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Workplace Ethics and Organisational Performance of Owner Manager Businesses in Rivers State, Nigeria

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***Abstract**: This study investigated workplace ethics and organisational performance of owner manager businesses in Rivers State. The objectives were to find out the influence of transparency on growth and profitability. It also tries to ascertain the extent to which trust affects the growth and profitability of owner manager businesses in Rivers State. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey method and employed the use of questionnaires, the choice for the use of survey approach is to empirically analyse responses to get result that can be attributable to the accessible population. Research questions were formulated for the study and based on this, a research questionnaire was designed and One Hundred and Eighty (180) copies were distributed to managers, employees and customers of owner manager businesses across 3 Local Government Areas in Rivers State that constituted the population of study. The researcher administered 6 copies to each of the owner manager businesses. A total of one hundred and sixty-five (165) correctly filled copies of the distributed questionnaire were retrieved. Out of this, 116 respondents were sampled out using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. From the responses gathered, the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS Version 23.0. The result revealed that; there is a positive and significant relationship between transparency and growth and also, transparency and profitability. Findings from the study also shows a positive and significant relationship between Trust and Growth and also between Trust and Profitability. It was recommended that owner manager businesses must adopt the right workplace ethics by ensuring transparency in their general conduct and principles in such a way that will align with the expectations of their customers and the public at large. It was also recommended that owner manager businesses in Rivers State must hold trust in high esteem as an essential aspect of their operations to earn the conviction of the outside world. This will help position the organisation for long-term growth and profitability.*

***Keywords**: Workplace, Ethics, Organizational Performance, Business, Profitability, Growth*

1.0 Introduction

Workplace ethics and organisational performance has long been debated by management scholars and business owners around the world. There is an extensive agreement that based on established policy, every organisation should endeavour to be committed in such a manner that is ethically acceptable and transparent in all their managerial activities. According to the Wikipedia internet encyclopaedia, (2023), ethics are the principles and values used by an individual to govern their actions and decisions. An organization forms when individuals with varied interests and different backgrounds unite on a common platform and work together towards predefined goals and objectives. The acceptable ethics within an organization are the set of rules and principles that are used to guide the organization in its policies, decisions and programs. Therefore, an organisation that is ethically inclined must have leaders and employees that are ready to adhere to a code of ethics established by that entity. The concept of workplace ethics typically deals with the ways organisational decisions affect employees, other people and the organisation itself. According to Etuk (2014) ethics and morality are aspects of human behaviour concerned with what is good, what is beautiful and what is desired or preferred human conduct. Ethics is concerned with contemporary norms or standard of conduct that govern the relationship among human beings and their institution. Similarly, Ebitu, and Beredugo, (2015) postulated that ethics is a set of moral principles or values used by organization to steer the conduct of the organization itself and its employees in all their business activities both internal and in relation to the outside world.

The performance of an organization is sometimes based on the ethical work climate. Ethical work climate reflects the collective moral reasoning of organization members. Thus, strong ethical climate provides employees a foundation for thinking about moral issues. According to Turyakira, (2018) workplace ethics among of organizations involve “ordinary decency” which encompasses such areas as integrity, honesty and fairness. Working in an ethical manner is seen as part of the social responsibility of organization, which is built on the philosophy that organizations ought to impact on the society in ways that go beyond the usual profit maximization objective.

