

Navigating Change Management on Workplace Unethical Practices and Organization Performance Study of Selected Banks in Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary business environment, unethical practices within the workplace continue to pose substantial obstacles, with regards to employee potential change behavior rather than employee change situation, thus exert various facets of organizational performance. The study adopted descriptive research design, with data collection through questionnaire as the main research instrument. Stratified random sampling technique using Taro Yamane formula to determine two hundred and thirty-one (231) employees from a population of five hundred and sixty (560) employees. As Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses in the study. The findings showed significant relationship among all the three elements of unethical practices: workplace leadership behavior, workplace discrimination and organization culture on performance outcomes. Hypothesis one, revealed a correlation coefficient of 51.3% ($r=0.513$); hypothesis two revealed a correlation coefficient of 38.3% ($r=0.383$); and hypothesis three revealed a correlation coefficient of 51.5% ($r=0.515$). Therefore, to enhance organization performance, the human aspect that constitutes unethical workplace practices must be painstakingly and carefully addressed in order to avoid un-anticipated outcomes and maintain ordinary decency to reduce tension in the organization. The study recommended that organizations leaders are to ensure leadership alignment devoid of unnecessary empathy; advocate non-discriminatory policies, rules, and regulation that impaired psychological, and teamwork treats for an enhance work achievement. And lastly, need for good organizational culture to influence unbiased decision making, availability of punitive sanctions that support morals within the organization. Study limitations are in terms of sample size coverage, geographical and adopted methodology. Further studies should encompass large sample size, cutting across many organizations, and the use of mixed method to balance deficiencies of both quantitative and qualitative approach.

Keywords: *Change management, workplace, unethical practices, organization, performance*

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In the modern organizational environment, ethical conduct adherences are becoming more and more significance in fostering sustainable success, owing to the fact that a healthy environment is not a luxury but an inevitable necessity. However, navigating change management on workplace unethical practices continue to pose substantial obstacles, with potential of employee change behavior rather than employee change situation, thus affecting various facets of organizational performance. Despite this, contemporary

organizations are required to take purposeful and anticipatory actions in a manner that will help to achieve the desired level of performance from their workforce, and at same times taking cognizance of the acceptable norms and best practices in the industry to which the organization belong and operate in a nation (Silas, Ingigha, & Njoku, 2022).

According to Egbara and Ofodu (2024), the inevitability of workplace ethics is very germane and quintessential for any organization to achieve best performance from the available employees, while unethical behaviors (perceived toxic) like: workplace discrimination, employee's abysmal performance, organization's property misuse, failure & non-compliance to rules, poor employment relationship, theft, misleading communication, fraud, abusive leadership which arise from the asymmetry between workplace ethics and employees' performance. Furthermore, how well an organization adheres, able to navigate and managed ethical standards in the workplace, obviously determines the well-being of all the stakeholders: the employees' performance, organizational productivity and the subsequent viability, as well as the macroeconomic growth and development of the nation.

Employees who perceive their workplace as unethical are more likely to disengage, underperform, or even leave the organization. Moreover, these behaviors can also cause emotional distress and burnout among staff, resulting in increased absenteeism and reduced productivity (Mahurkar et al., 2024). Externally, unethical conduct severely damages an organization's reputation, affecting customer trust, investor confidence, and public image. In today's digitally connected world, news of corporate misbehavior spreads rapidly, often leading to financial losses, legal penalties, and long-term brand damage (Zhang & Zhang, 2024). Organizations that ignore ethical lapses may also face regulatory sanctions and loss of competitive advantage.

