

CHAPTER - 5

Ethical Corporate Communication and Business Productivity in Nigeria: The Nexus

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ABSTRACT

This work focused on examining whether Ethical Corporate Communication has any relationship with business productivity and to what extent this has impacted the Nigerian business environment. The trigger was the observable decline in ethical values in business dealings and the seeming craze for immediate personal benefits and profit margins which have become the focus of business transactions in corporate entities. This is in spite of several attempts at ethical reorientation. Integrity and loyalty no longer seem to matter. The work was anchored on Classical Management and Norm theories; a survey of four public service institutions was carried out through random administration of questionnaires to more than 410 employees. Findings showed that although there is widespread awareness of the role of communication in business productivity as well as the essence of Code of Ethics in the integrity of organizational perception, ineffective ethical corporate communication and lack of adherence to ethical codes have become impediments to efficiency, with attendant negative impact on business productivity in the organizations surveyed. Given the potency of ethical codes in defining the way things should be done in any corporate situation, it was recommended that both the government and body corporates should emphasize integration of ethical values in everyday practice across board. Another recommendation is that Ethical Corporate Communication should be adopted in directing employee attitudes towards business productivity in Nigeria and sanctions must follow any breach for effectiveness and deterrence.

Keywords: *Business; Corporate communication; Ethics; Productivity.*

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1.0 Introduction

Studies have shown that effective communication in the workplace is capable of providing a clear basis for interaction and actions that could help in improving accountability; and in the process increasing productivity (Aiyammahi *et al.*, (2020). This happens because when workers receive clear instructions through appropriate channels, they are most likely to know what is expected of them and how to deliver.

Krugman (1994) defines business productivity as “a ratio between the output volume and the volume of inputs” where efficient production inputs, such as labour and capital, are being used to produce a given level of output. Business productivity can be seen in terms of output and expansion of business earnings and settings (Kenton, 2021). It is seen in the turnover and increased inventory. It is seen in the returns and growth levels. Kenton says productivity is determined by output divided by the units used to generate it.

It could be the timely meeting of targets or achieving set goals and achieving set objectives within appropriate time and space (Wholley, 2019). It is a development which does not just occur in isolation, but results from a combination of factors and intervening variables strategically designed and working in sync to produce results and meet objectives. Some studies indicate that it is a culmination of the coordination of human and material resources working together towards a set of common goals. The human resource, which is the most critical - because it directs and coordinates all other resources- operates within a system in different forms and stages; and needs some form of interaction to work in sync with the processes and procedures. That interaction required to direct a group towards achieving a common goal is known as corporate communication (Zink, nd).

It is not likely that Corporate Communication, on its own, can produce significant results. It depends on how it is packaged and delivered. Krugman (1994) stated that productivity is not everything; it is about raising the output per worker. Vdovin (2017) stressed the

essence of communication in workplace productivity and the negative effect that ineffective or lack of proper communication can have on employee retention, morale and overall productivity. The way communication is presented is likely to determine how it is received and internalized. The way it is internalized would determine the direction, action and impact. In some organizations, what guides perceptions and reactions within the systems is usually embedded in codes, which provides a framework for how people should respond and behave in given circumstances (Gilman, 2005). In his report prepared for the World Bank, Gilman indicates that codes are the framework upon which professions are built.

Communication which is the vehicle that conveys such guides can create action; but effective communication not only creates action, it produces results. The level of result attainment would most likely depend on the perceptual ingredients that motivated the action – the ethics embedded in the communication and how it resonates with the values of communication targets. The result can come in terms of enhanced productivity, where productivity may be seen as the output, goal or objective of the organization.

However, there is the likelihood that efficiency and productivity may have suffered some relapse within corporate circles in Nigeria as a result of some unethical attitudes of leaders and workers, which is why government have been moving from one re-orientation project to another, including the ‘War Against Indiscipline’ (1985), ‘National Orientation Agency’ (NOA, 1993), ‘SERVICOM’ (2004), ‘Rebranding Nigeria Project’ (2009) and ‘Change Begins with You’ (2016), among others.

