

Ethical Decision- Making And Organization Resilience In Tertiary Health Institutions In Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between ethical decision-making and organizational resilience in tertiary health institutions in Bayelsa State. The study used a cross sectional research design involving directors and heads of departments of the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa and Niger Delta University Teaching Hospital, Kolobiri. The primary source of data collection was through the structured questionnaire. The sampling elements in the population consist of 113 directors and heads of department of both hospitals. The entire population elements are included in the study therefore no sample size was determined. After data cleaning, only data of 83 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. The study findings confirmed that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between ethical decision-making and organizational resilience in tertiary health institutions in Bayelsa State. The study recommended that management of tertiary institutions should not only be profit oriented but should make ethical decisions that will guide against unnecessary damage and exposure to threats by ensuring a proper control of vulnerabilities in the organization.*

Keywords: *Ethical decision- making, Organizational Resilience, Situation Awareness, Keystone Vulnerabilities*

I. INTRODUCTION

The business milieu today is characterized by constant changes, occurrences, activities of individuals or groups that have the tendency of adversely affecting the ability of a business to achieve its objectives, as a result, only the tough and resilient are able to survive, hence survival of the fittest. This is why Mitroff (2005) emphasized that the constant changes in the business environmental conditions have stressed the urgency for organizations to strive to meet their corporate goal of performing at their best in all circumstances. This, according to him, may lead many managers of organizations who are obliged to deliver shareholder value and maintain their jobs resort to unethical practices.

In the same vein, Foote and Ruona (2008) admitted that in our present -day period of unpredictable terrain, managers are facing difficulties in the area of ethical business practices in decisive situations. Evidences of this behavior abound, such as the recent fuel emissions violation scandal of Volkswagen. It was discovered that the manufacturer had deliberately worked out turbocharged direct injection (TDI) diesel engines to

trigger a specific energy control only at the period of laboratory energy testing to satisfy U.S. standards during regulatory testing meanwhile it was meant to produce as much as 40 times higher nitrogen output in real-world driving. This unethical practice led to the public apology of the CEO, his resignation, and a 37% loss of their stock within 2 the weeks of the scandal.

The priority of an ethical managerial practice seeks the success of the organization, where ethical decision making is upheld as an important factor that will enable the organization deal with difficult ethical predicaments and aid an organization avoid being involved in criminal suit or illegal activity (Shuja and Abassi, 2015). According to Valastro (2011) many organizations have discovered that the customary business methods are unable to shield them from destruction. Resilience becomes imperative to provide organizations with the enablement to sustain an avenue that calls for change and flexibly acclimatize as they remain profitable and competitive, in other respects, they might decline and crumble when there is emergency. He argued that the idea of resilience for businesses, especially the health sector, is both timely and

important. The inevitability of disaster and the increasing dynamism and complexity of the business environment highlights the importance of organizational resilience. Hence, what is resilience?

McManus, Seville, Vargo and Brunsdon (2008) have defined resilience as the special activity of the total situational awareness, controlling of important causes of exposure to threats and the flexibility of an organization to change when necessary in a complex, dynamic and interdependent environment. According to them, for an organization to be resilient, it needs to be abreast with the totality of the environment on which it operates. Manage those key aspects that are liable to badly affect the organization should any part gets damaged in the event of a disaster and its culture must make room for free flow decision-making from top management to staff in an urgent and accurate way during business Operations as well as in crisis situations. Bouncing back is of great necessity to ensure all important services rendered to other businesses, stakeholders, government and the communities continue in the event of uncertainties.

