, emphasizing truth, non-violence, and self-discipline; prescribed a code of ethics for individuals. Chatterjee and Dutta (2007) explained Yoga as a means of purification and enlightenment guided by truth, loyalty, generosity and non-violence. Likewise, Manikutty (2012) suggested that the ancient Hindu text, Mahabharata connects ethics with meaningful life.

Teachings of Buddhist philosophy (5th century BCE) emphasized on truthful and moral behavior. Buddhism stands on three jewels: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha that teaches to live every moment with ethical and moral principles and behavior for attaining the ultimate goal of life (Basu & Miroshnik, 2021).

Ahimsā (non-violence) and aparamita (carefulness) are pillars of Jainism (Donaldson, 2019) that explains pertaining life forms; desires and dislikes guiding behavior; direct and indirect modes of harm; and possible efforts to reduce harm (Donaldson, 2019).

Similar teachings can be found in Western philosophy. As mentioned by Smith (2000), Plato (428 - 347 BC) explored justice, morality, and the ethical role of individuals in creating harmonious society and Aristotle (384 - 322 BC) emphasized on the development of foundation for ethical living. Likewise, Confucian Analects (551-479 BC), Bible (written 386 and 388 CE), Quran (610–632 CE) also emphasized ethics, righteousness, ethical living, justice etc.

Confucian Analects deal with role-based morality. Zhu (2020) explained unique ways of thinking about social and political issues in Confucian ethics like selection and evaluation of political leaders, ethical justification of political actions, and prioritization of economic, social, and cultural rights over individual and moral rights.

Zest of all the ancient text lies in following ethical approaches of integrity, justice, non-violence.

Employee ethical behavior in Organization

Ethics and human ethical behavior has been discussed from ancient times. However, according to Treviño et al. (2014), the proper study of employee ethical behavior and employee unethical behavior in organizations started only in the 1980s. Modern literature also covered employee ethical behavior with great importance from its early stage of conceptualization. For example, Trevino (1986) proposed an interactionist model where cognition leads to employee ethical decision making, which is impacted by individual and situational factors. Stead et al. (1990) proposed a

framework for employee ethical behavior in organization, where a number of individual, organizational and environmental factors have an impact on employee ethical behavior. Till today the topic of employee ethical behavior is getting similar attention from researchers - recently researchers (Rubel et al., 2025; Ejaz et al., 2025) studied the impact of ethical leadership on employee ethical behavior and employee ethical voice. While Zhou et al. (2025) found that performance-oriented HRM practices are responsible for employees' pro-social behavior leading to employee ethical behavior.

Theories to explain ethical behavior

A number of researchers have studied and proposed different theories that explain individual employee ethical behavior. One of the widely accepted theories of ethical human behavior, Kohlberg (1958), based on Piaget theory of cognitive development, proposed a theory to explain ethical behavior of an individual. Kohlberg (1958) theorized six stages of moral development that are grouped into three levels of two stages each: pre-conventional, conventional and post conventional. The stages are:

1. Pre-Conventional level deals with moral reasoning based on rewards and punishments. The sub groups categorized at this level include obedience and punishment orientation (How can I avoid punishment?) and self-interest orientation (What's in it for me?, Paying for a benefit)
2. Conventional Level is the level of moral reasoning guided by external evaluation or external ethics. The sub groups categorized at this level are interpersonal accord and conformity (Social norms, The good boy/girl attitude) and authority and social-order maintaining orientation (Law and order morality)

3. Post-Conventional Level discusses moral reasoning guided by personal ethics. This level includes social contract orientation and universal ethical principles (Principled conscience)

Kohlberg (1958) suggested that individuals attain lower to higher stages of moral development in a sequential manner. The stage of moral development of an individual reflects his/her moral reasoning. Moral reasoning is responsible for guiding individuals for ethical behavior in case of ethical dilemmas (Wu & Liu, 2014).

Another important model, Rest (1986)'s rational and deliberative four-stage model suggested steps of ethical decision making as:

- individuals face ethical dilemmas
- individuals experience moral awareness - recognize that the issue being faced is an ethical issue
- individuals engage in moral judgment - decide what is right and wrong
- individuals form a moral motivation or intention and take action.

Likewise, Reynolds (2006) proposed a neurocognitive model of ethical decision making. The model suggested that people first behave, then rationalize, and form moral judgment that shapes further behavior.

Perkins et al. (2024) presented three perspective in understanding individual ethical behavior:

1. Inter-individual - cognitive moral development, moral awareness, moral characteristics of individual determine his/ her ethical or unethical behavior
2. Interactionist - interplay between individual and contextual factors as explanations for ethical/ unethical behavior. The contextual factors like relationship with coworkers, organizational culture, group culture etc. are discussed.

3. Intra Individual - behavior as a byproduct of a dynamic process that unfolds overtime. The concepts of bounded ethicality, self-regulation are discussed.

Another theory of Utilitarianism described ethical behavior in terms of behavior for greater good; happiness for a larger population (Mill, 2016).

Different theories of ethics and ethical behavior deal with different aspects in shaping the individual's behavior. The present study investigates the role of value driven motivation in shaping individual ethical behavior. Thus Kohlberg's theory of moral development is relevant for explaining the phenomenon.

Antecedents of employee ethical behavior

Many researchers are working in the area of individual employee ethical behavior to understand why individuals behave ethically or unethically. Researchers have tried to investigate logical reasons in generating individual employee ethical behavior and speculated on the important role of individual innate characteristics like moral identity, moral standards, and moral traits. For example, Aquino and Reed (2002) stressed on the importance of moral traits and moral identity in demonstrating employee ethical behavior. Tangney et al. (2007) added that emotions of guilt and shame are responsible for formation of moral standards leading to employee ethical behavior. Hannah et al. (2011) proposed that employee ethical behavior is determined by moral maturation, moral courage, ownership and moral connotation while moral maturation is determined by moral identity, complexity and metacognitive ability. Likewise, Hertz and Krettenauer (2016) in a meta-analysis of 111 studies concluded that moral identity is responsible for employee ethical behavior. Al Halbusi et al. (2023) concluded on the moderating role of moral identity and self-control in generating employee ethical behavior.

Other researchers focused on demonstrated individual features like personality as a reason for individual employee ethical behavior. Villegas de Posada and Vargas-Trujillo (2015) found employee ethical behavior is linked with individuals' actions. While, McFerran et al. (2010), Kyambade and Namatovu (2025) found personality types responsible for individual employee ethical behavior. While Kalshoven et al. (2011) found that agreeableness and conscientiousness in personality traits of leaders is responsible for leader ethical behavior which in turn leads to subordinate ethical behavior.

Further, other researchers have been trying to identify the influence of external environments within organizations that are beyond individual control like leadership, organizational climate on individual employee ethical behavior. For example, researchers (Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025; Al Halbusi et al., 2021; Lu & Lin, 2014 etc.) found empirical evidence that ethical leadership positively influences employee ethical behavior of followers. Beforehand, Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) also found leader personality traits are responsible for employee ethical behavior. Wimbush and Shepard (1994) found individual employee ethical behavior depends on perceived ethical climate in organization and supervisors play a major role in shaping the perception of employee ethical behavior.

Consequences of employee ethical behavior

The importance of employee ethical behavior can be seen in its positive outcomes. In organization, the effect of employee ethical behavior can be felt in reduced conflict, increased job satisfaction and increased performance (Román & Luis, 2005). Ethical leaders have an apparent role to play in reducing employee unethical behavior of subordinates (Mayer et al., 2012). While Zaim et al. (2021) also

found ethical behavior of leader and subordinates responsible for organizational performance.

Ethical behavior Across Context

Individual employee ethical behavior has its relevance in every age group, across all professions. Though a large number of researches on individual employee ethical behavior is focused on professionals within organizations, a substantial concentration has also been given to understand ethical behavior of school children, sportsperson in fields, soldiers in war etc. For example, Alonso and Gallo (2025) investigated the role of formative measures like ethics training on ethical behavior of secondary school children. De Waegeneer et al. (2017) investigated ethical behavior in sports, and McMaster (2011) among soldiers in war. Earlier on, Wright (1995) also studied formal teaching of moral judgment that can ensure ethical behavior among children. Hodge et al. (1993) found that ethics attached to childhood sports can shape ethical behavior of the individual through appropriate environments and teammates.

Organizational ethical behavior

The boundary of ethics is not limited to the individual employee. It is important to consider ethical behavior demonstrated by teams, departments, and organizations as well. Phillips and Margolis (1999) indicated the need to investigate organizational ethics separately as an organization is distinct from individual employees working in the organization. Earlier on, at organizational level, Drucker (1981) conceptualized business ethics as socially responsible behavior demonstrated by business organizations. Business ethics found to have positive results like enhanced organizational performance (Grbac & Lončarić, 2009). The ethical behavior of organizations towards employees in terms of policies, practices etc. is conceptualized as the ethical climate of the organization (Cullen et al., 1993). Ethical

climate has also been widely studied in literature and found to be responsible for shaping positive employee attitudes and employee behavior like employee ethical behavior (Wimbush et al., 1997), job satisfaction (Deshpande, 1996) etc.

Ethical behavior, whether at individual or team or organization level is important as it is responsible for enhanced performance of the organization. A number of factors shape individual employee ethical behavior that ranges from individual traits to larger environmental factors, where the individual employee is operating.

Workplace spirituality

Conceptualization and Definitions

Workplace spirituality, as defined by Ashmos and Duchons (2000), is the recognition that employees have an inner life that is nourished by meaningful work. Ashmos and Duchons (2000) explained the existing work situation of demoralized workers, individuals searching for connectedness at the workplace, interest in contemplating life's meaning and pressure of global competition gave way for the concept of workplace spirituality.

Different researchers have conceptualized workplace spirituality differently (Nandram et al, 2025). Milliman et al. (2003) defined workplace spirituality in terms of understanding the meaning of work, sense of connectedness with others and association with organizational mission and purpose. While Marques et al. (2007) defined workplace spirituality as an experience of interconnectedness associated with authenticity, reciprocity, goodwill and a sense of meaning at work. Shrestha et al. (2023) summarized different conceptual definitions of workplace spirituality proposed by different researchers and offered amendment in definition of workplace spirituality for Eastern context based on Vedic learning. According to Shrestha et al. (2023), workplace spirituality is an individual experience of connectedness that includes

altruistic motive to serve selflessly, positivity in attitude and behavior, feeling of compassion, inner calmness without any hostile motive, drive to fulfill responsibilities with highest honesty, collaboration for achieving common goal, ability to control one's thought, actions and behaviors, interconnectedness with community and self, mindfulness.

Nandram et al. (2025) discussed workplace spirituality in terms of workplace where individuals seek purpose, meaning and transcendent values in their professional lives. The conceptualization of workplace spirituality is still evolving and the common thread that binds these conceptualizations is interconnectedness - interconnectedness with self, work, organization, community and supreme power.

Dimensions of workplace spirituality

Pawar (2023) summarized a different conceptual definition of workplace spirituality published in attempts to prepare scale for workplace spirituality and confirmed workplace spirituality as a multidimensional concept. Pawar (2023) found that different researchers have found different dimensions of workplace spirituality relevant in their context, thus updating the definition of workplace spirituality.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) defined workplace spirituality in terms of meaning at work, connection with community and inner life. Milliman et al. (2003) introduced dimension alignment with organizational values. Sheep (2004) included self-workplace integration, transcendence and personal development. Ciremier (2006) added spiritual values and beliefs to the concept. Moure and Casper (2006) found self-work immersion, interconnectedness and self-actualization as relevant dimensions of workplace spirituality. Rigo and Pino e Cunlo (2008) claimed the importance of team community sense, alignment of individual values with organizational values, and a sense of contribution in conceptualization of workplace spirituality. Lyan et al. (2008)

included faith in work. Pandey et al. (2009) added lok sangrah, swadharma - doing work for the world. Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) added mindfulness, compassion and transcendence. Lin and Robertson (2011) added interconnectedness with human beings, nature and higher power. Arnetz et al. (2013) discussed the relevance of spiritual values and practice. .

Shrestha et al. (2023) summarized the concept of workplace spirituality in the eastern context, which is largely and differently guided by the spiritual traditions and guidance experienced by the individuals in the western part of the world. Thus, researchers in south Asian continent have realized a need of a different definition of workplace spirituality, hence more relevant dimensions found are: altruistic motive, interpersonal positivity, compassion, inner calmness, duty orientation, sense of collaboration, self-regulation, interconnectedness, higher consciousness (Shrestha et al., 2023).

Despite continuous improvement and update in definition and dimension, the researchers have not settled to a single definition. The definitions introduced by different researchers were found valid and applicable in their specific context. The area is still evolving.

Development of workplace spirituality

Workplace spirituality is not a new concept. The origin of workplace spirituality can be traced back to seminal work of Mitroff and Denton (1999). The workplace spirituality was formally conceptualized in the context of the US workforce. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) developed the first instrument for measurement of workplace spirituality and was empirically tested in the same context. Most of the inferences related to workplace spirituality are derived from the context of the USA (41%) and there are very few studies in south Asian context like India

(5.1%) (Vasconcelos, 2018). However, Dubey and Bedi (2023) depicted continuous and steady growth in publication related to workplace spirituality in other parts of the world as well. Earlier on, researchers (Crossman, 2015; MacDonald, 2011) had strongly come forward with the notion that workplace spirituality varies across cultures. Efforts (e.g. Shrestha et al., 2023; Saxena & Prasad, 2022) are being made to update conceptualization of workplace spirituality in different cultural contexts, for example Indian, Asian, South American and so on. Shrestha et al. (2023) summarized that the concept of workplace spirituality in the eastern context is largely and differently guided by the spiritual traditions and guidance experienced by the individuals in the eastern part of the world. The researchers in South Asian continent have realized a need of a different definition of workplace spirituality, hence found different dimensions as: altruistic motive, interpersonal positivity, compassion, inner calmness, duty orientation, sense of collaboration, self-regulation, interconnectedness, higher consciousness (Shrestha et al., 2023).

Dimensions of workplace spirituality as described in Shrestha et al. (2023) are:

1. Altruistic motive - inner urge to serve selflessly;
2. Interpersonal positivity - tendency to be positive in attitude and behavior;
3. Duty orientation - desire to discharge duties and apply oneself to work with higher sense of responsibility;
4. Self-regulation - ability to control self and ability to influence thoughts, actions and behaviors;
5. Interconnectedness - sense of community, feeling of oneness with all living beings;
6. Mindfulness - desires enter one's mind without creating any disturbance to him/her; ability to be neutral.

Among other definitions, the definition of Shrestha et al. (2023) is relevant for the present study as this definition is grounded in Nepali context.

Workplace spirituality and Religion

Workplace spirituality cannot be isolated from religiosity. However, a clear distinction is that spirituality does not let individuals follow specific belief systems as religion does (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Gotsis and Kortezi (2008) mentioned a historic debate on spirituality and religion dichotomy, where Douglas Hick argued for religiosity as an integral part of spirituality while Researchers (e.g. Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Hill et. al, 2013) asserted for distinction between the two. During the initial conceptualization, Ashmos and Duchon (2000), explained its connection with religion, the contemplative life in research of meaning and purpose through religious belief.

Workplace spirituality Across Sectors

Workplace spirituality found its relevance across different sectors of work like the hospitality sector (Aboobaker, 2022), public sector (Hassan et al., 2022; Mahakud & Gangai, 2015), higher education (Saeed et al., 2022), school teachers (Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019), banking sector (Pradhan & Jena, 2016) and others. Across these different sectors empirical evidence found that workplace spirituality can generate positive attitudes and behavior among individuals.

Antecedents of workplace spirituality

Researchers have established workplace spirituality as an antecedent for employee attitude and behaviors like job satisfaction, organizational commitment etc. There has been limited study that explored antecedents of workplace spirituality. Among others, leadership has been established as a major antecedent of workplace spirituality. Riasudeen and Singh (2021) found leadership effectiveness builds workplace spirituality among IT employees. Sapta et.al. (2021) found spiritual

leadership as a cause for workplace spirituality. Likewise, Haldorai et al (2020) found ethical climate can be responsible for workplace spirituality. Thus, environment at the organization can shape workplace spirituality in organizations.

Outcomes of workplace spirituality

A significant number of studies related to outcomes of workplace spirituality shows it is still a young and dynamic area. Bibliometric studies (Rammkumar, 2023; Barik & Nayak, 2023) reported continuous growth in publications related to workplace spirituality and the studies are from different parts of the world. For example in 2025, Chouhan (2025) empirically verified linkage of workplace spirituality with work engagement in a sample of India. Gomes et al. (2025) connected workplace spirituality with organizational citizenship behavior. Many such studies are being published.

Workplace spirituality has been an intriguing subject among organizational researchers. Researchers have established that workplace spirituality can have a positive impact on organizational members in shaping positive employee attitudes and behaviors. Workplace spirituality has been found to enhance job satisfaction (Hassan et al., 2016; Van der Walt & De Klerk, 2014), organizational commitment (Rego & Cunha, 2008), organizational citizenship behavior (Kazemipour et al., 2012; Farahnaz et al., 2012; Haldorai et al., 2019), job involvement (Shrestha, 2017), intrinsic job satisfaction (Crawford et al., 2008) and many more. These studies have confirmed the influence of workplace spirituality on employee productivity.