The core essence of all these programmes is to positively change attitudes, values and behaviours accurately through proper communication deployments and to develop a society where citizens demonstrate core values of honesty, hard work and patriotism (Abari, nd). These apparently follow some ethical concerns that affected efficiency and better society (which includes work environment) that required reorientation through proper and effective communication.

The projects could be seen from a wider perspective as ethical corporate communication.

As earlier indicated, some research findings have established that there is some correlation between communication ethics in the workplace and improved accountability which in turn leads to enhanced business productivity (Aiyammahi *et al.*, 2020).

2.0 Objectives of the Study

The objectives were to:

- Examine if ethical corporate communication has any relationship with business productivity in Nigeria and
- Establish whether the relationship between ethical corporate communication and business productivity has any impact on decision making, accountability and productivity.

3.0 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- Does ethical corporate communication have any relationship with business productivity in Nigeria?
- In what ways does ethical corporate communication impact on business productivity?

4.0 Theoretical Framework

Given the trajectory of the paper which straddles two major paradigms – communication ethics and organizational productivity, two theories that have to do with management principle/styles and ethical responsibility were adopted as frameworks – the Classical Management Theory and the Norm Theory.

5.0 Classical Management Theory

The main plank of the Classical Management Theory is that

organisations are like machines and all critical parts must work in sync for efficiency. The notion is that a well built and well managed organisation serves the employees and owners just the same way a well built and well serviced machine serves the purpose. The point here is that workers are part of a large machine, which is the organisation. If one part fails then the entire machine fails (Zink, nd). Being a critical component of the whole, the attitude of the workers, their disposition and actions are critical for the success or otherwise of an organization.

The classical perspective of management derives impetus from the theories of Fredrick Taylor, Max Weber, and Henri Fayol; propounded in the 19th Century and focused on the efficiency of employees; and on improving an organisation's productivity through measurable, data-driven methods. It drew essence from the industrial revolution era when productivity output was the focus of business owners and managers. Attention was basically on improving efficiency, productivity, employees' output and the overall economic health of the business.

However, because its focus was largely on production output, it overlooked the implications of human behaviour in driving the process. It did not consider human desires and needs, the psychographic issues, those things that can influence perception, and in the process affect performance. Although this class of theories have strong influence on modern operations and process improvement, it ran into trouble with workers, because it saw them as mere tools to improve efficiency and not as a critical resource. It was this situation that gave impetus to the Behavioural Perspective of Management which was propounded from different perspectives by Eton Mayo, Abraham Maslow and Mary Follet in the 1920s. The intervention was a product of the human relations movement of the period which birthed the human relations perspective of management.

The Norm Theory is concerned more about business ethics. Its focus is on the standard of moral conducts that should be followed by a group within an organisation and in relation to its operation and

publics – a standard and acceptable conduct – usually also embedded in employee handbooks or corporate codes of conduct Akers (2022). The codes, according to Akers (2022), provide a framework for employees' response and behaviour in given circumstances, with deviation attracting disciplinary action. The theory is recorded to have been first used by Perkins and Berkowitz in 1986 to address students' alcohol use patterns.

Norm Theory includes Kantian Ethical Principles which was developed by an 18th Century German philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Although the Kantian Principles lean more towards the Deontological Theory, it emphasised goodwill as a veritable framework in any endeavour; those ethical prescriptions should guide humanity as an entity. It was based on the philosophy that humans should be seen and treated as ends rather than means; that individuals, in their pursuits, should not use others to their own selfish advantage. Deontological Theory on its own emphasises human behaviour following an established set of rules or principles in all types of situations, irrespective of the outcome (Akers, 2022).

Both the Classical Management and Norm theories are relevant in this work because they allow management and employees to be more objective in their judgement and approach in line with rules and procedures for doing specific tasks and provide essential tools for understanding behaviour, for reasoning, judgement, and decision-making etc., (Gold *et al.*, 2011).

