

MANAGEMENT OF UNETHICAL PRACTICES AND INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN CIVIL SERVICE

Dr. Nworgu, Kelechi Godson and Dr. Collins Okechukwu Amadi
Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Port Harcourt, P.M.B. 5323, Choba, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Email:nworgu_godson@yahoo.co.uk,otukiri63@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Unethical practices in several organizations are incumbent upon leaders and managers to discover and strategize on effective ways or measures of controlling and managing them. The paper evaluated the management of unethical practices and influence of organizational climate in Rivers State civil service. The study objectives include, to investigate how organizational management and leadership can reduce unethical practices and encourage productivity in civil service, and to ascertain how organizational climate, and conflict of interest influence employees on involving in unethical practices in civil service. The study utilized deontological theory to elucidate its connection to the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted to elicit data from respondents through the administering of questionnaires to a sample size of 400 respondents. However, a total number of 398 copies of questionnaire were retrieved and data was analyzed by percentage and presented on tables. The findings revealed that ethical leadership and managing of unethical practices reduces unethical practices among civil servants and that organizational climate and conflict of influences employees on involving in unethical practices. Based on the findings of the study the paper recommends among others that management should keep promoting ethical ideologies among civil servants through constructive and impacting routine programmes that is geared toward developing more consciousness of ethical codes and standards.

Keywords: management, leaders, unethical practices, organizational climate.

INTRODUCTION

Ethical practices and employee cohesion in any work organization is viewed by Mason, (2009) as being crucial for the overall development, growth, increase in production of goods and services, both for international exchange and domestic consumption, and national wealth creation and sustenance, the achieving of political stability as well as the general growth of sustainable human developments. Organizations adhering and operating on the basis of ethical standards can determine the well-being of all the stakeholders, the improvement of organization's productivity and profitability, and the macroeconomic growth and development of the society.

Palchoudhury (2016), argued that ethics reveals acceptable standards of what is right and wrong. In any work area that a person chooses to do wrong by disregarding acceptable standards, such practice is unethical in the workplace because it violates acceptable workplace rules and regulations. This elucidates that exemplary leadership and good decision making in organizations is inevitable in controlling employees unethical practices, therefore, while taking decisions in workplace, it will be appropriate to consult both moral and organizational compass which provides guideline of what is right as to avoid the unacceptable or unethical practices among employees so as to pave way for productivity.

Overtime, the right choice may appear clear but in some instance, an individual may choose to weigh both options of the good against the bad and may discover the option that is productive or that is harmless than choosing to practice the wrong option. Several corporate and professional bodies have official "Code of Ethics" which is usually a written guideline that regulates workers' activities at workplace. However, ethical conduct or practices of an employee and the organization as a whole, can have impact on the productivity of such organization even to a greater extent. Employees can be largely influenced by the climate and culture that prevails in an organization as

Management of Unethical Practices and Influence of Organizational Climate in Civil Service

well as the type of leaders they have, because where there are ethical leaders, organizations and employees can be highly motivated, encouraged and energized to perform and serve creditably. Productivity in organizations is perceived to increase in a scenario where ethical standards are promoted by individuals, Palchoudhury (2016). Organizations that strive to sustain a healthy and effective workplace, where each individual is treated with respect can also grow in productivity. A workplace that is void of unethical conducts, creates a more tolerating work environment, free from unlawful discrimination and abuses against the workforce, can go further in motivating employees and employers. Therefore, employees become happy and they are bound to give their best in an ethical workplace. Motivation, usually increases the individual productivity which also translate to productivity in organization.

Finally, ethical codes and standards are always adopted by human resource management, to pragmatically run an organization in every complex society, in which moral beliefs are viewed to play crucial role. Furthermore, ethical choices may appear not to be easy, but employers expect individuals to put their consciences while working with them. In essence, employees expect that organizations should be ethical, responsible and honest to allow fairness to prevail. An individual with integrity can make ethical choices on the basis of moral values and principles, knowing assuredly that mistakes can also happen. Learning from such mistakes can help individuals to be conscious of their ethical choices, and they become more alerted on ethical demands of the organization, Palchoudhury (2016).

Unethical practices are incumbent upon company managers to learn and understand how to develop effective ways or measures of controlling and managing them (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson 2005). In order to control or manage such issues, leaders need to have understanding of elements that tend to interest or motivate employees to indulge in such activities, and what factors that makes it conducive to engage in such practices. Considering workplace unethical behaviours as a form of deviance, it is notable to perceive the counterproductive nature of some of the practices as substandard work, job slowdowns, employee insubordination, and theft of company belongings, pilferage, monetary embezzlement and vandalism, Bennett & Robinson, (2003),

In essence, behavior is understood to be unacceptable when it violates "organization's customs, culture, policies, or internal rules and regulations that may likely jeopardize the productiveness and well-being of the organization or its citizens". Unethical practices in most industries can take various forms, however, the generally recognized forms of unethical practices include, bribery, monetary support get something, fraudulent acts, deceit to obtain financial advantages, extortion, bid rigging, overbilling, claim games, money laundering, and cover pricing. The management of unethical or negative behavior in workplaces is of increasing concern in most organizations because such practices can be detrimental to the organizations financial growth or well-being. It is proper to identify that unethical work behavior is the breaking or violation of significant organizational rules, regulation and norms (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004).

Mason (2009) argued that any reasonable professional or career growth cannot be achieved without the element of ethics. In a development sense, moral behaviour might be measured by the level of uprightness and reliability with which employees and organizations carry out their business (Mason, 2009). Deceptive practices, dishonesty, or exploitation are said to be unethical practices which eventuate through learning while carrying out business, or by being brought into the practice by another individual.