Researchers have also concluded that workplace spirituality can be responsible for workplace wellbeing. For example, Rathee and Sharma (2019) established workplace spirituality as a predictor for employee engagement. While researchers (Garg, 2017; Salem et al., 2023) introduced workplace spirituality as a variable

responsible for generating employee wellbeing. Researchers (Van der Walt, 2018; Ozdemir et al., 2022) found employees thrive when they experience spirituality at their workplace.

Another group of researchers have established workplace spirituality as an asset for organization by showing its potentiality in reducing negative attitudes among employees. For example Lata and Chaudhary (2020) demonstrated workplace spirituality can reduce perceived incivility at workplace. At the same time, other studies have also demonstrated that workplace spirituality has supported organizations in reducing negative employee behavior like employee silence (Chouhan, 2025), counterproductive work behavior (Kökalan, 2019), workplace deviant behavior (Haldorai et al., 2019), employee cynicism (Shrestha & Jena, 2021), turnover intention (Shrestha & Jena, 2021; Ghadi, 2017), employee incivility (Lata & Chaudhary, 2022) and so on.

Lately, researchers have also indicated that there is a possibility of unethical pro-organizational behavior among employees due to intense identification with organization due to workplace spirituality. Zhang (2020) found that increased identification with organization due to workplace spirituality may go to the extent that employees tend to feel logical to demonstrate unethical pro-organizational behavior for the benefit of the organization.

Thus, workplace spirituality is considered as an important tool in shaping employee behavior. So, deliberate efforts in organizations in enhancing workplace spirituality has been evident. Not limited to shaping employee behavior, researchers have established the role of workplace spirituality on shaping team and organizational dynamics like climate, leadership etc. Abdullah et al. (2009) linked workplace spirituality with leadership effectiveness and Garcia-Zamor (2003) with

organizational performance. Thus, workplace spirituality have positive impact on organization.

Mediating and Moderating effect of workplace spirituality

Researchers have investigated the mediating and moderating role of workplace spirituality in generating positive employee attitudes and behavior. Adnan et al. (2020) found a significant mediating role of workplace spirituality between leadership and work engagement. Haldorai et al. (2020) found workplace spirituality mediated relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior, workplace deviant behavior. Likewise, Dubey et al. (2022) found mediating role of workplace spirituality in the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior among managerial employees of Chhattisgarh.

Workplace spirituality is also found to play a moderating role in enhancing positive employee behavior and attitude and suppressing negative employee attitude and behavior. For example, Kumar and Kumar (2014) established workplace spirituality suppresses the relationship between workplace stress and employee health. Sprung et al. (2012) found workplace spirituality reduces the impact of workplace aggression on employee outcomes. Lata and Chaudhary (2020) found a moderating role of workplace spirituality in reducing incivility caused due to personality traits like Machiavellianism.

Workplace spirituality and Ethics

Dubey and Bedi (2023) pointed out that the importance of workplace spirituality was felt amidst unethical conducts at the workplace. Researchers have investigated the relationship of workplace spirituality with different aspects of ethics. Researchers (Nair & Sivakumar, 2018; Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020) found workplace spirituality is responsible for creating an ethical climate within an organization and

enhancing employee ethical behavior among organizational members (Tiwari & Pathak, 2018). Ethical leadership also promotes workplace spirituality (Aftab et al., 2023; Ayoun et al., 2015) found an association of spirituality at the workplace with ethical business practices. While Corner (2009) found association of business ethical practice with eastern spiritual practices prescribed in Yamas and Yoga. Thus, association of workplace spirituality and ethics is undeniable. Integration of spirituality into the workplace fosters a culture of employee ethical behavior, resulting in long-term organizational success (Wet, 2024; Lategan & Koko, 2022).

Experience of spirituality at the workplace builds a positive attitude among employees that helps them to demonstrate proper ethical behavior. Leadership, organizational climate has a role to play in developing such experience among employees.

Public service motivation

Conceptualization and Dimensions of public service motivation

The concept of public service motivation evolved from the notion of unique work ethics evident among public service employees. Perry and Wise (1990) suggested that public service employees are guided by different motives as compared to their private counterparts and proposed to name it public service motivation. Perry and Wise (1990) defined public service motivation as an individual's inclination to respond to unique needs of public institutions. Thus, public service motivation is related to pro-social motivation where the individuals work for eudaimonic happiness derived from meaning and purpose (Perry & Wise, 1990). This pro-social motivation is different from intrinsic motivation evident in private institutions where the individual works for self-pleasure and enjoyment (Grant, 2008).

Brewer et al. (2000) suggested that public service motivation was first studied by Bruce Buchanan II around 1975 and later systematically studied by Perry and Wise (1990) as a distinct motivational force seen among public service employees. Perry (1990, 1996) defined public service motivation in terms of three types of motives:

1. Rational motive - guided by value maximization,
2. Norm based motive - guided by rules, norms and common good;
3. Affective motive - guided by emotional response in social context.

Based on these three motives, Perry (1996, 1997) formally conceptualized public service motivation as a multidimensional concept. The dimensions of public service motivation as defined by Perry (1996, 1997) are:

1. Attraction to public policy making: indicates an opportunity to be part in formulation of public policy. This is rational satisfaction of reinforcing one's importance through role in policy change.
2. Commitment to public interest or civic duty: indicates desire to serve the public with altruistic motives. This is normative motives generated by the sense of duty and loyalty toward government and community.
3. Compassion - indicates extensive love for people. This is affective motive of commitment to a society.
4. Self-sacrifice - willingness to sacrifice personal reward for service to others.

Thereafter, a number of researchers joined in to explore this unique motivation among public service employees. Kim and Vandenabeele (2010) categorized these dimensions of public service motivation into instrumental, value based and identification motives.

1. Instrumental motives - concerned with the methods of performing meaningful public service.

2. Value-based motives - concerned with the terminal public values of desire to deliver for the benefit of the public.
3. Identification motives - concerned with individuals' desire to serve, and concerned with the relationship between public service employees and service recipients.

Public service motivation as a Construct

After formal conceptualization of construct public service motivation by Perry and Wise (1990), a number of researchers joined to reinforce and further develop the construct. Later, Perry (2014) summarized the development of public service motivation construct from 1990 and outlined three distinct phases of development of the construct: first phase: defining and measuring phase; second phase: diffusion phase for empirical testing confirming construct validity and nomological net; the third methodological advancement for adopting innovative methodology for better understanding the phenomena.

Perry and Wise (1990) proposed that public service motivation can be defined in terms of affective, norm based and rational motive. Perry (1996, 1997) developed an instrument for measurement of public service motivation as a four dimensional construct. Perry (1996) verified goodness of measure developed for public service motivation. Thereafter many variations in the definition were seen.

Brewer and Selden (1998) linked public service motivation with the force that triggers meaningful public service. Rainey and Steinbauer (1999) defined public service motivation as altruistic motivation to serve the shared public interests, for welfare of state, a nation or humankind. Brewer et al. (2000) identified four distinct facets of public service motivation: Samaritans- motivated to help the underprivileged, Communitarians - motivated by civic duty and responsibility of public service,

Patriots - with sense of loyalty for duty over self, and Humanitarians - motivated by sense of social justice and public service.

Though the concept of public service motivation is defined at the level of individual employees, institutional values, and culture also have a definite role to play in shaping the motivation among public service employees. Thus, the concept of public service motivation, developed and tested in western world, was mandated modification to match the needs of the eastern part of the world (Kim, 2009, 2011). Other researchers (e.g. Vandenabeele et al., 2006; Kim, 2009 etc.) proposed for adjustment in original dimension to match the need of their specific cultural context. However, Wright et al. (2013) discussed the need for a global measurement of public service motivation. Researchers have tested its relevance of the original conceptualization in non-US settings as well. Mikkelsen et al. (2021) found relevance of Public service motivation construct in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Africa. However, Nepal and Bangladesh were found to be exceptions in the study. Likewise, Shrestha and Mishra (2015) tested public service motivation construct among Nepali public service employees, but reported that all the dimensions of public service motivation did not load on to the construct. Nepali public service appears to be the unique in case of public service motivation.

Irrespective of the claim for different conceptualization, public service motivation has been studied and appreciated in different parts of the world. Van der Wal (2015) in his review found steady growth in public service motivation studies in the Asian context and found researchers from different countries like China, South Korea, South east Asia etc. found relevance of public service motivation in their own context. For example Chen et al. (2018) studied with samples from Taiwan; Gupta et

al. (2021) from India; Lui et.al. (2008) from China; Azhar and Steen (2022) studied in Pakistan.

Exploring nomological net for public service motivation, studies have found increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Taylor, 2008), reduction in work stress, increased organizational citizenship behavior (Julian et al., 2015) as outcomes of public service motivation. As antecedents, researchers have attributed to the origin and development of individuals like parental and religious socialization, political ideology, demographic characteristics (Perry, 1997) and social origin, demographics (Riccucci, 2018). While Kim (2021) found leadership experiences, volunteering satisfaction, peer collaboration can be antecedents of public service motivation among individuals.

After the phase of conceptual development and identification of nomological networks, the researchers have focused on methodological advancement for developing a better understanding of the public service phenomena. In this phase, researchers have started to explore and adopt new methodological approaches in further understanding public service motivation like experimental research (Chung et al., 2023; Christensen & Wright, 2018), longitudinal approach (Ward, 2014; Kim, 2021; Das, 2023).

Consequences of public service motivation

Consequence of public service motivation is one of the most widely researched areas in behavioral science. Researchers have shown evidence that public service motivation can generate positive consequences in organizations like building positive employee attitudes and behavior.

Vandenabeele et al. (2014) found 147 papers from 1998 to 2012. Ritz et al. (2016) demonstrated a sharp increase in the number of publications related to public

service motivation from 11 per year in 2006 to 76 per year in 2014. Meta-analysis by Homberg et al. (2015) found 28 papers verifying the positive relationship between public service motivation and job satisfaction from 1990 to 2013 and Das (2023) found 110 papers linking public service motivation with performance.

It is believed that individuals with high public service motivation join public service system (Christensen & Wright, 2011). And public service motivation has been taken as an effective tool in ensuring loyal employees for public organization as studies have found a direct positive relationship between public service motivation and organizational citizenship (Kim, 2006), job satisfaction (Lui et al., 2008), organizational commitment (Shrestha & Mishra, 2015). Thus, organizational researchers suggested public service organizations to induct employees with high public service motivation in their workforce.

Public service motivation also found to generate positive impact at organization level. For example, public service motivation can enhance individual and organizational performance (Shi & Zhang, 2022; Das, 2022), organizational identification (Miao et al., 2019).

Researchers have established public service motivation as an important factor for generating positive employee attitudes and behavior. Zhang et al. (2012) found public service motivation increases job satisfaction. Kim (2012) found public service motivation responsible for generating employee-organization fit ensuring better organizational performance. Potipiroon and Wongpreedee (2021) revealed that public service motivation instigates employees for appropriate action like whistle blowing.

Other researchers found that public service motivation can be responsible for reducing negative employee work attitudes like deviance behavior (Vogel et al. 2016). However, some researchers have investigated possible negative effects of public

service motivation as a dark side of public service motivation. Schott and Ritz (2018) identified issues of high stress, burnout, resigned job satisfaction, and intention to quit. The study also pointed out a possible problem of inflexibility infused due to group thinking among public service employees.

Antecedents of public service motivation

In addition to the advantages that public service motivation provides, researchers have also investigated ways to generate public service motivation among employees. Positive work elements at organizations like work relationship, job design, education, cultural belonging were found to be responsible for generating public service motivation (Vandenabeele et al., 2014). Ward (2014) found that public service motivation can be generated through an intensive national service experience. Fernandes et.al. (2022) also found work environment, working condition, remuneration, recognition, self-realization, learning as important factors for generating public service motivation among health workers. .

Other researchers have attributed factors internal to individuals for enhancing public service motivation. Self-efficacy have relationship with pro-social motivation (Cuadrado et al., 2016), while Thielmann et al. (2020) found theoretical linkage between personality traits, and pro-social behavior, which are believed to be positively related to public service motivation (Perry, 2014).

Likewise, Kim (2021) found that public service motivation changes over time and can be acquired and polished through leadership experience, volunteering satisfaction and collaborative learning.

Public service motivation and Ethics

Linkage between public service motivation and ethics is undeniable. Public service motivation takes into account the unique ethical standard of public service

employees against their private counterparts (Perry, 1990). These individuals guided with pro-social motivation, altruism are likely to have high ethical standards.

Systematic review Lee et al. (2024) found an increasing trend of studies linking public service motivation with ethics. Stazyk and Davis (2015) found public service motivation leading to ethical values and ethical decision making. Ripoll (2018) investigated the relationship of public service motivation with moral identity leading to ethical outcomes. Meyer-Sahling et al. (2019) in a large sample of 4763 found a significant relationship of public service motivation with ethical behavior. The study further reinforced that public service motivation activation leads to intention to ethical behavior.

Public service motivation has found its relevance across different types of public service employees. Alonso and Lewis (2001) studied public service motivation of federal employees. Ritz et al. (2016) in a systematic review found studies of public service motivation among non-profit organizations, organizations with public-private partnerships. The study reported a proportionate number of studies on national, state and local level samples.

Quynh et al. (2025) established mediating role of public service motivation in the relationship between ethical leadership and positive organizational behavior like organization citizenship behavior.

The unique altruistic motivation among public service employees can be nourished to ensure positive attitude and behavior among public service employees that is ultimately reflected in positive organizational outcomes.

Moral disengagement

Concept and Definition

Bandura (1999) defined moral disengagement as “psycho-social process affecting moral cognition and behavior that enables people to act against their personal moral principles without experiencing distress or guilt; without hindering them from committing such actions”. Moral disengagement as described by Bandura (1999) is a cognitive mechanism by which individuals disconnect their actions from their own moral standards. That is, a means by which an otherwise ethical individual finds reason or rationale to be involved in unethical behavior without guilt or self-sanction. From the definition itself it is evident that moral disengagement has the tendency/prospect to alter the ethical intention of an individual.

The concept of moral disengagement is a part of Bandura (1986, 1999)’s social cognitive theory that suggests human behavior is a function of interaction among person, environment and behavior. The concept of moral disengagement proposed by Bandura (1999) is also influenced by other seminal works on individual justification of behavior like Cressy (1953)’s seminal theory on rationalization and Sykes and Matza (1957)’s work on neutralization.

Bandura (1999) suggested eight general ways of moral disengagement evident in human behavior. They are:

1. Social and moral justification - justification that the conduct is made personally and socially commendable by portraying it as a service.
2. Advantageous comparison - justification presented by violence is made morally acceptable by claiming that one’s injurious actions will prevent more human suffering than they cause.

3. Euphemistic language - People behave more cruelly when detrimental practices are sanitized than when they are called aggression.
4. Displacement of responsibility - displaced responsibility they view their actions as stemming from the dictates of authorities rather than being personally responsible.
5. Diffusion of responsibility -
6. Disregarding and denial of injurious effects - minimizing, disregarding and disputing the harmful effects of one's actions..
7. Dehumanization - blaming one's foes for bringing the suffering on themselves by their provocative behavior.
8. Attribution of blame - shifting the responsibility of action on others.

Newman et al. (2020) categorized these eight ways into three categories, termed as locus or sets:

First locus: Behavioral - This set indicates individuals morally disengage via rationalizing their behavior. Moral justification, Euphemistic labeling and advantageous comparison are categorized in this set.

Second locus: This set is related to agency. This indicates the way employees make sense of their own choices and do not feel responsible for the conduct. Displacement of responsibility and diffusion of responsibility is categorized under this category.

Third locus: This set deals with victims of immoral action that dehumanizes and attributes the blame on others. The locus deals with attribution of blame, dehumanization.

Application of moral disengagement

The concept of moral disengagement has been used to explain how individuals justify or find excuses for immoral or harmful actions (White et al., 2009). Moral disengagement has been observed as a major mechanism in generating war emotions, rationalizing human rights abuses and other unethical actions in everyday situations (Luongo, 2023). A number of studies related to moral disengagement have been devoted to understanding human actions like school bullying (Obermann, 2013). Studies have shown the role of moral disengagement in violence against animals (Zalaf & Apostolou, 2025), doping in sports (Boardley & Kavussanu, 2011). Researchers have found an important role of moral disengagement in training war soldiers (Wolfendale & Wolfendale, 2007), training civilians for terrorist activities (Aquino et al., 2007). Bandura (2017) also explained cognitive restructuring through moral disengagement during terrorist training.

Moral disengagement has been used in explaining issues at different social settings. Mazzone et al. (2019) in a longitudinal study concluded that moral disengagement leads to aggressive behavior among adolescents. A review by Luo and Bussey (2023) also found strong association of moral disengagement with aggression that is moderated by age. Hyde et al. (2010) found moral disengagement responsible for antisocial behavior among low income children.

Though formally conceptualized by Bandura (1997), the concept of moral disengagement has been with us from the beginning of human civilization. Acts of killing animals from the Paleolithic era for feeding family members to appointing a human being as a slave for inhumane tasks in the Modern Era considering his/her caste can be the result of moral disengagement. We feel that another human being is

eligible to be treated differently thinking that the person belongs to lower social strata. Such an act can also be explained using moral disengagement.