6.0 Review of Related Literature

6.1 The necessity of ethics in organizations

Ethics generally refers to a set of rules that describe acceptable conducts in society; conducts largely in sync with the norms and values of a society. They serve as a guide to moral dispositions of the people and help to judge whether such behaviours can be justified. Zink (nd) defined ethics as a society's sense of the right way of living. This is done by establishing rules, principles, and values on which people's conduct can be based. Rules form the yardstick with which behaviours acceptable within respective societies are

measured. Msoroka & Amundsen, (2017) describe ethics simply as being concerned about how people ought to live in the right way. They listed truth, honesty, fairness, and equity among concepts most directly associated with ethics.

Zink indicated that ethics is not just how people think and act; it is also about character, which he noted drives what people do when they are not watched or supervised. Going by some of the definitions, ethics can largely be said to be about right and wrong; but the question remains: who determines what is right and what is wrong? Although some studies point to the universality of ethics, it is also argued that morality, a critical ethical ingredient, seems to have a universal façade, an application which also seems to be more in sync with the norms and values of respective societies; which explains the notion that ethics is universal while its application is local.

Msoroka & Amundsen (2017) in their study of *Universal Ethics with Diversity* argued that conception “one size fits not all.” They were of the opinion that certain actions that may be seen as right in reference to ethical norms endorsed in one society might not necessarily be seen in the same light in reference to ethical norms in another society. Cultural disparities may create the difference in perception and (re)action. The universality is seen as a western construct, which tends to push the narrative that Western ethics contain prescriptions that apply to all – everywhere, at all times and in whichever contexts. Such positions regarded contrary dispositions as unethical (Nordenstam cited in Msoroka & Amundsen, 2017). Again, such thinking may not altogether be unfounded. It can be situated within the contemplation of multinational corporations with global corporate culture. That, again, does not eclipse the point that norms and values are largely local in orientation and perception.

Arguing against the universality of ethics, Msoroka and Amundsen were of the opinion that if there were a possibility of accepting the notion that morality is culture-driven, it would most likely lead to the consideration that the question of ethics itself can be seen differently. Not discounting the context of validity and applicability in all situations, they still contended that more research

work can unearth reasons why ethical principles should be mediated to enable the adoption of different meanings in relation to ethical practices.

Palchoudhury (2016) also saw relativity in ethical prescriptions and is of the view that circumstances can also determine and, in some cases, justify ethical indulgences. Pointing to “Situational Ethics,” he noted that there may be some not too clear areas where what is right may depend on the circumstances that pushed the action. Directing attention to the corporate sphere, he stated that organizations and professions have formal code of ethics which provides guidelines on the way to go for workers and members, respectively. These are based on some ethical values and standards which, Gilman (2005) stated, carry general obligations and admonitions. However, Gilman pointed out that codes carry far more than just obligations and admonitions; “they often capture a vision of excellence, of what individuals and societies should be striving for and what they can achieve.”

Given the foregoing, it is obvious that there are common signposts to ethical practices, but the argument is that such signposts derive perceptual meanings from the background of the interpretation of the cultural leanings of the respective societies or organizations – the norms, the values and beliefs of such entities. This is against the postulation of universality in all cases, anywhere. What may be frowned at in one society may not attract the level of negative reaction from another. Rules, obligations and admonitions may also differ from one organization to the other.

Notwithstanding, there are common denominators that evidently will show a breach of ethical integrity, particularly in the work place – integrity, dishonesty, impunity and profiteering, among others, are attributes that attract universal admonitions.

Relating ethics to the workplace, Palchoudhury (2016) says they are standards of right or wrong in an organizational scenario. He opined that in professional life, the choices individuals make affect their quality of work. In trying to establish the correlation between moral codes of conduct in an organization and its productivity, he

was emphatic on the position that code of ethics affects behaviour of an individual in the workplace.

He submitted that ethical standards are a great asset for an organization while unethical dispositions are a liability; pointing out that well-structured organizations have come to recognise that commercial success means much more than profit margin. That is so because success is largely determined by the image and goodwill it generates. Such organizations, in addition, attract the brightest and the best workforce - that means efficiency, and consequently enhanced productivity. He confirmed the existence of a direct correlation between ethical conduct and job satisfaction; adding that a happy employee often turns out to be a productive employee in an ethical environment. Happiness in a workplace, according to him, is one of the greatest motivating factors that induce a strong sense of belonging and loyalty.