Ethics and personal value are critical issues in today’s workplace, if employers and employees refuse to follow high standards of conduct in their day-to-day activities, company cannot prosper. Ethics means putting principles into action. Having consistency in what we say we value and what our actions say we value is a matter of integrity meaning that the organization must have to walk according to what they talk. The practice of good workplace ethics in today’s business world is highly inevitable because when you act according to what you say, people will hold you in high esteem. That is why it is important for companies to establish essential ethical policies and principles that guide the way the organization operates. How that organization operates in the eyes of the outside world is very important because a typical organization must have established workplace ethics that conform with the expectations of the public, meaning that the organization’s culture norms and believes aligns with the expectations of the outside world, i.e. their customers, stakeholders and the society at large. Workplace ethics involves moral principles, standards of behaviour, or set of values regarding proper conduct in the workplace. Employees or employers who act against these principles and set values are acting unethically. If lie is considered to be unethical practice, an employee who lies to a customer about the organizational capabilities when they cannot actually do such, alters the reputation of that organization. Jones, George and Hill (2000), defines ethics as moral principles or beliefs about what is right or wrong. These beliefs guide individuals in their dealings with other individuals and groups. Workplace ethics is geared towards instilling set standards of behaviours among workers in the organization. Every organization in today’s competitive world is facing new challenges regarding sustained productivity and creating committed workforce. In this present time, no organization can perform at its peak levels unless each employee is committed to the organization’s objectives and core values. Hence, it is important to understand the concept of organizational performance from the point of view of good ethics in the workplace. In their writings, George and Jones (1996), asserted that, organizational ethics are rules, beliefs, and values that outline the way manager and workers should behave when confronted with a situation in which their action can help or harm other people inside and outside the organization. Accordingly, they mentioned that, ethical behaviour enhances employees' well-being including happiness, health, and prosperity of individuals, group, and the organization, and sometimes the environment in which they operate. Workplace ethics begins with an honest and objective assessment of an organization's existing ethical culture. Workplace ethics are designed to assist organizations in determining staff perception of organizational policies and practices. Appropriate use of these practices will help organizations to identify areas that needs specific attention especially among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Workplace ethics and organizational performance have been a critical area of study among researchers in recent times. Ethics describes the sum total of the, values, attitude and goals shared by individuals in an organization. It also has to do with the way in which the outside world perceives the practices of an organization in terms of transparency trustworthiness and reliability. Workplace ethics must be given priority because they can affect the effectiveness and performance of the organization. This has been proven by many studies. Most researchers in this area of study has suggested that management needs to establish policies and practices that guide the employee's work behaviour. Failing to inculcate the right work values in employees can greatly affect the organization's productivity and performance. According to George and Jones (1996), organizational ethics are rules, beliefs, and values that outline the way manager and workers should behave when confronted with a situation in which their action can help or harm other people inside and outside the organization. This study will be built on two dimensions of workplace ethics which are transparency and trustworthiness as our independent variables and profitability and growth as dimensions of organizational performance which represents our dependent variable. Irrespective of available literature in the area of workplace ethics and organizational performance, we do not know the extent to which these variables affect organizational performance among owner manager businesses. Considering the fact that, there is a body of evidence that demonstrates a positive connection between employee ethics and organization our emphasis is that workplace ethics depends largely on the quality of human capital i.e. the employees who represent the intangible resources that helps to increase organisational performance. This study will therefore ascertain the relationship between workplace ethics and organizational performance among owner managers of businesses in Rivers State putting into consideration the key dimensions highlighted above.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out how workplace ethics affect organisational performance among owner manager businesses in Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study include:

i. To examine the relationship between transparency and growth of owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

ii. To examine the relationship between transparency and long-term profitability
iii. To determine the extent to which trustworthiness influences business growth

iv. To determine the extent to which trustworthiness affects the profitability of owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

1.3 Research Questions

As part of concerted effort to achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher has put forward the following research questions, thus;

i. How does transparency affect the growth of owner manager businesses in Rivers State?
ii. To what extent does transparency affect the level of profitability of your business?
iii. How does trustworthiness impact on the growth of your owner manager business?
iv. To what extent does trustworthiness affect the level of profitability of your business?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, we have put forward the following hypothesis;

H_{01}: There is no positive and significant relationship between transparency and growth among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

H_{02}: There is no strong and significant relationship between transparency and profitability among owner-manager businesses in Rivers State.