Positive aspect of moral disengagement

Moral disengagement does not always lead to transgression. It can also be viewed in a positive light. Any behavior in isolation cannot be categorized as ethical behavior or unethical behavior. The context where the behavior is taking place plays a major role for judgment and moral disengagement can be the context for the evaluation of our behavior. For example, killing another human being is unethical. But, the killing during war is appreciated as an act of bravery (Bandura, 2012). The similar teachings can also be found in teachings of ancient mythological texts. For example, one of the important lessons from the Mahabharata war, as described in the Mahabharata epic, was that otherwise unethical acts can be regarded as appropriate if done for the larger good or to perform your “dharma”. The similar learning can be derived from the Ram-Ravan war as described in epic Ramayana. Likewise, according to Radhakrishnan (1914), Vedanta also rejected absolute moral rules rather than stresses on purity of ultimate goal. The concept of utilitarianism also guides us to judge action on the greater good it brings (Mill, 2016).

Thus, energy generated by moral disengagement can be utilized to achieve the goal.

Moral disengagement in Organizational setting

In an organizational setting, moral disengagement has gained attention recently. Moral disengagement has been popularly used to explain unethical actions and corporate scandals (Bandura, 2015). Researchers have used moral disengagement to explain negative human behaviors like workplace deviant behavior (Lui et al., 2012), unethical pro-organizational behavior (Hsiesh et al., 2020). Detert et al. (2008)

also found moral disengagement is responsible for unethical decision making among business and management graduate students. White et al. (2009) found that the social, moral and economic justification presented by corrupted organizations are in line with the dimensions of moral disengagement suggested by Bandura (2012).

Review, Newman et al. (2019), identified a number of antecedents like moral identity, moral personality, cynicism, locus of control, empathy, honesty, humility, leadership, self-efficacy, psychological entitlement, authenticity, motivation to lead, resource depletion, interpersonal justice, organizational identification, psychological contract breach for moral disengagement. The same review listed a number of outcomes of moral disengagement. Turnover intention, information security violation, unethical behavior, pro-organizational behavior, interpersonal deviance, organizational citizenship behavior, social undermining, unethical negotiations, workplace harassment, employee silence, accident under-reporting are among the list.

Findings of Ogunfowora et al. (2022) are also in line with the above study. Ogunfowora et al. (2022) categorized antecedents at individual level like honesty-humility, guilt proneness, moral identity, trait empathy, conscientiousness, idealism, and relativism and at organizational level like abusive supervision and perceived organizational politics, organizational justice. Another study (Detert et al., 2008) also concluded that individual characteristics like empathy, trait cynicism, locus of control, and moral identity can instigate moral disengagement.

Moral disengagement and ethics

A number of studies have found that moral disengagement generates a tendency for unethical behavior in social as well as organizational context. White et al. (2009) found that the social, moral and economic justification presented by corrupted organizations are in line with the dimensions of moral disengagement suggested by

Bandura (2012). Hyde et al. (2010) in a study of low income boys found that the impact of early childhood issues leading to antisocial behavior is moderated by moral disengagement. Moore et al. (2012) found a tendency of employees towards moral disengagement encouraging them to be involved in work related unethical behavior. Likewise in a study of fraudulent incidences, Barsky (2011) found that moral disengagement through moral justification and displacement of responsibility are causes for unethical behavior. Moore (2008) discussed the role of moral disengagement in ethical decision making leading to organizational corruption. Moore (2015) verified moral disengagement can amplify unethical behavior and concluded that employees with high moral disengagement in their decision are not affected by an environment like ethical leaders. Study (Detert et al. 2008) also concluded that moral disengagement predicts unethical decision making.

Thus, it is evident that moral disengagement is negatively associated with ethics and ethical behavior. However, there has been limited effort to explain ways moral disengagement impacts ethical behavior of public service employees.

Researchers have also identified intrapsychic, social and environmental reasons for development of moral disengagement. Luo and Bussey (2023) found personal (e.g., self-efficacy; empathy) and environmental factors (e.g., parental monitoring; peer rejection) responsible for moral disengagement. Likewise, Hyde et al. (2010) found child upbringing like rejecting parenting, neighborhood environment etc. can shape moral disengagement in a child that determines their future behavior.

Moral disengagement has been studied at individual, team and organization level. Buckley (2015, as cited in Newman, 2020) explained that moral disengagement as an interpersonal phenomenon where a disengaged person can make a group or

organization disengaged as a result of social contagion progress. Thus argues for the need for study of moral disengagement at group or organizational level.

Knowingly-unknowingly every individual is experiencing and demonstrating moral disengagement. Organizations can benefit from being sensitive to employees' moral disengagement and redirecting them for the benefit of the organization.

Framework and Hypothesis

The theory of planned behavior by Fishben and Ajen (1980) suggests that any human behavior is preceded by an intention for that behavior, where a number of internal and external factors (subjective norm, attitude towards behavior etc.) shape that intention. So, investigating factors leading to intention for employee ethical behavior will help in finding ways of generating employee ethical behavior.

The intention to behave ethically is guided by the standard of moral reasoning of the individual (Kurtines & Breif, 1974). The moral reasoning according to Kohlberg (1958) depends on the ethical standard of the individual. Ethical standard in turn is determined by the stage of moral development the individual is in. The levels of moral development are pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional (Kohlberg, 1958).

The social cognitive theory of Bandura (1986, 1989, and 1990) suggests that human beings form their own ethical standards to regulate their behavior. The standards are in turn formed by the interaction of their personal experience and external stimulus. Thus individuals are moral agents of their own ethical behavior where they form personal moral standards that build up their intention for ethical behavior and prevent unethical behavior (Bandura, 1990). Thus, identification of these internal and external stimuli will lead to enhancing moral standards and can be an answer to generating intention to employee ethical behavior.

Individuals experiencing spirituality at their workplace are driven by a feeling of altruism, the individuals feel connected with their workplace and feel responsible for the stakeholders, and the individuals are committed to fulfilling their duty and are always mindful of their own actions (Shrestha et al., 2023). Drawing upon Bandura (1990)'s social cognitive theory, these values form a high ethical standard of an individual that according to Kohlberg (1958)'s theory of moral development enables individuals to generate moral reasoning of higher stage leading to intention for employee ethical behavior. Thus, behavior of such an individual will reflect their intention to be honest, good and right. Explanations in the same line can be found in Tiwari and Pathak (2018). Thus, workplace spirituality has potential to generate intention for employee ethical behavior. Further, researchers like Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004), Comer et al. (2011) have also linked workplace spirituality with individual moral integrity that prevents them from derailing due to external pressure.

Thus we can hypothesize that,

H1: workplace spirituality has a significant relationship with employee ethical behavior.

Perry and Wise (1990)'s public service motivation suggests that public service employees are guided by the pro-social motives to serve the service recipients for larger social causes than to meet the self and organization objective. Pro-social motivation is positively related to the desire to do good for others. Thus individuals with high public service motivation are likely to be at a high level of moral development, which according to Kohlberg (1958) have better moral reasoning leading to intention for employee ethical behavior. From this argument, it can be hypothesized that

H3: Public service motivation has significant relationship with employee ethical behavior

Among public service employees, employees experiencing spirituality at the workplace are guided by public service motivation (Hassan et al., 2022). Otaye-Ebede et al. (2020) also found that workplace spirituality is associated with pro-social motivation and moral judgment. Public service motivation is closely linked with pro-social motivation (Perry & Wise, 1990).

Considering the above argument and the relationship in H1, it is plausible to say that workplace spirituality has a direct and indirect path to employee ethical behavior. The indirect path can be through public service motivation as suggested by the positive relationship between workplace spirituality and public service motivation (Hassan et al., 2022 and Otaye-Ebede et al., 2020) and relationship discussed in H2. Thus, a mediating role of public service motivation in the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior can be hypothesized.

Public service motivation can explain the mechanism through which workplace spirituality can be responsible for employee ethical behavior among public service employees. We can hypothesize the mediating role of public service motivation in the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior.

H2: Public service motivation mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior

Bandura (1999) suggested that the moral self-regulation can be selectively activated and deactivated. This is called moral disengagement. Moral disengagement of Bandura (1999) suggested that an ethical person can indulge in unethical corrupt behavior without guilt or self-moral sanctions, if the person rationalizes his/her behavior in one of the eight ways: social and moral justification, advantageous

comparison, euphemistic language, displacement and diffusion of responsibility, disregarding and denial of injurious effects, dehumanization and attribution of blame (Bandura, 1999, 2015). Hence, the possibility of employee ethical behavior generated by public service motivation can be manipulated by the presence of moral disengagement such that public service employees start to behave unethically. Based on the argument, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H4: Moral disengagement moderates the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior

H5: Moral disengagement moderates the mediated relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation.

The above argument and hypothesis can be represented in the framework of study as depicted in fig. 1.

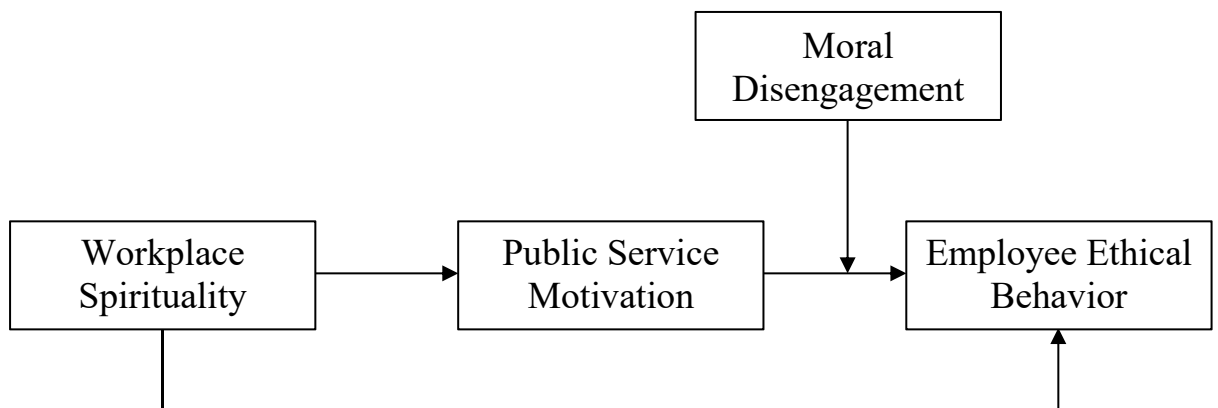


Fig. 1 : Conceptual Framework

The individual level hypothesis of the study are summarized as:

H1: Workplace spirituality has a significant positive relationship with employee ethical behavior.

H2: Public service motivation mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior.

H3: Public service motivation has a significant relationship with employee ethical behavior.

H4: Moral disengagement moderates the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior.

H5: Moral disengagement moderates the mediated relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation.

Cross level hypothesis/ Multi-level hypothesis

The spirituality of an individual, though individual characteristics, is shaped by the organization and team characteristics the individual is working with (Otake-Ebede et al., 2020). That means individuals in the same organization or work unit can have a similar level of workplace spirituality shaped by the environment and is different from that experienced by employees in other organizations. Ashforth and Pratt (2010) also describes in the same line. Thus, considering it as purely individual characteristics may not be a true assumption that according to Heck et al. (2024) will result in a clustering effect. This will violate the basic assumption of regression that individual data sets are independent of each other. Thus, the analysis of impact of organization level or unit level workplace spirituality is warranted. The inclusion of the workplace spirituality at organizational/ unit level, collective workplace spirituality, will bring better understanding of the reality of the phenomenon that the public service employees are experiencing. Rocha and Pinheiro (2021) also stressed on the importance of studying spirituality at organizational level.

From the above arguments for hypothesis H1, H3, it is evident that workplace spirituality is expected to have relationships with both public service motivation and

employee ethical behavior. Likewise, the spiritual environment that the employees are experiencing at the workplace, depicted by the aggregated workplace spirituality or collective workplace spirituality, can have an impact on shaping the individual's public service motivation and individual's employee ethical behavior. Thus the spiritual environment of the organization that supports individuals nourishes them to experience spirituality can enhance their intention to behave ethically.

Further, the relationship nested at organization or unit level can be explained using reciprocal determination of social cognitive theory by Bandura (1978). Reciprocal determination theory suggests that individuals' internal factors, individual's environment and individual's behavior has triadic relationships. Each is forming and is impacted by the other. Thus, individual workplace spirituality is shaping the spiritual environment at the workplace (collective workplace spirituality) and vice versa. The spiritual environment and individual workplace spirituality is shaping his/ her public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior. Wood and Bandura (1989) also reinforced implementation of reciprocal determination where personal factors, behavior and environmental factors interact with each other to explain triadic relationships.

Thus, based on above arguments, cross level hypothesis can be framed as:

H6: Collective workplace spirituality has a significant positive relationship with the individual public service motivation of public service employees.

H7: Collective workplace spirituality has a significant positive relationship with the individual employee ethical behavior of public service employees.

The collective workplace spirituality that the employee experiences at the organization can further reinforce the public service motivation and employee ethical behavior created by individual workplace spirituality. Researchers (Jurkiewicz &

Giacalone, 2004; Pawar, 2017) discussed about moderating effect of organizational spirituality in shaping individual behavior. Further, Tombaugh et al. (2011) suggested that interaction of organizational spirituality depends on alignment of spiritual values at organization and individual level, hence need further investigation. Thus the aggregate level workplace spirituality or collective workplace spirituality was hypothesized to moderate the relationship between individual workplace spirituality and individual public service motivation and relationship between individual workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior.

H8: Collective workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between individual workplace spirituality and individual public service motivation

H9: Collective workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between individual workplace spirituality and individual ethical behavior

Researchers have conceptualized workplace spirituality at individual, team and organizational level. Organizational spirituality as defined by Pawar (2017) is spiritual values and practices possessed by organization. However, considering the public service system spread across the country, it would be logical to think that beyond the organizational values and practices established, the spiritual environment that the employees in an organization are shaped by the leader, relationship with co-workers etc. Thus, the aggregate workplace spirituality or collective workplace spirituality in the nested framework is more logical to indicate the spiritual environment experienced by the employees.

Thus the nested conceptual diagram can be depicted as follows:

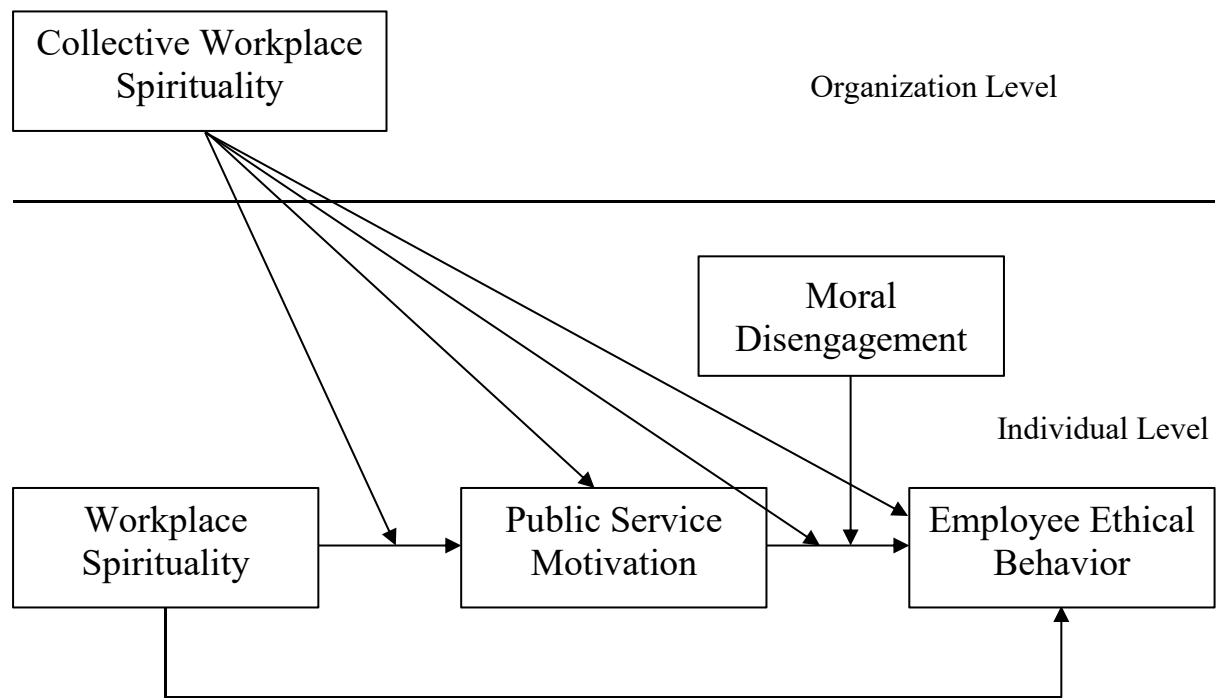


Fig. 2 : Conceptual Framework with cross level variable

The cross level hypotheses can be summarized as:

H6: Collective workplace spirituality has a significant positive relationship on the individual public service motivation of public service employees.

H7: Collective workplace spirituality has a significant positive relationship on the individual employee ethical behavior of public service employees.

H8: Collective workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between individual workplace spirituality and individual public service motivation.

H9: Collective workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between individual workplace spirituality and individual employee ethical behavior.

CHAPTER-3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between workplace spirituality, public service motivation, employee ethical behavior and moderating effect of moral disengagement. Thus the study adopted a quantitative deductive approach to investigate the hypothesized relationship among the study variables. The study used already validated instruments to measure the constructs for a hypothetico-deductive approach. The following section includes explanation of the process followed in the study.