Unethical activities are viewed to constitute detrimental effect on organizations and their workforce. It is obvious that those behaviors have severe and harmful consequences on the organization by either affecting its functioning or productivity, or by hurting its employees in various ways that may lower their individual and collective effectiveness. Other researchers like (Fox & Spector, 1999; Robinson & Bennett, 1995) have posited some evidences and perceptions arguing that unethical activities could adversely or negatively affect productivity in organizations as employees could be impeded from performing to the expectation of the employers. Consequently, organization management however, is becoming increasingly complex, and it seems to increase to new kinds of

unethical practices and patterns of behavior and, also, give rise to the number and scope of wrongdoings like in corruption, conflicts of interest, bribery and fraud, (Moilanen, 2011). Moreover, Osgood *et. al*, (1996) posits that company job status or task structure may result to the likelihood of employees getting involved in workplace unethical practices this is because a well-organized and well-allotted task to specific employees can often place among individuals in positions that gives them responsibility to be out of others control while they maintain their own social control within prescribed task. In addition, structured tasks can become a problem as it will offer several opportunities to engage in unethical activities, Osgood *et. al*, (1996). Therefore, it can be further argued that keeping most workers occupied than others with specific task can lower or increase the chances for such employees to be involved in unethical behaviors.

There is growing evidence that, in support to the personal characteristics of employees, cues in the workplace play a crucial role in determining unethical behavior. Each work system has specific ethical practices, policies, and procedures. When the practices, policies, and procedures are consistent among employees in organization, they form perceptions of organization's ethical climate. Organizational practices are major factors influencing the overall development of organizational climate for productivity, (Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003). The gap identified is that the researchers deliberated on the pressures unethical practices places on organization, the causes and severe consequences, harms it generates, lowering of growth in organizations, and issues of employees in organization involving in unethical behaviours in organizations. However, this study seeks to evaluate the ways of managing employees' unethical practices, performance, productivity and impact of ethical leadership, organizational climate and conflict of interest in civil service.

The study objectives include to:

- i. investigate how organizational management and leadership can reduce unethical practices and encourage productivity in civil service.
- ii. ascertain how organizational climate, and conflict of interest influence employees on involving in unethical practices in civil service.

Research Questions

- i. How can organizational management and leadership reduce unethical practices and encourage productivity in civil service?
- ii. What ways can organizational climate, and conflict of interest influence employees on unethical practices in civil service?

Ethics Management in Public Sector

In recent times, the public sector has been encountering several challenges on issues of ethics management because trending reforms intended to translate traditional and bureaucratic public institutions into flexible institutions. The reforms are mainly in cooperation with public and private partners. In this cooperation, all partners are required to adapt to the terms of partnership. Accordingly, the reforms on post-bureaucratic structure according to (Whitton 2001) requires transformation in individuals moral thinking and the prevalence of ethics management in public and private sector. The reforms are accounting for changes in public values, accountability being fragmented or sharpened, and ethical standards imposed onto governments, administrative department and public office holders who are continuously on the increase due to recruitment, (Whitton, 2001). More so, public institutions management is viewed to be increasing more in its complexity (Moilanen, 2011) giving rise to unethical behaviors, as well as increasing the number and scope of employees' wrongdoings due to presence of corruption, frequent conflicts of interest, theft, fraud, embezzlement and bribery, to mention a few.

Management of Unethical Practices and Influence of Organizational Climate in Civil Service

There are several indications that the misuse of public power and public assets or resources for individual purposes is on an alarming increase. Furthermore, trust in governments, public officials and authorities, civil service employees as well as in politicians is rapidly reducing (Salminen, & Ikola-Norbacka, 2009). In addition, the lack of transparency, accountability and truthfulness is noted to have deepened the problem. (Moilanen, 2011). On these important reasons, effective reforms and other measures are needed to effectively curb and eliminate wrongdoings among public servants and to improve or awaken ethical behavior consciousness among civil servants and public office holders. It is demanding that public administrators and politicians should ensure they have a wider and solid understanding on the importance of ethical traditions and approaches in public management (Pinto, 2009), and search for ways of thinking on the ethical dimensions of their individual and collective decision-making (Whitton, 2001) because ethical codes imposed on governments, public administrators and public offices have become imperative, highly demanding and rapidly diversified. These ethical approaches stem initially from various philosophical traditions (Donahue, 2003).

More practical substantial instruments like codes of conduct, laws and codes of ethics can also be applied for improving ethical behavior in public service among civil servants and holders of public office for the purpose of combating and dissuading wrongdoings in public institutions (Pinto, 2009). Ethics management is vital in all public institutions because the public workers play a crucial role in public decision-making that constantly affects the existence of all citizens (Pinto, 2009). The underlying aspect is that ethics management is based on ethical theories and effective instruments are crucial in the public sector. In addition, ethical management is possible for all public workers who are found to be virtuous, and who behave ethically and carry out their duties in compliance with common moral standards, expectations and values most common to the public sector.

In recent decades, the changes observed in some workplace environments have triggered renewed working patterns and practices involving alliances, outsourcing, and partnerships. Importantly, it is believed that ethics management is necessary in complementing public institutions reforms and handling possible negative effects on the ethics of public services (Maesschalck, 2004). The increasing rate and diversity of ethical matters to uphold decry unethical behavior. Public workers and public office holders have moral responsibility, or a series of duties, both legal and moral, that may be adopted as their professional ethics (Constantin 2014). Corruption in the public sector is viewed as the most prevalent type of wrongdoing that is major, (Transparency International 2015), as well as conflict of interests, lack of accountability, theft and transparency appear to be on the increase (Moilanen, 2011).

Public administration is bound to address ethical issues in the public service sector to checkmate the behavior of civil or public servants in different public offices. Civil servants are expected to bear important ethical and moral obligations because they are made to be responsible for public activities and to issue directives, rules and regulations (Moilanen, 2011). It is also obvious to include that the public sector workers have discretionary apportioned powers beyond the work manuals, job orders, job descriptions and binding legal framework of their position, (Pinto, 2009).

