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**IMPACT OF CONFORMITY VALUES ON NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN THE
TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study investigates the influence conformity values on performance in the telecommunication industry in Kaduna metropolis, Nigeria. It is also one of the very few studies in Nigeria, which test the relationship between conformity values and company's operational performance. The study uses a survey research design, which utilizes questionnaires as the main instrument for data collection. The population of the study is the selected telecommunication companies namely; MTN, GLO, 9MOBILE and AIRTEL. Regression analysis using statistical package for social science (SPSS) was employed to analyze the data and test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that conformity values have a positive, insignificant impact on operational performance. The study concludes that core company values have significantly impacted on the operational performance which is speed and flexibility of the selected telecommunication companies in Kaduna. The study recommends that the management of these telecommunication companies should provide proper communication of these values during orientations, induction and in-house training of new and existing employees and motivate them to be operationally efficient at work.

Keywords: Values, Conformity, Speed, Flexibility, Operational Performance.

1. Introduction

The importance of values in all types of businesses cannot be overemphasized. This paper is focusing on conformity values simply buttress on self-restraint in everyday interaction with others. This includes obedience, politeness, and self-discipline, honoring parents and elders, responsible and being loyal. It also entails subordination to one's teacher, boss, and parents and others (Haralambos, 2000).

Over the past decade, Nigeria's telecommunication industry has experienced growth and development. The mobile data that was once too expensive to provide or consume has become common, giving rise to a rapid increase in the use of smart phones and also resulting to a rise in new generation economic sub-sectors like e-commerce and digital marketing on the media. These

have all come together to foster a much more robust Nigeria economy, buoyed by cheaper, faster, easier communication and information dissemination. Advancement in network technology didn't just happen. It took a lot of innovation and freedom to act and try new ideas and methods. For one's innovation to become acceptable and put into use, it would need the help of a team of experts or individuals to honestly support that particular idea or ideas as well as conform to rules and regulations (Okafor, 2008)

The telecommunication industry has contributed to the social economic and political environment in Nigeria. This could be seen in the areas of social interaction and communication, the opportunity of employment and payment of taxes, sponsorship of programs, political campaigns and so on (Wu, 2009). The concepts of

conformity values have come a long way but research on them and operational performance in the telecommunication industry in the Nigerian context is still rudimentary. It is on this premise that the study seeks to fill the literature, variable inclusion and environmental gaps.

This study is focusing on the impact investigation of values which is conformity values on operational performance (speed and flexibility) in the telecommunication industry which include MTN, GLO, 9MOBILE, AIRTEL telecommunication companies in Kaduna metropolis. The findings will serve as a reference for further research, add value to existing literature on values and assist new and old organizations with company values adoption.

The objective of this study is to find the influence of conformity values on operational performance.

The study formulated the hypothesis in a null form

Ho: conformity values do not have a significant influence on operational performance.

The study is organized as follows: in the next section, it reviewed some of the conceptual, empirical and theoretical literature concerning values. In section 3, it explains the sample size, population and model specifications. The fourth section presents the result and discussions derived from the results. Finally, it concluded and recommended in the last section.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Issues

Concept of values

Rokeach (2019) defines values “as an ending belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence”. Values can be classified into two broad categories: Firstly, individual values are values relate with the development of human personality or individual norms of recognition and protection of the human personality

such as honesty, loyalty, veracity and honor. Secondly, collective values are values connected with the solidarity of the community or collective norms of equality, justice, solidarity and socialness are known as collective values. Super (2020) defines a value as “an objective either a psychological state, a relationship or material condition, that one seeks to attain” while Hofstede (2018), defines value as a broad tendency to prefer certain state of affairs over others. A more elaborate definition is given by Schwartz (2017) “who define values as desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviours, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behaviours”.

Concept of Conformity

A behavior is said to conform when an individual in a group displays that behavior because it is the most frequent behavior the individual witnessed in other individuals, Cladiere and Andrew (2016). Conformity simply means yielding to group pressures (Crutchfield, 2015). Leon (2020) views conformity as a pressure towards the uniformity that a group exerts on its members which excludes deviants and favors cohesion of the group. Conformism is a social norm that is generally accepted in terms of thinking, acting or feeling, emphasized and expected by members of a particular community or social group since it is considered the right thing (Turner, 2014). There are different types of conformity which includes; firstly, Compliance which usually happens when an individual accepts influences because he hopes to achieve a favorable reaction from a group or another person. He does this because he expects to gain particular rewards or approval and avoid specific punishment or disapproval. Compliance ends when there are no group pressures to conform and it is therefore a temporary change in behavior.