Research Philosophy

The researcher was guided by positivist research philosophy and adopted a deductive approach for the study. The researcher was trying to unravel the truth related to the relationship between workplace spirituality, public service motivation and employee ethical behavior in the context of Nepali public service employees. The researcher followed a prescribed process to investigate the phenomenon. The researcher started with an established theory to hypothesize the relationship between study variables. Data from relevant respondents were collected. Standard data analysis techniques were used to test the hypothesized relationship.

Research Design

The study used non-experimental cross-sectional design i.e. data was collected at one point in time. As the purpose of the study was to test hypothesized relationships between variables, it was a relational design and the study was conducted in a non-contrived setting where the respondents were in their natural work setting and the researcher had no interference in the data collected. The data collected from each respondent was treated as an individual dataset.

Variables

The variables used in the study were workplace spirituality, public service motivation, employee ethical behavior and moral disengagement. Among the variables, workplace spirituality was the independent variable and employee ethical behavior was the dependent variable. The study intended to study mediation of public service motivation in the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior. The study also included moral disengagement as a moderator that moderates the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior. While exploring the moderating effect of moral disengagement, public service motivation acted as an independent variable and employee ethical behavior acted as a dependent variable. The study also explored the moderating effect of moral disengagement on the mediated relationship between workplace spirituality and individual employee ethical behavior through public service motivation.

Population and Sample

All the individuals employed in Nepali civil service are eligible to be participants in this study. The public service employees are broadly categorized into employees of the central government (federal government), that of province and that of local government (“gaun and nagar palika”). According to the Kathmandu Post (Feb, 2023), the number of civil servants positions are 139,000 of which 41 percent are at federal level and 14 percent at provincial level and 45 percent at local level. The number was also verified by an officials from Rastriya Kitabkhana.

According to the official portal of the government of Nepal (2024), there are 21 ministries, six constitutional bodies at the federal government level of the government of Nepal. At provincial level, there are seven provinces namely Koshi, Bagmati, Madhesh, Lumbini, Gandaki, Karnali and Sudurpaschim. The public service

employees of the central (federal) government are governed by Civil Service Act 2049 BS and Civil Service Rule 2050 BS. As prescribed by Provincial Civil Service Act 2079 BS, public service employees of each province are governed by their own provincial civil service rules (e.g. g. Bagmati Provincial Civil Service Act 2079 BS, Lumbini Provincial Service Act 2080 BS, Karnali Provincial Civil Service Act 2080 BS).

The population of public service employees can further be classified into senior level (joint secretary and above), mid-level (section officer and undersecretary) and junior level (non-gazette). However, each province has a different number of ministries and each province has different nomenclature for its ministries (List of ministries of different provinces in Appendix). The level, type and nomenclature of public service employees at provincial and local levels are different from that of central government. However, there is a lot similarity in the ministries of province and that of central government (list is in appendix II).

The work unit of public service employees is spread across 77 districts of Nepal. According to the official cite of Provincial and Local Government Assistance Program (PLGSP) under the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), the ‘Nepal Gazette’ notification of the Government of Nepal has declared 753 local level units in Nepal that consist of 460 rural municipalities, 276 municipalities, 11 sub-metropolitan and 6 metropolitan cities. The rural municipalities and urban municipalities in total have 6743 ward committees. Reaching out to such a widely spread population was found to be a difficult task. Thus, in order to simplify the coverage for data collection, public service employees at local level government were removed from the sampling frame for the study.

Sampling Design

The population consisting of federal employees and provincial employees were considered for data collection. For segregation of provincial employees, the number of ministries in each province were considered as a basis. Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces have less than ten ministries and the remaining five provinces have more than ten ministries. Between Karnali and Sudurpaschim, Karnali province was chosen. Among the remaining five provinces, with more than ten ministries, Koshi and Bagmati were selected.

At the federal level the ministry of education, ministry of health and ministry of urban planning were chosen. Their counterpart ministries at provincial level were chosen for data collection. The departments, offices and work units were chosen according to the convenience of researchers such that the proportion of the number of work units roughly reflects the size of the ministry. Thus 100 offices were shortlisted such that 15 individuals can be approached in each unit for data collection.

Implementation of Sampling Design

The researcher faced a major constraint in implementation of the sampling design. The researcher found that employees working in the selected unit of public service were skeptical about providing information through questionnaires in spite of the fact that the questionnaire did not seek any confidential information from employees and collected only perception of the individual employee about their work. Each questionnaire included a cover letter from the researcher promising confidentiality of their identity. Amidst experience of a few unsuccessful attempts, the researcher decided to approach public service units based on personal contact. For this researcher identified public service employees that the researcher knows in person and identified faculty members at University and individuals from personal contact

who can introduce the researcher to some other public service employees. The researcher used those employees as contact persons in their work units and requested them to get the questionnaire filled from 10 to 15 other colleagues in their work unit. Practically, the sampling design used became a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. Thus the researcher could not maintain the logical proportion of respondents representing provinces and ministries.

One thousand hardcopy questionnaires were distributed in different units of public service organizations. Among the completed questionnaires collected, 653 questionnaires were usable. The collected questionnaires were from 109 organizations, among which 67 were from federal and remaining were from different provincial units as mentioned in the Table 1.

Table 1

Number of work units from federal and provincial government

Organization	Number of units	Percent
Federal Level Organizations	67	72
Bagmati Province	16	12.1
Koshi Province	5	1
Karnali	4	5.4
Lumbini	8	3.5
Madhesh	8	6
Total organizations reached	109	

For testing individual level hypothesis H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5, a complete data set was used. While testing multi-level hypotheses H6, H7, H8 and H9, the data from organizations with fewer than five respondents were removed. Doing so, cross level analysis was done with 60 organizations where the average size of respondent per organization was found to be 9.25.

Measures

Self-administered questionnaires were used for data collection. Previously developed, tested and validated instruments from published sources were used to capture different variables of the study. These instruments were used by different studies and proved valid and reliable. The responses were captured in a 7-point likert scale where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= neither agree nor disagree, 5= slightly agree, 6=agree and 7=strongly agree.

Ethical behavior

The study was not intended to measure the actual ethical behavior of public service employees, however captured their intention to behave ethically. Different researchers have developed instruments to capture ethical and unethical behavior of employees.

Researchers have used small situations with ethical dilemmas in order to measure the moral reasoning of the individual through the approach in dealing with the situation. The situations prescribed by the researchers found to be irrelevant for Nepali public service employees. Moreover, the effort demanded by such an instrument from the respondent side might not be possible to expect from the respondent targeted by the study.

Regarding other instruments developed, Kaptein (2008) considered unethical behavior from the perspective of different stakeholders to develop a multidimensional measure of unethical behavior. Al Halbusi et al. (2021) used an adapted 12-item scale reflecting an ethical behavior developed by Newstrom and Ruch (1975). The instrument conceptualized ethical behavior in two dimensions - normative ethical behavior and judicial ethical behavior. As reported in Al Halbusi et al. (2021), the scale was designed for North American and have been widely used by researchers in

other cultural contexts like Israel, Russia, and Uganda, China (e.g. Lu and Lin (2014)). The instrument used by Al Halbusi et al. (2021) was found suitable for the current study. CR and AVE reported for variable ethical behavior by Al Halbusi et al. (2021) were .93 and .533 respectively. The instrument Al Halbusi et al. (2021) was found relevant for the study.

Moral disengagement

Moral disengagement has largely been studied in non-organizational context like school kids, college students, war soldiers, sports etc. Instruments available are also suitable in such context. However, a measure published, Moore et al. (2012) was used to capture propensity of moral disengagement among adults applicable in organizational context. The scale captures eight dimensions of moral disengagement in a 32 - Items scale, with an option of using 16 or 8 items. The instrument was reported to have NNFI = .94, RMSEA = .12, SRMR = .05 by Duffy et al. (2005). The instrument by Moore et al. (2012) was based on Bandura's theory of moral disengagement conceptualized moral disengagement in eight dimensions. The instrument consists of 32 items and provides a choice of using 16 suggested items.

Public service motivation

Instrument for public service motivation was originally developed by Perry (1996). Later, a number of efforts have been made to modify the instrument (Kim, 2009). However, a review by Ritz et al. (2016) found evidence that four dimensions capture public service motivation better than the three dimensions. Thus the instrument with four dimensions of public service motivation was used to capture public service motivation of individuals.

As cited in Vandenabeele et al. (2014), public service motivation, despite the possibility of social desirability bias, is a global concept and can be safely applied.

The research Shrestha and Mishra (2015) has also used four dimensions of public service motivation to test relationship in Nepali public service employees. Thus the study used four dimensional instrument for measurement of public service motivation.

Workplace spirituality

The instrument of workplace spirituality was first developed by Ashmos and Duchan (2000). The instrument has been widely used across countries for measurement of workplace spirituality. Researchers (Crossman, 2015; MacDonald, 2011 etc.) argued that the workplace spirituality instrument developed in the US context is not relevant for other cultural contexts like Asian. Thus the instrument has undergone a number of adaptations to incorporate different cultural aspects. Recently Shrestha et al. (2023) developed an instrument of workplace spirituality based on respondents from Nepal. The instrument has conceptualized workplace spirituality in six dimensions - altruism, interpersonal positivity, duty orientation, self-regulation, interconnectedness, and mindfulness. The instrument has 29 items. The instrument Shrestha et al. (2023) was used for measurement of workplace spirituality in the present study. As the instrument has been used in limited research works, the present study will also serve as further validation of the instrument.

Research Procedure

Research procedure included explanation of administration of questionnaire, data gathering, data capture and data analysis.

Questionnaires Administration

The questionnaire consisted of items capturing study variables (Items in Appendix 1) and questions for collecting demographic information. Except for socio demographic variables, responses for all items were collected in a 7-point likert scale.

The instruments for capturing all the study variables were developed in western countries and were published in English language. The target population for the study, public service employees, were found to be more comfortable with Nepali language. Thus an approach of translation and back translation suggested by Brislin (1970) was used to translate the questionnaire in Nepali. The English version of the items of instruments were given to the professional translation service available at the University. Two independent professionals translated the items from English to Nepali and back translated from Nepali and English. The back translated English and original questionnaire were found similar. Further, an independent professional was also used for translating the English version of questionnaire items to Nepali and back translation. The researcher along with the research supervisor compared the two versions of translated items and selected the translated items that makes most sense for the context.

The questionnaire distributed to respondents had both English and Nepali versions of items so as to reduce possible confusion caused by the translation.

One thousand hard copy questionnaires were distributed to different public service organizations. A contact person was identified in each public service unit. The contact person in the organization/ unit was personally contacted by the researcher in person or through telephonic conversation to explain the objective of the study. The ten to fifteen hard copy questionnaires were handed over to the contact person. The contact person served as a coordinator in collecting responses from employees in the organizational unit. Completed questionnaires were collected from the contact person. The respondents were not directly in contact or were not identified by the researcher. In case of units outside Kathmandu Valley, the hard copy questionnaires were sent to the contact person through courier. The contact person coordinated in distribution and

collection of data from employees in the organization. Graduate students of Kathmandu University were also used as enumerators for data collection. The researcher remained in constant contact with the contact person through telephone. Telephonic follow ups were done so as to improve response rate. The response rate slightly more than 65% was attained, which was fairly good considering the type of respondents the study targeted.

Each returned questionnaire was manually screened for missing data and unnatural response. After manual screening, appropriate coding was done for capturing the data in electronic form. Special attention was given in preparing a catalog of responses and the organization they belong to, so as to prevent possible errors in preparing data for multilevel analysis.

Support from graduate and undergraduate students was used in questionnaire administration and data entry. Special care in orienting the data handling team was taken to reduce the possibility of error in data. For this, one of the graduate research student served as coordinator in handling data. The student was explained in detail about the requirements of the research. The student coordinated the remaining students involved in data entry. MS Excel was used for student data entry. The data in MS Excel was later transferred to SPSS for analysis. The responses were captured in SPSS 23 for windows statistical software. Software SPSS 23 and AMOS 21 were used for statistical analysis.

CHAPTER-4

RESULTS

The chapter explains results of the relationship analysis among study variables: workplace spirituality (WPS), public service motivation (PSM), employee ethical behavior (EEB) and moral disengagement (MD). The unit describes preparation of data for hypothesis testing. Followed by the test of reliability and validity of data collected. After confirming reliability and validity of data, the data is ready for hypothesis testing. The chapter demonstrates results of hypothesis testing.

Data Preparation

For preparing data for hypothesis testing, the data was used for testing validity and reliability. The previously tested and validated instruments from reliable published sources were used to capture the variables of the study. Thus, reliability and validity of the instruments can be assured. Further tests were carried out in order to confirm reliability and validity of the instruments used for measurement of variables, before testing the hypothesis of the study.

Statistical software SPSS 23 and AMOS 21 for SPSS was used for analysis of data. Reliability was tested using SPSS. Structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS 21 was used for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test convergent and discriminant validity. For testing the proposed hypothesis, PROCESS Macro in SPSS was used.

Descriptive of Respondents

Initially data was examined for dispersion, central tendency and normality. Descriptive analysis is summarized in Table 2.

Descriptive statistics reported the characteristics of respondents. Statistics demonstrated among the respondents 434 (69.1%) were male and remaining were

female. In terms of age of the respondents, maximum number of respondents were from the age group 30 to 39 years: 122(19.4%) were between 18 to 29 years, 278 (44.3%) were in between 30 and 39 years, 159 (25.3%) were between 40 and 49 and the remaining between 50 and 60. Analyzing marital status, most of the respondents were married: 484(77.4%) were married, 122(19.4%) were unmarried and the remaining were widowed and divorced. In terms of educational qualification of respondents, highest percentage of respondents have masters degree followed by a bachelor degree: 23(3.7%) had Schooling only, 44(7.0%) had Intermediate, 169 (36.9%) had bachelor degree, 374(59.6%) had master degree and the remaining had higher than master degree. The summary of data is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of respondents

Gender				
Male (434- 69.1%)		Female (175 - 27.9%)		
Age				
18-29 yrs (122- 19.4%)	30-39 yrs (278 - 44.3%)	40-49 yrs (159 - 25.3%)	50-60 yrs (60 - 9.6%)	
Marital Status				
Unmarried (122 - 19.4%)	Married (486 - 77.4%)	Divorcee (3-.5%)	Widowed (2-.3%)	
Educational Qualification				
Schooling (23-3.7%)	Intermediate (44-7%))	Bachelors (169 - 26.9%)	Masters (374 -59.6%)	Above Masters (10-1.6%)

For investigating descriptive statistics of variables, a summated score of each variable was calculated and descriptive analysis was carried out. The variables workplace spirituality, public service motivation and ethical behavior have above

average values of mean. The values of mean recorded were: workplace spirituality =5.1; public service motivation = 5.4 and employee ethical behavior = 6.1. From the values, it can be concluded that in general, public service employees possess good intention to behave ethically, are guided by fairly good public service motivation and are experiencing good workplace spirituality at their workplace. The descriptive analysis of variables also shows that the mean value of moral disengagement is 2.6, which is lower than average value. From this, it can be inferred that the public service employees in general are low in moral disengagement. The values are summarized in correlation table, Table 4.

Normality of data was ensured using skewness and kurtosis. Following the standard by Hair et al. (2019), the data with skewness between -2 and +2; kurtosis between -7 and +7 is considered normally distributed. All the variables have values of skewness and kurtosis within the prescribed range. Thus, the data is normally distributed. Thus the data can be used for further hypothesis testing. The values are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Test of normality

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis	Remarks
WPS	.6	.8	Data is normally distributed
PSM	.7	1.8	Data is normally distributed
EEB	1.6	4.2	Data is normally distributed
MD	.92	1.38	Data is normally distributed

WPS= workplace spirituality, PSM = public service motivation, EEB = employee ethical behavior, MD=moral disengagement

Reliability Testing

Inter-item internal consistency reliability of each variable was tested for the data collected using Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha values of the variables

workplace spirituality, employee ethical behavior, public service motivation and moral disengagement were found .95, .90, .74 and .87 respectively. The values of Cronbach alpha of all the variables as recommended by Nunnally (1978), are above recommended value .7 indicating that the respondents have responded to the items of the variables consistently. Thus are reliable measures of the construct. The Cronbach alpha values of the variables of study are included in the correlation table, Table 4.

For correlation analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. From the correlation table, the significant correlation at 95% confidence interval between the study variables were seen. Variables of workplace spirituality, public service motivation and employee ethical behavior are positively correlated with each other. While moral disengagement is negatively correlated with other study variables.

Table 4

Correlation table with mean, standard deviation of variables and correlation between the variables

	Mean	Stdev	WPS	PSM	EB	MD
WPS	5.1	.85	.95			
PSM	5.4	.58	.37**	.90		
EEB	6.1	.78	.45**	.51**	.74	
MD	2.6	.92	-.14**	-.28**	-.26**	.87

Note: diagonal values are cron bach alpha values

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

WPS= workplace spirituality, PSM = public service motivation, EEB = employee ethical behavior, MD=moral disengagement

Convergent and Discriminant Validity Testing

For validity testing, structural equation modeling was used for confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis of each variable was used to check whether the data collected for the study fit the factor structure proposed by the instruments. AMOS 21 for SPSS was used for structural equation modeling.