H_{03}: There is no positive and significant relationship between trust and growth among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

H_{04}: There is no strong and significant relationship between trust and profitability among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Concept of Workplace Ethics

Basically, the performance of an organization is sometimes based on the ethical work climate. Workplace ethics reflects the collective moral reasoning of organization members towards the accomplishment of set goals. According to Abiodun, and Oyeniyi, (2014). A good ethical climate provides employees with a solid foundation for thinking about moral issues Although organization members may reason effectively about the right thing to do, but translating reason into action depends on the moderating effect of two additional contextual factors; collective moral emotion and collective ethical efficacy. These must be properly evaluated in line with the right workplace ethics to get the best out of employees. Workplace ethics, according to Weller (2017), contains the right and wrong principles governing the behaviour of employees. Schwartz and Milligan (2016) asserted that organisational ethics is often referred to as the study of behaviour within the organisational context that conforms to the principles, rules, and standards of business practices because it is an approved community. Workplace ethics focuses more on the productive direction. In this context, Johnson and Ronald Buckley, (2015), highlighted that ethical issues are meant to guide employees by focusing on more participatory value systems on channel, shape, and direct employee behaviour. Workplace ethics, according to Weller (2017), covers the right and wrong principles governing the behaviour of employees. Workplace ethics has a major impact on the behaviour and actions of employees and even owner manager businesses across the length and breadth of our society. Jones (2017), stated that institutional ethics are normally called into questioning if they are not consistent with the ethical values of the organisation or the generally accepted standards of the organisation. Workplace ethics consists of a set of moral principles and values. Jones, Parker and Bos, (2005) stated that workplace ethic governs the behaviour of the organization with respect to what is right and what is wrong in the workplace. It provides a framework on which the organization could be legally governed. Borgerson and Schroeder, (2008) asserted that workplace ethics is the behaviour that an organization adheres to in its daily dealings with the world and among members of the organization. Solomon, (1983), stated that the ethics of a particular workplace can be diverse, they apply not only to how the business interacts with the world at large, but also to their one-on-one dealings with every single customer.

In the strictest sense of view, workplace ethics covers the provision of adequate justification for our choice and behaviour when influencing others and justifying our praise or criticism of the behaviour of others toward us as a response to our initial behaviour. A critical dimension of workplace ethics may include a focus on what is right and good in a particular economic activity. During such engagement, a moral assessment of the economic activity and practices by that entity as whole is put into focus. According to Enofe *et al*. (2015), because enterprises carry on economic activity, they source their factors of production from the environment to produce goods and services using internal business processes that align with ethics of the organisation. Turyakira (2018), posited that acceptable ethical standards are associated with the formulation of a company's culture; it influences employees' working spirit, shows a good image to the public, develop trusts with customers, and benefits potential customers and/or potential business partners. On a similar note, Du Plessis *et al*. (2018), asserted that there is need for a company to be trusted; this normally leads other companies to select the company as a trading partner; it keeps customers loyal to a brand, and attracts potential customers. There are consequences meted on businesses that violate ethical reasoning and standards. They might end up facing the judgment of the law, and/or the criticism of the public. And this negative image will go a long way to affect the long-term existence and growth of the organisation. Irrespective of the size of the business, a group of people must join hands to run the company and create revenue and these associations among several persons must be built and anchored on strong ethical values. In the writings of Ali *et al*., (2011), unquestionably, people would be more willing to trust a company that is known for its ethical culture. Enterprises that focus more on ethical decision-making enjoy more benefits as compared to other organisations. Essentially, the shareholders, stockholders and even the society where the business operates can be affected by the success or

failure of an enterprise. Therefore, it is wrong to conclude that ethics should not be the primary focus for managing organisations. The main difference between business ethics and personal ethics is that in business there is more than one person involved and as a result there must be consistency in the manner in which ethical values are appropriated to effectively manage the organisation.