This study now defines conformity simply as the restraint from the disobedience of social norms or expectations.

Operation Performance

Business Dictionary (2016) defines operational performance as simply a firm's performance measured against standard or prescribed indicators of efficiency, effectiveness and environmental responsibility for instance waste reduction productivity, regulatory compliance and cycle time. Andy (2019) explains that operational performance is a firm's performance after being measured against the prescribed or required quality, speed, flexibility, dependability and cost. The research now defines operational performance as the performance of a firm measured against standard indicators of efficiency, effectiveness and environmental responsibility such as quality, waste reduction, speed, cost, regulatory compliance, flexibility and dependability.

Objectives of Operational Performance

Andy (2016) explains that an operational performance objective includes; quality, speed, dependability, flexibility and costs. Dependability: A company can measure dependability in terms of the products ability to function as designed, as expected and to perform or work consistently over a reasonable amount of time. Andy (2014) regards to a company's operation as dependable if the company produces and delivers products to its consumers and customers on time and according to agreed costs and prices. Flexibility: operations are flexible if a company can configure the product lines to deal with various requirements of a product and if the operations can adjust to new requirements quality. Flexibility also requires a company to adapt its operations to meet new or changing production volumes and delivery schedules. Quality: Andy (2019) states that quality is more than just conformance to specification but how well a product or service performs its intended function, the product feature desirability and its reliability. Andy views quality in another sense means product durability, the ease with which the product is serviced and the extent to which the customers believe the service or product meet their needs. Speed: this simply means the rate at which a company can generate sales quotas and how rapidly and

often a company can deliver its services and products (Andy, 2012). In addition, speed refers to issues such as the time required to manufacture one or more products and the time a company requires to research and develop a new product or service. Cost: this objective means the variation in unit cost as a result of changes in the volume produced by a manufacturer and the variety of products produced. Most at times, the higher the variety of products produced, the lower the volume produced and the higher the cost per unit and vice versa. Most importantly the cost of each product will be different which will affect the prices of the product, profits and running cost.

2.2 Empirical Reviews

Gonzalez, Diaz-Fernandez and Simonetti (2014) research which aimed to explore whether Schwartz's value theory was applicable to the social science students who were Spanish at the undergraduate level and also to bring new knowledge to the relationship between basic values and those patterns which determine perception under social initiative carried out by a company. A self-completion structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 1060 university students. Regression analysis and correlation was used for the study. The analysis revealed that the best predictors for acceptance were Benevolence, Universalism, Security, Conformity and gender and they positively influence the acceptance of social initiative developed by the company and also women like the social initiative more than men. Self-direction, simulation, security, and tradition values were positively correlated to the support dimension. Universalism, Achievement, Security, and Conformity influenced the perceived usefulness dimension positively. Gonzalez, Diaz-Fernandez and Simonetti (2014) did recommend that individuals should be educated using CSR/Business ethics programs to provide better understanding of the concept but also cultivating in them the awareness of being responsible to the environment and society. By and large, Gonzalez, Diaz-Fernandez and Simonetti (2014) was logical and organized, it did look at modern theory of Schwartz and also dimensions of social initiative but the introductory part of the research could

have expressed the researchers ideas in words rather than have too many citations. A regression analysis was conducted but there was no model to show how the variables correlate. The research is on values and corporate social initiative not on core values and operational performance.

An investigation on what happens to the meaning of core values when translated by employees and also how these values are visible in the day-to-day actions in the employees was conducted by Charlotta and Nathalie (2013). A qualitative approach was used and a case study was conducted in one of the H & M subsidiaries. 12 semi-structured interviews were used and a convenience and opportunistic sample was used to select the participants of the study. Interviews, written documents (annual report) and observation were used to collect data. Findings show that the employees translated core values into a guiding tool that supported and joined the work force in their daily activities. Recommendations were that further research should be conducted to include staff, the employees that have the least daily contact with the head office. In conclusion, core values rely on the institutionalized organizational procedures and processes set in place. By and large, Charlotta and Nathalie (2013) were well organized, detailed and understandable to an average reader. The study investigated core values and its translation by employees in their day-to-day activities in china a case study of a Swedish company whereas the present study is on the examination the impact of core values on operational performance (speed and flexibility), Kaduna metropolis Kaduna, Nigeria.