As it is required in public service, public employees are to be accountable in whatever they do at the workplace. They are to give priority to public interest, and exercise adequate administrative discretion with every ethical perception when performing their jobs. Subsequently, public officers must follow ethical codes, standards, rules and regulations common to their profession, while conducting their various public functions (Pinto 2009). Ethical instruments are crucial in impeding and fighting against unethical behaviors as to enhance ethical practices and behaviors required in the public sector. Overtime, the public sector has faced some ethical problems and the basic

instruments for controlling and fighting against unethical practices were just the legal sanctions, the public service oaths and formal laws (Moilanen 2011).

Corruption

Corruption is a serious unethical practice in public institutions. The corruption problem affects mostly developing countries. This is because there is low corruption perception due to compromise and a high corruption index signals in bribery, inability to punish corrupt public servants and politicians in different public institutions that neglect basic citizens' needs (Transparency International 2014). Corruption, is generally referred to as "abuse of entrusted public power for individual or private gain" (Transparency International 2015). Corruption is becoming a frequent act that is perceived to be among the greatest ethical challenges of most countries. (Moilanen 2011). It is generally recognized that corruption can impede economic growth, development, undermines national stability and can erode individual trust of civil servants in public institutions (Pinto 2009). It also undermines good governance, distorts public policy, supports misallocation of public resources, incur harms to the private and public sectors and particularly hurts the vulnerable poor (Moilanen, 2011).

In public administration, corruption can be seen as the selfish wealth-seeking behavior of most individuals who have the role to represent the government and the public institutions or as in misuse of public assets by public office holders for personal benefit (Pinto 2009) corruption is the illegal use of public office and goods for personal gain (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1999). Accordingly, corruption mostly takes place among public or civil servants, its functionaries and agencies, bureaucrats and politicians, departments or individual that holds a position of public authority to allocate rights, and have control over public resources for the state or the government, and misuses such public authority and power for individual benefit (Moilanen 2011).

Corruption can be in two aspects, one of which is called grand corruption that elites usually practice, while the other one is known as petty corruption involving petty bureaucrats, (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1999). There is similarly a link between grand corruption and petty corruption (Whaley 1999) which has overtime had long term relationship between each other. Grand and petty corruption often result to social, economic, and political paralysis of developmental programmes, (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs 1999). In a situation where grand corruption is becoming rampant, there may be no restriction or control over petty corruption. This is to say that combating a widespread corruption involves focusing on the unethical behavior at the grand corruption peddlers. For this purpose, to fight corruption, effort should start from the top cadre of administration. As a result, the effort, of stopping and its related consequences should be increased. Because of the number of cases of corrupt practices in civil service, and the seriousness of the global impacts of the forms of corruption, there is urgent call for all stakeholders to for find effective means and tools that can be relevant and helpful for the fight against corruption.

Strategic Benefits of Ethics Process

In strategic term, managing ethics processes is highly perceived to be of importance in public service. This has led the human resource scholars to construct the concept of "Value-Based Management" which is used to describe what has been previously termed as actively managed ethics activities or programmes. In some reports, firms are seen using formal values management for more than just avoiding lawsuits, fines, penalties, and criminal penalties. They are also finding that these programmes will build civil servants loyalty, reduce training costs; lower theft, prevent anti-company activity; promote sales and enhance customer loyalty; encourage community goodwill that can provide needed assistance for tax advantages and other strategic alliances; attract skillful and unskillful applicants with low cost in recruitment; sustain loyal vendor relationships, encourages suppliers and other unexpected cost increases

Management of Unethical Practices and Influence of Organizational Climate in Civil Service

Increasingly, reports are piling up on the support of perception that organizations can have competitive advantage above other firms through proper management and control of business ethics and values. McNamara's (1999) asserts that various benefits have emerged considerably to expand perception on more of the broad based benefits to include: interest for business ethics can substantially improve in society; Ethics programmes can assist in maintaining a moral purpose in turbulent times; Ethics programmes can be an insurance policy which helps to ensure that policies are legalized; Ethics programmes can help to prevent criminal "acts of omission" and can reduce payment of fines; Ethics programmes can help to manage work values related with quality management and control, strategic planning and diversity management.

Programmes for Managing Business Ethics

There are basically two ways to developing corporate ethics or values management programmes. The initial approach is the "do-it-yourself" way. The second way is to employ a consultant or third party to help design the programme. In addition, approaching a university to determine the possibility for students to undertake academic research or project in the matter under the supervision of a faculty or department member can be another alternative. However, in the case of small and medium enterprises, there are few advantages as well as disadvantages toward developing programmes for the smooth management of business ethics and corporate values. More so, perceived disadvantages include a lack of employee dedication, lack of money, and lack of time because of the frequency of daily business activities coupled with a lack of preferred knowledge of the process, McNamara's (1999).

On aspect of developing and designing codes as well as managing ethics and values in the workplace, there are important steps expected to be followed to achieve the expected result, it can be developed by a firm on its own, or the firm may decide to use expertise of consultants. However, the steps are: (i). Recognize the necessity of a corporate ethics and values management programmes. (ii). Enquire from the employees the excerpts that should be included. (iii). Decide on the approach to depend on in developing the programme either by using in-house approach, hire a consultant, or allow a university for support. (iv). prepare a workable timetable for the smooth development and running of each part of the programme. These parts could include identification of areas to be concentrated on or covered, drafting each aspect as well as obtaining feedback, conclude every aspect in the written project, ascertain the easier methods of educating and training for easy implementation of the code, confirm whether training, monitoring and evaluation of the training can be done in the house or by an independent third party, create avenues for anonymous members reportage of violations and non-conformity concerns, develop a process for prompt and active follow-up or reporting of complaints or other reports, as well as establishing dates that will call for programme reviews or updates. (v). Establish dates and centres for review or update of the programme.

Finally, the leadership and corporate organizers of the firm programmes should always be available and accessible during the entire development, implementation, evaluation and regular reviews of the ethics process. The initiating and management of business ethics programmes have been argued to possess bottom line form benefits in reducing ethical violations, and enhance the image of the entity in the all-encompassing business community as well as the social community. Such development and implementation encompasses programmes and processes that can actively be used to manage a company's business ethics and values to enhance profitability, productivity and the image of the organization.