6.2 Relevance of communication in the workplace

Communication is a vital aspect of the corporate governance structure in any organization, and it is the bridge between decision makers and decision targets. Zink (nd) says it is a building block of successful organizations - "it acts as organizational blood." It is the fuel that powers the system and serves a basic function of guiding and coordinating. For workers to activate the kind of buy-in and participation required in a work situation there must be both standard and targeted communication templates at appropriate times for effective guidance towards achieving organizational goals. Communication gives impetus to planning, motivation and control; and drives workers towards corporate goals. Once communication is well packaged, delivered and well received, implementation becomes very easy and positive result is assured.

Martins (2021) describes workplace communication as any type of communication done at work and about work. It could be added, in furtherance of work and achievement of desired results. It has to do with informing and discussing individual tasks, sharing work status updates, or giving feedback to managers or employees

(Martins, 2021). It can take various forms, including verbal, written and online interactions, meetings, and recorded transmissions, etc; as long as the interaction is about work, and about achieving corporate goals.

Faizal (2019) says it is the process of exchanging information and ideas, both verbally and non-verbally between individuals and, or groups within an organization. Arcenas (2021) noted that it is critical in not just getting the job done, but also in building a sense of trust and increasing productivity. She aligned with the positions of other scholars that effective communication in a workplace is a critical factor for success in business.

Effective workplace communication helps in boosting employee engagement and bolstering a sense of belonging, engendering team buy-in, building healthy organizational culture, reducing conflicts and increasing retention (Martins, 2021). All these can only lead to effective participation and increased productivity; but Arcenas (2021) pointed out that lack of, or ineffective communication can have detrimental impact on an organization and can in fact negatively affect efficiency and productivity.

6.3 Ethical communication, leadership and organizational productivity

Mandelbaum (2020) defined Ethical Communication as one that is based on certain business values such as truthfulness, conciseness and responsibility with words and actions resulting from it. One of the most fundamental principles of ethical communication is honesty.

In trying to find out the impact of communication ethics on the workplace, Aiyammahi *et al.*, (2020) noted that communication ethics is vital in any business decision-making process; and emphasised not just the need for proper understanding of the role of effective workplace communication ethics and culture by managers but the integration of such ethics in everyday practice within the organisation. Palchoudhury (2016) had earlier noted that the ethical conduct of an individual and the company as a whole, can to a very large extent, affect the productivity of both.

Aiyammahi *et al.*, (2020) noted that just as communication is the first most important tool towards workplace success, effective communication ethics increases workplace productivity in various ways. This is because both management and employees are well guided in making the right decisions concerning various issues within a workplace. Effective communication ethics govern all the decisions made within any work environment. Theirs was in tune with other studies which confirmed that ethics guides and directs all the business operations and is a very critical element in the overall success of any business.

Zink (nd) was emphatic that just as ethical behaviour was important in personal behaviour, it was more so in the workplace; he pointed out that individual actions do not only affect the individual but also those around them - if not directly in terms of influencing attitude change, it could be from the fallouts of untoward actions. Their position was that ethics matters wherever business is conducted, because a successful business depends on the trust of the various parties involved in the engagement, including executives, employees, customers and other critical stakeholders and competitors. He listed terms upon which ethical business practice is built to include: values, morals, integrity, character and laws.

Mercader *et al.*, (2021) also found some relationship between ethics in leadership, teamwork, effective communication and productivity, particularly when looking at the benefits to the society. That was predicated on their thinking that a well governed relationship of this combination could contribute to better understanding, enhanced knowledge and increased productivity. They noticed, during their study, that there was a noticeable absence of studies which relate ethics to the four elements simultaneously.