Disasters come in different ways: there are natural disasters like flood, hurricane, storm, climatic change,. There are also human induced disasters like the Boko Haram insurgency, terrorism, suicide bombers, land, water and air pollutions, industrial and transport accidents, sharp business practices. According to Mills and Avegno (2015) a disaster is an event that suppresses the resources of the place or area on which it takes place. They defined a hospital disaster as an event that strains the receiving hospital. It is pointed out by them that hospital disaster can take place in various ways and is not confined to mass casualty incidents. A single patient who takes in a poisonous substance may exhaust the resources of the emergency department in such a way that it affects the care of other patients. High attrition and mortality rate comes as a result of severe loss of lives to disaster; low customer patronage results due to scandals, socio-psychological trauma becomes inevitable due to loss of lives, economic, social and health resources, decrepit infrastructure or equipment failure can disable business operations. (Mills et al. 2015, Bonanno, 2005; and Valastro (2011) However, Mills et al. (2015) pointed out that all medical disaster planning must include practical simple alternatives to technology that are likely to fail.

As employees become empowered, more decisions are made with minimal approval and under time pressure. Meeting customers' needs on the spot usually create pressure on many managers and employees to assess situations quickly, make ethical decisions promptly, take immediate action and later defend their actions while they move on to the next transaction. With regards to other research works describing what resilience means in the face of disasters, this study attempts to examine the relationship between ethical decision – making and organizational resilience in tertiary health institutions Port Harcourt. This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- ✓ To examine the relationship between ethical decision-making and situation analysis in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

- ✓ To examine the relationship between ethical decision-making and keystone vulnerabilities in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

The responsibility of making ethical decision totally lies in the hands of the individual. It takes sound morals for an individual to exhibit ethical principles like fairness, respect, empathy, good citizenship and this contributes a great deal to making ethical decisions under all sorts of pressure.

According to Trevino (1986) the reason why managers get involved in voluntary decision- making is to positively influence the lives and the well-being of people because ethical issues always exist in unpredictable manner different stakeholders concerns and values disagree and rules are difficult to understand. He posits that the decisions and behaviors of managers can produce notable social outcomes. An atmosphere that further ethical decision- making is therefore one that consist of a wider set of dimensions where organizations' staff observe clarity of purpose, commitment to organizational values and a sense of standards and responsibility for ethical conduct (Marot and Dunn, 2010)

Marot and Dunn, (2010) maintained that the introduction of information technology and public examination of government and commercial organizations alike has focused attention on ethical decision- making which can occur all through the organization. According to them, the environment plays an important function in every angle of leadership. A leader's behavior relates with the expectation of the state of affairs any time there's a need for decision making. They are interested in the manner managers should handle emergency situations in the process of the deliver} of a 5-star customer service. (Marot and Dunn, 2010)

On the other hand, Trevino and Brown (2005) in an attempt to understand what influences a manager's decision gave some illustrations of unethical practices encountered during business. They pictured a manager's position on ethical dilemma, using Lawrence Kohlberg's model of cognitive moral development, which maintained that a person's state of cognitive moral development cloud his perception of what is right or wrong. The} thus concluded that the situational factors surrounding the present job milieu coupled with the general organizational culture greatly influences a manager's decision/behavior. (Trevino, 2004)

Trevino, et al. (2004) further considered turning down a huge amount of money during transactions on ethical grounds. They admitted that in such situations, the individual will be acting within the scope of the organization's culture and might be bothered about the after effect of turning down a superior's instruction. Turning down an extremely large sum of money during business transactions or reporting a colleague or a boss on ethical misconducts are actions whose consequences might pose a threat to the individual. Again, those who feel free to transfer their preferred music or videos from the net without due authorization may overlook the ethical denotation of "making away with" someone's artistic work or a staff

instructed to sign a legal document in the absence of his manager may not consider the ethical implication as an attempt to forgery. It takes the decision maker to initiate moral judgments processes when he realizes the ethical implications and a clear understanding of this step, according to (Trevino and Brown (2004) is the way to a profound knowledge of ethical decision- making.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

According to Hubert (2011) Organizational resilience is the competence organizations possess to quickly resolve and react to alterations (within and outside) like disaster claims, opportunities or threats and carry-on with normal operations with reduced effect on business flow. According to Cholewa, Mamula and Smith (2009) organizational resilience is the competence of an entity to continue to function or remain in existence while making progress in emergency situations. They admitted no organization exist in isolation; and argued that the ability of an organization to bounce back greatly rely on the strength of the other organizations that it look up to it for support.