The relationship between individual level values was examined using Schwartz's theory and organizational and occupational commitment by Aaron (2012) among Israeli Arabs. The sample was 254 females and 115 males given at total number of 369 Arab teachers working in 14 schools in Arab communities in the north of Israel. Commitments were measured using Meyer (2001) scales while the individual values were measured using the portrait value questionnaire (PVQ) Schwartz's (2006). Data was analyzed using regression and

correlation. Findings showed a significant effect of two values; Conformity and benevolence on most organizational and occupational commitment dimensions beyond and above the effect of demographic variables. Aaron (2012) recommended that continuing research should be done in these areas. For the most part, the study was well conducted and organized although empirical studies on values were rudimentary, the Schwartz's basic human values were not explained in details for the understanding of an average reader, the sampling method was not clearly stated, the regression model could have been specified to show the relationship of the variables.

Okafor (2011) researched on the relationship between shared values and organizational Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE). Proportional stratified sampling method was utilized. Expost factor and cross-sectional survey research methods were used as data collection method. Ordinary least square (OLS) regression models were used to analyze the data collected. performance was conducted on quoted companies were randomly selected on the 1st tier of the Findings showed that shared values among organization members were positively related to organizational performance (Return on Total Assets, ROTA). Okafor (2012) recommended that these values should be communicated to all levels both in the organization and nation and also appropriate sanctions and reward system should be instituted and related to employee performance.

An exploratory research was conducted by Falkenberg (2021) on organizational values of fifty (50) largest companies operating in the Norwegian private sector. According to Falkenberg (2022), focus on value statements has increased over the last decade for so many reasons. They are considered as a vital part of successful business, important for corporate governance and also a key to reputation management and development of corporate culture and identity. In this study, corporate values were classified into the following categories: moral, economic, norms for cooperation and responsibility, norms for professional practice of all the companies studied. 86% had defined values, which were mostly non-economic. Results showed that there was a

correlation between company values and the industry a company operated within and also that, company value statements were often both divergent and competing. Conclusion was that companies generally formulate value statements to create a positive impression on the public and recommended that values statements should not therefore be taken literally but rather looked upon as areas of focus. Falkenberg (2023) is an exploratory research on organizational values known a value statement in Norway which subsequently led to the findings of its correlation; although a regression analysis could have been conducted to determine the extent of their relationship while the present study is to core identify values impact on operational performance in the telecommunication industry, Kaduna metropolis Nigeria.

Laurre and James (2014) tried to answer a basic question which was can work place values be managed? They conducted interviews for over 5 years period 2018 and 2023 for both employees and managers of the US department of defense installation. Findings showed that organizational goals are motivating employees to the extent that such goals that are strategic reflect employees' internal normative, affective and task oriented values, "a zone of existing values and also middle managers play a crucial role in interpreting the values in terms of employees' values, daily work responsibilities and also communicating and rewarding performance towards those values in areas that reflect and build on individual values of employees. It further explained that the question: can values be managed? From their findings suggest a "yes and "no". Laurre and James (2021) was detailed and organized but the introductory aspect did not really show the researcher words but statements and citation of so many authors. The research could have appreciated other theories of values like that of Schwartz's (2020). The conclusion and recommendation of Laurre and James (2019) study was not clearly stated and it looks at values management: aligning employee values and organizational goals whereas the present research is to examine the impact of core values on operational performance.

2.3 Theoretical Review

The value theory (Schwartz, 2012) adopts a conception of values that specifies six main features that are implicit in the writings of many theorists: values are beliefs linked inextricable to affect. Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action. Values transcend specific actions and situations. Values serve as standard or criteria. Values are ordered by importance relative to one another. Values guide multiple actions. The value theory defines ten broad values according to the motivation that it expresses or underlies each of them and it has been empirically validated in at least 65 countries.

Schwartz theory of Basic value

Self-direction: Defining goal: independent thought and action – choosing, creating and exploring. Self-direction derives from organic needs for control and mastery (Bandura, 2006; Deci 2010) and independent requirements of autonomy and independence (Kluckhohn, 2013; Kohn and Schooler (2012) Simulation: Defining goal; excitement, novelty, and challenge in life. Simulation values derives from organic need for variety and stimulation in order to maintain an optimal, positive, rather than threatening, level of activation (Berlyne, 2011). Hedonism: Defining goal: pleasure or sensuous gratification theorists from many disciplines (Freud, 2015) mention hedonism. Achievement: Defining goal: personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards. Competent performance that generates resources is necessary for individuals to survive and for groups and institution to reach their objectives. Power: Defining goal: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources value analysts have mentioned power values as well (Allport, 2016). Security: Defining goal: safety, harmony and stability of society of relationships and of self. Some security values serve primarily individual interests (e.g. clean) other wider groups interest (e.g. National security). Conformity: Defining goal: restraint of actions; inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm other and violate social expectations or norms. (Obedient, self-discipline, politeness, honouring parents and elders) (loyal and responsible). Tradition: Defining goal: respect,

commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides. Benevolence: Defining goal: preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the in-group). (helpful, honest, forgiving; responsible, loyal, true friendship, mature love). Universalism: Defining goal: understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. According to this theory, all these values are very important in both individuals and work place settings and that is a major reason for the study to be hinged on this theory.