Popescu (2019), who was part of the study had in his own solo work, mentioned that these four elements should be closely analysed focusing on their relevance in the business environment. In another work, Popescu & Banta (2019) also emphasized the need to look into the opportunities that are capable of bringing in order, to ensure business performance and excellence. Their findings in a

performance evaluation study showed that: ethics and integrity are pivotal elements in any human entity; and importantly that there are strong connections between ethics, integrity, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability, in today's contemporary society.

Palchoudhury (2016) had much earlier, held a similar while analysing productivity and ethical conduct. According to him, "the entire work culture of an organization depends on the moral values of its employer as well as employee." He noted that an ethical work environment is very likely to be highly motivating and bound to increase productivity; pointing out that highly valued and ethical workforce have always been highly productive and outstanding.

7.0 Research Methodology

Survey method was adopted for this study and questionnaires were distributed among workers in four organizations namely: Bingham University in Karu (near Abuja); National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) headquarters, Abuja; Ministry of Information and Culture (MOI&C) headquarters, Abuja, and the National Judicial Council (NJC) headquarters, Abuja. These are agencies with large population of employees which deal with people on a daily basis with a disposition to service delivery that impacts greatly on members of the public and the integrity of the institutions.

Purposive sampling method was preferred in selecting respondents because the chosen organizations formed the most available primary data sources that can contribute immediately to the study given the limited time frame. More so, the diversity makes them representative of the study universe.

Four hundred and fifty (450) questionnaires were sent to staff ~~on~~ of the four organizations according to the size of each organization. Two hundred (200) were sent to MOI&C; 100 to NIMC; 90 to NJC and 60 to BHU. A total of 417 questionnaires were returned, but a round figure of 410 (98.32%) adopted for easy computation and analysis, as the surplus was not significant enough to affect the result of the research.

A large sample size was adopted for this work because larger samples more closely approximate the population. The primary goal of inferential statistics is to generalize from a sample to a population and apart from providing more accurate mean values; larger sample sizes provide a smaller margin of error (Zamboni, 2018).

8.0 Data Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Item	Frequency	%
Organization		
MOI & C	193	47.1
NIMC	91	22.1
NJC	72	17.6
BHU	54	13.2
Total	410	100
Gender		
Male	208	50.7
Female	202	49.3
Total	410	100%
Age		
30-40	200	48.8
41-50	151	36.8
51-60	54	13.2
61-70	5	1.2
Total	410	100%
Educational Status		
Secondary	45	10.97
Tertiary	257	62.69
<u>Professional</u>	108	26.34
Total	410	100%
Job Status		
Executive	34	8.3
Manager	103	25.1
Supervisory	102	24.9
Others	171	41.7
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

The following is an analysis of the data collected following the administration of questionnaires to employees of the four organizations that formed the study population, arranged in tables, with brief explanation of each.

Table 1 shows distribution in terms of organization, gender, age, education and job status. The segment in respect of organization indicates that 47% of the sample population were from the Ministry of Information and Culture (MOI&C) which includes the Ministry itself, Voice of Nigeria and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria. 22% of the respondents were from the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC); 17.6% were from the National Judicial Commission (NJC), while 13.2% were from Bingham University, a private institution located in Karu, Nasarawa State. The first three are located in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Of the respondents, 208 representing 50.7% were male while 202, representing 49.7 were female.

The second segment shows that 200 of the respondents which represent 48.8% were of the age bracket of 30 to 40 years; 151 (36.8%) were between 41 and 50 years; 54 (13.2%) were between 51 and 60 years; while five (1.2%) which represents experts in the system were between 61 and 70 years. In the civil service, the retirement age is 60 years.

The third segment on educational qualifications shows that the bulk of the respondents (257/62.69%) had acquired tertiary education; 108 (26.34%) are professionals and 45, which represents 10.97% were those with secondary education.

The last segment on job status indicates that more than one quarter of the respondents (103/25.1%) were of the managerial cadre; 103 representing 24.9% were of the supervisory cadre; those on the executive cadre were 34 (8.3%), while the rest 171 (41.7%) belonged to the lower cadres.