Conflict of interests

Inclusive with corruption is the issue of conflict of interests occurring in civil service, which has been described as one of the most prevalent wrongdoings today, (Moilanen, 2011). In this context, the relationship between various organizations and their functions become blurring, thereby making so

call lines of authority and responsibility as well as ethics management a great challenge. Therefore, in such workplace, public employees doing side-line or on the job personal business activities for financial interests face more conditions where personal monetary interests become conflicting with their assigned official duties. Furthermore, conflict of interests often occurs as individuals in position of public trust and responsibility, allows competition between professional interest and personal interest, (Pinto, 2009).

In addition, conflict of interest manifest whenever one's official job as a public servant is influenced by his or her private business. This unethical practice may have wider consequences where it interferes with family interests. A family related conflict of interests likely takes place for when a member of the family is employed as a holder of public office (Pinto. 2009). Conflict of interests most times become difficult to understand when there is no transparency in the public sector, (Moilanen, 2011). Because of the serious and prevalent ethical issues and the economic consequences growing number of individuals involved in conflicts of interest, it is important that it should be taken very seriously and combated squarely with the most available and reliable instruments.

Leadership on Unethical Practice

Leaders have influential capacity on organizational ethics. They are to provide ethical leadership (Ciulla,1998). Leaders set ethical pace at the top of public and private organizations, and determine the formal and informal ethical climate or cultures (Treviño & Nelson,2004). Therefore, leaders are also expected to play a very important role in communicating and aiding ethical standards as well as applying rewards and punishments rules to reinforce normatively ethical conduct (Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000). In addition, ethics has been described to be influencing most organization's values or ethics management as to make its integration more evident in everyday activities through performance appraisal.

Leaders can influence employees' ethical practice and conduct. However, despite the suggestion that leaders are basic when it concerns organizational ethics, the specific aspect of leadership that can influence unethical behavior in public workplace has to be more elucidated. However, leaders are not just role models themselves, but they are capable of converting others into role models by rewarding or awarding prizes for ethical conduct and also disciplining or penalizing inappropriate behaviours (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). These actions are very crucial to the management of unethical behaviour. By observing employees experience of reward and punishment, many of the employees can learn from the apportioned consequences vicariously, Treviño (1992). Discipline transmits strong signals on the value of organizational norms as well as leaders' willingness to stand with them. Employees standing for the right thing often expect misconduct to be seriously punished, and they can show displeasure if such action is neglected.

Employees' sense of repercussive act of justice can be well satisfactory (Treviño, 1992), because it may likely discourage them to engage in any unethical behavior. However, if otherwise the wrong behavior is allowed to permeate, the workers can question management's position and sincerity in relation to the organization's appealing rules. Moreover, vicarious rewards and awards to abiding employees can signal management supporting ethical practice and disdaining unethical conduct. In a situation an employee on an emergency condition rightly pulls the handle of a machine to stop it from harming a fellow worker, such employee may be celebrated for showing care, however, in another situation that the same worker stops a machine for a short period for personal interest, thereby preventing production, such employee may be punished for such behavior. In some organization, production targets are more vital than even employee safety.

Finally, if a worker who often lie to clients is given an award as the best staff of the year, paid a fat bonus, and sent on a vacation, other employees will observe that lying to clients is rewarded, and this can propel other employees to make such behavior a habit. In organizations, most employees

Management of Unethical Practices and Influence of Organizational Climate in Civil Service

become susceptible to influential leaders' to involve in appropriate or indiscriminate behavior by learning right or wrong practices from the leaders' who vicariously reward and punish wrong behavior. Leaders role, power and authority to reward and punish, individuals can make employees to pay attention to leaders and mimic their behavior.

Organizational Culture and Ethical Climate

Organizational culture is generally regarded as a social construct connoting the degree to which organizational members share basic organizational values together. Culture is a tool used by most dominant groups to intuit and shape their members' values as to reduce deviant behaviors, (Boye & Jones 1997).

Furthermore, the manner employees do perceive fairness within an organization they belong and how they are treated on issues of equity in terms of distribution of resources are clear antecedents of unethical behavior. Therefore, ethical organizational related policies and practices also known as ethical climate mostly influence the ways and attitudes workers behave and misbehave, Vardi (2001).

An organization's climate serves as a tool in all organization, which can be used to assist individuals to make sense of the workplace environment, by aiding them to an acceptable pattern of behaviour appropriate for the organization. For instance, organizational climate is mostly perceived by employees and it makes them easier to change than adapting to culture. The definition of ethical climate is varying with the generally accepted meaning of organizational climate, which depends on shared perceptions regarding practices, policies and procedures that are rewarding, supportive, and encouraged with focus to elements in organizations such as service, safety, and innovation. In contrast, previous definition of ethical climate is "a shared perception of what is correct behavior and how ethical issues should be handled" and it focuses on issues of decision-making processes and procedures in organizations. Such therefore, relied on three basic types of moral reasoning which included utilitarianism, egoism and deontology as well as three loci of analyses regarding individual, local, and cosmopolitan to determine nine types of ethical climate, (Smith, Thompson, & Iacovou, 2009), Although ethical decision making in organizations is an element of organizational climate, the climate variables also includes a more variety of practices that is initiated by the organization's formal systems (Treviño & Nelson, 2017). It is a necessity to have understanding of the related factors that encourage ethical organizational climate in organizations, one of such factors is leadership. Ethical leadership refers to "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005: 120). Therefore, ethical leadership consist of two aspects that can vitally influence employees: (a) the individual moral component, which involves personal demonstration of integrity, fairness, and relative passion or concern for others, and (b) the moral managerial quality aspect, which confines on transactional or business efforts, such as making use of reward and penalty systems to transmit acceptable ethical behavior to all employees (Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000).