2.2 Organisational Performance

Organisational performance is a major issue of discuss among every modern organisation, whether it is a profit or non-profit entity. This poses a very important task on the part of managers to know which factors influence and organisational performance in order to take the right steps to incorporate and initiate them into the firm's operations. Though, conceptualising, defining and measuring performance have not been an easy task all these years, as different researchers have different opinions and definitions of organisational performance and this still remains to be a challenging issue among organisational researchers. According to Javier (2007), performance is equivalent to the famous 3Es (i.e. economy, efficiency and effectiveness) of a certain programme or activity. However, according to Daft (2009), organisational performance is the organisation's ability to attain its goals by using resources in an efficient and effective manner. Similar to the above postulation, Richardo and Wade (2010) defined organisational performance as the ability of the organisation to achieve its goals and objectives. Organisational performance has suffered from not only a definition problem, but also from a conceptual problem. Most renowned researchers have stated that as a concept in modern management, organisational performance suffered from problems of conceptual clarity in a number of areas. Firstly, in the area of definition and secondly in the area of measurement. The term performance is sometimes mistaken for productivity. While Productivity is a ratio representing the volume of work completed in a given amount of time. Performance is a broader pointer that could include productivity as well as consistency, quality and other similar factors. According to Rompho (2018), organizational performance is described as "transformation of inputs into outputs for achieving certain outcomes. In line with this assertion, performance informs about the relation between minimal and effective cost in terms of economy, between effective cost and realized output in terms of efficiency and between output and achieved outcome in terms of effectiveness".

There are numerous ways to understand organization performance but, in this treatise, it has been judged upon by the growth and profitability of the company over a specified period of time. Growth in terms of revenue defines the total amount of money collected by the company for the goods they sold over a specified period of time and this amount is calculated before any expenses are subtracted. On the other hand, profitability can be explained as all the profits generated from total amount of sales made by the firm over a given period of time. Koontz and Donnell, (1993) opined that organizational performance refers to ability of an enterprise to achieve such objectives as high profit, quality product, large market share, good financial results, and survival at pre-determined time using relevant strategy for action. Organizational performance can also be used to interpret how a business is doing in terms of level of profit, market share and product quality in relation to other organisations in the same industry. Accordingly, it is a reflection of the level of productivity of employees in an organisation, measured in terms of profit, growth and expansion of the organization in every respect.

2.3 Transparency

Transparency is the level of openness and trust that an individual, group or an organisation can establish as an ethical value which places a very high level of trust and dependability and reliability by the public on all aspects of the organisation's operations. According to the Wikipedia internet encyclopaedia, As an ethic that spans science, engineering, business, and the humanities, transparency is operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed. Transparency implies openness, communication, and accountability. Transparency according to Clark (2004), is the ease with which an outsider is able to make meaningful analysis of a company's transactions, its economic fundamental and non-financial aspects pertaining to that business. The issue of transparency has become very significant and important among organisations in recent times. It gives detailed information about the activities of an organisation that cannot be quantified in monetary terms at that point in time but which has far reaching implications on the organisation's existence. It is a measure of how good an organisation's management is at making information available in honest, accurate and timely manner, not only in their audited data but also in their annual reports and press releases. Transparency according to Hallak and Poisson (2007) requires clearness, honesty and openness. It is the principle that those affected by administrative decisions should be informed and the duty of civil servants, managers and trustees to act visibly, predictably and understandably. The idea of corporate governance basically involves the monitoring of the organisation's performance and the monitor's capacity to respond to poor performance. Again, the ability to observe and the ability to act to ensure that organisations are able to adhere to set standards. Transparency is closely associated with the equity market's ability to observe a company's performance. Most information concerning a business's performance is readily available from the company. Without effective and sincere disclosure of financial performance, existing equity investors cannot evaluate management's past performance, and prospective investors cannot also forecast the corporation's future cash flow. For example, equity investment and good corporate governance go hand-in-hand. Equity investment requires good corporate governance, and good corporate governance requires the capacity to make credible disclosure of financial results. When an effective financial disclosure is absent, an organisation's capacity to float their shares in the equity markets is compromised and transparency is also compromised. It becomes necessary that every well-organised company must put transparency at the forefront of all their dealings with the public so that they can be trusted for dependability and reliability.