Marcos and Macaulay (2008) maintained that with purpose, whenever disaster but resilient organizations and regardless of the cause, they can recover and bounce back from trauma and quickly restore business capabilities. They opined that such organizations endeavor to be ready for any kind of situation while they remain flexible to change. Seville et al. (2008) saw organizational resilience to be "a result of the collective's situation awareness of an organization, control of keystone vulnerabilities and a flexible changing ability in a difficult, changing and mutually joined environment".

In another light, Dalzieli and McManus (2004) maintained that organizational resilience and community resilience are interdependent, explaining chat being resilient can bring about a competitive advantage. However, McManus et al (2008) argued that resilience play an important part in bringing about a quick and timely bounce back for communities. Furthermore, in the absence of essential services provided by organizations to communities, the communities will find it difficult to react quickly or return to their normal states. In the same spirit, Stephenson (2010) explained that these organizations make it possible for communities to operate. To him, organizations alongside community resilience are interdependent such that the readiness of organizations to react quickly to disaster indicates that of the readiness of the neighboring community.

Healthcare Information and Management Society (2013) maintained that Organizational Resilience Management provides tools and advances to help an Health Information Exchange Organization maintain a high level of accessibility, declaring that it puts forward some ways that can be used in pinpointing and estimating risks to the Health Information Organization, and a structure for dealing with those risks, whether by suppression or by reduction. It also promotes an organization's ability to react and regain its stand from stress and do the needful to confirm the organization's continued accomplishments.

III. MEASURES OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

SITUATION AWARENESS

According to Franklin and Downing (2013), the concept "situation awareness" traces its first usage to the military in world war 1, where it was seen as an important attribute for crews in military aircraft. Mcmanus et al. (2008) maintained that situation awareness is expressed as the knowledge a corporation has of its total functional surrounding. This according to them includes the ability to anticipate opportunities and also possible disasters, disturbances and the ability to pinpoint crisis and their outcomes correctly. Nairn (2011) sees situation awareness as a degree of an organization's comprehension and appreciation of its total working milieu.

Endsley, Bolte, and Jones (2003) defined situation awareness as being abreast with happenings in the environment and to comprehend the relevance of that information now and in time to come. They explained further that the term 'situation awareness' is mostly used in working terms.

Endsley (1995), defined team situation awareness as the extent to which all the team members have the understanding of happenings necessary to carry out required tasks, stressing that it goes to a large extent to determine the success or failure of members of a team and that a poor situation awareness on a member can negatively affect the progress of the entire team. He argued that the ability of organizations to see themselves as part of a wider network, in perfect agreement can bring about a common and shared situation awareness, even for decision makers. According to Mills, et al. (2015) when medical directors foresee a health disorder, they carry out relief efforts with the aid of available information from former crisis experiences as they simultaneously remain alert to the disaster and area presently disturbed.

First Aid as provided by the Red Cross Society stresses the need to be informed of happenings within the affected area as the first important strategy to be accepted by responders when attending to an individual in need of medical assistance (www.unicef.org)

Situation awareness for First Aid responders in medical context also includes examining and understanding the event that occurred to avoid injury of responders and equally to communicate to other rescue agencies which may be interested with the information of the situation through radio services before their arrival. It is equally used to avoid further injury to already injured individuals, to medical responders as well as to inform other like-minded responders of hazardous conditions before their arrival, (www.unicef.org)

KEYSTONE VULNERABILITIES

Keystone vulnerabilities, according to McManus et. al. (2008) are the elements in the organization's system which by their loss or destruction may have the ability of adversely affecting the organization, causing terrible damage all through the system, and by which other close elements of the system depend for support. They explained further that keystone vulnerabilities can either occur violently, implying the sudden

failure of a system or it may occur gradually, implying the step by step failure of a system for a longer period due to growing systematic or coincidental loss of mild important factors.