Prior to examination of the measurement model, data was first checked for outliers with Mahalanobis distance. Outliers were not found. Then the confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on each item of each scale to ensure that there is no major deviation from the expected factor structure when the scales were used in the present sample. Factor loading of each item on the corresponding construct was examined to determine whether any item needed to be dropped from the scales. As suggested in Rosen (2006), the items with factor loading below .3 can be removed for better results. From the examination it was concluded that the four items of PSM need to be dropped. The pruned measurement model for PSM was prepared and used for further analysis.

Common Method Bias

Data on items of all the variables of study were collected through self-administered questionnaire at the same time. This might result in systematic error as the respondent's mind might become trained to answer the question. The type of error is called common method bias.

Harman's single-factor test was used for common method bias test. In SPSS dimension reduction was used to run exploratory factor analysis. Un-rotated factor solution in principal axis factoring was used with Eigen values >1. The initial Eigen values shows that first factor explains 20% variance. As the variance explained is less than 50%, it was concluded that there is no serious problem of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Measurement Model

Measurement models were prepared for each construct. The standards suggested, relative chi-square ≤ 3.0 and alternative fit indices; GFI $\geq .9$, CFI $\geq .9$, RMSEA $\leq .05$ were used to ensure the goodness of fit of each model. For each

variable, model improvement as suggested in modification indices were used to improve the model. However, Hu and Bentler (1999, as stated in Park, 2024), recommended using at least two criteria with an acceptable level of the model fit index to evaluate structural equation modeling (SEM) model fit. So, the attempt for improvement was stopped once two indices with acceptable levels were achieved.

The values of fit indices achieved after modification for the variables are summarized in Table 5. For further analysis, the improved variables were used.

Figure 4, 5 and 6 demonstrates measurement model of study variables.

Table 5
Fit indices from measurement model of variables

	Relative Chi-sq	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	AVE	CR
WPS	2.9	.9	.94	.05	.62	.9
EEB	3.5	.94	.93	.06	.56	.81
PSM (pruned)	3.85	.92	.87	.06	.61	.83
MD	4.22	.94	.92	.07	.87	.98

WPS= workplace spirituality, PSM = public service motivation, EEB = employee ethical behavior, MD=moral disengagement