Zohar & Luria (2005: 616), argued that "The core meaning of climate relates, therefore, to socially construed indications of desired role behavior, originating simultaneously from policy and procedural actions of top management and from supervisory actions exhibited by shop-floor or frontline supervisors". Meanwhile, the process of understanding, interpreting and acting on practices emanates from both the moral individual who interprets and moral manager who takes steps in implementing the roles of ethical leadership. The role of ethical leaders is to use transactional or routine business influence processes like setting work and behavioural standards, rewards and penalty, and issues of performance appraisals to subject their employees to accountability on ethical conduct (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). More so, an ethical manager or leader's moral qualities and behaviors are viewed to contribute in shaping the process of implementation of ethical conducts

and practices. During recruitment of new employees, ethical leaders are concerned on hiring individuals with expected moral standards. This is due to the fact that ethical leaders take appropriate position in active ethics management (Brown & Mitchell, 2010), it because they are primarily minded toward implementing training programmes and orientation activities for employees to adapt to practices required as to provide clarification on the acceptable organizational behaviors. In addition, ethical managers are also more likely given to open discussion on business ethics or values with new or old employees (Brown & Mitchell, 2010), which intently notifies employees the policies and codes effective in the organization.

Furthermore, ethical managers' or leaders are basically more focus on the processes that ensures the attainment of organizational goals rather than just the last outcomes (Greenbaum, Quade, & Bonner, 2015). Related with reward and penalty practices, ethical leaders are more conscious on arranging systems that imposes discipline on employees that violate or omit ethical standards while playing their work roles and reward employees who took ethical decisions and maintained ethical behavior and (Ngo & Feldman, 2015). Associated to ethical accountability and responsibility practices, most ethical leaders make themselves an example on how to do things in the right way by adhering to ethics and quickly admit when they do contrary (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Ethical leaders are more likely to uphold multiple systems that permits employees to interrogate the ethical practices of others and to ensure that employees become accountable for their individual behaviors. Finally, ethical leaders ensure to make fair and balanced ethical decisions (Xu, Loi, & Ngo, 2016) and compel employees to know what is the approved and right thing to do when taking decisions. In organization climate, leaders usually influence the workplace environment and in particular the climate aspects (Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010; Schneider, 2011).

Ethical climate and Selfish Interest

Business ethics entails codes, rules, standards, or moral principles that institute guidelines for morally acceptable behaviour and truthfulness in terms of specific situations.". An organization's ethical climate is perceived as organizational culture. Therefore, an organization, and its employees learn to behave ethical through formal or informal socialization. They learn and adapt to the values that are held in high esteem, and has components for reward. The organizational values that deals with ethical issues, are those that can determine the considerable ethical standards that keep up the ethical climate upheld in an organization. The factors that can influence ethical climate often in an organization may include employee self-interest, organization profit margin, operational efficiency, group interests, interpersonal friendship, collective social responsibility, individual morality, rules and regulations, laws and professional ethical codes, (Sims, 1992). In all, the most basic factor rest on the apparent behaviour of top level management; because "what top managers do, and the culture they establish and reinforce, makes a big difference in the way lower-level employees act and in the way the organization as a whole act when ethical dilemmas are faced" (Sims, 1992).

Determining ethical climate

Using the ethical climate quotient, six different ethical climates can be determined, which include the following criterial:

- (a) Professional. Workers are meant to follow the ethical codes, rules and guidelines common to their professional, as well as the laws enacted by the government. They are also need to consider external organization to have more cues regarding how to behave in ethical manner.
- (ii) Caring. In an organizational climate of caring, employees and employers in such organization are basically interested in issues related to workers' welfare and that of others, within and outside the organizations. The activities of a particular group demonstrating caring climate indicates a very great concern for all individuals that may be affected by their decisions.
- (iii) Rules. In rules climate as is obtainable in a given organization, individuals are compelled to effectively obey the rules of each of their various department within the organization.

Management of Unethical Practices and Influence of Organizational Climate in Civil Service

- (iv) Instrumental. In organizational instrumental climate, workers of that organization concentrate on their individual self-interests, often at the gain of others.
- (v) Efficiency. In this kind of climate, the right or appropriate way to do things in such organization prevails efficiently.
- (vi) Independence. In the independence organizational climate, employees are strongly controlled by their individual sense of reasoning on doing right or wrong.

Dimensions of Ethical Climate

There are basically two main dimensions to ethical climate. And they include, its strength as well as its direction. The direction is determined through ethical climate quotient, however, the strength of organizational ethical climate is determined by the organizations control over its employees, or how employees are attached to existing norms. In a truly strong ethical climate, the employees expected behaviour is open and unambiguous; because organizations give clear guidelines about what should be the behaviours expected of them and gives rewards and attracts punishments within and outside the organization. Therefore, as it clarifies the kind of ethical attitude or behaviour is required from individuals, employees within the organizations having a strong ethical climate are left with the option of choosing ethical behaviours whenever they are confronted with a dilemma.

Ethical Climate and Unethical Workplace Behaviour

Ethical and unethical workplace behaviour is now gaining more recognition as a prevalent problem in most public organizations as this has also become an important aspect for scholars to investigate. Workplace unethical behavior is voluntary employee disposition that go contrary to the norms and rules of an organization, and at the same time threatens the well-being of all that are within the organization or its external members (Robinson & Bennett, 1995a). Wimbush & Shepard (1994) have argued that the ethical climate of any organization can be used to predict both unethical and counterproductive behaviours. Peterson (2002) posited that from the ethical climate of an organization, counterproductive behaviours are present as well. Reasons for unethical and deviant behavior.

Organizations often do reward behaviour that may counter to what is generally approved as being ethical; however, these are recognized as counter norms. (Sims,1992). Sometime, organizations may find it desirable to maintain secrecy and be deceitful to an extent. Similarly, some organizations try to reward employees who pass the buck, rather than those who take responsibility for all their actions (Sims, 1992). The reason for these counter norms is show "bottom-line mentality". This type of mentality enhances financial success at the cost of other values. It "promotes or supports short-term solutions that are financially profitable, irrespective of the fact that they may result unforeseen problems for individuals within the organization and the organization in particular" (Sims, 1992). This mentality encourages individuals to perceive ethics as a mere obstacle to profit making. In addition, there is a postulation that says anything is right as long as the public can be convinced that such is right (Sims, 1992).