Conversely, unethical behavior-actions intended to benefit the organization but through morally questionable means-can backfire, resulting in systemic issues and organizational inefficiency (Mukherjee & Saritha, 2024). Importantly, organizations that prioritize non-ethics tend to enjoy lower employee commitment, performance outcomes, and weaker stakeholder relationships. As such, promoting an unethical workplace culture is not only an immoral imperative but also a strategic necessity for organizational failure (Mahurkar, Saxena, & Prasad, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Often goes the saying 'equity preaches fairness', this statement is rooted in maintenance of ethical operational conduct among diverse setting of people that exist in an organization and thus by means establishes accountability, alignment, core values, integrity and decisions clarity, on favorable work environment. Globally, the people are rewarded through improve standard of living, egalitarian community as well in promotion of business fruitfulness when in compliance to ethics. Despite workers being the more vulnerable of the resources, ability to navigate and managed changes in behavior can ginger workplace etiquette; honesty and self-control that affect performance within the organization (Alagbogu & Chima, 2023).

Silas et al. (2022), noted that sometimes, employees were considered to be the best of resources in the world because of their behavioral intuition toward work ethics. But today, the pyramid rating has changed because workers are only concerned about what they can benefit (self-satisfaction) from employment relationships irrespective of the ethical organization system. Employees subjected to unethical treatment are more likely to exhibit counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs), such as absenteeism, theft, decreased engagement, or even sabotage, which ultimately diminish organizational effectiveness (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). As such, understanding change management on how workplace unethical practices influence various dimensions of organizational performance including: financial outcomes (fraudulency); employee satisfaction; and overall efficiency is vital for developing appropriate interventions and promoting a culture of integrity.

This research seeks to navigate the extent to which workplace unethical practices management affect organizational performance, with the goal of providing evidence-based recommendations for cultivating ethical climates that support long-term success.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of unethical workplace practices on organizational performance, using selected banks in Lagos State Nigeria as focus of the study. Other specific objectives are to.

1. Explore the relationship between unethical leadership behaviors and employee's job satisfaction.
2. Examine the effect of workplace discrimination on organizational growth and sustainability.
3. Identify how unethical culture influence organizational outcomes.

Research Hypotheses

H₀: Unethical leadership behaviors have negative effect on organization job satisfaction.

H₀₂: There is a negative relationship between workplace discrimination and organizational growth and sustainability.

H₀₃: An unethical organizational culture negatively influences the overall organizational outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Unethical Workplace Practices (UWP)

Historically, philosophical and in addition to legal theory and political discourse, a set of moral standards that are implemented in the workplace for favorable outcomes is what is known as workplace ethics (Silas et al., 2022).

Unethical workplace practices have become a growing concern globally, particularly in environments where regulatory enforcement and organizational accountability are weak. These practices include discrimination, favoritism, workplace harassment, lack of transparency, and unethical leadership, that impair employee morale, organizational culture, and overall business performance (Trevino & Nelson, 2017). Organizations operating in emerging economies may either exacerbate or obscure unethical behaviors in a number of transactions without keen interest on compliance to right or wrong actions (Adeyeye et al., 2015. & Agbo, 2022). Organization with illegal records have not only been forced to pay for investigations and fines but have also suffered significant stock price decline and report, lower profitability rates, damage to their reputation among customers and other stakeholders. than their law-abiding counterparts.

Navigating Change Management: Change management is both systematic and articulate approach to present the future in the present, while integrating resources (both physical and people) as an encompassment of organization strategy (Ajani et al., 2021) The ravaging impact of change management cannot be underestimated, particularly considering it severalty as unmanaged; intentional neglect and untimeliness may lead to negative consequences on an organization performance due to the dynamism and complexities of activities (Ajani et al., 2022). Change as a displacement of an existing equilibrium does not represent likelihood nor possibilities, rather a constant that permeates across all human aspect of living, be it personal or career. The quest to navigate changes and it management premise on the process of knowledge possession, initiating adjustment, building resilience, confronting adversity and honoring boundaries by setting clear goals towards organizational growth and survival (Lussier, 2020).

