



Empirical Investigation of the Relationship between Workplace Ethics and Employee Involvement Practices in Maritime Firms in Lagos and Rivers States, Nigeria

Gbadamosi¹, Abdul Olalekan¹, Enyindah² and Charles Wele²

¹Department of Business Administration University of Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria.

²Department of Business Administration and Management Ken Saro Wiwa Polytechnic Bori, Rivers State Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between workplace ethics and employees involvement practices in Lagos and Rivers states. Research questions and hypotheses were adduced to test, the hypothesized relationship between workplace ethics and employees involvement practices. The quantitative research data was orchestrated with the aid of a five point Likert Scale questionnaire distributed to 278 employees of in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states. The sample size of 278 were obtained from a population of 963 employees using the krejcie and Morgan Table of Sample Size Determination on the reliability of the instrument of the study, they all met the Cronbach Alpha of 0.7 and above. The validity of the instrument was determined by the experts in the field. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 21) and the Spearman Correlation was utilized to test the research hypotheses. The result of the study indicates that workplace ethics has relationship with all employees' involvement practices. The study also found that the institutionalization of workplace ethics has beefed up productivity in maritime organizations. This study therefore recommends that maritime firms should ensure the institutionalization of ethical values and norms in order to improve employee involvement practices in maritime organizations in Lagos and Rivers states.

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Introduction

Ethics is critical in contemporary organizations. For an organization to prosper, it is pertinent for employers and employees to conform to acceptable standard of conduct (Blum, 1988). Ethics is the study of what is good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust (Steiners, 1988). Acting with concern for others makes behaviour ethical, since ethics is only meaningful in relation to other people (Jones, 2003). Workplace ethics is the application of moral principles and standards of behaviour or set of values regarding proper conduct in the workplace as individuals and in a group setting (Benson and (Muhramam, 2001). It is imperative to state that workplace ethics guides the employees in the degree to which they become committed to the attainment of organizational goals.

Employee's involvement practices are used to accord decision making authority to employees. It refers to actions which are intended to inject the information and knowledge to non-management employees into higher level organizational decision making processes. Employee involvement entails gaining the commitment of employees to the attainment of organizational goals.

It is a process of empowering workers to take part in managerial decisions and improvement in activities appropriate to their levels in their organizations (Zveror, Leoni and Syracuse, 1992).

A whole gamut of studies abounds on ethics but there is no study for the best of our knowledge on workplace ethics

and employees involvement practices in Lagos and Rivers states. This is the gap which this study intends to abridge in literature.

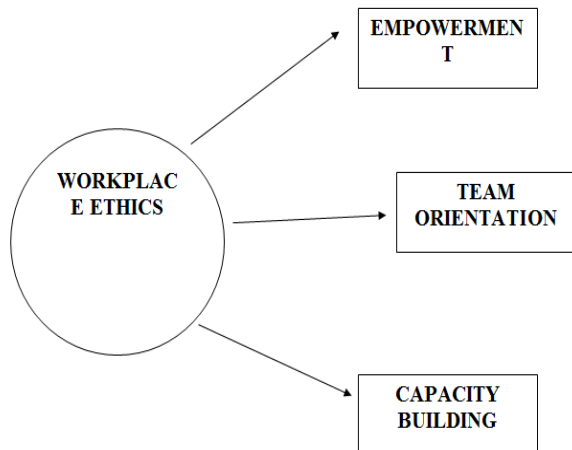
Review of extant literature

Workplace ethics is the application of moral principles and standards of behavior or set of values regarding proper conduct in the workplace as individuals and in a group setting (Muhraman and Benson 2001). It is these moral principles that guide the conduct of employees while working in organizations. Workplace ethics entails conformity with accepted and especially professional standards of conduct (Zverow, 1992). Ethics is the study of what is good and bad, right and wrong, just and unjust (Steiner, 1988). Acting with concern for others makes behavior ethical, since ethics is only meaningful in relation to other people (Jones, 2003).

Workplace ethics has appreciated the need to encourage the development of moral strength in the workplace and this will entail more than reinvention of programs, policies and penalties (Vershoor, 2004). It is also adduced that we ought to investigate behavior shift soliciting for a revolution of character and a reintroduction of personal conscience, responsibility and values (Gates, 2004). It is contended that for organizational ethics to be effective, a value-based approach must be institutionalized in juxtaposition with classic compliance based initiatives (Stansbury and Barry, 2006, Weaver and Trevino 1999).

