

IMPERATIVE OF BUSINESS ETHICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL**Jemima Ogechukwuka Irabor-Ighedosa****Phd Student, Department of Management, Faculty of Business Studies
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria***Email: ojemima@yahoo.com/jemimairabor@gmail.com***Abstract**

Survival is very crucial at this period of business turbulence. Organizations strive for survival and continuity, while seeking relevance and key positions in the industry. Over the years the term ethics in organizational survival has long been associated with management scholars and business leaders around the world. This study which was based on previous literature examined and highlighted the importance of business ethics in organizational survival. Business ethics in this paper was measured in the dimensions of integrity, work attitude and self-discipline. The paper anchored on stakeholder theory by Freeman (1984). It was stated that business ethics have positive impact in the reduction of fraud cases, corruption, theft and mismanagement of fund by employee and corporate adherence to rules and regulations is insignificant in relation to organizational survival, though the relationship is positive which means that if organizations align with the adoption of business ethics it may lead to corporate growth. Based on this it was recommended that organizations should develop and promote business ethics, and the need for the cellular communication companies operating in Jordan to identify ethical policies and distribute them across the company, and the training of staff to enhance their ability to cope with the difficult ethical problems.

Keywords: Business Ethics, Integrity, Work Attitude, Organization, Business Survival**INTRODUCTION**

Maintaining a place in this competitive era becomes not only the responsibility of the owners or leaders of the organization but that of the employees (Oke, & Olughor, 2014). Organizational survival has been the primary goal or objective of every organization (Adewale, Abolaji and Kolade, 2011). Survival is very crucial at this period of business turbulence. Organizations strive for survival and continuity, while seeking relevance and key positions in the industry. Jones & Bartlet (2008), posit that survival and growth of organizations are contained in its goals which require energy and resources investment. From observation, survival concept is an unwritten law of every organization and when organizations survived, without doubt, there will be available goods and services and the organization will be in continue operations, and Gross (1968), adds that survival should be an expedient factor for organizations interest. Over the years the term ethics in organizational survival has long been associated with management scholars and business leaders around the world. There is a broad agreement that as a matter of corporate policy, every organization should strive to be committed in a manner that is ethically transparent. The concept of ethics simply deals with how decisions affect other people and organization. According to Etuk (2009) ethics and morality are aspects of axiology concerned with what is good, what is beautiful and what is desired or preferred human conduct. Ethics is concerned with contemporary norms or standard of conduct that govern the relationship among human beings and their institution. Cole (2002) explains ethics as a set of moral principles or values used by organization to steer the conduct of the organization itself and its employees in all their business activities both internal and in relation to the outside world. Schermerhorn (1989) argued that ethics in the word of organization business involve "ordinary decency" which encompasses such areas as integrity, honesty and fairness. Behaving in an ethical manner is seen as part of the social responsibility of

organization, which itself depends on the philosophy that organizations ought to impact on the society in ways that go beyond the usual profit maximization objective.

Business ethics is a concept that is neither new nor old. As moral aspects of commercial activities, business ethics was as old as the trade. However, as an academic concept, business ethics has existed for only 40 years. Norman Bowie was the first to have launched business ethics in a scientific conference in 1974, (Marcoux, 2006). Since then business ethics has become a popular topic in debate speeches of leaders in the business world, employees, shareholders, consumers, as well as university professors and from there it spread around the world.

Despite this, not all researchers, authors and speakers share the same opinion about business ethics. Firstly, between business and ethics there are always contradictions. On one hand, society always wants the company to create more high-paying jobs, but on the other hand, the company wants to reduce costs and improve labour productivity. Consumers wish to purchase at the lowest prices, and commercial establishments want the highest interest rate. Society desires to reduce environmental pollution and companies want to minimize costs incurred when complying with regulations on environmental protection in their production activities. This fact lead conflict inevitable in the concept of business ethics, owing to discrepancies in the company's interests with the interests of workers and consumers and whole society. Because all these are in opposition to the above is the inevitable for managers to balance the interests of the company with the interests of shareholders, and those with related interests, including staff, customers and the entire community. (Vickers, 2005)

It was canvased that business survival of an organization is sometimes based on the ethical work climate. Ethical work climate reflects the collective moral reasoning of organization members. Thus, strong ethical climate provides employees a foundation for thinking about moral issues. Although organization members may reason effectively about the right thing to do, translating reason into action depends on the moderating effect of two additional contextual factors; collective moral emotion (in the form of collective empathy) and collective ethical efficacy. Furthermore, the moral reasoning reflected in ethical climate is more likely to translate to ethical behaviour if members:

- (i) Care about those impacted by their actions (empathy).
- (ii) Believe in their ability to successfully follow through in their decision (efficacy).