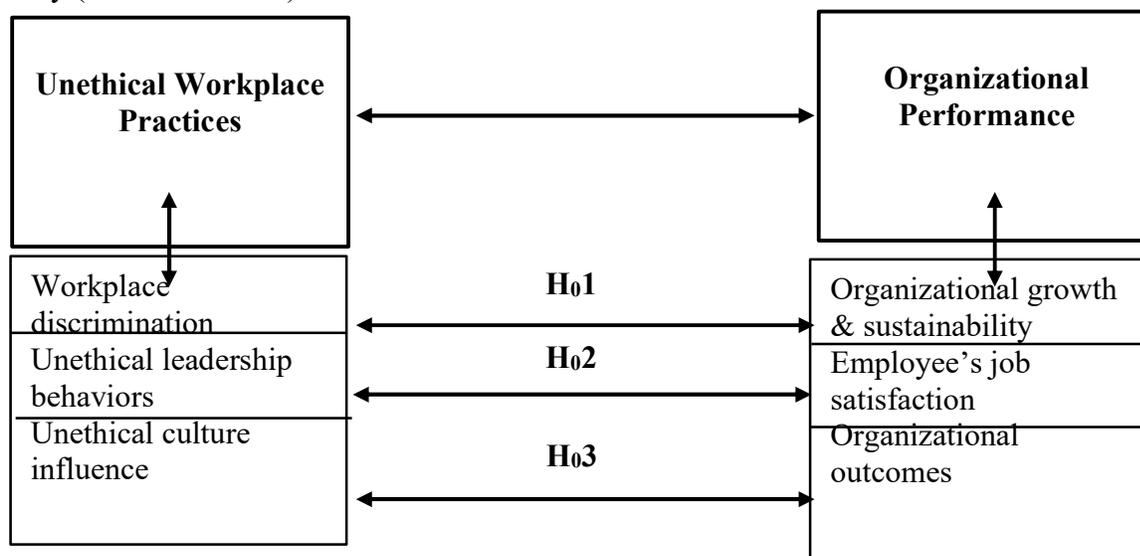
Organizational Performance

According to Khandekar and Sharma (2006), cited by Alagbogu and Chima (2023), organizational performance reflects a business's effectiveness or inefficiency in terms of its brand reputation, abilities, and financial performance. A worker's progression and (or) suitability for advancement, promotion, or even termination can all be determined by job performance evaluations, often determined through the process of performance appraisal exercise over a period of time (Rowold, 2011). Performance determination is an business growth and employee satisfaction. Performance has also been conceptualized using monetary and

non-monetary metrics from objective and subjective sources. And even at time extended to financial metrics like return on assets, return on investment, and profit growth (Alagbogu & Chima, 2023).

Unethical Leadership Behaviors and Employee Job Satisfaction

Unethical leadership includes behaviors such as favoritism, deception, abuse of authority, and lack of integrity, the consequences of trust erosion between leaders and employees (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Job satisfaction is directly tied to feelings or perceptions of fairness an employee derives and enjoy from leadership act (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). When employees perceive their leaders as unethical, they are more likely to become demotivated, exhibit counterproductive work behaviors, or exit the organization. This not only impacts employee well-being but also impairs team performance and reduces overall organizational efficiency (Yukl et al. 2010).



Source: Researchers conceptual, framework2025

Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in the philosophy of institutionalized ethics. **Institutional theory of ethics (Meyer & Rowan, 1970's)** explains inter-relatedness on how organization ethical behavior is being influenced by the external and internal forces, such as societal norms, regulatory frameworks, and organizational structures. This theory suggests that organizations are not isolated entities but are shaped by the larger institutional surrounding, which foster and permeate acceptable practices and behaviors. It further posited that organizational actions, including ethical and unethical behavior, are often a response to institutional pressures that seek conformity in-line to perceived and established norms, rules, laws and regulations.

Ethical procedures in the workplace should end exploitation of all categories of employees at every stage in the workplace from hiring process to separation. Some of the literature suggested that employees' dedication to the organization is determined by emotional workplace ethical behaviors. Organizations that have strong ethical standards in place connected to human predisposition to tasks, interpersonal dynamics, and external pressures in the workplace are more likely to receive employees all in all commitment in the discharge of their jobs. Paul, (2013). In a socio-organizational setting, the idea of interconnections implies that workers are purposeful individuals who collaborate in teams and whose shared experiences inform their shared practices.