The penchant on ethics pans the whole spectrum of disciplines. In organizational behavior, the interest in unethical

behavior is reflected in research investigation on topics such as abusive supervision (Tepper, etal, 2006), theft (Greenburg, 2002) incivility (Pearson etal, 2001). In industrial organizational psychology and human resource management, interest in issues such as integrity (Deckop, 2006, Saceket and Wanek 1996) unsafe working conditions (ariss, 2003 and drug testing (Greenwood, Holland and Chrong, 2006) have added virtues to the study of ethics in organizations.



Research Conceptual Model

We adapted the entirety of the Denison, (2007); Holden, (1996) employee involvement which are empowerment, team orientation and capacity building in this study.

Employee Involvement

Employee involvement is the degree to which organization members share information, knowledge and power throughout the organization (Randolph, 2000, Vroom and Jago, 1988). Employee involvement entails building human capacity, ownership and responsibility. The practice is imperative as it lead to sharing of vision, values and purpose (Amah and Ahiauzu, 2013). This is vital to organization as its members share in the same vision, values and intention. It enables them to jointly and purposely work towards the attainment of organizational goals.

Empowerment

Empowerment is defined as a constellation of experienced psychological states or cognition (Spreitzer 1992; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Empowerment is a change management tool which helps organizations create an environment where every individual can use his/her abilities and energies to satisfy the customers (Cook and Macualay, 1997). It is therefore expedient for organizations to create an enabling environment where employees are empowered to take part in decision making in their organizations. It has been argued that employees are empowered when they have been certified to be ethical in their practices in organizations (Foy, 1994, Gates, 2004)

Team orientation

Team work is defined as the cooperative and coordinated effort on the part of a group of person who work together as a team (Adeyeye, Adeniji, Osinbanjo and Oludayo, 2015). Team orientation is the process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve organizational goals (Matthieu Maynard, Rapp and Gibson, 2008). Team orientation can only be feasible in the atmosphere of civility. The team can then attain set goals.

It is a consensus in literature that team work promotes organizational adaptability and create individual roles that are wider, more socially linked and more imperative for individuals (Hackman and Oldham, 1976, Illegan, Hollenbeck,

Johnson and Jundit, 2005 and Matthieu, Maynard, Rapp and Gilson 2008). A strong team orientation entails group members perceptions, their interactions, communication styles and levels of trust and participation all enhance working towards the attainment of group goals (Hare, 1976). A strong team orientation can subsist co-terminously of team working consensually on decisions (Isabella and Waddock, 1994)

Capacity development

Capacity building is also termed capacity development. It refers to building a long term continual process of development that entails the involvement of stakeholders, including ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organization, professional, community members, academics and more (UNDP, 1991). It is expedient for employees to the involved to have their talents, skills, knowledge and capabilities enhanced so that they can be assets to their organizational. Capacity development is essential and veritable both for productive work units, feeding state and nations. This is because problems solving is the goal of capacity building and it is a continuous one. It assists in enhancing productive, work units.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are to investigate the relationship between workplace ethics and employees involvement practice in the maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states. Specific objectives of the study are;

- To determine the relationship between workplace ethics and empowerment in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states, Nigeria.
- To ascertain the relationship between workplace ethics and team orientation in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states, in Nigeria.
- To investigate the relationship between workplace ethics in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers state in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

With the objectives and research questions, research perspective, the following proposed hypotheses are:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between workplace ethics and empowerment in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers state.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between workplace ethics and team orientation in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between workplace ethics and capacity building in Lagos and Rivers state.

Research Questions

This study will seek to address the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between workplace ethics and empowerment in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers state?
2. What is the relationship between workplace ethics and team orientation in maritime firms in Lagos and River states?
3. What is the relationship between workplace ethics and capacity building in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states?

Significance of the Study

The outcome of the study will be useful to be whole gamut of persons, groups and organizations. It will also be useful to employees in the maritime industries particularly and other sectors of the Nigerian economy. This is because of the contributory role of the impact of workplace ethics on employee involvement practices among stakeholders in the maritime industry.

Material and Methods of Research Design

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Sullivan, 2009). This study adopted a cross sectional survey of quasi-experimental design. The quasi-experimental design, specifically, the survey method was chosen because it is more efficient, economical and time saving (Baridam 2001).

Population and Sampling Procedure

A research population can be defined as the theoretically specified aggregation of survey elements (Babbie, 1973). The study population is made up of members called subjects (Avwokeni, 2004). The accessible population of the study is 963 employees in maritime firms in Port Harcourt and Lagos state. The sample size utilizing the krejcie and Morgan's Table of Sample Determination is 278. Sampling is the process of electing items from the population so that the sample characteristics can be generated to the population (Sekaram, 2003). It is an extraction from the population of the study randomly selected to objectively represent the entire population.