3. Methodology

In an attempt to empirically examine the impact of value systems on performance, the study uses primary data using a survey research design. The data was collected using questionnaires. The instrument of data collection used is the modified version of Schwartz value survey questionnaire (SVS) (Schwartz, 2001) for values while Wu (2011) questionnaire was used to develop questions for speed and flexibility.

3.1 Population of the Study

The total population of the study is 115 members of staff of the telecommunication companies. 115 staff members which include 30 staff from 9mobile, MTN 25, GLO 40, and Airtel. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table was used to arrive at a sample size of 107 staff members; having 28 for 9MOBILE, 24 MTN, 36 for GLO and 19 for AIRTEL.

3.2 Model Specification

In functional form it's represented as follows;

$$OPP = f(V)$$

Operational performance is a function of values

In equation form is represented as follows:

$$OPP = + B_1 CON + E_i \quad (1)$$

Where;

V = values

OPP = Operational Performance

CON = conformity values

E_i = Standard Error of Estimate

= Constant or Intercept

B_1 - B_3 = Coefficient of Independent Variable

3.3 Method of Data Analysis

The study employed regression analysis. The hypothesis of the study will be empirically tested using the regression analysis.

3.4 Variable Measurement

Performance Measurement

In the study, the Dependent Variable performance is measured as:

Operational Performance = speed and flexibility in services delivery. Andy (2013)

Explanatory Variable Measurement

Variable	Proxy	Measurement
Values	conformity	obedience and polite

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Presentation of Regression Results and Hypothesis Testing

In this section, the regression results of the models of the study are presented and interpreted. The hypothesis formulated for the study is also tested from the results as presented below;

Table 1: Summary of Regression Result

Variables	Co-efficient	t-statistics	p-values
Constant	0.200	0.311	0.756
CON	0.233	1.002	0.319
R	0.498		
R ²	0.248		
ADJ R ²	0.217		
F-Stat	8.145		
F-Sig	0.000		
DW	1.497		

Source: SPSS 2024 (Appendix ii)

The above table presents the regression results of OLS model. It presents, interprets and discusses the regression result of the dependent variable (Operational performance) and the independent variables of the study (conformity values). The presentation of the result takes the form of analyzing the relationship between the dependent variable and each independent variable as well as the analysis of the combined result of the model.

4.2 Conformity and Operational performance

Hypothesis: Conformity does not have a significant impact on operational performance of telecommunication industry in Nigeria.

The study reveals positive and insignificant impact of Conformity on the operational performance of telecommunication industry in Nigeria at thirty-two percent. The Conformity has a t-value of 1.002, co-efficient value of 0.233 and p-value of 0.319. This indicates that Conformity has positive and insignificant impact on the operational performance of telecommunication industry in Nigeria. Conformity value was found to reveal a positive but insignificant impact on operational performance with a p-value of 0.319. This is also in line with the researcher's prior expectation and what is obtainable in reality. When individuals value politeness and being obedient, it only makes sense that these values will increase their operational performance but insignificantly according to the findings of this study. This is similar to the findings of the study by Gonzalez, Diaz-Fernandez and Simonetti

(2014) and in contrast to the findings of the study by Aaron (2013).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

On the overall, the study concludes that conformity values have significantly influenced the operational performance of telecommunication companies in Kaduna metropolis. Therefore the responsibility for ensuring the values is vested with the management of the telecommunication companies. Thus the management should ensure as much as possible that:

Since conformity value is the representative indicator that measure operational performance. Any default in conformity values can generate large loss, which could lead to business collapse. Regulatory bodies in charge the telecommunication industry should encourage companies to develop a document that clearly state their values and drives. The management of these telecommunication companies should provide proper communication of these values during induction and in-house training of new and existing employees and should encourage their employees to be more creative at work and conformity to guidelines. Efficient and effective security should be adopted by the management to ensure that the employees feel very safe and secure at their work place in order to ensure operational efficiency. Since telecommunication companies are less efficient when there is a security breach. The telecommunication companies should maintain a consistent level obedience, innovation and freedom through motivation to the employees, in order to

encourage them to be more operationally efficient. Further research should be conducted in this area of

study by scholars and researchers to add value to literatures on values, particularly on conformity values.

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