Instead of depending on legitimate and ethical morals, people within such organizations are concerned with how they can appear ethical.

Operational environment

According to Baucus & Near (1991), several conditions can increase the chances for illegal activity to occur. In their postulation, that bigger firms, operating in a unique environment having unlimited resources stand the chance for its employees to engage in illegal or unethical behaviour. Furthermore, organizations having previous records of wrongdoing among its workers are also associated with increasing level of illegal behaviours. Employees here, may have the tendency or desire to choose illegal activities over ethical activities because of organized processes (Baucus & Near, 1991). It is however possible to determine the risk of employee aggression and violence on the basis of interacting with the public, such as in guarding valuables, drinking alcohol, supervision

of co-workers, disciplining or penalizing others, making decisions that control other people's lives, and exercise security or safety functions, Leblanc & Kelloway, (2002). Aggression depicts an action with the intention to cause harm to individuals or organizational at large. In addition, violence is the outcome of an action taken to hurt a fellow worker, LeBlanc & Kelloway, (2002).

Promoting an ethical climate

In recent times, negative impression was shown by selected "unethical" organizations, these have surprisingly attracted some organizations to take steps toward increasing the culture of ethical behaviour among their employees. Sinclair (1993) argued that initiating a "unitary and cohesive organizational culture around core ethical values is very necessary." Further, this culture should be shared and valued in organizations and accepted by all employees, and it should be capable of influencing and affecting employees behaviour within and outside the organization as a whole.

The main requirement in organizations is to ensure the formulation of a clear all-encompassing mission statement. It should also become imperative for all actions of top managers and leaders to reflect the acceptable moral climate that is approved, (Sims, 1992). Irrespective of how a mission statement is strongly worded, or how it may be thoroughly addressed an organization's, the code of ethics, if not adhered to will amount to futility when the management's actions contravene the stated philosophies, (Sims, 1992). The ethical behaviour of employees can be strongly influenced by their superiors; and the potential ethical climate common in an organization, and invariably must be adopted by management. (Wimbush and Shepard, 1994). However, where changes on the current ethical climate are recommended for review, the organizations management needs to take proactive steps and involve in ensuring the promotion and maintenance of the new standardized climate.

Theoretical framework

The deontological ethics theory

This theory was selected to affirm the study, and to give further expatiation on key variables related with the research. Deontological ethics theory was propounded by the most revered deontologist, who happens to be the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). The theory believes that some types of individual or collective actions such as breaking a truce, promise, law or killing innocent people are wrong in themselves, and that such actions are not just wrong because of its inherent bad consequences. Such actions may be exceptionally wrong or might however have some autonomous moral weight or judgement against them. There is a common notion affirming that the pursuit of recognized human needs has moral limitation, this assertion has raised deontological arguments, and the recognized needs may include love, happiness, wealth and peace.

Deontology theory advocates the believe that some actions could be intrinsically morally wrong or right. This explains that most actions have the moral character they possess by the virtue of their particular nature, considered totally differently from their own consequences. However, there may be a perception about doing wrong, like stealing, intentional cheating, or humiliation, which makes these actions wrong by their nature. Meanwhile, deontology theory perceives moral judgments in light of individual moral rights; in general, every individual has a right to be handled in ways that assures his respect, dignity, and independence. (Debeljak, Krkack, & Ragab, 2008). The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). In his formulation, Kant argues that an act is intrinsically right or wrong when it can be determined by intellectual sense on requirement of logical consistency. Kant argues that we can contradict ourselves when we become inconsistent to rules and regulations. He further stressed that when an action is intrinsically wrong, we contradict ourselves when we argue that it is not (Barcalow, 2007). Furthermore, deontological ethics theory agree that the end cannot justify the means. Humans are believed not to have ethical duties to people only but a religious and devotional duty to God. However, the key deontological theorist Kant have claimed to support a duty or role centered ethic without depending on a religious perspective, (Cordner, 2007). Kant in his masterpiece work on foundations of the metaphysics of morals; narrates that "nothing in the world, indeed nothing even beyond the world can possibly be conceived which could be called

Management of Unethical Practices and Influence of Organizational Climate in Civil Service

good without qualification except a Good Will." Therefore, characters like diligence, bravery and persistence; goods such as power, fortune and fame, talents like strength, and intelligence, endurance; are all good, but, they are obviously not good without verification or qualification since they can be tools for evil ends.

Since wealth can be a tool to harm people; strength or intelligence can be used to damage or kill; bravery can be tool for theft or burglary. All of these types of goods may be used for wrong ends except the individual has a good will. Therefore, it is only good will that can be perceived good without qualification. For Kant, one has a good will when he or she tries to do assigned duty accordingly. But Kant further emphasized that for a will to be viewed truly good, it must try to fulfill its duty or role from a purely moral perspective and motive, rather than from the aspect of a self-centred or self-interested motive. In addition, when a purely moral motive is the main desire to carry out one's duty, there will be respect for moral law. An individual with a good will can show respect to the moral law and will try to act as duty demands because he or she chooses to act often in ways that mostly conform to what his roles or duties are. (Rachels, 2003).

Additionally, Kant believes that fulfilling a duty does not involve exploiting to gain happiness and pleasure for oneself; rather it involves just accomplishing one's duty, and sometimes it could be quite difficult. Absolute duties as explained by Kant might be referred to as "heavy-duty" duties, and with ethical duties there are no avenue for ifs, ands, or buts. Kant deontological ethical theory was of the view of providing solution to the problem of human interaction in public institution, and that human beings are rational, and being rational they have freedom to morality. (Cordner, 2007) Kant argues that there should be search for the ultimate source of morality in the expected way human ought to behave rather than on how people actually behave. Moral principles are universal and essential in guiding behavior, however, in some rising particular circumstances, humans go against moral commands. In addition, Kant deontology theory also believes that the formation of fields of authority that exist in society can indicate how individuals has the right to be under a particular kind of rational control over their behaviors and thoughts. This actually is a basic character of morality, which requires no further explanations, (Sher, 2012).