Test of Validity And Reliability

Validity is an essential attribute of a test that no quality can adequately compensate for it (Gay, 1996). Validity is defined to the extent to which the test measures what is supposed to be measured (Baridam, 2001). Validity is the appropriateness of an instrument in measuring what is intended (Uzoagulu, 1998).

Test of Reliability

Reliability is the consistency or precision of the measure (Baridam, 2001). It is the extent to which a measuring instrument is consistent in measuring whatever it measures (Gay, 1996). Cronbach alpha was utilized to test for reliability of this study. Cronbach, alpha statistic is generally utilized

Validity

Copies of the questionnaires were administered to 5 managers and 7 supervisors for their responses and necessary inputs. This is intended to ensure that the research measures what it is supposed to measure in research investigation to test internal reliability. Alpha coefficient of 0.80 is commonly accepted, however, an alpha level of 0.70 is also deemed to be efficient

Table1 .Reliability Analysis Scale (Alpha)

Variables	No of items	Alpha co-efficient
Empowerment	2	0.785
Team orientation	2	0.869
Capacity building	2	0.919

Result And Discussion

The table shows the number of questionnaires administered as well the number of returned and useable copies of the retrieved questionnaires for our analysis.

Table 2

	No of cases	Percentage
Copies of questionnaire	278	100%
Copies of questionnaires returned	268	96%
Copies of questionnaires not returned	10	4%

The table explains that 278 questionnaires were administered out of which 268 representing 96% were retrieved, 10 copies of the questionnaires representing 4% were not retrieved.

Univariate Analysis

Univariate analysis is the statistical attributes of a single variable including its distribution, its central tendency and its spread Lewis- Back, Ryman and Liao, 2004

Table 3. Statistics on workplace ethics.

N	Valid	268
	Missing	0
Mean	4.11	
Standard deviation	0.80	
Skewness	-2.34	
Standard error of skewness	0.15	
Kurtosis	5.08	
Standard error of kurtosis	0.30	
Minimum	1.00	
Maximum	5.00	

Source: Research Data, 2016 (SPSS Computation)

The above table univariate analysis of the predictor variable- workplace ethics where mean score (X= 4.11) indicates strong agreement levels thereby supporting affirmative stance of the whole gamut of the respondents in the maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states.

Table 4. Statistics on Employee Involvement.

	Valid	268
	Missing	0
Mean	4.03	
Standard deviation	0.81	
Standard error of skewness	-1.95	
Kurtosis	0.149	
Standard error of kurtosis	4.11	
Minimum	1.00	
Maximum	5.00	

Source: Research Data 2016 (SPSS COMPUTATION)

Table 4 indicates the univariate analysis of the criterion variable employee involvement where mean score (X=4.03) indicates strong agreement levels thereby supporting an affirmative stance on a plethora of the respondents.

Table 5 statistics on empowerment

The table below represents the response statistics indicating responses on employee empowerment

Table 5 . Statistics On Empowerment.

N		EMP 1	EMP2
	Valid	268	268
	Missing	0	0
Mean		4.21	4.06
Standard deviation		0.93	0.88
Skewness		-1.66	-1.46
Standard error of skewness		0.15	0.15
Kurtosis		3.39	2.87
Standard error of kurtosis		0.297	0.297
Minimum		1.00	1.00
Maximum		5.00	5.00

Sources: Research data, 2016 (SPSS Computation)

Where; EMP represents empowerment Question 1

EMP 2 represent empowerment question 2

Table 6: statistics on team orientation

This table represents a descriptive statistics indicating response on team orientation

Table 6. Statistics On Team Orientation.

N		TE 01	TE 02
	Valid	268	268
	Missing	0	0
Mean		4.12	4.13
Standard deviation		0.94	0.87
Skewness		-1.63	-1.78
Standard error of skewness		0.15	0.15
Kurtosis		3.14	4.31
Standard of kurtosis		0.30	0.30
Minimum		1.00	1.00
Maximum		5.00	5.00

Source: Research Data, 2016 (SPSS Computation)

Where;

TE 01: Represent team orientation 1
TE 02: Represent team orientation 2

Table 7. Statistics on Capacity Building.

