

Employee Unethical Behaviour: An Analysis of Instigating factors Amongst Operational Level Workers in Indigenous Manufacturing Organizations.

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Abstract

This paper focused on espousing instigating factors of employee unethical behaviors amongst operational level workers of indigenous company's in the manufacturing sector; in a bid to achieve the said objective the paper establishes a conceptual clarification of unethical behavior and its behavioral evidences. Further, the paper highlighted some unethical behaviors in the manufacturing sector, sequently, the instigating factors were noted and how to curb unethical behavior in the sector where proposed. The study upon the theoretical excursion recommended that rewarding of ethical behaviors, initiating stiffer penalties for unethical behaviors, setting up ethics committees and courts to handle ethical issues in the various sectors of Nigerian economics amongst others should be implored.

Keyword: Ethics, unethical behavior, Psychological traps,

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I. Introduction

Unethical behaviors are a common quandary in corporate world around the world inclusive of the western corporations. According to United States Department of Justice (2006), Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) enlisted over 400 American companies that were earmarked for unethical business practices; corrupt questionable and illicit transactions made with foreign government officials and politicians. Employees compliance with ethical standards were observed to be extremely low in organizations with heightened level of unscrupulous practices due to managers negligence and compromising attitude (Oladunni 2002).

Though, there seems to be harmony amongst firms in their strive towards sustaining ethical norms. Steinberg (1994) described ethos as a mere decency which involves veracity, and fairmindedness. Employees acting ethically are perceived to be engrossed with the spirit of civic responsibility as an organization citizenship culture other than the usual profit expectation as a major objective (Adenubi 2000).

Unethical practices amongst employees of indigenous manufacturing organization have been a concern for researchers lately. Sam-Dalyop, Bogda, Peter, Elizebeth (2017) avers that unethical professional practices where professionals in the said sector who fail to comply with professional best practices, such unprofessional misconducts permeate the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Nwaizigbo & Ogbunan, (2013) shared the same line of thought in asserting that the Nigerian society including the manufacturing sector is pervaded with unscrupulous practices which have flooded the Nigerian business landscape. Bello and Ibrahim (2018) avers that these unscrupulous depravities in the business circle has run Nigeria into lost in billions through conniving with government officials in manufacturing substandard products and diverting proceed to personal pocket. Sequently, Ameh & Odusami, (2010) noted that lack of ethical values demonstration of employees and business operators leads to failure and collapse of enterprises.

Though, previous investigations have looked at several ethical issues in Nigerian business landscape (Ayozie, 2013, Johnny & Benjamin, 2013, Don-Solomon & Gogo 2018). The focus of this theoretical exploration is directed at investigating the instigating factors of employee's unethical behaviors amongst operational level workers of indigenous manufacturing organizations.

Conceptualizing Unethical Behaviors

Unethical behaviors are those ill demeanors which are dishonest, manipulative, life threatening and upheaval to societal development (Ayuba and Aliyu 2018). Kotler (2003) alleged that Unethical business practices could be referred to as social criticisms of marketing; that is, various practices in business exhibited corporately or by employees that upheaval to consumers, society and other business concerns.

Vee & Skitmore, (2003) underpinned ubiquitous unethical behaviors to include corruption, misrepresentation, negligence and manipulative tendencies to get some unfair favorable position. Kaptein (2008), described unethical behaviors as corporate scandals. Deceitful accounting practices, and divulging of confidential information are amongst issues of common interest relating to unethical behavior of operational level manpower in the manufacturing sector (Goodpaster, 2007; Paine, 2003). mistreatment, misuse of organizational resources, policies violation and code of conducts are common unethical behaviors (Verschoor, 2012). In all unethical behavior is a cankerworm that threatens the reputation of any organization (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

Instigators of Employee's Unethical Behaviors in Manufacturing Sector

In bid to curb the ire of unethical practices in the Nigerian's business environment especially the manufacturing sector, researcher have hypothesized several antecedents, causes and instigators of employee unethical behavior in the said sector; perhaps in agreement with the notion that identifying the cause of a problem is the first progressive attempt in addressing it. Robert and Paul (2009) avers "psychological traps" as main source of unethical behaviors. They explained "psychological traps" as psychological innuendos by nature that destroys the discernment of morality from immorality such that people conceive their unscrupulous behaviours to be appropriate conducts.