2.4 Trust

Trust describes the extent to which the outside world, that is all those people, groups and established entities whom an organisation is directly or indirectly connected to, can depend and rely on the operations of the organisation in a vulnerable manner. The Wikipedia internet encyclopaedia (2023) sees trust as the willingness of one party (the trustor) to become vulnerable to another party (the trustee) on the presumption that the trustee will act in ways that benefit the trustor. Research studies have consistently shown that companies with a strong ethical and trusting culture are more profitable than those without it. Prospective employees want to be sure they work for a company with a reputation for treating its stakeholders fairly, which leads to greater productivity and lower turnover and training costs. Many customers also prefer to patronize more ethical companies, which results in higher sales and wider margins. The importance of trust in financial services is exemplified by the number of trust indices in that industry. For example, in the United States in 2014 Thomson Reuters used proprietary data and analysis of business news to "track the state of trust" in the top 50 global financial institutions. Also, in the United Kingdom the Nottingham University Business School produces a Trust and Fairness Index of the financial services industry through its Centre for Risk, Banking and Financial Services. Its 2016 report shows that "consumer perceptions of the trustworthiness and fairness of financial advisers and brokers have deteriorated 'significantly' during those periods. In a similar vein, the Edelman Trust Barometer (ETB), which surveyed 33,000 respondents in 28 countries for its 2016 ETB, is the most comprehensive global measure of the level of trust that an institution will "do what is right." The ETB reports "significant trust gap" between those who are "elite," or higher-income, more informed, and more educated (15% of the sample), and those in the general population. The four areas studied, from most to least trusted, are non-governmental organizations, business, media, and government.

2.5 Growth

Basically, organizational growth is something many businesses strive for, regardless of their size. It has the potential to provide companies with a variety of benefits, including greater ability to withstand market fluctuations, increased power and greater efficiencies from economies of scale. Understanding the key stages of organizational growth can be essential to ensuring the longevity of the company. Growth is the process of improving some important measures of an enterprise. It can be achieved either by boosting the top line or revenue of the business with greater product lines which will in return sustain the business. Deal and Kennedy (1992), states that effective growth ensures the availability of well-trained managers who understand the organisation's mission, values, culture and strategy. These managers have virtually "grown up" in the organisation, they identify with its mission, have assimilated its values and have been socialised into its culture. Such characteristics have been associated with more effective individual and organisational performance. organizational growth is a stage a company reaches when it can consider expansion and may look for additional options to generate more revenue. Organizational growth is often a function of industry growth trends, business lifecycle and the owners' desire for equity value creation. Rhodes (1998), agrees that business growth can be an important element in achieving competitive advantage, so long as it is viewed and structured as both a strategic and tactical process. Nevertheless, he stated that it cannot be cumbersome, overweight, and slow focused on hypothetical situations. Rather, it must be forward looking, flexible, lean, decisive and results oriented. Growth is the barometer by which organisations measure all of their operations to see whether they align with established standards. That is whether they are doing well or not over a specified period of time.

2.6 Profitability

Profitability is a measure of an organization's profit relative to its expenses. Organizations that are more efficient will realize more profit as a percentage of its expenses than a less-efficient organization, which must spend more to generate the same profit. Profitability is a situation in which an entity is generating a profit. Profitability arises when the aggregate amount of revenue is greater than the aggregate amount of expenses in a reporting period. If an entity is recording its business transactions under the accrual basis of accounting, it is quite possible that the profitability condition will not be matched by the cash flows generated by the organization, since some accrual-basis transactions (such as depreciation) do not involve cash flows. Profitability can be attained in the short term through the sale of assets that garner immediate gains. However, this type of profitability is not sustainable. An organization must have a business model that permits its ongoing operations to generate a profit, or else it will eventually fail. Profitability is one of the measures that can be used to derive the valuation of a business, usually as a multiple of the annual amount of profitability. The primary mission of a business is long-term profitability not just revenue growth. As a result, profitability can therefore be seen is a measurement of efficiency. It is ultimately the deciding factor in the success or failure of a business. It is expressed as a relative and not an absolute amount generated over a specified period of time. Profitability measures the capacity of a business to produce a return on an investment based on its resources in comparison to an alternative investment.

2.7 Owner-Manager Businesses

An owner-manager enterprise, popularly called a "one-man business" in the Nigerian labour market, is often associated with precarious terms and conditions (Pitan, 2015; Nzewi *et al.*, 2017). Proper and effective management is generally prevalent under conditions in which the board is just one person similar to that of a sole proprietorship kind of business, with minimal regard for corporate governance, processes, procedures and best practices. According to Bass, Jaouen and Lasch (2015), owner-manager businesses that have been established more out of necessity than out of opportunity or innate desire to be entrepreneurs cannot run their business relying on any best practice or personal experience, mainly placing short-term gains ahead of long-term sustainability as a corporate objective; as such, they often struggle to separate the management function from ownership interests.