		CPT 1	CPT 2
	Valid	268	268
	Missing	0	0
Mean		3.82	3.82
Standard deviation		1.15	1.12
Skewness		-1.17	-1.14
Standard error of skewness		0.15	0.15
Kurtosis		0.68	0.70
Standard error of kurtosis		0.30	0.30
Minimum		1.00	1.00
Maximum		5.00	5.00

Source: research data, 2016 (SPSS Computation)

Where;

EPT 1 represents capacity building question,

EPT 2 represent capacity building 2

Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis is a statistical procedure employed to describe the relationship between two variables (Sullivan, 2001).

Presentation of Result on the Analysis of Data on Research Questions and Testing Of Hypothesis

A research hypothesis is the statement created by researchers when they speculate upon the outcome of a research or experiment.

Relationship between Workplace Ethics and Employee Involvement Practices

The result of the spearman rank correlation coefficient for the relationship between workplace ethics and employee involvement practices embedded in the table is the statistical test of significance (P- value) which assists us to answer the prime research questions and generalize our findings on the solutions of the study.

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing.

	Workplace ethics	Empower	Team	Capacity
Spearman's rho	1.000	.454	.627	.721
trustworthy		.000	.000	.000
correlation sig (2-tailed)	268	268	268	268
N				
Empower correlation	.454	1.000	.376	.544
coefficient sig (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
N	268	268	268	268
Team correlation	.627	.376	1.000	.452
coefficient sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	268	268	268	268
Capacity correlation	.712	.544	1.000	.452
coefficient sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	268	268	268	268

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Source: Research Data, 2016 (SPSS Computation)

Hypothesis (Ho1): there is no significant relationship between workplace ethics and empowerment in the maritime industry in Lagos and Rivers states.

The findings show significant relationship between workplace ethics and empowerment in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states; rho= 0.454; and p-value=0.05 where significance is at a 95% confidence interval. We reject the null hypothesis based on the adopted criterion of P<0.05. This means that there is a significant relationship between

workplace ethics and empowerment in maritime firms in Lagos and rivers state.

Hypothesis (Ho2): There is no significant relationship between workplace ethics and team orientation in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states.

The findings show significant relationship between workplace ethics and team orientation in Lagos and Rivers states where rho=0.627, and P-value; where p = 0.05 and where significance is at a 95% confidence interval. We therefore reject the null hypothesis based on the adopted criteria of P<0.05, and conclude that there is a significant relationship between workplace ethics and team orientation in maritime firms in Lagos and river state.

Hypothesis (Ho3): There is no significant relationship between workplace ethics and capacity building in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states.

The findings show that there is a significant relationship between workplace i.e. ethics and capacity building in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states.

Table 9. Correlation For Variables Of The Study.

	Correlation	Sig(2 tailed)	N
Structure - structure	1		268
Ethics	0.869	.00	268
involvement	0.900	.00	268
Ethics structure	0.869	.000	268
Ethics	1		268
Involvement	0.900	.000	268
Involvement structure	0.900	.000	268
Ethics	0.869	.000	268
Involvement	1		268

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Research Data 2016 (SPSS version 21 computation)

Interpretation of Result of Bivariate Analysis of Workplace Ethics and Employee Involvement

The above table illustrates the relationship between the dual variables of the study namely – workplace ethics (predictor variable) and employee involvement practices (criterion variable). The result shows significant levels of correlation between these variables in the maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states. These connote that employees who hold workplace ethics in high esteem are the ones to be placed in positions of managerial decision making. It also enables managers to be placed in work teams in organizations. Adherence to organizational ethics enables employees' capacity to be developed in maritime organizations.

Conclusion

From the forgoing, the following conclusions are adduced:

1. The use of workplace ethics in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states enhances empowerment of employees.
2. The utilization of workplace ethics in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states significantly affects team orientation.
3. The use of workplace ethics in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states enhances capacity building
4. The institutionalization of workplace ethics improves employee involvement in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states
5. The study also found that the institutionalization of workplace ethics has beefed up productivity in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made;

- Workplace ethics should be institutionalized in order to enhance employee involvement practices in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states.

- Adherence to workplace ethics should be the basis for empowerment, team orientation and capacity development of employees in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states.
- Workplace ethics should be used as a tool for enhancing quality productivity in maritime firms in Lagos and Rivers states

Suggestion for Further Studies

The study on workplace and employee involvement is yet an emerging area of research interest in Nigeria. It is therefore suggested that other researchers should replicate this study in these states (Lagos and Rivers) and in the same industry in Nigeria.

It is further suggested that this study should be carried out in other industries in Lagos and Rivers states. The same study can further be conducted in the entire country, Nigeria. It is also suggested that this study can be studied in other West African countries. A comparative study can also be conducted between maritime firms in Nigeria and Ghana.

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