Similarly, Nairn (2011) argues that the direct effect of keystone vulnerabilities may occur either immediately and badly affect a constituent part or gradually, causing the malfunctioning of minor important element that may eventually cause a terrible damage in the future if not checked on time. However, Luers (2003) submits that vulnerability is generally defined as the weakness to damage, and is often characterized by either of the scenarios: the sensitivity of some of the people or place to threats, shocks or disturbances, also the state of the system's skill to fit in to different situation. Luers (2005) opined that pointing out those things that causes the exposure to attack and understanding what make up the basic operation may help decision makers discover the most important issues that are pressing, as they make futuristic management plans. He maintained that controlling vulnerabilities in the future needs a proper directing of the main factors as they observe the differences occurring in the organization's processes while keeping track of changes in the system that are in line with the present situation.

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

Marot and Dunn (2010) puts it that ethical managerial practices as included in the behavior of an organization has been shown to possess channels that affect the results organization achieve in the form of ethical decision-making, creativity, quality safety and resilience. In the same vein, Schoeman (2014) admits that ethical managerial practices are important to a lot of important business results and that it differentiates conspicuous organizations from the ordinary.

Richard, Osborn, and Groves (2013) discussed extensively on business ethics and argued that business ethics is the putting into practice a set of moral values accepted by an organization's stakeholders as the codes that should determine behaviors. According to them, looking at the way organizations show ethical behavior, it is obvious that the outcome of failure can be disastrous and can even deprive the organization the freedom to operate irrespective of its legal rights.

Ethical leaders and managers discriminate between information that should be disclosed and kept confidential (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2006). Further leadership and management's ability to set and communicate realistic objectives is important. The practice of setting realistic objectives may help to prevent unethical behavior in the organization. Carroll and Buchholtz suggest that unrealistic organizational goals may cause pressure for individuals in the organization to act in unethical ways to achieve the established goals or misrepresentation of the progress on these goals.

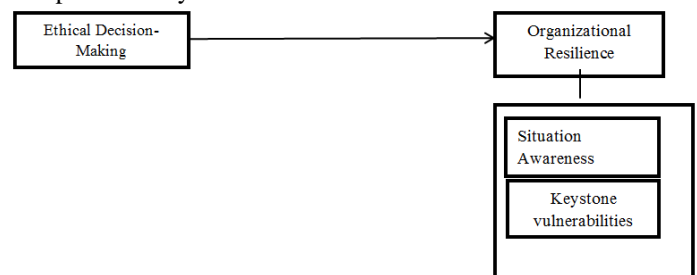
Ethics officers and ethics programs are both considered to be ethics best practices. Carroll and Buchholtz (2006) suggest that ethics officers in the organization often times are responsible for leading and managing the implementation of ethics programs in an organization. Components of ethics programs include dissemination of codes of ethics, training in

ethical decision-making processes, recognizing ethical behavior, and understanding the protocol for reporting unethical behavior. Codes of conduct, considered an ethics best practice in an organization, primary purpose is to convey the ethical standards and behavior throughout the organization. These codes of ethics make a statement about expectations of behavior and the principles of the organization. Effectiveness of codes of ethics is based on how these codes are communicated and used in ethical decision-making.

From the foregoing discussion, we hereby hypothesized thus:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between ethical decision-making and situation analysis in tertiary hospitals in Bayelsa State.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between ethical decision-making and keystone vulnerabilities in tertiary hospitals in Bayelsa State.