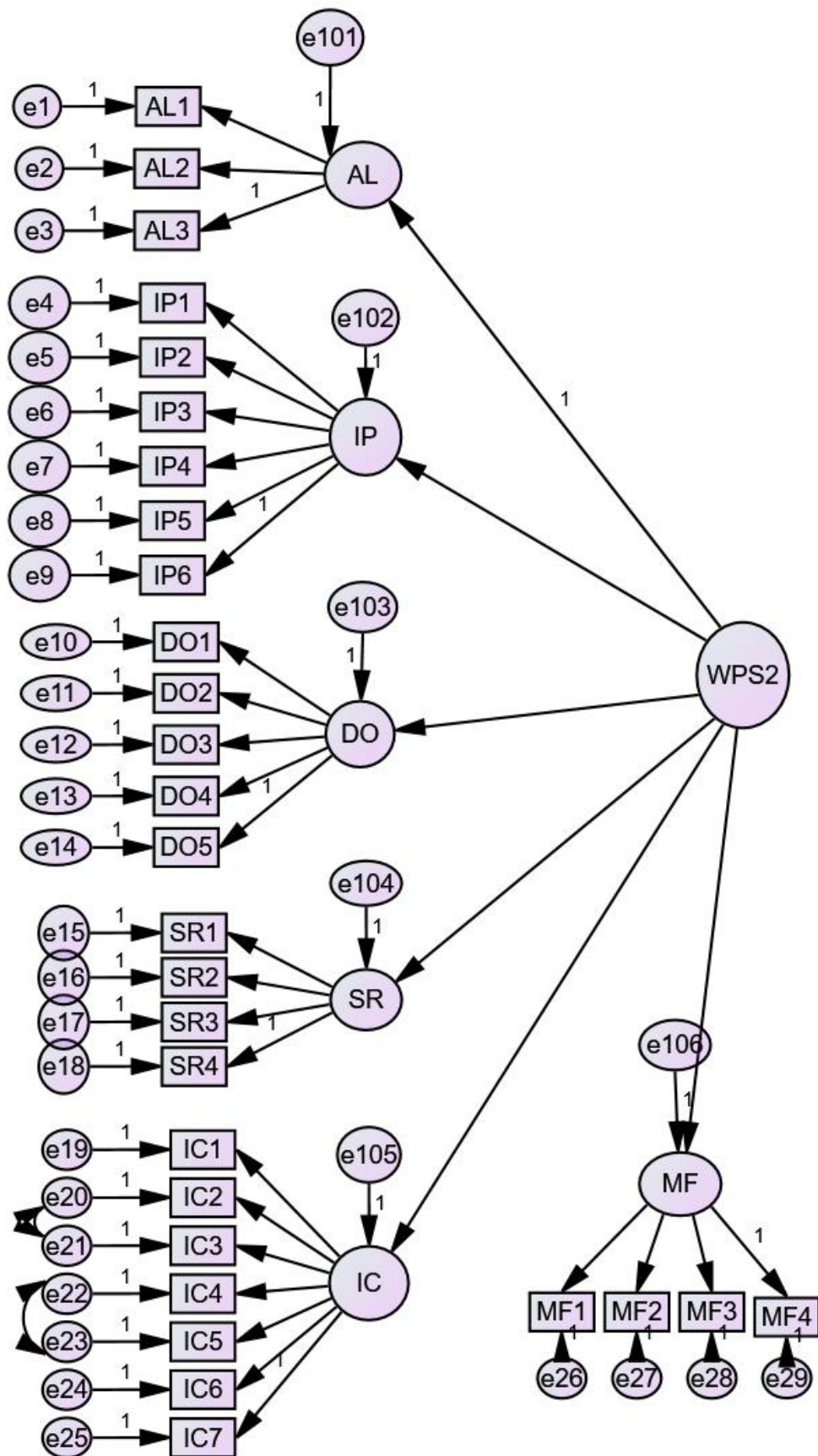


Fig. 3: Measurement model of workplace spirituality

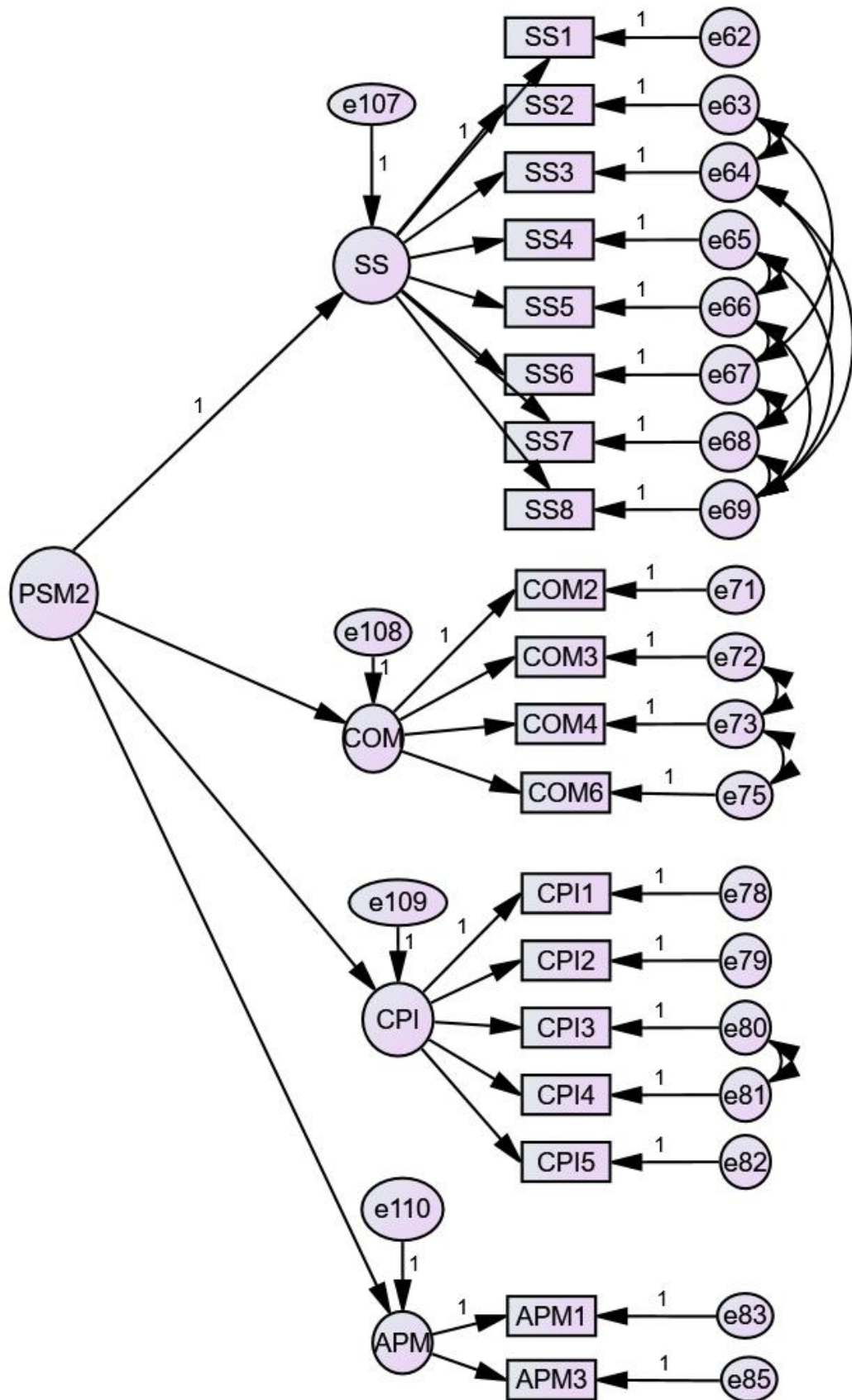


Fig. 4: Measurement mode of public service motivation

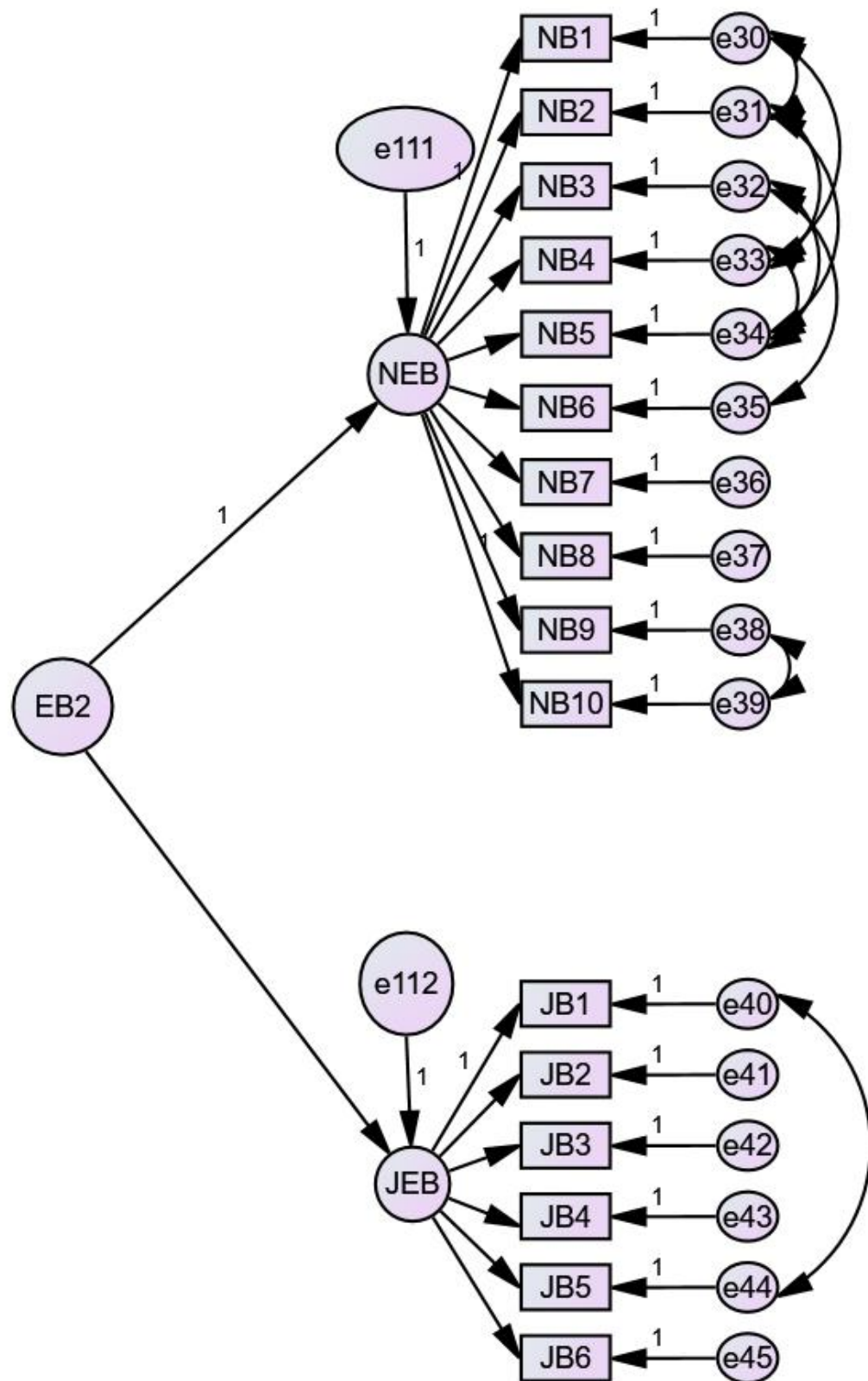


Fig. 5: Measurement model of employee ethical behavior

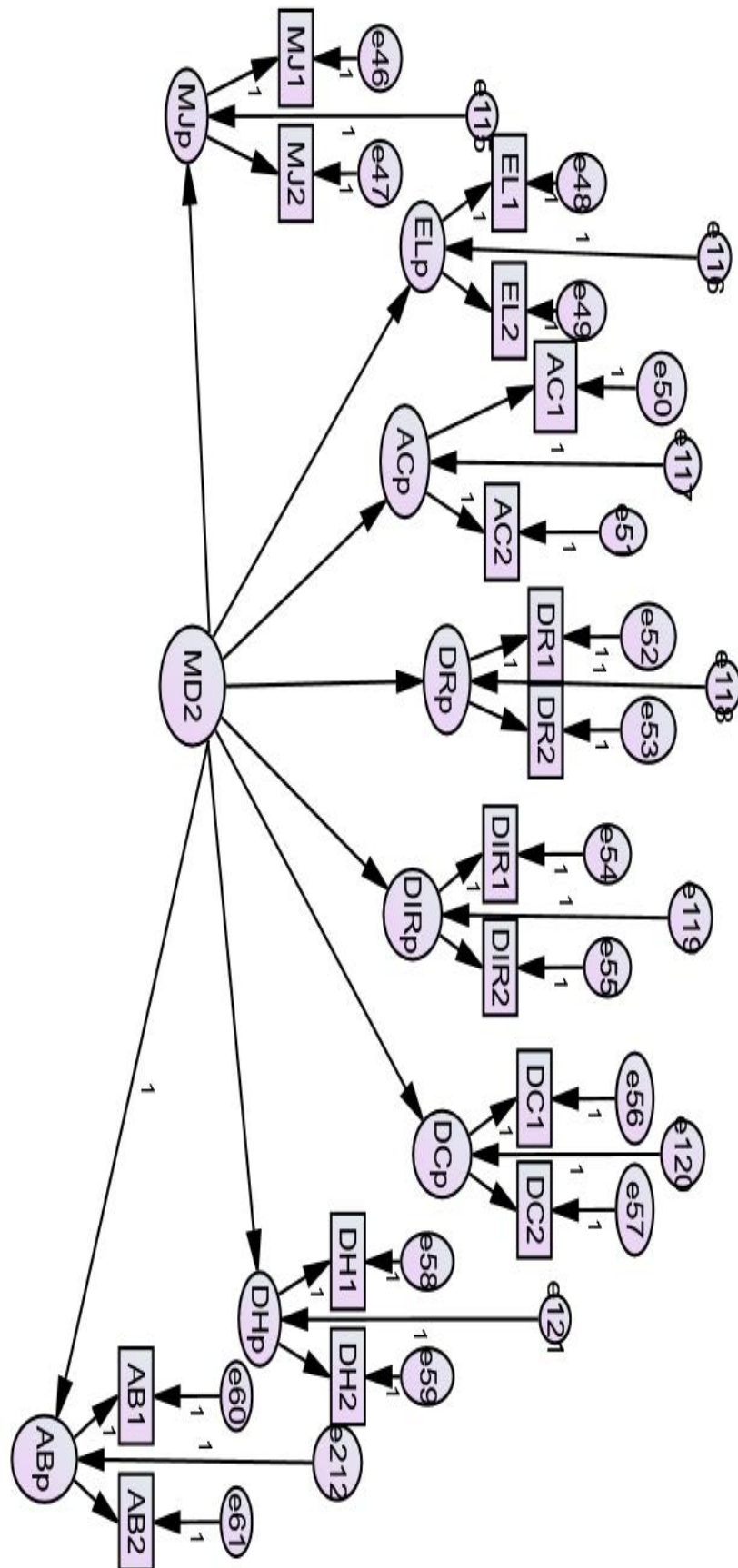


Fig.6: Measurement model of moral disengagement

Fig. 7: Overall measurement model with all four variables

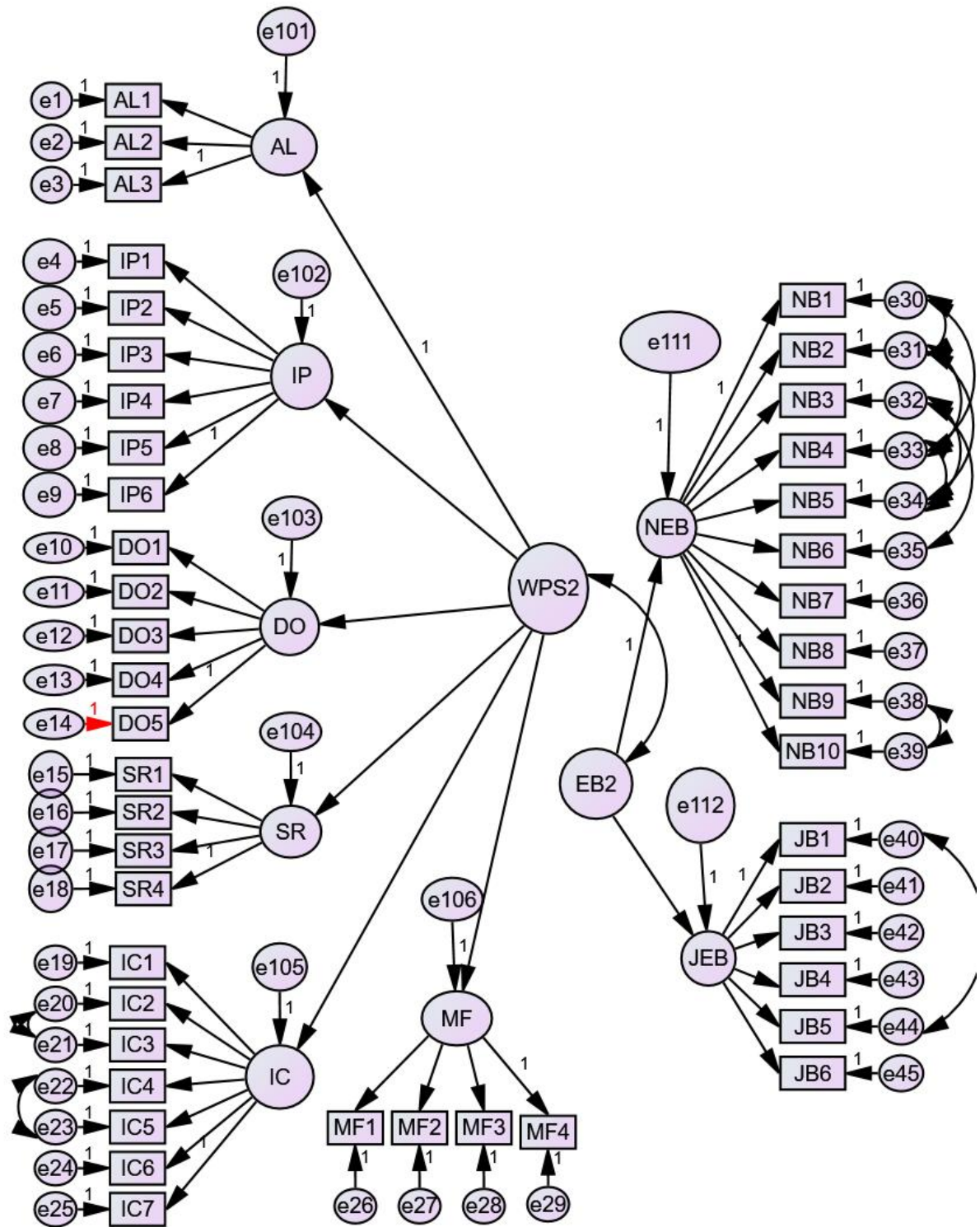


Fig. 8: Overall measurement model with two variables

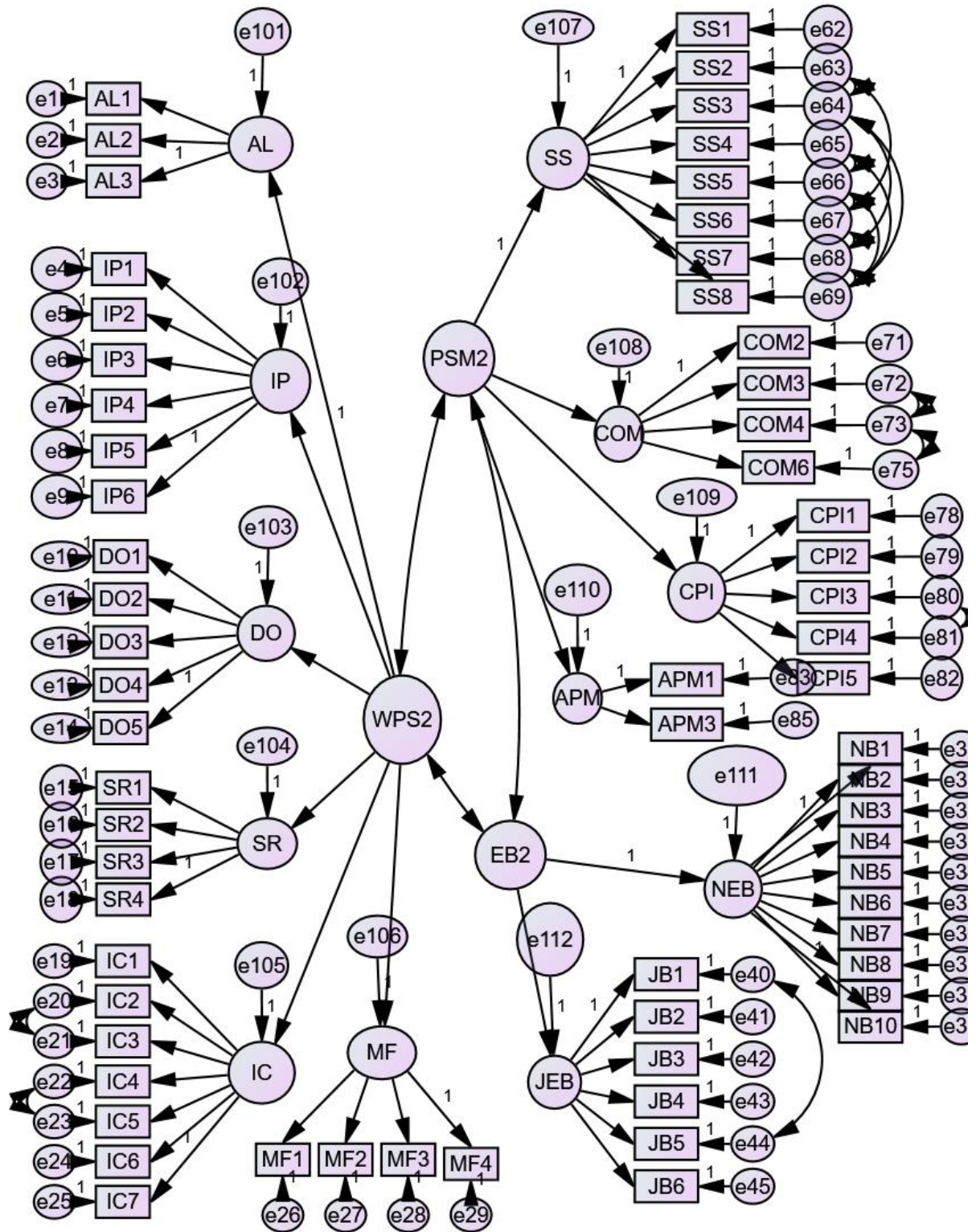


Fig. 9: Overall measurement model with three variables

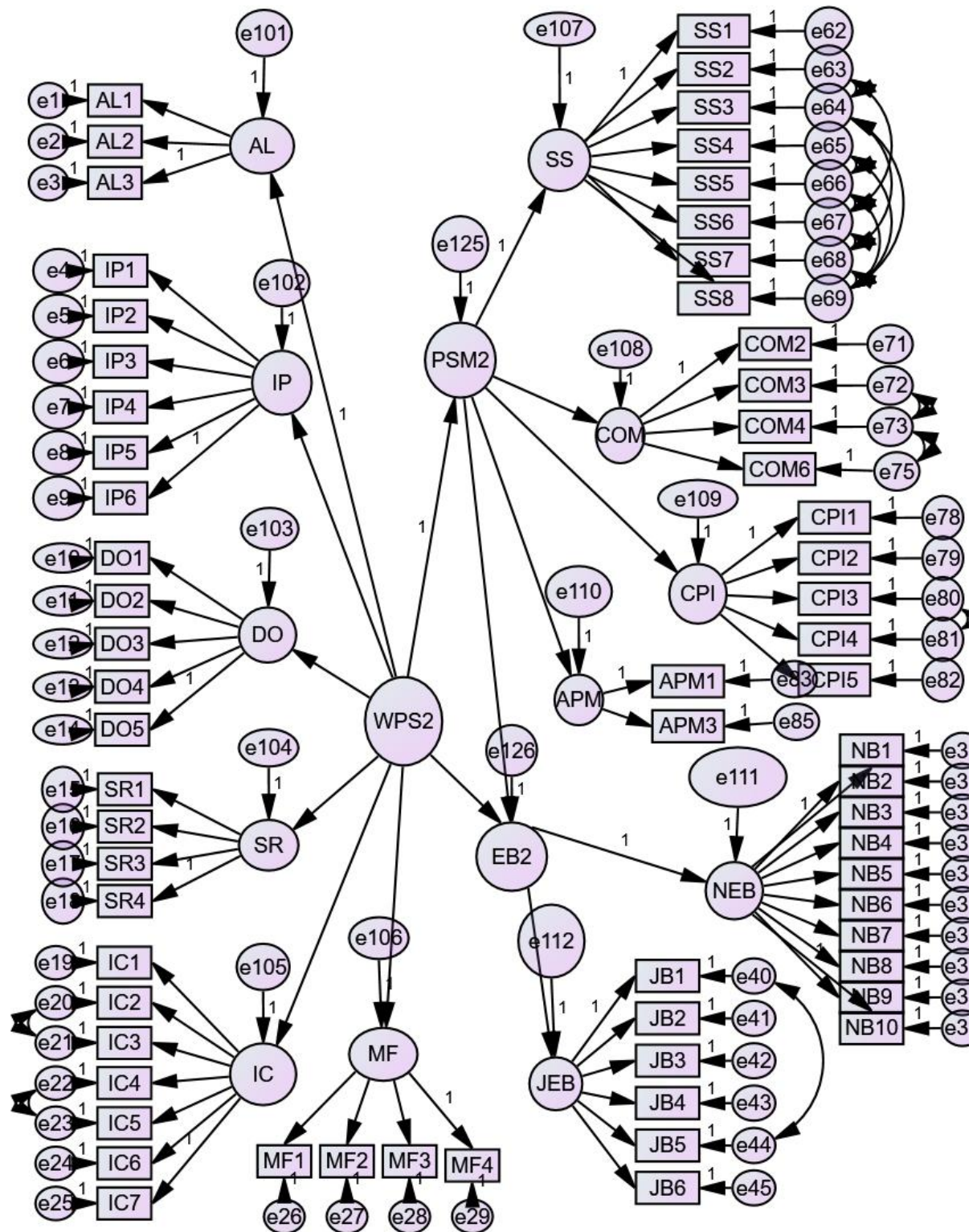


Fig. 10: Structural model with four variables

For ensuring convergent and discriminant validity of each variable, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) were calculated using standardized loadings of the items. CR captured inter-item consistency after accounting for measurement error. The Fornell and Lacker (1981) criteria recommended values $AVE \geq .5$ and $CR \geq .7$ for ensuring convergent validity. Comparing the value of AVE and CR of each variable demonstrated convergent validity of the variables. The values are summarized in Table 6.

For discriminant validity, AVE for each construct was compared with shared variance with other variables. As seen in Table, AVE of each construct is greater than the shared variance with other variables. Thus each construct is distinct from other constructs.

Table 6

Comparison Table: AVE with shared variance and square of shared variance

	WPS	EEB	MD	PSM
WPS	.62	.26	.03	.18
EEB	.51	.56	.13	.42
MD	.16	.36	.87	.13
PSM	.42	.65	.36	.61

Values in diagonal is AVE

WPS= workplace spirituality, PSM = public service motivation, EEB = employee ethical behavior, MD=moral disengagement

Overall Measurement Model

Overall measurement model is shown in Figure 7. Overall measurement models with two, three and four study variables were compared. The comparison of relative chi squares as seen in Table 7 demonstrates that a four factor model is better than a three and two factor model based on the value of relative chi-sq.

Table 7*Comparison of measurement models*

	Relative Chi-sq	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	Remarks
Two-factor model (WPS and EEB)	2.5	.8	.9	.049	
Three- factor model (WPS, PSM, EEB)	2.3	.81	.86	.046	
Four-factor model (WPS, PSM, EEB, MD)	2.16	.78	.84	.043	Better than two and three factor model based on value of relative chi-sq

WPS= workplace spirituality, PSM = public service motivation, EEB = employee ethical behavior, MD=moral disengagement

Thus convergent and discriminant validity of each variable of study was ensured. The data was now used for further data analysis for hypothesis testing.

Data Analysis

Data after preparation of measurement model data was imputed for further testing hypotheses. For testing hypothesized moderated mediation relationships among the study variables, the PROCESS Macro of SPSS was used. As suggested in Hayes (2018), model number 14 matches the relationship proposed. Process Macro in SPSS with model 14 was used to evaluate direct, indirect and moderation of mediated relationships.

For cross level analysis, mix models in SPSS were used. Steps suggested by Heck et al. (2014) were used to calculate coefficients and indices for mixed models.

Hypothesis Testing

Individual level Hypothesis (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5) testing

The relationship between workplace spirituality (WPS), public service motivation (PSM), employee ethical behavior (EEB) and moral disengagement (MD) was investigated. For testing individual level hypotheses, Hayes (2018)'s PROCESS Macro in SPSS was used. Standard model 14 was found to match with the proposed framework.

For testing H1, the analysis with EEB as output demonstrates that WPS has a significant positive relationship with EEB (for WPS, $\beta=.27$, $SE=.03$, $p\text{-value}<.05$ and $95\% CI=[.20,.33]$). In the confidence interval zero is not included. Thus, there is support for the first hypothesis, H1. WPS has a significant positive relationship with EEB is evident.

For testing H2, the indirect effect of WPS on EEB through PSM was evaluated. The indirect effect of WPS on EEB was evaluated through PSM using bootstrap analysis with 10000 bootstrap resample. The result of analysis revealed that the indirect relationship of WPS on EEB through PSM is positive and significant for all three levels of moderator MD: low (at mean-stdev = 1.6875), medium (at mean = 2.5625), and high (at mean+stdev = 3.3750) as at 95% confidence interval did not include zero. The values are: at low MD (at mean-stdev = 1.6875), effect = .10, BootSE = 0.0311, 95% CI [0.0468, 0.1673]; at medium MD (at mean = 2.5625), effect = .12, BootSE = 0.0282, 95% CI [0.0744, 0.1846]; at high MD (at mean+stdev = 3.3750), effect = .15, BootSE = 0.0302, 95% CI [0.0918, 0.2099]. Thus, the partial mediating effect of PSM in the relationship between WPS and EEB is seen. H2 is supported.

For testing H3, the analysis with EEB as output demonstrates that PSM has a significant positive relationship with EEB (for PSM, $\beta=.21$, $SE=.13$, $p\text{-value}<.05$ and

95% CI= [.06, .47]). In the confidence interval zero is not included. There is support for the hypothesis, H3. Thus, PSM has a significant positive relationship with EEB.

For testing H4, the moderating effect of MD in the relationship between PSM and EEB. In the analysis with EEB as output, the interaction term (Int_1 = PSM*MD) is seen as significant ($\beta = -.11$, $SE = .05$, $p\text{-value} < .05$ and 95% CI= [.01, .20]). In the 95% confidence interval, zero is not included, thus the moderating effect of MD on the relationship between PSM and EEB can be inferred. The negative value of coefficient indicates that the moderating effect of MD acts such that the presence of MD suppresses the effect of PSM on EEB. Thus the support of hypothesis H4 can be inferred.

Further, investigating the indirect relationship between WPS and EEB through PSM at low, moderate and high values of MD, the change in effect size was evident (effect = .01 for low MD, effect = .12 for medium MD and effect = .15 for high MD). The variation in effect observed reflects the moderating effect of MD on the mediating indirect relationship of WPS on EEB, through PSM. Thus evidence for hypothesis H5 support was found. Moreover, the moderated mediation index was also found significant ($SE = .01$, $p\text{-value} < .05$, 95% CI = [.00, .05]).

Cross level Hypothesis (H6, H7, H8 and H9) testing

For multilevel analysis, regression based random coefficient modeling was used where outcomes of interest were measured in lower level (individual employee level). The proposed framework is random intercept and random slope model. It takes account of intercepts as outcomes where public service motivation of individuals is impacted by the aggregate workplace spirituality/ collective workplace spirituality of the organization the individual works in. It also takes account of slopes as outcomes

where aggregate/ collective workplace spirituality moderates the relationship between workplace spirituality and public service motivation at individual level.