There are majorly two aspects of deontological theory, rule deontology, and act deontology. The rule deontology believes that in all organizations and work situations individuals ought to be guided or controlled by a set of predetermined standards, rules or principles, in which case, the individuals action is judged to be unethical or ethical in comparison to the spelt out rules themselves, and not by the consequences of that action. Therefore, when employees are regarding or perceiving to perpetrate a specific work action, he or she ought to ask what rule should be followed before doing it. There is need to determine whether such rules are binding or whether employees are willing to make such work or will followed by everyone in the organization at all the time. At this point, if the rule become consistent with the workforce, then it might be followed, and the apparent action will become morally permissible. However, where the rule would not be followed by all, then their violating action will be morally inadmissible.

In accordance with the act deontology, individuals are obligated to behave in a particular way in the account of others. There is a duty to take in account of others rights and dignity regardless of the consequences so that the emphasis is on moral value embedded in the act (Ignatieff, 2012). This gives insights on the categorical imperative of Kant, which says: "Act so that you treat humanity whether in your person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only." This implies that as rational beings, our reason becomes ends that leads to achieving the ends through various means. Furthermore, on act deontology, individuals must have to give respect to other peoples' dignity and their respective unconditional value by treating them constantly as ends in their peculiarities and never as just a means. (Sher, 2012).

Kant gives a vivid example to clarify what it means to value or consider others as ends in themselves rather than as means. For instance, in a situation where you need a certain amount of money, in order to get such cash, you need a loan, but you are fully aware that will unable to repay it. Since the person is desperate, he or she will think of making false promise to repay the borrowed money just to convince a friend into providing you that money. Maybe your intention would be to use that

money for a good purpose, and you may ponder how to convince the individual by lying in this regard as to be justified. However, if you lie to the friend, you would be deceiving him or her because you are using that friend as a means to your end.

In relation to the study, the theory convinces that employees in public or private organizations and in their different professions have laws, rules and regulations that guides their actions and that such laws or rules are binding in discharge of their duties. Employees are to have the good will to carry out assigned roles and duties as to fulfill the goal of the employer and to ensure that people in society are not denied services meant for them. Hence, as rational beings, employees should be more concerned on doing what is right to do rather than in engaging on the wrong acts that are dearly prohibited by the ethical rules.

METHODOLOGY

For this research, the descriptive survey design was adopted. The survey approach is used to describe details of data related to unethical professional practices in Rivers State Civil Service. In addition, the choice for adoption of the descriptive survey design is to allow for a wider reception of variety of research approaches to investigate univariate and bivariate variables that concerns the phenomenon which is subjected to research questions, that can be applied in quantitative method of research. The reason for survey design is to obtain and show statistical evidences that can be analyzed as well, in other to establish a link between variable. However, the population of the study involves a total number of 488,400 full time (Institute for Government, 2023) civil service professionals under the auspices of departments in the Rivers State Civil Service. Therefore, a total sample size of 400 respondents was drawn from the observed population being 488,400, (Institute for Government, 2023). Therefore, Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size.

Table 1. How can organizational management and leadership reduce unethical practices and encourage productivity in civil service?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	140	35.5	35.5
Agree	112	28.4	28.4
Strongly disagree	84	21.3	21.3
Disagree	58	14.7	14.7
Total	394	100	100

Source: field survey (2023)

Table 1. revealed that 140(35.5%) of respondents strongly agree and 112(28.4%) respondents agree respectively that organizational management and leadership reduces unethical practices and encourage productivity in civil service. But 84(21.3%) respondents strongly disagree, and 58(14.7%) respondents disagree to the stated research question. However, greater number of respondents agreed to the stated research question, therefore, organizational management and leadership reduces unethical practices and encourage productivity in civil service.

Table 2. What ways can organizational climate, and conflict of interest influence employees on involving in unethical practices in civil service?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	116	29.4	29.4
Agree	122	31.0	31.0
Strongly disagree	104	26.4	26.4
Disagree	52	13.2	13.2
Total	394	100	100

Source: field survey (2023)

Management of Unethical Practices and Influence of Organizational Climate in Civil Service

Table 2 revealed that 116(29.4%) of respondents strongly agree and 122(31%) agree that organizational climate and conflict of interest influence employees on involving in unethical practices in civil service. However, 104(26.4%) respondents strongly disagree and 52(13.2%) disagree to the stated research question. Therefore, a greater number of respondents agree to the stated question, the study accepts that organizational climate and conflict of interest influences employees on involving in unethical practices in civil service.

Discussion of findings

The findings revealed that organizational management and leadership reduces unethical practices and encourage productivity in civil service, and that organizational climate and conflict of interest influences employees to engage in unethical practices in civil service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Management should keep promoting ethical ideologies among civil servants through constructive and impacting routine programmes that is geared toward developing more consciousness of ethical codes and standards. Government should mandate the head of service to set up mediums of monitoring individuals in civil service who flaw the code of ethics of the organization and penalize them through depriving them some basic entitlements until there is a notable change. Management should constantly appraise and promote employees who keep to ethical codes and standards, and achieve greater productivity for the organization through their work commitment.