The determination to achieve justifiable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all is still a formidable challenge throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria. With respect to small and medium scale enterprises segment of businesses where challenges are critically severe. In developing countries like Nigeria, achievement of sustainable growth mandates that the economic value creation potential of businesses be harnessed and actualised; while striving towards this objective, all stakeholders in the economy must work in unison and collaborate so that businesses can achieve their pre-determined objectives amongst other metrics. As at 2015 on a global scale, Nigeria has the highest percentage of the population, at 39.9% of 18 to 64 year-olds, who are either entrepreneurs or owner- But today this figure has been dominated by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) recording the highest in the most supportive environment for entrepreneurship managers (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2023). For the second consecutive year, the United Arab Emirates is number one in the GEM National Entrepreneurship Context Index (NECI). GEM defines the entrepreneurial context of a particular economy in terms of 13 different characteristics, labelled the Entrepreneurship Framework Conditions (EFCs). In effect therefore, this makes owner-managed businesses one of the most significant drivers of economic development across the world. However, as agents of economic development the value they create to enable them grow and expand depends largely on their ability to access funds that can sufficiently support the growth of their businesses.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

In order to establish a dependable conceptual framework and achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher adopted two dimensions of workplace ethics namely; Transparency and Trust and two popular dimensions of organisational performance namely, Growth and Profitability.

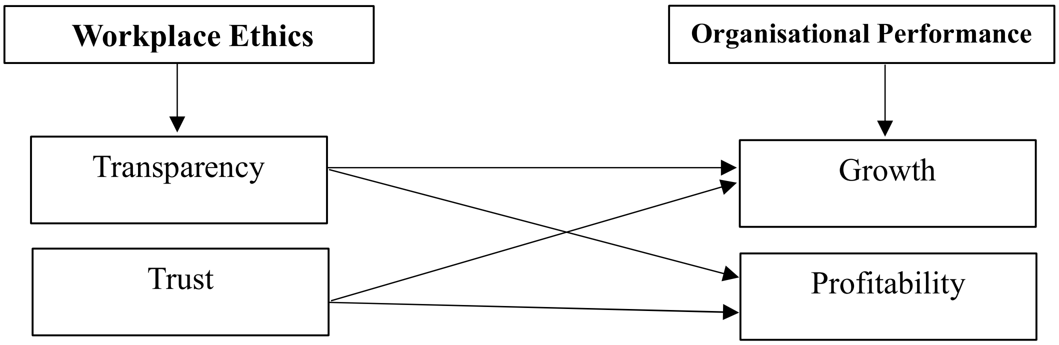

Fig. 2.1 *Conceptual Framework on the Relationship between Workplace Ethics and Organisational performance of owner-manager businesses in Rivers State.*
Source: *Researcher's Conceptualization from Review of Related Literature, 2023*

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey method in the investigation of the variables under study. Primary data were sourced through structured questionnaires. The population of the study were limited to three local government areas in Rivers State, Port Harcourt City, Obio/Akpor and Ikwerre Local Government areas. This will be representative of our population of study, being River State. Ten (10) owner-manager businesses were selected randomly from each of these local government areas and a total of 6 questionnaires were distributed to each of these businesses. One administered to the owner-manager and the remaining 5 to their employees and customers. Making a total 180 questionnaires that were distributed to respondents. Only 15 questionnaires were rejected and not used for the study. This makes our population of study to be 165 respondents. A sample size of 116 employees were sampled using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. These instruments were validated thoroughly by experts as provided by supervisors vetting and approval. Furthermore, the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring coefficients above 0.80. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The statistical tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. This was made possible with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

4.0 Data Analysis and Results

The two dimensions of workplace ethics established in the study were correlated against the measures of the dependent variable which is organisational performance (growth and profitability). The aim was to ascertain if there is a positive and significant relationship between dimensions of workplace ethics and that of organisational performance and the direction of such relationship. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics was used in analysing the data collected for the purpose of this study. The computations were done with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