The individual employee workplace spirituality from an organization was aggregated to form aggregated/collective workplace spirituality. Aggregation of individual workplace spirituality gives overall workplace spirituality within the unit that indicates the environment at the workplace that promotes individual employees to experience spirituality.

The steps suggested by Heck et al. (2014) for multilevel modeling were used. The steps consist of modeling a null model followed by modeling a random intercept, followed by modeling random slope in the model.

For cross level analysis, data from organizations with more than five employees' responses were retained. Doing so, data from 60 organizations were found useful for multilevel analysis. The average size of response is 9.2 response per organization.

Aggregate workplace spirituality of each organization was calculated. Intraclass coefficients (ICC1 and ICC2) and within group reliability (rwg) were calculated to ensure internal consistency of data within an organization for aggregation.

Null model explains how much variation in public service motivation is explained by individual level and by organization level. ICC1 depicts the proportion of variation in an individual's public service motivation due to variables at higher level in nested data. ICC1 is 9.17% which indicates that 9.17% of the individual public service motivation of employees is due to higher level variables at organization level or team level. Cut off value for ICC1 is not clear in literature. But, Bliese (2000) suggested 5 to 10 % is small but can be acceptable in case for large sample analysis.

As the value was close to 10%, the researcher decided to move forward for multi-level analysis.

ICC(2) was used to test intergroup agreements that ensure agreement between individual workplace spirituality with that of organization. ICC2 for the present study was found to be .47. Cutoff here is again not clear. However, Cicchetti (1994) suggested .4 to .59 is fairly reliable. So the researcher decided to move ahead with multi-level analysis.

For multi-level analysis, steps suggested in Heck et al. (2014) was used. Indices Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Schwarz's Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) were used as indices to choose the best model in explaining the phenomena. As mentioned in Heck et al. (2014), the model with lowest AIC, BIC is the best model to explain the phenomenon. The steps suggested in Heck et al. (2004) are as follows:

1. Step 1: Examine Null Model. This is null or no predictor model. This model is used to partition the variance in the outcome into its within and between groups components. This will help to determine how much of the variance in dependent or outcome variables lies between the organizations/units in the sample.
2. Step 2: Random Intercept model without aggregate level predictor. This model is built to examine variability in intercepts across organizations/ units.
3. Step 3: Random Intercept model with aggregate level predictors. This model adds organization/ unit level variables (aggregate variables) to explain variability in intercepts across units.

4. Step 4: Random intercept and slope model. In this step, the slope varies across different organizations/units. This can help in identifying whether the units are equitable in producing outcomes for employees.

The index value comparison is summarised in Table 8. The null model was used to investigate the possibility of impact from higher level (organizational/ unit). The model demonstrated that the fixed effect is significant. The covariances estimated were used to calculate intraclass correlation coefficients. The values calculated were ICC1=9.17% and ICC2=4.7%. For calculation of ICC2, as suggested in Heck et al. (2014), the average size of the group (9.25) was used.

The values in the table 8 show reduction in values of AIC, BIC with addition of random intercept and random slope and with introduction of aggregate level variables. There is significant improvement in the model with the introduction of random intercept (p value<.05). Thus, the significant variation in public service motivation of individual employees can be explained by organizational/ unit level variables. In other words, the impact of organization/ unit environment is evident in the framing of public service motivation of individual employees. However, with the introduction of aggregate level workplace spirituality, shows that the variation in aggregate workplace spirituality has no significant impact on the public service motivation of individual employees (p value=.78).

Table 8

Comparison of cross level models: Collective WPS impacts individual PSM

S N	Model	AIC	BIC	DEVIA NCE	DF Degree of Freedom	DELTA - DEV	DELTA -DF	p-value	Remarks
1	Null model	948.07	961.04	942.08	3				
2	Random intercept model with no L2 predictors (effect of organization level variable)	881.04	898.31	873.04	4	69.05	1	<.05	this model is significantly better than the previous model
3	Random intercept model with L2 predictors (including aggregate WPS as organization level variable)	884.56	910.46	872.56	6	0.48	2	0.78	not significantly better
4	Random intercept random slope L2 predictors for random intercept only	868.04	902.58	852.04	8	20.52	2	<.05	Best model with least AIC, BIC
5	Random intercept random slope L2 predictors for random slope and random intercept	868.79	911.97	848.8	9	0.76	1	0.38	models do not differ

Comparison of different models demonstrates that inclusion of organizational level effects demonstrates significant improvement. Thus, the organizational level impact on individual public service motivation of public service employees is evident. However, as hypothesized, addition of effect of collective or aggregate level workplace spirituality improved AIC and BIC. However the model improvement was not significant. Thus, even though the effect of organizational level variable on public service motivation was seen, sufficient evidence to support the multi-level hypothesis that collective workplace spirituality influences individual public service motivation was not found.

Organizational level impact on individual employee ethical behavior

The data was further used to investigate the impact of organizational/ unit level impact on individual employee ethical behavior. Again, the four steps suggested by Heck et al. (2014) were used. In step 1, the null model was investigated. The fixed effect was significant (p value $< .05$). The correlation coefficients calculated using covariance as ICC1=14.06% and ICC2=.59. Thus the impact of organization/ unit level variables were found significant in explaining variation in individual employee ethical behavior. Variation of workplace spirituality across organizations/ units were not seen as significant in this case as well. Index values are given in Table 9.

Table 9*Comparison of cross level models: Collective WPS impacts individual EBB*

SN	MODEL	AIC	BIC	DEVIANCE	DF	DELTA-DEV	DELTA-DF	p-value	Remarks
1	Null model	1251.99	1264.940	1245.99	3				
2	Random intercept model with no L2 predictors	1135.06	1152.33	1127.06	4	118.93	1	0	this model is significantly better than the previous model
3	Random intercept model with L2 predictors added	1137.611	1163.514	1125.61	6	1.449	2	0.48	Not significantly better than previous
4	Random intercept random slope L2 predictors for random intercept only	1240.89	1276.43	1224.89	8	99.28	2	0	AIC, BIC higher than previous model
5	Random intercept random slope L2 predictors for random slope and random intercept	1242.574	1286.999	1222.57	9	1.68	1	0.19	improvement not significant

Thus aggregate workplace spirituality as a predictor of public service motivation and as a moderator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and public service motivation could not be established. Thus, it could not find support for H6 and H7. Summary of results of hypothesis testing is summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Summary of result of Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	WPS has significant positive relationship with EEB	Supported
H2	PSM mediates the relationship between WPS and EEB	Supported
	PSM has significant relationship with EEB	Supported
H4	MD moderates the relationship between PSM and EEB	Supported
H5	MD moderates the mediated relationship between WPS and EEB through PSM.	Supported
H6	Collective WPS has a significant positive relationship on the individual PSM of public service employees.	Not Supported
H7	Collective WPS has a significant positive relationship on the individual EEB of public service employees.	Not Supported
H8	Collective WPS moderates the relationship between individual WPS and individual PSM	Not Supported
H9	Collective WPS moderates the relationship between individual WPS and individual PSM	Not Supported

WPS= workplace spirituality, PSM = public service motivation, EEB = employee ethical behavior, MD=moral disengagement

CHAPTER-5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The main objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between workplace spirituality, public service motivation, moral disengagement and employee ethical behavior among public service employees. The study investigated mediating role of public service motivation in the indirect relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior. The study further explored moderating role of moral disengagement in the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior. Both literature and practice acknowledge the importance of employee ethical behavior. The study highlights the role of workplace spirituality and public service motivation in shaping ethical behavior of public service employees.

This chapter is divided into five parts. First, summary of main findings is presented followed by discussions of the findings in comparison with the findings of other relevant studies. Then, the chapter includes research and practical implications of those findings in context of Nepali public service organizations. Finally, the chapter indicates critique of the study along with direction for future research.

Summary of Findings

The study analyzed impact of workplace spirituality and public service motivation on individual employee ethical behavior. The study also investigated the impact of workplace spirituality nested at higher organization or unit level on the variables, public service motivation and employee ethical behavior at individual employee level.

From the results of statistical analysis, the impact of workplace spirituality on individual employee ethical behavior was evident. The indirect relationship of

workplace spirituality on individual employee ethical behavior through public service motivation was also established. Significant moderating effects of moral disengagement on the indirect relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation was also evident. These findings suggest that employees' experience of spirituality in the workplace positively influences their demonstration of ethical behavior, both directly and indirectly through public service motivation. This highlights the importance of both workplace spirituality and public service motivation in fostering individual employee ethical behavior.

Moreover, the study also found that the moral disengagement has a significant moderating role in the mediated relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation. Hence, managing workplace spirituality and public service motivation might not be sufficient for ensuring employee ethical behavior. Supervisors might also need to monitor moral disengagement among employees that might dampen the intention for ethical behavior generated by workplace spirituality and public service motivation.

The study also investigated the impact of organizational/ unit level variables on individual employee level variables. The cross level effect of analysis demonstrated that the organizational level has effect on public service motivation and employee ethical behavior of public service employees. This underlines the importance of creating suitable work environment such that employees are motivated to demonstrate appropriate attitude and behavior. However, the effect of workplace spirituality at organization level or collective workplace spirituality did not show effect on individual employee public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior. In other words, variation of workplace spirituality among organizations (collective workplace spirituality) could not explain individual public

service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior. This signals requirement of further study to identify other organization level variables that can explain individual employee ethical behavior and individual public service motivation.

The study findings can further be used to corroborate other research findings and theories in literature. The study findings are further discussed in the following section.

Discussion

Human beings are expected to be accountable for their behavior. So, understanding of factors that shape individual ethical behavior is important. The current study findings on the role of workplace spirituality, public service motivation and moral disengagement on employee ethical behavior is discussed in light of past literature.

Discussion on impact of workplace spirituality on employee ethical behavior

This study found that workplace spirituality has positive relationship with employee ethical behavior. Researchers have established the role of workplace spirituality in shaping employee behavior in organization. Scoping review (Barik & Nayak, 2024) bibliometric review (Barik & Nayak, 2024) and systematic literature review (Dubey & Bedi, 2023) have indicated steady increase in studies related to workplace spirituality and studies linking workplace spirituality with positive employee attitudes and behaviors like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee loyalty, moral judgment.

Building on Bandura (1990)'s social cognitive theory, experiencing spirituality at the workplace increases the moral standard of an individual, thus leading to employee ethical behavior. Thus the study findings also reinforced relevance of Bandura (1990)'s social cognitive theory in context of Nepali public

service employees.

Research studies have found a significant relationship of workplace spirituality with different aspects of ethics like personal ethical threshold (Comer & Vega, 2011), ethical climate (Nair & Sivakumar, 2018), stimulating ethical voice (Chaudhary & Srivasta, 2024), ethical leadership (Gunawan & Widodo, 2024) etc. These research findings connecting workplace spirituality with different aspects of ethics and Bandura (1990)'s social cognitive theory helps to endorse the current study finding that shows significant relationship between workplace spirituality and individual employee ethical behavior among public service employees. As empirical evidence establishing relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior among public service employees was not found in previous studies, the present study finding confirms the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior in Nepali public service system, thus adds on to the workplace spirituality and public service literature.

The present study finding empirically tested the theoretical proposition of Tiwari and Pathak (2018) linking workplace spirituality with ethical behavior among Nepali public service employees. Tiwari and Pathak (2018) theoretically derived the role of workplace spirituality in generating employee ethical behavior. The same study suggested that ethics without workplace spirituality can result in doing good without ensuring morality which has no value. Thus, depicting inseparable relationship of workplace spirituality with ethical behavior.

The relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior signal public service organizations to take some proactive measures of enhancing workplace spirituality to generate intention of ethical behavior among its public service employees. That means to create opportunities for public service employees to

understand the meaning of the work they are doing, make them feel connected with the larger motive of the public service they are doing, make them feel connected with the self and the community of public service.

The research finding; positive relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior appears more pertinent in the present workforce where the new generation Z (Gen Z) is replacing the generation X and Y in the workforce. Gen Z workforce value meaningful work; understanding value and purpose over following formal rules and regulations in comparison to its previous generations (Mahapatra et al., 2022). Thus the experience of spirituality at the workplace can motivate them to demonstrate ethical behavior.

Discussion on mediating role of public service motivation

This study found that public service motivation has a mediating role in the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior. Previous studies have found a positive relationship of workplace spirituality with public service motivation (Hassan et al., 2022; Pulungan & Martdianty, 2023) and that of public service motivation with employee ethical behavior (Christensen & Wright, 2018). These study findings can explain the relationship of workplace spirituality, public service motivation and employee ethical behavior as indicated in the present study findings.

The present study indicated that public service motivation acts as a mechanism through which workplace spirituality influences the employee ethical behavior among individual public service employees. To the best knowledge of the researcher, the mediating role of public service motivation in the relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior among public service employees has not been empirically established. The study thus extended understanding in literature

regarding the impact of workplace spirituality on employee ethical behavior among public service employees by introducing an indirect path through public service motivation. Thus public service organizations need to be prepared for enhancing workplace spirituality of employees such that it can increase their motivation to serve with public service ethos, i.e. enhance their public service motivation. The study demonstrated that both direct and indirect paths were significant i.e. partial mediation effect of public service motivation was seen. Thus, the study demonstrates the role of public service motivation in carrying the positive effect of workplace spirituality to employee ethical behavior. Hence, it can be inferred that the public service organizations need to focus on both boosting public service motivation of employees and ensuring that the employees experience spirituality at their workplace in order to ensure employee ethical behavior from their employees.

The study finding also confirmed application of Perry and Wise (1990)'s public service motivation and Shrestha et al (2023)'s conceptualization of workplace spirituality Nepali public service system

Discussion on moderating effect of moral disengagement

The study found that moral disengagement moderates the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior such that the relationship is dampened by the presence of moral disengagement.

Much of the studies on moral disengagement are conducted in non-management context. Researchers have highlighted the application of moral disengagement in boosting sentiments during war (McAlister & Wilczak, 2015), rationalizing bullying action (Hymel & Bonanno, 2014), understanding school bullying (Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; Obermann, 2011), doping in sports (Li et al., 2022) etc. In organizational context, researchers have underscored moral

disengagement as an explanation for employee behavior leading to corporate frauds, scandals etc. (Beu & Buckley, 2004).

Researchers have also established relationship between moral disengagement and unethical employee behaviors. Newman et al.'s (2020) review indicated that researchers have found moral disengagement is a cause for negative employee workplace behaviors like unethical decision making, counterproductive work behavior, unethical behavior, harassment, discretionary accruals etc. Likewise, Niven and Healy (2016) found a moderating effect of moral disengagement on the relationship between performance goals and employee unethical behavior.

These study findings are aligned with the current study findings that demonstrated moral disengagement plays a moderating role in the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior. Thus moral disengagement among public service employees can dampen the effect of public service motivation on their employee ethical behavior. This signifies that it is not sufficient for public service organizations to ensure high public service motivation among its employees. The organizations need to be careful about moral disengagement among employees that might dampen the impact of public service motivation.

To the best of researcher's knowledge, empirical evidence of the moral disengagement moderating effect the relationship between work motivation and employee ethical behavior was not found. Thus the present study underlined a new perspective that the positive impact of public service motivation on employee ethical behavior can be manipulated by moral disengagement among public service employees. Beu and Buckley (2004) also explained in the similar line. Thus in public service organizations, supervisors need to be cautious of the moral disengagement

among their subordinates.

Discussion on moderation of indirect relationship

The current study result revealed that moral disengagement moderates the indirect relationship between workplace spirituality and employee ethical behavior through public service motivation. This suggests that workplace spirituality helps in shaping public service motivation of public service employees which in turn shapes individual employee ethical behavior. The presence of moral disengagement however dampens the intention for employee ethical behavior generated by workplace spirituality through public service motivation. Thus it is important for public service organizations to ensure its employees experience spirituality at their workplace and are able to develop public service motivation. However, organizations should also be mindful about the effect of moral disengagement of their employees.

Saying so, it is also important to note that leaders have a significant role to play in shaping and redirecting the impact of moral disengagement for positive behavior of their subordinates (Beu & Buckley, 2004). If an individual gets proper guidance, energy generated by moral disengagement can also be utilized to boost courage for appropriate behavior during difficult situations, as evident among soldiers during war (McAlister & Wilczak, 2015).

Further, in case of employees with low moral disengagement, public service motivation has reduced impact on employee ethical behavior as compared to individuals with high moral disengagement. Thus the role of public service motivation in generating employee ethical behavior is more pronounced when in case of individuals with high moral disengagement.

Discussion on multilevel analysis

The multilevel analysis demonstrated significant impact of organization level on public service motivation and employee ethical behavior of individual employees. But the organization level could explain only 9.17 % and 14.6 % variation in individual public service motivation and employee ethical behavior respectively. From this, it can be inferred that the variation of organization level variable is not large thus, intervention at organization level is not highly recommended

Moreover, the impact of aggregate level spirituality (collective workplace spirituality) on public service motivation and employee ethical behavior of individual public service employees was not found significant. Thus, identification of other organization level factors that can explain the public service motivation and employee ethical behavior of public service employees is warranted.

The nested effect of collective workplace spirituality on individual public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior was not significant. One of the major reasons for this could be implementation flaws in the sampling process. As suggested in Heck et al. (2014), for cross level analysis, proper sampling needs to be done at the higher level (organization level) as well. Due to limitations posed by implementation of sampling design, the study could not ensure proper sampling at organization level. This can be one of the reason for insignificant cross level effect.