Thus, ethical climate, collective moral emotion and collective ethical efficacy interact to create an environment more strongly related to ethical behaviour. Ethical behaviour is characterized by honesty, fairness and equity in interpersonal and professional relationship and it respects the dignity, diversity and the right of individual and groups of people. Therefore, for an organization to survive, it is important to have a good understanding of ethics and also take it seriously as this can undermine the competitive strength of the organization and the society at large (Harrington, 1991).

The current business environment has imposed with many challenges prompted organizations to invest in activities that are consistent and runs from the principles set out by the law and moral values, and many organizations seeking to avoid the boycott by customers, so they are very careful to spare itself from such situations leading them to do more in the field of ethical dealing (Mohr et al. 2001, p: 45).

Daft (2003) explained that the ethics related to the internal values which are part of the cultural environment of the organization, the ethical issue affect the behavior of an individual, group, or organization (negative or positive) on the other, while describing work ethics as everything related to justice and in some respects, such as the expectations of the community and the integrity of the competition, advertising and public relations.

The business ethics is a comprehensive framework that governs the behavior and actions towards something, and describes what is acceptable or true and what is unacceptable or is relatively wrong in light of the prevailing standards in the community by custom and law, which the organizational culture, values and systems. Against this background, this paper discusses the

necessity of business ethics on organizational survival. In this paper business ethics is discussed in the dimensions of integrity, work attitude and discipline. Organizational survival is a single construct.

Based on the variables of this study the following conceptual model is set to guide the study:

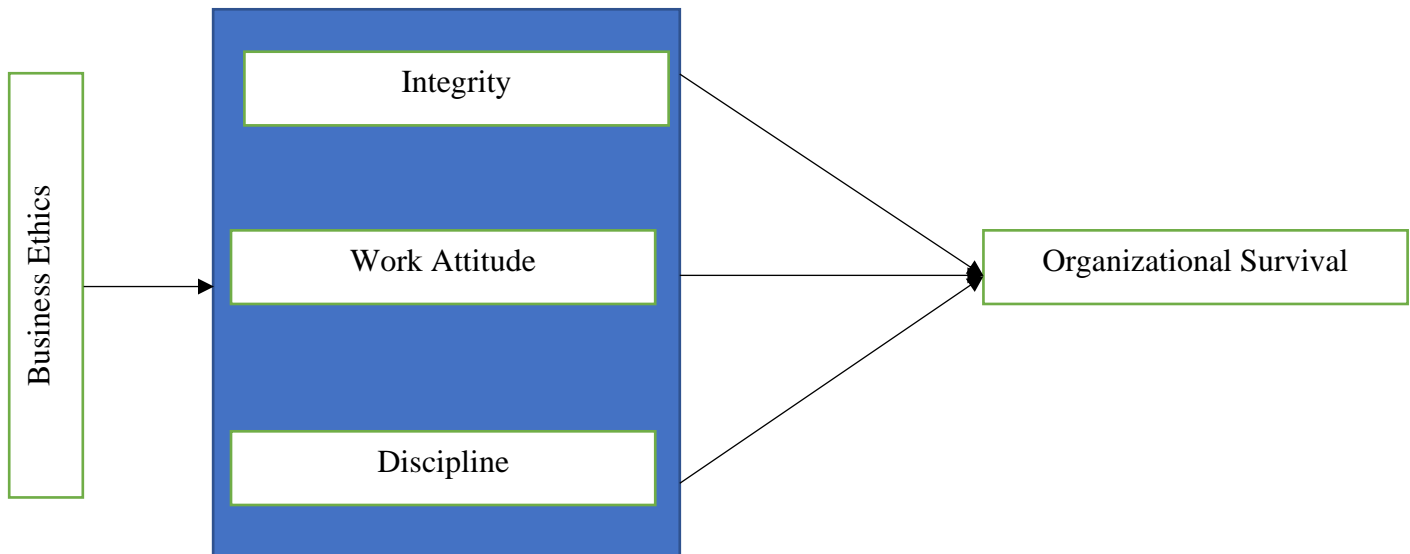


Fig 1: Conceptual framework on business ethics and organizational survival

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Stakeholder Theory of Business Ethics

Freeman 1984 as cited by Elias (2005) advocated the stakeholder theory which states that corporate entities are responsible to many stakeholders which includes consumers, investors, employees, shareholders, government and the general public. Business ethics help management to align with their different interest group in a bid to maximize their welfare. Stakeholder theory can also set the stage for effective measurement of corporate social overall performance by distinguishing between stakeholder issues and social issues. Business ethical code of conduct help to resolve these issues confronting corporate organizations. Stakeholder theory provides a structural and rationale for understanding and explaining why building ethics into planning and operations is a sound management strategy. It provides a framework for understanding why firms with records of ethical management might be expected to outperform competitors lacking this focus on the medium or long term measure by conventional financial and market test of performance. (Clarkson, 1998).