Table 2 indicates that an overwhelming number of respondents agree that effective communication is one of the most important tools towards workplace success. Three hundred and ninety-one (391) of

the respondents representing 95.4% affirmed; seven (1.7%) were not sure, while 12 (2.9%) dismissed it.

Table 2: Effective Communication is One of the Most Important Tools Towards Workplace Success

Response	Frequency	%
Not sure	7	1.7
Not true	12	2.9
True	391	95.4
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

As depicted in Table 3, 360 respondents representing 87.8% affirmed that the culture of their respective organizations encourages the understanding and commitment to corporate goals. Twenty (4.9%) said it was not true; while 30 (7.3%) were not sure if it does.

Table 3: The Culture of Our Organization Encourages Employees’ Understanding and Commitment to Corporate Goals

Response	Frequency	%
Not sure	30	7.3
Not true	20	4.9
True	360	87.8
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 4: The Corporate Objectives are Properly Communicated Within Our Organization

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly Disagree	25	6.1
Disagree	31	7.6
Neutral	71	17.3
Agree	185	45.1
Strongly agree	98	23.9
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents (45.1%) agreed that corporate objectives are properly communicated within their organizations; 23.9% strongly agreed; 17.3% were neutral; 7.6% disagreed, but 6.1% strongly disagreed that it is.

Table 5: The Organization's Structure Facilitates Organizational Learning

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly Disagree	22	5.4
Disagree	33	8
Neutral	73	17.8
Agree	184	44.9
Strongly agree	98	23.9
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 5 shows that nearly half (44.9%) of the respondents were in agreement that their organizational structure facilitates organizational learning; 23.9 strongly agreed it does; 17.8% were neutral; 8% disagreed and 5.4% vehemently disagreed.

Table 6: Code of Ethics Helps in Streamlining Activities Within the Organization

Response	Frequency	%
Not true	13	3.2
Very little impact	59	14.4
True	338	82.4
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 6 shows that 82.4% of the respondents hold the view that it is true that Code of Ethics helps in streamlining activities within their organizations. More than 3% said it was not true, while 14.4% believe the impact is insignificant.

Table 7 demonstrates that more than 44% of the respondents strongly agreed that Communication Ethics is critical in any business decision making process, as it works to enhance credibility among workers. While 31.7% just agreed it does, 14.9% were non-committal, while 7.8% strongly disagreed and 1.5% merely disagreed.

Table 7: Communication Ethics is Critical in Any Business Decision Making Process, as it Works to Enhance Credibility among Workers

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly Disagree	32	7.8
Disagree	6	1.5
Neutral	61	14.9
Agree	130	31.7
Strongly Agree	181	44.1
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 8 shows that there was a clear indication that Ethical Communication helps to improve accountability and increases workplace productivity. 90.5% said it did, 6.8% were not sure, while 2.7 said it was not true.

Table 8: Ethical Communication Helps Improve Accountability and Increases Workplace Productivity

Response	Frequency	%
Not sure	28	6.8
Not true	11	2.7
True	371	90.5
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 9 shows that 78.5% of the survey respondents agreed that Ethical Cooperate Communication has connection with business

productivity in Nigeria, but 3.7% did not agree while 17.8% were not sure. Table 10 indicates that a significant percentage (68.3%) of the respondents were of the view that focusing more on the ethical correctness of an action rather than the result can seriously hamper productivity and 20.7% said the impact might not be significant, if any. However, 11% said it was a false assumption. In other words, it cannot hamper productivity.

Table 9: Does Ethical Cooperate Communication have Any Connection with Business Productivity in Nigeria

Response	Frequency	%
Not sure	73	17.8
No	15	3.7
Yes	322	78.5
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 10: Focusing More on the Ethical Correctness of an Action Rather than the Result Can Seriously Hamper Productivity

Response	Frequency	%
Neither here nor there	85	20.7
False	45	11
True	280	68.3
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 11: Is it Therefore Advisable to Insist on Certain Ethical Prescriptions Even if They Have Serious Implications on the Growth and Productivity Levels of the Organization?