Source: Desk Research, 2017

Figure 1: Operational Framework for the hypothesized relationship between ethical decision-making and organizational resilience

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross sectional research design involving directors and heads of departments of the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa and Niger Delta University Teaching Hospital, Kolobiri. The primary source of data collection was through the structured questionnaire. The sampling elements in the population consist of 113 directors and heads of department of both hospitals. The entire population elements are included in the study therefore no sample size was determined. After data cleaning, only data of 83 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was used for data analysis and hypothesis testing with the aid of the SPSS Package version 20. The internal reliability of the instrument is as shown below:

variables	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Ethical decision making	4	0.958
Situation awareness	4	0.971
Keystone vulnerabilities	4	0.960

Source: Research data, 2017

Table 1: Reliability statistics for the instruments

The following Cronbach's alpha results shows the test of reliability of the scale. Ethical decision making (0.96), Situation awareness (0.971) and Keystone vulnerabilities (0.96). Going by Nunally's (1978) alpha threshold of 0.70

should be accepted. Therefore the reliability level of the scale is acceptable.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The secondary data analysis was carried out using the Spearman rank order correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover hypotheses H_{01} to H_{02} which were bivariate and all stated in the null form. We have relied on the Spearman Rank (ρ) statistic to undertake the analysis. The 0.05 significance level is adopted as criterion for the probability of either accepting the null hypotheses at ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypotheses at ($p < 0.05$).

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between ethical decision-making and situation awareness.

			Ethical decision-making	Situation awareness
Spearman's rho	Ethical decision-making	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.851**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	83	83
	Situation awareness	Correlation Coefficient	.851**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	83	83

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

Source: Research Data ,2017 (SPSS output, version 21.0)

Table 2: Correlation analysis showing the relationship between Ethical decision-making and Situation Awareness

The relationship between ethical decision-making and situation awareness was investigated using Spearman Rank Order. It revealed a strong correlation between both, with ρ value = 0.851, $p < .000$. This means that high degree of ethical decision making agrees with high degree of situation awareness. Hence ethical decision making has a significant effect on situation awareness. This result simply infer that management's clear codes of ethical values, as demonstrated in their culture makes room for ethical decision making and the more the right decisions are being made, the greater the increase of their situation awareness. This is closely related to the findings of Powley (2009) who maintained that employees, who are carried along in decision making, might become committed to the organization and this commitment will eventually be of immense benefit in enabling them think outside the box towards establishing a resilient organization.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between Ethical decision-making and Keystone Vulnerabilities.

			Ethical decision-making	Keystone vulnerabilities
Spearman's rho	Ethical decision-making	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.895**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	83	83
	Keystone vulnerabilities	Correlation Coefficient	.895**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	83	83

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

Source: Research Data ,2017 (SPSS output, version 21.0)

Table 3: Correlation analysis showing the relationship between Ethical decision-making and Keystone vulnerabilities

The relationship between Ethical decision-making and Keystone Vulnerabilities was investigated using Spearman Rank Order. There was a positive correlation between them, with ρ as = 0.895, $p < .000$, denoting that the greater the degree Ethical decision making practiced in the institution, the higher the control of Keystone Vulnerabilities. Hence Ethical decision making has a significant effect on Keystone Vulnerabilities. From this finding, the study deduce that making right decisions on identifying factors that cause damage increases in the application of the right measures for the control of vulnerabilities in the institutions. This corresponds with the emphasis by Luers (2005) that the ability of managers and decision makers to identify close cause of vulnerability and understand the links to underlying processes as well as identify priorities that are urgent, enhances a proper management of vulnerability s in the organization.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study thus concludes that Health Institution that imbibe the principle of Ethical decision making and Situation awareness will be abreast with the happenings around their operating environment and better prepared to tackle difficulties that may arise. Health Institution that engage in Ethical decision making and a proper monitor of keystone vulnerabilities will be equipped with the skills needed in Achieving the resilience of not just the organization and its members but also the community on which it operates. On the other hand, organizations that are defiant to ethical principles might decline event of unforeseen crises and possibly become extinct as the case may be.

Based on this the following, recommendations are here proffered:

- ✓ Management of tertiary institutions should not only be profit oriented but should make ethical decisions that will guide against unnecessary damage and exposure to threats by ensuring a proper control of vulnerabilities in the organization.
- ✓ Management should involve staff in decision making as this will increase their situation awareness and their sense of commitment to the organization.

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