CONCEPT OF BUSINESS ETHICS

Ethics are an important and fundamental element among pillars upon which communities, and in the concept and role of ethics in the social structure, they have a major role beyond the role of the supervisor and the controller on the personal level on the public social level. All religions has focused on morals and being fair and apparent among and toward people. Ethics play a major role in changing human behavior, and human behavior is the focus of the change in the universe. As shown in (Low and Weeks), "the need to support and promote ethical behavior is not capable of being the subject of discussion." And even when the degree of improvement scalability, the organizations can achieve a balance in the efforts to improve the business ethics "(Valentine, 2007, p: 248).

The concept of ethics in the world of business holds many meanings and implications, revolve mostly around the bases of human behavior, in terms of what is acceptable and unacceptable to the others, specialists and researchers agree in the definition of ethics in terms of content and

substance, even if they differ in terms of form and style, that business ethics represent ethical questions about what should be and what should not be to accomplish different types of business (George & Kaler, 2003, p: 250).

The word Ethics means the compatibility with standards, values, behavior or literature specializing mostly in professions, also known as the standards of the act and behavior that we expect to be followed by the people and personal morality relate to individual daily acts (Mrayat, 2011, p 26). The straightness and ethical values, a producer of ethical and behavioral standards in the unit, and how it can be connected and adhered to in practice, including the actions of the Administration to remove or reduce incentives and temptations that drive people to commit actions of nonstraight, illegal or unethical (Lutfi, 2005, p 5014).

Thus, the aspects of ethical behavior and the need to work with ethics of business by business organizations, are not linked to specific communities, but it has become a vitally important subject facing business organizations in developing and growing countries, the concept of ethics was associated with many subjects and organizational tasks, human resources and energies such as management and employees and salesmen, managers and leadership it instructs and promotes good behavior, this concept has become one of the important matters for the job in the organization, as it confirmed by the departments because it serves as the self-censorship of the individual, because he can distinguish between right and wrong in his behavior at work, for that they attracting individuals with high ethics to work in the organization on the grounds that these individuals are the ones who bring its ethics or morality that the organization derives its ethics from individual workers (Daft, 2003, p: 326).

And contemporary organizations focused on the goals and principles, values and ethics in the development of the performance of individual workers, who are now the best resource for the organization and represent the intellectual capital (cognitive), the focus is on them and their construction according spiritually and intellectually by providing them with the knowledge, skills, abilities and behavior in the framework of the organization culture, , which has become a trend in which organizations and managers about the work ethic through individual behavior and the organization behavior, this requires them to keep up with the change that is happening in the external environment (Hussein and Jameel 0.2009, p 8).

Business ethics at the organizational level is how the management company manages its relations with each employees, customers, suppliers, competitors on the basis of the credibility and confidence-building, within four main themes are doing meaningful, and not to harm the others, and lack of deception in any transactions, and impartiality to engage in any practices that favor one party without the other, if characterize any activity in society these characteristics can in this case, judge to this activity ethics.

Business ethics is defined as the rules, standards, codes, or principles that provides guidance for morally appropriate behaviour in managerial decision relating to the operation of the corporation and business's relationship with the society (Sexty, 2011). To Heysel (2013) business ethics is a set of guidelines for business people to use to avoid making a wrong decision. Business ethics has evolved over the years, with growing concern to curtail the activities of managers in the management of the organization. Peters and Waterman, 1982, (as cited by Elias, 2005) show that nearly all highly performance firm have at the core a well-established set of shared values, particularly ethical values. Ethical code from organization to organization varies but its content or message remains the same all through as it is geared towards enhancing organizational performance. Ethical codes are aligned with the organisational culture, mission, vision and objective statement and the core values of the organisation in order to maximise corporate growth. Hosmer, 1994; and Jones, 1995 (as cited by Berrone, Surroca and Tribo, 2005) argue that ethics are good business investment because it generates positive externalities like trust and commitment with relevant stakeholders, which in turn assure long-term performance. According to Beer (2009) many of the Wall Street companies that collapsed during the economic crisis of 2008

result from their lack of focus on customer service, lack of clear business strategies, and their propensity to over prioritize profits at the expense of commonly accepted ethical practices.