Response	Frequency	%
Can't say	98	23.9
No	46	11.2
Yes	266	64.9
Total	410	100

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 11 shows that almost 65% of the respondents supported ethical prescriptions even if they have implications on the growth and productivity levels of organizations. 11.2% were not in support and 23.9 could ascertain whether it was necessary or not.

9.0 Discussion of Findings

This work set out to achieve the following objectives: Examine whether Ethical Corporate Communication has any relationship with business productivity and to establish whether such relationship has any impact on decision making, accountability and productivity; and to find out whether Ethical Corporate Communication has any relationship with business productivity in Nigeria, and in what ways Ethical Corporate Communication impacts on business productivity in Nigeria. To answer the questions a number of posers were put out as precursors, to set parameters and give perspectives, bearing in mind the postulations of the both the Classical Management and the Norm theories which provided the framework for the work.

Although cumulative majority of the respondents agreed that organizational culture encourages employees' understanding (87%); those corporate objectives are properly communicated within their organizations (69%); and those existing structures facilitate organizational learning (68,8%), responses at various stages indicted some gradual decline in terms of physical expression of the positives.

To start with, there was an almost unanimous agreement on communication being one of the most important tools in workplace success. Only 4.6% of the universe of study either did not agree or were not sure. That figure is insignificant as to affect the postulation which had earlier been established by scholars which include Aiyammahi *et al.*, (2020) and Arecenas (2021) that communication is a very necessary tool for organizational success; Vdovin (2027) who stressed the essence of communication in achieving organizational objectives; and Zink (nd) who said it was the building block of successful organizations.

However, it was a slightly different picture with Ethical Communication's relationship with business productivity in Nigeria. A comparatively lower percentage of respondents 78.5% agreed that there is; 17.8% were not sure. Though still significant, there was an almost 17% drop between those who affirmed the role of communication in business productivity generally and those who affirmed its impact in Nigeria. It was not surprising though because service delivery in the establishments surveyed cannot be said to be optimal. Though 95.4% agreed to the relevance of communication in organizational success, only 78.5% of the same universe linked ethical communication with efficiency, accountability and productivity in the establishments.

Taken alongside the results on the relevance of Code of Ethics in streamlining activities within an organization, there was an indication that something was wrong somewhere. More than 82% agreed it does, 14.4% said the impact was insignificant and 3.3% disagreed that it does at all. The opinion of the majority is ~~goes~~ in tandem with the positions of Gilman (2005) on the guiding role of code of ethics in terms of response and behaviour in given circumstances, and Zink's postulation of ethical frameworks driving employee activities even when unsupervised. However, the percentage of negative responses went up to almost 18%.

Responses to whether ethical communication helps to improve accountability and increase workplace productivity emphasised that awareness of the essence of communication and availability of Code of Ethics do not on their own guarantee efficiency, accountability and productivity where effective communication, monitoring, and due diligence are lacking. Where these variables are lacking in a setting, individual attributes are unleashed. Such attributes spread and affect others in the workplace; thus having negative effect on productivity, as indicated in the works of Arecenas (2021) which noted that lack of effective communication can have detrimental impact and thus negatively affect efficiency and productivity; Palchoudhury (2016) and Zink (nd) which noted that ethical conduct of an individual has the tendency of affecting those around them and

by extension productivity to a very large extent; and Aiyammahi *et al.*, (2020) which emphasised the need for integration of ethics in everyday practice within an organization.

There was a noticeable aversion for ethical prescriptions, as a comparatively lesser percentage preferred insistence even if there are implications on growth and productivity levels. Approximately 65% preferred insistence even with implications; 23.9% were not sure, while 11.2% were indifferent about ethics so long as there were immediate benefits. To the last two, image and goodwill seem secondary to profit and immediate gains. Even though a slightly higher percentage indicated otherwise, the negatives constitute a significant percentage (35.1%); which establishes a position that although Ethical Corporate Communication has relationship with business productivity in principle, the impact on decision making, accountability and productivity in the Nigerian corporate space leaves much to be desired.