The ethical decisions made within an organization are shaped by the need to conform to these broader

institutional norms, often motivated by legitimacy, competitive advantage, and the desire to maintain a positive reputation (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). As such, unethical behaviors may occur when organizations either resist or fail to comply with the ethical expectations of the broader institutional environment, or when there is a gap between institutionalized norms and actual organizational practices.

Empirical Framework

Recent empirical studies have been used to highlight the complex interplay among leadership behaviors, workplace discrimination, and organizational culture, on performance.

Research literature review by Manelkar and Mishra (2024) on 'the influence of leadership on unethical workplace emphasized that leader behaviors significantly affect employees' unethical actions aimed at benefiting the organization. The study found that leader-member exchange and organizational belonging create favorable circumstances for unethical workplace, moderated by employees' personal moral orientation. Similarly, a study by Alqhaiwi (2024) explored the paradoxical effects of ethical leadership on unethical workplace. The research revealed that ethical leadership could inadvertently encourage unethical norms, vices and retrogressive performance outcomes by enhancing employees' psychological empowerment, especially among those with a strong sense of work meaningfulness.

A study conducted by Omale et al. (2024), investigated the effect of business ethics on organizational performance. The population consisted of top and medium management staff of the organizations as well as junior staff and amongst which include Managing Directors, Functional Managers and lower-level employees and customers. The total population for this study was 150 from six organizations across the zone which was selected using purposive sampling technique. One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were retrieved from respondents out of one hundred and fifty for analysis. Four null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Mean statistics and ANOVA were the main statistical tools. The study found that unethical behavior in business transaction has significant effect on organization's profitability. Employees' adherence to rules and regulations significantly enhances organization profitability. The study also found out that corporate adherence to standard and adherence of corporate social responsibility are significant to organization's profitability.

Roy et al. (2023) reviewed over two decades of research on ethical culture in organizations. The study emphasized that a strong ethical culture positively influences ethical decision-making and organizational outcomes. However, the authors noted that the strength of ethical culture and collective moral identity play critical roles in shaping ethical behavior within organizations. In a related study, researchers found that ethical culture and its strength significantly affect unethical behavior in organizations. The study suggested that fostering a strong ethical culture can mitigate unethical pro-organizational behavior and enhance organizational performance.

Silas et al. (2022) study examined Workplace Ethics and Organizational Success in manufacturing firms. Instrument used for data collection was questionnaire, data were presented and analyzed using mean score rating to analyze the research questions and statistical tool used for testing their associated hypotheses were Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis formula with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The finding shows that the respondents indicated high extent that transparency and accountability influences growth and market share in the selected manufacturing firms of South-South Zone, Nigeria. The study concludes that workplace ethics is the crucial part for the success of the organization to achieve its goals and objectives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Lagos State occupy a significant role in Nigeria and identify as mega-city with an estimated population of

16-21 million people (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>) having three (3) senatorial districts. The study employed a descriptive research design, from selected target population areas of Lagos East Senatorial District only, made up of five Local Governments: Epe, Ikorodu, Kosofe, Ibeju-Lekki, and Somolu). Population of study is sum total of five hundred and sixty (560) employees selected across various departments of the seven leading banks: First Bank, Guarantee Trust Company (GTCO), United Bank for Africa (UBA), Zenith Bank, Access Bank, Union Bank, and First City Monument Bank (FCMB) in the district based on parameters of - not less than ten (10) years of operational existence, customers base patronage and geographical spread. Purposeful and stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation from different levels within the organization, including junior, middle, and senior management. While sample size was determined using the taro Yamane formula, resulting in a sample of 231 employees.

The formula for determining the sample size is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where :

- n = sample size required
- N = number of people in the population
- e = level of significance

Structured questionnaires were used to gather the primary data for this study, structured into two sections. The demographic data and construct items with Likert scale statements ranging from 1 point to 5 point. Data collected from the questionnaires were coded and entered into SPSS version 25 for analysis. Inferential statistics, of Pearson's correlation coefficient, were employed to determine the direction of the relationship between unethical workplace practices and organizational performance. A significance level of 0.01 was set for all statistical tests.