Integrity

The employees in companies are characterized with justice and bearing have when carrying out their work integrity, chastity and honesty in the performance of their duties, and to stay away from personal interests, and workers should not put themselves in positions of influence on the impartiality or make them fall under the influence of others.

CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL

The survival of a firm depends on its ability to survive with its internal and external environmental factors. Drucker (1979) says that corporate performance should portray how effective and efficient is in terms of its profitability, growth, cost minimization and productivity. Schumpeter argued that innovation plays a key role for the survival of firms, innovation "strikes not at the margins of the profits and the out of the existing firms but at their foundations and their very lives" (Schumpeter, 1942:84). The nature of technology also shapes the likelihood of survival, as revealed by a classification of firms according to Paritt, (1984). Every organization works towards survival. As survival is the major goal of most of most organization (Barnard, 1947). Paying attention to this goal contributes to the satisfaction and execution of other organizational goal.

Organizational survival has been the most interesting topics for organizations over the years. Organizations exist to survive in the midst of environmental factors that tend to encroach on business performance. Organizations attempt to maintain the existing state of affairs, but essentially the larger part of their efforts is tilted toward survival (Mindy, 1998). The competition in the industry is getting stronger and firms are adopting different strategies to be competitive in the industry. Surviving in the global struggle to meet with increasing demand on firms in the market place has seen many researchers and academicians having a resort to pay attention to the individual employees in the organization since innovation in product and services are brought about by these individuals.

In order to survive in the wake of the environmental changes, organizations must be able to alter behavior, structures; and systems. In other words, adaptability entails translating the demands of business environment into action. Organizations as open systems exist in environment that is complex and uncertain. To survive and make profit, organizations need to adapt continuously to the different levels of environmental uncertainty (Amah and Baridam, 2012).

These changes include providing resources for technical development and acquiring the support of others in the organization or in outside organizations. Gaining this support requires negotiation, bargaining, and coalition building. Organizational change, then, is a very complex process. Change of this sort can be very difficult. Significant innovations can be resisted; fall victim to competing ideas, or fail to be sustained (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Evans (2013) argued that organizational innovations are instances of organizational change that: result from a shift in underlying organizational assumptions, are discontinuous from previous practice, and provide new pathways to creating public values. Environmental uncertainty represents an important contingency for organization structure and internal behaviors (Daft, 1998). Organizations need to have the right fit between internal structure and the external environment. Adaptability has also come to be considered an important response option worthy of research and assessment, not simply in order to guide the selection of the best mitigation policies, but rather to reduce the vulnerability of groups of people to the impacts of change, and hence minimize the costs associated with the inevitable (Kane and Shogren, 2000; Smit and Pilifosova, 2001).

Methodology

To meet the aim of the paper, the theoretical and conceptual part will be presented in order to explain and point out basic meaning of the business ethics, business ethics dimensions, organizational survival, measures of organizational survival and the effect of business ethics on

organizational survival, finding the information and theory from book, e-sources, and article as a references. Furthermore, also some real examples about the business ethics in human resources are presented.

Discussion

INTEGRITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL

The goal of any organization is to have employees behave in a manner consistent with the company's mission and goals i.e aligning absolutely with the core values, adhering to a code of ethics and matching actions with beliefs across a variety of situations (Pattison. & Edgar, 2011). Meanwhile, integrity play a fundamental role in employee pattern of alignment, sound moral, ethical principles and organization survival (Simons, 2002). Moreover, absenteeism, unwarranted breaks, stealing of organization property, converting office equipment for personal use, gossiping etc. are characteristics of unethical conducts and are liable to affect organizational survival (Qiu & Peschek, 2013). However, the organization level of productivity is directly proportional to employee level of commitment and satisfaction, thus, the commitment and satisfaction becomes immaterial if it is not infused with integrity (Arnold, 2009). Integrating values of integrity into the day-to-day operation of an organization will promote employees ethical behaviour, prevent damaging lapses while tapping into human instincts for moral thought/action and as well enhanced sustained productivity (Bergman, 2006).