Incidentally, the spreadsheet showed that the bulk of the more than 35% that did not directly believe on insistence were from the MOI&C, even by aggregate; but almost the entire respondents from the NJC preferred ethical prescriptions. The latter is understandable because of the nature of the work environment which is largely professional, with strict codes of practice and mutual respect among employees; a confirmation of Palchoudhury (2016) position on the indispensability of formal code of ethics as guidelines for those engaged in any corporate activity; emphasised also by Zink (nd) who stated that ethics matters wherever business is conducted. The disparity in focus between the respective organizations here also emphasises the point that although codes of ethics carry general obligations and admonitions as indicated by Gilman (2005), lack of adherence or enforcement can render them worthless. It shows that where there is due diligence, it counts.

Going by the responses, it could be deduced that although there are no significant disagreement over the relationship between Ethical Corporate Communication and business productivity in Nigeria, the impact in real terms is not significantly high because there are

patterns in the responses that indicate availability of the necessary structures, but lack of compliance by employees in some of the critical institutions, absence of diligent evaluation by their managers and leaders and indulgence and apathy by the society. Therefore, it could be said that Ethical Corporate Communication has impact on organizational productivity in Nigeria where there is due diligence in observance and pursuit.

10.0 Recommendations

It is obvious from the data analysis that there is significant awareness of the role of communication in organizational productivity as well as the essence of Ethical Corporate Communication on perception and productivity levels of an organization. However, an apparent lack of effective coordination and indulgence of unethical behaviours have rendered the availability of Code of Ethics unhelpful in enhancing efficiency, accountability and productivity. These deficiencies have negatively impacted on service delivery and growth in productivity levels in Nigeria. Therefore:

- There is an urgent need to re-invigorate the various re-orientation agencies to re-strategize for a massive enlightenment programme to redirect the people on the path to ethical consciousness, improved citizen satisfaction, efficient service delivery and better productivity.
- Organizations must consider Ethical Corporate Communication as a cardinal compass for directing employee attitude towards efficiency and productivity and also see ethical standards as a great asset for organizational integrity, better perception and loyalty. There must be emphasis on integration of ethics in everyday practice within an organization.
- Those entrusted with the responsibility of leading and directing ethical reorientation projects; whether in an organization or the larger society, should be sufficiently empowered to carry out such responsibilities, with adequate monitoring and evaluation

mechanisms that are capable of exposing indolence and non-conformity-backed by appropriate sanctions.

- Government, in particular must not see public enlightenment and strategic communication as a routine activity that signposts a new administration, but one that has a critical role in moulding and remoulding attitudes of the people towards a high level of contentment and integrity, effective service delivery, quality productivity and working towards general well-being of society and the people. This is necessary because those working in organizations are from the larger society, and where there are untoward indulgences in the society, it is likely to affect organizations operating within such environments.
- The people must be recommitted towards living ethically correct lifestyles that are in conformity with established and acceptable cultural and societal prescriptions.
- Since a larger chunk of unethical dispositions stem from the desire for uncontrolled benefits, there should be a monitoring mechanism to track acquisitions that cannot be ordinarily explained or accounted for. Sanctions and seizures can act as deterrents while reward for hard work, honesty and efficiency could act as incentives towards overall productivity.
- It would be necessary to conduct further studies to establish why, in spite of the numerous re-orientation projects in Nigeria, issues of unethical indulgencies keep popping up at all times in almost all spheres, including corporate organizations. Service delivery seems to be getting poorer with every passing day, in spite of these initiatives.

11.0 Conclusion

It is obvious, from the analysis of respondents that there is widespread awareness of the role of communication in organizational productivity as well as the essence of ethical corporate communication on the integrity of organizational perception. Ineffective communication and lack of due diligence to ethical codes of conduct, which has high propensity for enhancing efficiency and

productivity, has instead been detrimental to efficiency with attendant negative impact on productivity in the organizations surveyed, which incidentally are aggregate representatives of the public segment of corporate Nigeria. This is so, because MOI&C harbours the mouthpiece of government, NIMC is in charge of identity management; NJC embodies the justice system while BHU represents the educational segment of the Nigerian body corporate.

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