Robert and Paul (2009) categorized the psychological traps into primary traps, personality traps and defensive traps. Primary traps are exterior stimuli that prompt individual's behavior in a certain pattern ignoring subsisting ethical values. "Obedience to Authority" is an example of primary trap. Personality traps on the other hand is an internal stimulus; traits in one's disposition that propel wrongdoing. Arie and Donna (1996) states that when employees ignore, justify, or condone unethical behavior of colleagues, it tends to send wrong signal by making the culpable feel that his or her unethical actions are acceptable. Defensive traps are basically attempting to atone transgressions; it's a defensive reaction to two internal stimuli: guilt and shame.

Rahul (2017) on a divergent perspective posits pressure from supervisor, personal greed, ignorant of the company's codes of ethics as biggest instigating factors of unethical behavior amongst operational level workers.

Additively, Don-Solomon & Gogo (2018) identified manager/supervisor's influence, loosed organizational culture, rewarding of unethical conducts and pressure/need force as key promoters of unethical employee behavior.

Moreso, Haron, Ishmail, & Razak, (2011) cited in Adam (2015) outline six instigators of unethical behavior to include; (1) employee's personal moral values and standards, (2) family and friends who provide support and insight in resolving ethical issues, (3) boss who controls the pressure employees have to compromise ethical standards, (4) company environment/culture which controls the pressure to compromise employee's ethical values to achieve

organizational goals, (5) company management philosophy that emphasizes ethics in business operations, and (6) the professional codes of ethics.

Undoubtedly, its glaring that unethical behaviours just don't happen in the said sector amongst operational level employees but are predicated by obvious factors highlighted above.

Curbing Unethical Behaviour

Curbing employee unethical behaviours amongst operational level workers in the manufacturing sector requires a holistic approach; government involvement in setting up uncompromising regulatory apparatus, tight organization's institutional structures that upholds the sound ethical values and individual cognition to moral principles.

Burgeoning the above premise, Ayuba and Ibrahim (2018) suggested unethical control strategy which includes; ensuring that regulatory agencies, shareholders in the manufacturing sector enforces best practices and initiate rigid consequences on violators. Subsequently up the consumer right game by encouraging consumers to proscribe harmful and sub-standard products and report same to the appropriate authority, to institute ethics violation committees and courts to deal with cases of unethical behaviours in all sectors of the Nigerian economy.

Kaptein (2011), forward reinforcement of ethical behavior as a major approach to curbing unethical behaviours amongst operational level workers; where unethically behaving staffs are penalized and rewarding staff with ethical conducts. Bello (2012) cited in Don-Solomon and Gogo (2018) holds the same position that corporations should recognize, encourage and reward workers who uphold good repute and maintain ethical standards; it would go a long way to influence customers and co-workers positively. This is in tandem with earlier standing espoused by Román and Munuera (2005) that rewarding ethical demeanor is a far-reaching strategy in discouraging unethical practices.

II. Conclusion

This theoretical paper is directed at identifying alienable unethical behavior prompting factors amongst operational level workers in Nigerian manufacturing sector. Inline with this purpose efforts were exerted in review literatures to establish a conceptual stance of unethical behaviour which revealed an understanding that unethical behaviors are ill practices that are illusory, manipulative and which pose threat to life and societal wellbeing. Further, the paper went further to identify; bribery, corruption, divulging of confidential information, falsification of document, negligence, bid-cutting and misrepresentation amongst others as some unethical practices in the sector under study. However, psychological traps, need pressure, quick to be rich syndrome, loosed organizational structures; lack of institutional structure to check unethical practices, and ignorant of the organizational ethical codes were some instigators identified. The paper proposed rewarding of ethical behaviors, initiating stiffer penalties for unethical behaviours, setting up ethics committees and courts to handle ethical issues in the various sectors of Nigerian economics amongst other as way forward.

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