WORK ATTITUDE AND ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL

Each individual worker has a different level of attitude to work and this attitude is assessed by the involvement of employees in performing the assigned responsibilities. According to Kenrick et al (2005), attitude is an acceptable and unacceptable evaluation of a particular person, people, objects, events, happenings or ideas. Attitude paves way for behavioral action which ultimately influences productivity. The relationship between work attitude and productivity has been largely studied and various factors are responsible for this relationship. Some studies Kenrick et al (2005), Salau, Faiola and Akinbode, (2014) argued that employees work attitude tends to be favourable when organizations facilitate industrial harmony, affection, recognition, friendliness, freedom that are crucial for enhancing organizational survival (Ogunbameru, 2004). However, where these are ignored, intention leave, sabotage, absenteeism, labour turnover, low morale and survival becomes a common phenomenon. Also argued that unfavourable work attitude could come as a result of poor relationship with a leaders/manager, lack of recognition and flexitime, inequality, inconsistent promotion and payment of salary, lack of training, development and career opportunities increased industrial hazard, inadequate employment protection can be the push factor behind an individual's attitudes towards organizational survival (Salau, Faiola & Akinbode, 2014). It becomes imperative to note that an individual that is not satisfied with the pay, working environment, ethical values, culture, company policy and processes may exhibit some attitudes that could be detrimental to organizational productivity. When productivity is adversely affected, then achievement of corporate objective suffers which will eventually make profit maximization unattainable. It is pertinent to note that the notion of an employee towards his/her job will certainly influence his/her attitude. However, favourable and unfavourable cultural and ethical values should be a formal and informal laid down policies, procedures and standards which are established to guide the conduct, attitude and behaviour of employees in the workplace [20]. Therefore, the success of every organization is a dependent factor on employees' attitude towards increasing productivity of the organization.

SELF-DISCIPLINE AND PRODUCTIVITY

Self-discipline at the workplace is an optimistic determination and efforts which assists in developing certain traditions for guiding individual's feelings, conducts, behaviours, thoughts, activities and habits. Self-discipline could be seen as an art of self-control, self-reliance, self-determination and self-sufficiency, which stimulates an individual to sustain his/her decisions and

drives the individual towards achieving the set goals. In order to flourish and survive, organizations must drive the need to concentrate on stimulating self-discipline at work (Fowers, 2008). The lack of self-discipline among workers may result to distressing thoughts, negativity and lack of enthusiasm at work, which adversely affect productivity of the employee and the organization at large. Leader and managers of organization need to admit the fact that self-discipline cannot be learnt, transferred and fulfilled overnight. An organization benefits greatly when its employees demonstrate some measures of self-discipline at work. In fact, self-discipline at work promotes strong relationships to succeed and raises an environment of commitment, dedication, keenness and devotion among the employees which ultimately results in improved organizational productivity. Maxwell, Chonko, and Loe (2001) indicated that self-discipline at work can be sustained by making sure that employees are cleared about performance expectations in order to sustain their focus towards the accomplishment of work assigned to them. Self-discipline involves giving greater commitment to work without being coerced, compelled and intimidated; relaying information to others; keeping them informed and updated; assuming responsibilities; caring for others' interests etc. (Arvey & Jones, 2005). Self-discipline is not influenced and imposed from supervisors or managers rather it comes from one's attitude. When an individual in an organization has this attitude, it shapes and develops the culture of self-discipline which will ultimately lead to increased productivity. And where a new employee/individual joins the workforce, he/she inevitably and habitually imbibes the culture of self-discipline. Conversely, productivity can be affected adversely when individuals are overwhelmed with laziness, negligence, irresponsibility, favoritism, self-interest and lack of self-determination. Apparently, if managers and employees are not self-disciplined, the organization will become a lawless community which will eventually make increased productivity far from sight.

Conclusion

The employee adherence to rules and regulations and the adoption of business ethics by an entity will enhance corporate growth and sustainability in the long run. Business ethics as earlier stated have positive impact in the reduction of fraud cases, corruption, theft and mismanagement of fund by employee. This study also concludes that corporate adherence to rules and regulations is insignificant in relation to organizational survival, though the relationship is positive which means that if organizations are to align with the adoption of business ethics it may lead to corporate growth. Therefore, adoption of business ethics by corporate bodies will enhance organizational survival which is of interest to all stakeholders. Finally, this study asserts that business ethics help guard both corporate entities and employees in building the trust of its stakeholders and addressing ethical issues confronting business entities.

Recommendations

In the light of the above, the following recommendations were made:

1. Develop and promote business ethics, and the need for business organizations to identify ethical policies and distribute them across the company, and the training of staff to enhance their ability to cope with difficult ethical problems.
2. Organizations should pay attention to objectivity, independence and the ability to take into account the balance of interests, and verification of the ability to work and mastery.
3. Corporate entities should ensure that their corporate structure and culture are aligned with the objective of business ethics in order to enhance performance and growth.
4. Emphasize the importance of integrity and transparency in order to ensure impartiality and distance from any side effects, and that their impact is clear on the competitive advantage from the viewpoint of the organization.

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