REFERENCES

- Baucus, M. & Near, J. (1991), "Can illegal corporate behavior be predicted? An event history analysis", *Academy of Management Journal*, 34 (1), pp. 9-36.
- Bennett, R. J. & Robinson, S. L. (2003). "The past, present and future of workplace deviance research", in Greenberg, J. (Ed.), *organizational behavior: the state of the science, 2nd ed., Erlbaum, Mahwah*, pp. 247-81.
- Boye, M. W., & Jones, J. W. (1997). *Organizational culture and employee counter productivity*. In R. A. Giacalone & J. Greenberg (Eds.), *Antisocial behavior in organizations* (pp. 18– 36). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brown, M. E. & Mitchell, M. (2010). Ethical and unethical leadership: Exploring new avenues for future research. *Business Ethics Quarterly*. 20, pp. 583–616.
- Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K. & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. 97, pp. 117–134.
- Ciulla, C. (1998), "Avoiding a toxic organization", *Nursing Management*. 29 (5), pp. 32- 4.
- Constantin, E. (2014). Deontology in public administration. *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 6: 432–436.
- Donahue, A. (2003). Ethics and public policy, in J. Rabin (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of public administration and public policy*. CRC Press.
- Fox, S., & Spector, P. E. (1999). A model of work frustration aggression. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. 20 (6), p. 915–931.

- Greenbaum, R. L. Quade, M. J. (2015). Why do leaders practice a moral management? A conceptual investigation of the impediments to ethical leadership. *Organizational psychology review*. 5, p. 26-49.
- Ivancevich, J. M., Konopaske, R., & Matteson, M. T. (2005). *Organizational behavior and management*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- LeBlanc, M. & Kelloway, K. (2002). "Predictors and outcomes of workplace violence and aggression", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83 (3), pp. 444-53.
- Maesschalck, J. (2004). Approaches to ethics management in the public sector. *Public Integrity*. 5(7), P. 21–41.
- Mason, J. (2009). 'Ethics in the construction industry: The prospects for a single professional code', *International Journal of Law in the Built Environment*, 1(3), pp. 194-204.
- Mayer, D. M., Kuenzi, M. & Greenbaum, R. L. (2010). Examining the link between ethical leadership and employee misconduct: The mediating role of ethical climate. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 95, p. 7–16.
- McNamara, C. (1999). *Complete Guide to Ethics Management: An Ethics Toolkit for Managers*. <http://www.managementhelp.org/ethics>.
- Moilanen, T. (2011). Effectiveness of good governance and ethics in central administration: evaluating reform outcomes in the context of the financial crisis. *European Institute of Public Administration*. <https://www.oeffentlicherdienst.gv>
- Ngo, T. W. H., & Feldman, D. C. (2015). Ethical leadership: Meta-analytic evidence of criterion-related and incremental validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 100, p. 948–965.
- Osgood, D. W., Wilson, J. K., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G. & Johnston, L. D. (1996). "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior", *American Sociological Review*, 61 (4), pp. 635-55.
- Ostroff, C., Kinicki, A., & Tamkins, M. (2003). *Organizational culture and climate*. In W. C. Borman & D. R. Ilgen (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology: Industrial and organizational psychology*. 12, pp. 565–593 John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Palchoudhury, A. (2016). Productivity & ethical conduct: a correlation. *Journal of humanities and social science*, p. 93-94.
- Peterson, D. K. (2002), "Deviant workplace behavior and the organization's ethical climate", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 17 (1), pp. 47-61.
- Pinto, A.V. (2009). Introduction to public sector ethics <http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/3290-introduction-to-public-sector-ethics.pdf>
- Robinson, S. L. & Bennett, R. J. (1995). "A typology of deviant workplace behaviors: a multidimensional scaling study", *Academy of Management Journal*, 38 (2). pp. 555-72.
- Salminen, A. & Ikola-Norrbacka, R. (2009). Trust and integrity violations in Finnish public administration: the views of citizens, *Halduskultuur* 10, pp. 74–93.

Management of Unethical Practices and Influence of Organizational Climate in Civil Service

- Schneider, B., M. G. & Macey, W. H. (2011). Perspectives on organizational climate and culture. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *APA handbooks in psychology: Building and developing the organization* (pp. 373–414). *American Psychological Association*.
- Sims, R. (1992), "The challenge of ethical behavior in organizations", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 11, pp. 505-13.
- Sinclair, A. (1993), "Approaches to organizational culture and ethics", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 12. pp. 63-73.
- Smith, H. J., Thompson, R. L. & Iacovou, C. L. (2009). The impact of organizational climate on reporting behaviors in information systems projects. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 90, p. 577–591.
- Spreitzer, G. M. & Sonenshein, S. (2004). "Toward the construct definition of positive deviance", *American Behavioral Scientist*, pp. 828-47.
- Transparency International. (2015). *Corruption perception index 2014*
<http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/cpi2014>
- Treviño, L. K. (1992). The social effects of punishment in organizations: A justice perspective. *Academy of Management Review*. 17, p. 647–676.
- Treviño, L. K., & Nelson, K. A. (2017). *Managing business ethics: Straight talk about how to do it right*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Treviño, L. K., Brown, M. & Hartman, L. P. (2003). A qualitative investigation of perceived executive ethical leadership: Perceptions from outside the executive suite. *Human Relations*, 55, p. 5–37.
- Treviño, L. K., Hartman, L. P., & Brown, M. (2000). Moral person and moral manager: How executives develop a reputation or ethical leadership. *California Management Review*, 42, p.128–142.
- Vardi, Y. (2001). The effects of organizational and ethical climates on misconduct at work. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 29 (4), p. 325–337.
- Whaley, J. (1999). Legislative ethics: a comparative analysis. *Legislative Research Series*, 4. NDI.
- Whitton, H. (2001). Implementing effective ethics standards in government and the civil service. Transparency International.
- Wimbush, J. & Shepard, J. (1994), "Toward an understanding of ethical climate: its relationship to ethical behaviour and supervisory influence", *Journal of Business Ethics*. 13, pp. 637- 47.
- Xu, A. J., Loi, R. & Ngo, H. (2016). Ethical leadership behavior and employee justice perceptions: The meditating role of trust in organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 134, p, 493–504.
- Zohar, D. & Luria, G. (2015). A multilevel model of safety climate; cross level relationships between organization and group level climates, *journal of applied psychology*. 90, pp. 616-628.