TABLE 4.1 Correlation Matrix for Transparency and Organisational Performance for Hypothesis 1 (H_01**) and Hypothesis 2 (**H_02**)**

		Transparency	Growth	Profitability
Transparency	Pearson Correlation	1	.733***	.724***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.002
	N	90	90	90
Growth	Pearson Correlation	.733***	1	.888***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.000
	N	90	90	90
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.724***	.888***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.
	N	90	90	90

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

H_01: There is no positive and significant relationship between transparency and growth among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

H_02: There is no strong and significant relationship between transparency and profitability among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

The table 4.1 shows the correlation for hypothesis one and two. The correlation for hypothesis one shows a significant correlation at r = .733** where P-value = .000 (P<0.001). This implies a strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the null hypothesis (Ho:1), and accept the alternative hypothesis, thus, there is a positive and significance relationship between transparency and growth.

The correlation for hypothesis two shows a significant correlation at r = .724** where P-value = .000 (P<0.001). This implies a positive and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the Null hypothesis (Ho:2), and uphold the alternative hypothesis, thus, there is a strong and significant relationship between transparency and profitability among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

TABLE 4.2 Correlation Matrix for Trust and Organisational Performance for Hypothesis 3 (H_03**) and Hypothesis 4 (**H_04**)**

		Trust	Growth	Profitability
Trust	Pearson Correlation	1	.725***	.734***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.002
	N	90	90	90
Growth	Pearson Correlation	.725***	.888***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.000
	N	90	90	90
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.734***	1	.888***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.
	N	90	90	90

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

H_{03}: There is no positive and significant relationship between trust and growth among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

H_{04}: There is no strong and significant relationship between trust and profitability among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

The table 4.2 shows the correlation for hypothesis three and four. The correlation for hypothesis three shows a significant correlation at r = .725** where P-value = .000 (P<0.001). This implies a positive and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the null hypothesis (H_0: 3), and accept the alternative hypothesis thus, there is a positive and significance relationship between trust and growth.
The correlation for hypothesis four shows a significant correlation at r = .734** where P-value = .000 (P<0.001). This implies a strong and significant relationship between both variables at 95% level of confidence. We therefore reject the null hypothesis (Ho:4), and uphold the alternative hypothesis thus, there is a strong and significant relationship between trust and profitability among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

5.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

From the result of the analysis the correlation coefficient (r=0.733) and (r= 0.724), was tested at a 95% level of confidence, the outcome revealed that there is a positive and significant correlation between transparency and growth, also, between transparency and profitability. Therefore, organisations must continue to improve on their workplace ethics to maintain continuous growth of the company and satisfactory level of profitability.
Our analysis on the second dimension of the independent variable (Trust) with the correlation coefficient (r=0.725) and (r= 0.734) was also tested at 95% level of confidence. The outcome revealed that there is a positive and significant correlation between trust and growth; also, between trust and profitability. Organisations, especially owner manager businesses can learn from the outcome of this analysis by improving on the trust factor of workplace ethics through consistently application of the right ethics. By doing so, they will enjoy continuous customer loyalty and patronage that would bring the desired growth and profitability to the firm.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the finding revealed in the study, the following conclusions are made:

i. A positive and significant relationship exists between transparency and growth among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.
ii. Transparency influences the level of profitability among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.
iii. There is a positive and significant relationship between trust and growth among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.
iv. There is a positive and significant relationship between trust and profitability among owner manager businesses in Rivers State.

5.3 Recommendations

In agreement with the conclusions above, the researcher therefore recommends that: firstly, owner managers and their employees must continue to adopt the right workplace ethics by ensuring transparency in their overall conduct, norms, beliefs and behaviour in such a way that will align with the expectations of their customers and the public at large. There should also be a deliberate policy that will encourage their right workplace ethics for improving organisational performance at all times.

Secondly owner manager businesses in Rivers State must hold trust in high regard as an essential aspect of their operations i.e. they must ensure that all their stakeholders including their customers are able to trust them in all their dealings with them. This will help position the organisation for continuous growth and long-term profitability.

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