DATA PRESENTATION AND RESULTS ANALYSIS

This chapter detailed how the data collected were examined, analyzed and interpreted.

Table 1 *Analysis of Questionnaire*

BANKS	DISTRIBUTED	UNRETURNED	RETURNED
First Bank	33	05	28
Access Bank	33	09	24
GTCO	33	08	25
Union Bank	33	15	18
Zenith Bank	33	05	28
UBA	33	12	21
FCMB	33	14	19
TOTAL	231	68	163

Source: Field Survey, 2025

A total of 231 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and 163 were properly filled and returned. This represented 70.56% of the entire questionnaires distributed.

Table 4.2.1 *Demographics Characteristics of Respondents (Sex)*

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	69	42.34
Female	94	57.66
Total	163	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

A total of 69 respondents, representing 42.34% are male, while 94 respondents, representing 57.66% are female. Indicating that majority of the respondents are female’s employees of the Banks.

Table 4.2.2 Age Classification of Respondents by Age

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
20- 40 years	112	68.71
41-60 years	51	31.29
Total	163	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table indicated that 112 respondents, representing 68.71% are between the ages of 20 to 40 years, while 51 respondents, representing 31.29% are between the ages of 41-60 years. Indicating that majority of the respondents (employees) are in the middle range of the active labour force.

Presentation and analysis of research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀: Unethical leadership behaviors have negative effect on organization job satisfaction.

Inter-correlation among variables

		Correlations	
		Leadership Behaviors	Job Satisfactio
Leadership Behaviors	Pearson Correlation	1	.513**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	163	163
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.513**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	163	163

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Output from Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) V. 25

A correlation (r) of 0.513, significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) showed that there is significant relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction.

Regression among variables

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.513a	.263	.251	.40932

a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Satisfaction

Decision rule: Although there are no organization cutoffs for strength, general consensus among scholar is that absolute regression $|R|$ 0.7 and above is “very-strong”. Absolute correlations between 0.3 and 0.6 are “strong” and absolute correlations less than 0.3 are weak. A regression (R) of 0.513 or 51.3% indicates that there is a strong significant relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction, hence the null hypothesis is rejected; and accepting the alternative hypothesis. $R^2 = .263$ indicates that 26.3% of total variance in job satisfaction is accounted for by leadership behavior. Adjusted $R^2 = 25.1\%$ indicate that if total population is focused at in the study, deviation will only be by 0.01, and the standard error estimate is .40932.

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Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is a negative relationship between workplace discrimination and organizational growth and sustainability.

Inter-correlation among variables

		Correlations	
		Workplace Discrimination	Growth &Sustain
Workplace Discrimination	Pearson Correlation	1	.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	163	163
Growth & Sustain	Pearson Correlation	.383**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	163	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Output from Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) V. 25

A correlation (r) of 0.383, significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) showed that Workplace discrimination have effect on organizational growth & sustainability.

Regression among variables

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.383a	.147	.133	.44

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational growth and sustainability

Decision rule: Although there are no organization cutoffs for strength, general consensus among scholars is that absolute regression $|R|$ 0.7 and above are “very strong”. Absolute correlations between 0.3 and 0.6 are “strong” and absolute correlations less than 0.3 are weak. A regression (R) of 0.383 or 38.3%, indicates that a fairly strong significant relationship exists between workplace discrimination and organizational growth and sustainability, hence the null hypothesis is rejected; and accepting the alternative hypothesis. $R^2 = .147$ indicates that 14.7% of total variance in organizational growth and sustainability is accounted for by workplace discrimination. Adjusted $R^2 = 13.3\%$ indicate that if total population is focused at in the study, deviation will only be by 0.01, and the standard error estimate is .44072.

Hypothesis 3

H03: An unethical organizational culture negatively influences the overall organizational outcomes.