Another understanding of the cross level finding can be that the spiritual environment posed by different public service organizations do not have significant differences. The spiritual values of public service employees is governed by the fact that they are public service employees rather than a part of a particular organization or work unit. Their identity as a public servant outweighs their identity of being an employee of a particular organization or work unit. This might be one of the reasons

for the insignificant impact of collective workplace spirituality on individual public service motivation.

The notion that the public service system is a single system irrespective of their distribution across different ministries and departments is prominent. Thus variation in values of altruism, interpersonal positivity, duty orientation, self-regulation etc. among different service units might not be significant. This might be the reason for insignificant impact of aggregate workplace spirituality (collective workplace spirituality).

However, the characteristics of the leader, team with which they are in direct contact can have a remarkable impact on the way they behave. Similar role of ethical leader, ethical climate, and group culture on the shaping ethical behavior of employees was also emphasized in the interactionist perspective of ethical decision making (Perkins et al., 2024).

Summary of theoretical contribution

The study extended the literature of workplace spirituality and public service system by establishing relationship between workplace spirituality and ethical behavior among public service employees. The study also identified public service motivation as a mechanism through which workplace spirituality effects employee ethical behavior. Thus expanded the literature of public service motivation. The study findings also found moderating role of moral disengagement, thus offered new insight in the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior. The study further validated application of constructs workplace spirituality conceptualized for eastern context and public service motivation in Nepali public service system. The study also confirmed application of social cognitive theory in the Nepali public service system.

Research Implications

The study findings opened avenues for a number of research issues that need to be addressed in future. Addressing these suggested research issues can help to unravel the reality behind ethical and unethical behavior of employees, thus can help in better management of public service employees. Some of the research issues are discussed in this section.

Inclusion of other variables at organization level

The cross level analysis demonstrated the existence of the organization level role in explaining public service motivation and employee ethical behavior at individual level. However the aggregate workplace spirituality (collective workplace spirituality) could not explain the variation in individual public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior. Thus the findings warrants identification of other appropriate organization level variables that shape individual employee public service motivation and individual employee ethical behavior. In future studies, other organizational level factors like leader behavior, organizational justice, and organizational culture can be considered to test impact in developing public service motivation and employee ethical behavior of individual public service employees. Previous studies have indicated that public service motivation can be shaped by organization level variables like organizational culture (Panagiotis et al., 2014), leadership (Hameduddin & Engbers, 2022). Such variables can be considered for cross level analysis in future research.

Study with proper sampling at organization level

One of the possible reasons for insignificant model improvement in multilevel analysis can be improper sampling at organization level. Heck et al. (2024) suggested the need of proper sampling at organization level for cross level analysis. As the

researcher could not implement a sampling strategy as planned, the data collected could not reflect the actual variation among public service organizations or units. Thus, the significant improvement due to the presence of aggregate workplace spirituality was not seen. Thus further analysis of phenomena with more relevant sampling techniques can reveal the actual reality in the public service system.

Suggestion on antecedents of moral disengagement

The study found empirical evidence that moral disengagement acts as a moderator in the relationship between public service motivation and employee ethical behavior. Thus the organizations need to suppress moral disengagement such that public service motivation and workplace spirituality can enhance employee ethical behavior. So, organization need to determine proper strategies to reduce moral disengagement to ensure employee ethical behavior.

Newman et al. (2019)'s review pointed out a number of leadership, individual employee and work related factors as antecedent of moral disengagement. Further studies may include variables like leader characteristics, psychological contract breach, and empathy as antecedent in shaping moral disengagement of individual public service employees in the framework.

Further on study on ethical behavior in other sector

The focus of the current study is employee ethical behavior among public service employees. However, one cannot deny that employee ethical behavior is equally a necessity in all other sectors. Be it a banker serving its customer or a nurse serving its patient, employee ethical behavior is as important as it is for a public service employee. According to a review by Vandenabeele et al. (2014), the concept of public service motivation, public service ethos and values is slowly finding its relevance outside the public service domain in other service sectors like nurses, social

workers, teachers, military personnel, volunteers etc. Thus further study of employee ethical behavior among employees in other sectors is important.

Group specific study

The present study tries to generalize the public service system. It theorized relationship among workplace spirituality, public service motivation, employee ethical behavior and moral disengagement for overall public service system. The public service system is a huge area with a lot of variation in terms of level, location of service, nature of responsibilities and so on. The study encountered a major challenge in the sampling process. Further, generalizing them in only one category as part of the public service system might be a wrong assumption. Thus, the segregation of population could result in a clearer picture. Multiple group specific study with division in terms of level of employees, province, ministries etc. would provide a better picture of the public service system.

Qualitative study on other aspect of ethics

Ethics is a broad concept. The employee ethical behavior measured and studied in the present study captures only one aspect of ethics in the public service system. Further comprehensive analysis is desired that can give better picture of public service system so as to draw more useful practical implications.

The items of instrument developed for measuring employee ethical behavior might not be sufficient to capture different aspects of ethics in public service system. The statements of the instrument used deal with general employee ethical behavior of an individual in an organization like reporting to duty regularly, using office resources responsibly etc. However, the ethics of an individual is beyond what is demonstrated here. Thus, a qualitative/ inductive approach in the study is desired to derive a better understanding of ethics in public service system to derive more useful implication.

Practical Implications

The study findings indicated that workplace spirituality can generate intention for employee ethical behavior among individual public service employees. The study also revealed that workplace spirituality develops public service motivation among employees which in turn generates intention for employee ethical behavior. Thus the public service system needs to adopt measures to develop such a workplace for employees where they can experience spirituality; that can improve their public service motivation. In-line with suggestions by Garg (2017), the public service system needs to take initiative to institutionalize spirituality in the public policy, mission, and vision and practices so that each public service employee can realize the meaning of their work, mindful about their real “Dharma” of being a public service employee.

The findings of the study reinforced on shaping behavior of public service employees for creating ethical public service system grounded on realization of the larger mission of the public service system and its value. Thus the public service system should think beyond the traditional system of creating rules and regulations to shape behavior of public service employees. Rather, start preparing itself for creating workplace for experiencing spirituality and generating public service motivation among its employees. The public service system can set an example in nurturing its employees to understand themselves and the purpose of their work, making them feel connected so as to ensure appropriate action for the greater good. Some of the measures that public service system can adopt are:

- Modification of the public service selection process beyond technical skills and contextual knowledge is desired. Moral attitude and public service orientation can be included as an important part in selection of public service employees across all levels so that public service motivation can be cultivated

and the employees can be easily be prepared for experiencing spirituality at workplace.

- Onboarding training “Sewa prawesh talim“ can be used for trigger a sense of workplace spirituality and public service motivation among newly joining public service employees. Thus, can ensure ethical behavior among employees through workplace spirituality and public service motivation.
- As the moral disengagement found to moderate the impact of public service motivation on employee ethical behavior, awareness among individual employees on the larger picture of their behavior can be helpful in reducing impact of moral disengagement. Moreover, supervisors can also play a vital role in evaluating behavior of subordinates, reason for behavior and counseling them for proper behavior such that to reduce impact of moral disengagement.
- The study findings stressed on importance of generating public service motivation among public service employees. As concluded by Kim (2021), public service motivation can be cultivated on young minds through teachings in school. Thus, relevant course and project works can be made an integral part of the education system so that the graduates bear proper motivation for public service and may join the public service system with proper orientation.
- Individuals take time to internalize ethos and values that shape their ethical behavior. Thus, regular workshops to build and reinforce shared values, meaningful work, and compassion; reinforce duty orientation, interconnectivity, mindfulness may be required to be part of the public service management system. This can ensure employees experience spirituality at workplace, generating public service motivation, that in turn ensuring

employee ethical behavior.

- Researchers (e.g. Hameduddin & Engbers, 2022) have confirmed the important role of leadership in shaping workplace spirituality and public service motivation of subordinates. Attempts to introduce appropriate leadership and supervision can be helpful in imparting duty orientation, shared values and compassion among subordinates.

Limitation

Limitation in approach selected

Ethics and ethical behavior is a comprehensive concept. The instrument used to measure ethical behavior might not be able to do justice to understanding the ethicality of an individual. Many times it might not be possible to judge the ethical behavior of an individual with what is exhibited. Thus, a qualitative/ inductive approach in the study is desired to derive a better understanding of the phenomenon so as to derive useful learning for the public service system.

Limitation in sampling

The main limitation of the multilevel analysis in the study is the sampling approach used. The response collected from a limited number of ministries and some limited offices within those ministries in the study may not be able to capture sentiment of overall public service employees. Moreover, the researcher could not implement the sampling strategy as planned. The researcher could not balance the category of units from where data were collected. Thus the sample is unable to achieve high resemblance with the population especially at organization level.

This might have an impact on testing hypotheses. Thus, the study can further be extended with larger coverage in terms of number and category of organizations/ units.

The data collected has a large proportion of central units. The study finding would have been more meaningful if sufficient data collected from each ministry and comparison can be done at central and provincial level; among different ministries.

Collective workplace spirituality calculated might not capture actual workplace spirituality of the organization as the sample of respondents in each organization could not represent the actual proportion of employees of the organization in terms of size, level, gender etc.

Limitation posed by possibility of bias

The study deals with variables like ethical behavior, public service motivation, subject to social desirability bias. Data on all the variables were collected together. Thus the possibility of common method bias is high.

Limitation posed by choice of variable

The result of the analysis demonstrated the impact of organizational level variables. However, the inclusion of collective workplace spirituality could not demonstrate significant improvement in explaining public service motivation of individual public service employees. Thus study revealed that there are other variables at aggregate or organizational level that can better explain the variation of individual level variables in the nested data structure.

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APPENDIX 1
Items of Questionnaire

Workplace Spirituality

	In my workplace (office/organization), I feel that most of the employees:
1	Show concern for the wellbeing of all colleagues at the workplace.
2	Show willingness to do volunteer work for a charity organized by their organization.
3	Are available for volunteer activities to help those employees who are in need.
4	Try to develop the habit of accepting others.
5	Do not make others suffer.
6	Show respect to other people.
7	Do not show discriminatory behavior to their fellow workers.
8	Try to help the coworkers relieve their suffering.
9	Try to be loving towards others when they are in emotional pain.
10	Show utmost loyalty to their organization.
11	Support organization wholeheartedly in difficult situations.
12	Are eager to achieve organizational goals.
13	Do work from their heart.
14	Do all that they can to support the organization.
15	Try to control their anger.
16	Are able to control themselves even if their thinking pattern is challenged.
17	Are able to control their feelings.
18	Can cope up with difficult situation
19	Experience inner joy from nature.
20	Have a feeling of being connected with nature, living beings and/or God/sacred through love.
21	Feel being close to nature.
22	Have feeling that all living beings are part of the same existence.
23	Often feel a kinship with animals and plants.
24	Have a feeling that they are not different from others.
25	Believe that peace and happiness are within oneself.
26	Rush through activities without being really attentive to them.
27	Are found doing things without paying attention.
28	Are impatient with themselves and with others.
29	Often don't notice what they are doing until someone calls to their attention.

Ethical Behavior

<i>Normative ethical behavior</i>	
	I...
1	take responsibility for my own errors.
2	give credit to those who deserve it
3	use office services appropriately and not for personal use
4	am open about my errors
5	conduct only office work in office time
6	do not give gifts/ favors in exchange for preferential treatment
7	keep confidential information confidential
8	take appropriate amount of time to do job
9	report others' violation of office policies and rules
10	lead my subordinates to behave ethically
<i>Judicial ethical behavior</i>	
	I...
11	am careful with office materials and supplies
12	request reimbursement only for allowed expenses
13	come to work unless I am sick
14	refuse gifts that are offered for preferential treatment
15	take only the allotted/ assigned personal time/ breaks
16	complete time/ quality/ quantity reports honestly

Public service motivation

	I feel...
1	Politics is a dirty word.
2	The give and take of public policy making doesn't appeal to me.
3	I don't care much for politicians.
4	It is hard for me to get intensely interested in what is going on in my community.
5	I unselfishly contribute to my community.
6	Meaningful public service is very important to me.
7	I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community even if it harmed my interests.
8	I consider public service my civic duty.

9	I am rarely moved by the plight of the underprivileged.
10	Most social programs are too vital to do without.
11	It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress.
12	To me, patriotism includes seeing to the welfare of others.
13	I seldom think about the welfare of people whom I don't know personally.
14	I am often reminded by daily events about how dependent we are on one another.
15	I have little compassion for people in need who are unwilling to take the first step to help themselves.
16	There are few public programs that I wholeheartedly support. (Reversed)
17	Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievements.
18	I believe in putting duty before self.
19	Doing well financially is definitely more important to me than doing good deeds.
20	Much of what I do is for a cause bigger than myself.
21	Serving citizens would give me a good feeling even if no one paid me for it.
22	I feel people should give back to society more than they get from it.
23	I am one of those rare people who would risk personal loss to help someone else.
24	I am prepared to make enormous sacrifices for the good of society.

Moral disengagement

	In my opinion...
1	It is okay to spread rumors to defend those you care about.
2	It is alright to lie to keep your friends out of trouble.
3	Playing dirty is sometimes necessary in order to achieve noble ends.
4	Taking something without the owner's permission is okay as long as you're just borrowing it.
5	It's okay to gloss over certain facts to make your point.
6	When you're negotiating for something you want, not telling the whole story is just part of the game.
7	Considering the ways people grossly misrepresent themselves, it's hardly a sin to inflate your own credentials a bit.
8	Compared to other illegal things people do, taking something small from a store without paying for it isn't worth worrying about.
9	Damaging property is no big deal when you consider that others are assaulting people.
10	People shouldn't be held accountable for doing questionable things when they were just doing what an authority figure told them to do.

11	People cannot be blamed for misbehaving if their friends pressured them to do it.
12	You can't blame people for breaking the rules if that's what they were taught to do by their leaders.
13	People can't be blamed for doing things that are technically wrong when all their friends are doing it too.
14	It's okay to tell a lie if the group agrees that it's the best way to handle the situation.
15	In contexts where everyone cheats, there's no reason not to.
16	Taking personal credit for ideas that were not your own is no big deal.
17	Walking away from a store with some extra change doesn't cause any harm.
18	It is OK to tell small lies when negotiating because no one gets hurt.
19	Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt.
20	It's okay to treat badly somebody who behaves like scum
21	Violent criminals don't deserve to be treated like normal human beings.
22	People who get mistreated have usually done something to bring it on themselves.
23	If a business makes a billing mistake in your favor, it's okay not to tell them about it because it was their fault.
24	If people have their privacy violated, it's probably because they have not taken adequate precautions to protect it.

APPENDIX 2

List of Ministries

Federal government

S.N.	Ministry
1	Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
2	Ministry of Defense
3	Ministry of Home Affairs
4	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
5	Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
6	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
7	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security
8	Ministry of Finance
9	Ministry of Water Supply
10	Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation
11	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
12	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
13	Ministry of Health and Population
14	Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
15	Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport
16	Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation
17	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies
18	Ministry of Urban Development
19	Ministry of Youth and Sports
20	Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens
21	Ministry of Forests and Environment
22	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration

Provincial government

S.N.	Ministry
Koshi Province	
1	Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers
2	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning
3	Ministry of Physical Infrastructure Development

4	Ministry of Social Development
5	Ministry of Water Supply, Irrigation and Energy
6	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law
7	Ministry of Tourism, Forests and Environment
8	Ministry of Industry, Agriculture and Cooperatives
9	Ministry of Health
Madhesh Province	
1	Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers
2	Ministry of Physical Infrastructure Development
3	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning
4	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication
5	Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Co-operatives
6	Ministry of Social Development
7	Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Forest
8	Ministry of Women, Children, Youth and Sports
9	Ministry of Energy and Water Supply
10	Ministry of Law, Justice and Provincial Assembly Affairs
Bagmati Province	
1	Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers
2	Minister for Economic Affairs and Planning
3	Minister for Drinking Water, Energy and Irrigation
4	Minister for Physical Infrastructure Development
5	Minister for Internal Affairs and Law
6	Minister for Social Development
7	Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development
8	Minister for Health
9	Minister for Labor, Employment and Transportation
10	Minister for Industry, Commerce, Land and Administration
11	Minister for Forest and Environment
Gandaki Province	
1	Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers
2	Ministry of Health and Population
3	Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Drinking Water
4	Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation
5	Ministry of Physical Infrastructures, Urban Development and Transportation
6	Ministry of Finance

7	Ministry of Tourism, Industry, Commerce and Supplies
Lumbini Province	
1	Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers
2	Ministry of Tourism, Rural and Urban Development
3	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Cooperatives
4	Ministry of Physical Infrastructure Development
5	Ministry of Health, Population and Family Welfare
6	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication
7	Ministry of Energy, Water Resource and Irrigation
8	Ministry of Forest, Environment and Soil Conservation
9	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies
10	Ministry of Law, Women Children and Senior Citizens
11	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
12	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Transportation Management
13	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Technology and Land Management
Karnali Province	
1	Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers
2	Ministry of Social Development
3	Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives
4	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning
5	Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Urban Development
6	Ministry of Water Resource and Energy Development
7	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law
8	Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment
Sudurpashchim Province	
1	Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers
2	Ministry of Physical Infrastructure Development
3	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning
4	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Law
5	Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment
6	Ministry of Social Development
7	Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Co-operatives