Inter-correlation among variables

		Organizational Culture	Organization Outcomes
Organizational Culture	Pearson Correlation	1	.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	163	163 636
Organization Outcomes	Pearson Correlation	.515**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	163	163

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Output from Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) V. 25

A correlation (r) of 0.515, significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) showed that organizational culture have significance effect on organization outcomes.

Regression among variables

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.515a	.265	.253	.51117

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organization outcomes

Decision rule: Although there are no organization cutoffs for strength, general consensus among scholar is that absolute regression $|R|$ 0.7 and above are “very strong”. Absolute correlations between 0.3 and 0.6 are “strong” and absolute correlations less than 0.3 are weak. The regression significance at 0.515 or 51.5% indicates that a strong significant relationship exists between organizational culture and organization outcomes, hence the null hypothesis is rejected; and accepting the alternative hypothesis. $R^2 = .265$ indicates that 26.5% of total variance in organizational outcomes is accounted for by organizational culture. Adjusted $R^2 = 25.3\%$ indicate that if total population is focused at in the study, deviation will only be by 0.01, and the standard error estimate is .51117.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Summary of Findings

The hypotheses of this study were tested using Pearson correlation analysis and the finding from hypothesis one, revealed a correlation coefficient of 51.3% ($r=0.513$) supports that there is significant relationship between workplace leadership behavior and job satisfaction. This being in tandem with the findings by Manelkar and Mishra (2024), Alqhaiwi (2024), Odiwo and Onoyoze (2024), Silas et al. (2022), that leadership behavior, attract an exchange of belongings from employees in creating favorable circumstances for organizational performance.

From the second hypothesis stated, the study also found that a correlation coefficient of 38.3% ($r=0.383$) supports that workplace discrimination have effect on organizational growth and sustainability. This finding is supported by the work of Omale et al. (2025) ($r=0.515$) supports organizational culture have significance effect on organization outcomes. This finding is supported by the findings of Odiwo and Onoyoze (2024), Shahzad et al. (2024), Roy et al. (2023), Silas et al. (2022), that strong organization culture positively influences outcomes of decision-making and organizational performance, as well on the collective moral identity to shaping ethical behavior within organizations.

Conclusion based on Findings.

The result of the list of hypotheses indicated a significant relationship between all the three elements of change management on workplace practices. Unethical practices have now become a regular norm of Organizations, despite the desire to satisfy stakeholders and increasing organizational performance. However, successful management of unethical practices is a germane rudiment to achieve any degree of long-term growth and sustainability, as well as job satisfaction. Amelioration of unethical leadership behavior will result to overall growth in the performance of the organization due to increasing job satisfaction arising from non-discriminatory workplace involvement in responsibilities and the decision-making process in the organizational outcomes. Therefore, for an enhance organization performance, the human aspect to understand what constitutes unethical workplace practices must be painstakingly and carefully addressed in order to avoid un-anticipated outcomes, an maintaining ordinary decency to reduce tension in the organization.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusion, the study’s recommendations and suggestions are:

- Organizations leaders are to ensure leadership alignment for the creating of more favorable. environment devoid of unnecessary empathy in order to boost the level of job satisfaction and improves organizational performance.
- Organizations should advocate non-discriminatory policies, rules, regulation (on

areas such as age, color, tasks/responsibility), that impaired psychological treats, and loss of teamwork for an enhance work achievement. This is because employees are the dynamic resource agents, whose behavioral influence are correlated to the organization performance. Therefore, ability to identify with and understand human dynamics is crucial.

- There is need for good organizational culture to influence unbiased decision making, availability of punitive sanctions for erring employees that support morals within the organization. Thus, aggravating growth and organizational sustainability.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Relative to the study scope, future research should examine unethical work environment. practices cutting across both service and production sectors, with possible focus of determining where such practices in terms of frequency is highest. Also, the adoption of a larger sample size population globally across emerging economies and industrialized economies may not be avoidable for improve and credibility to the study findings. In addition, future researchers may be interested to use mixed methods approach, to alleviate the negative prejudices on quantitative and qualitative techniques for a balance methodology.

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