



ETHICAL COMMUNICATION ISSUE OF TRUSTWORTHINESS AND ITS IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF THE NIGERIAN IMMIGRATION SERVICE, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This paper was an expository study of how communicational ethical issues such as trustworthiness impact organizational efficiency of immigrations service in Rivers State. The objective of this study was to assess the relationship between trustworthiness and organizational efficiency. Questionnaires were the major instruments used in gathering primary data and findings were analysed using regression and correlational analysis. The study found that trustworthiness as an ethical communication tool significantly relates to the efficiency of the Nigerian Immigration Service in Rivers State. Trustworthiness is communicated by the display of acts or behaviours which are considered worthy. The study concluded that communicational ethics whose values in this study were established as trustworthiness significantly relates to efficiency-factors of time saving and cost reduction. The Nigerian Immigration Service was found to lack the efficiency-driven values as revealed in this study and as such must be repositioned to reflect these essential values to enable it compete more favourably. The study recommended that in order for immigration services to maintain their ethics in River State, the Federal Government should overhaul the Immigration Service with a view to enthroning the culture and values of communication ethics; Officers who had maintained high ethical standards should be publicly commended and rewarded accordingly; also officers with sound ethical records and orientation should be appointed into the members of Ethics and Disciplinary unit of the Service and Ethics and Disciplinary unit of the Service should evolve a realistic method for checkmating unethical and sharp practices and behaviours among the officers.

Keywords: *Trustworthiness, Communication, Ethics, Efficiency, Immigration, Organizational*

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INTRODUCTION

Ethics is at the root of any successful business organization. Parhizgar & Parhizgar (2006) define ethics as the “critical analysis of cultural values to determine the validity of their vigorous rightness or wrongness in terms of two major criteria: truth and justice. Ethics is examining the relation of an individual to society, to the nature, and or to God. How do people make ethical decisions? They are influenced by how they perceive themselves in relation to goodness and/or excellence. It drives the corporate image and clothes it with the irresistible attractions which are not only appealing to customers or clients but to also the whole external business world (Berlo, 2006).Dance (1970) any corporate or business organization that relegates ethics to the background does it to its own peril. This is because no serious and progressive minded businessman, investor or entrepreneur would like to associate or carry out business transactions with organizations notable for swindling people, failing its customers or client, courting with fraudulent and dubious individuals, making false promises, indulging in acts of illegality, giving false information(Wrench, McCroskey, & Richmond,2008). Everyone would want to associate or do business with organizations which have good track-records and cultural antecedents of honesty, transparency, accountability, responsibility, obedience to rules and regulations, adherence to promises and terms of contracts, respect and tolerance for divergent initiatives, opinions or ideas , listening to complaints and dealing with them accordingly and expeditiously, having regard for time and not passing bulks in order to escape regulatory punishments or legal actions for breaches of contracts or promises.

For the ethical issues of an organization to achieve its aim effective communication must be ensured.The organic nature of every organization is the fact that its affairs are run by human beings either as top management personnel or subordinate employees. Communication remains the bond or fabric under which individuals or

groups of individuals within and outside an organization build strong social relationship. Through healthy interactions, people get to know about the existence of particular organizations, the nature of business transactions they are into, their places of business, their leaderships, the financial strength, the disposition of the leaderships and the employees. Therefore, communication enables the people within and outside organizations to make what could be called ‘informed decision’. Informed decisions are decisions made after all the useful and honest disclosures have been made by a person of superior knowledge to the users of information about a thing or person.Communication generates sets of information and top management relies on the generated information to make over-reaching decisions. There is no agreed-upon definition of communication.The search for its essence and the study of its meaning is a search rich in the doing, not in the done (Dance, 1970). Dance (1970)communication is the process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.If we extend this to *organizations*, then we have a starting definition of organizational communication as the process whereby an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.And what is a “stakeholder”? According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of Business Terms*, a stakeholder is “any party that has an interest in an organization. Stakeholders of a company include stockholders, bondholders, customers, suppliers, employees, and so forth (Scott, 2009).” An organization must also interact with its external environment: competitors, community members, governmental agencies, and more. Every organization has a wide range of stakeholders with which it must communicate. The “idea” someone is trying to send is the *message*. This transmission of

a message from the source to the receiver is referred to as “stimulating meaning” because, according to this view of communication, the source is attempting to transmit her or his idea so that the receiver will understand the idea in the same way as the source. Thus, it is very important to ensure a receiver understands the intended meaning of a message.

A *channel* is “the means by which a message is carried from one person to another (Wrench, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2008). Communication ethics operates within the framework of designated principles. Principles of ethical communication advocate truthfulness, trust, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication. They endorse freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and tolerance of dissent to achieve the informed and responsible decision making fundamental to a civil society and strive to understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages. Communication that is intended to conceal the truth or harm another person cannot be described as ethical. There is no gainsaying that no business organization can be adequately efficient without first and foremost attracting and sustaining people’s goodwill, support, confidence and trust around its business. The practice of ethical communication has been strongly emphasized by top management, business experts and professionals as the best possible way for not only attracting as well as retaining the goodwill, confidence, and trust but also for enthronement of an honest, focused and accountable leadership in an organization for organizational efficiency. A public service as immigration service demands that the officials of the establishment have to adequately observe certain basic ethical principles and values of communication in their dealings with the members of the general public, so as to make service delivery in that sector ably efficient. As a matter of professional ethics, immigration personnel owe the members of the public the duty to disclose all necessary information about

immigration, duty to disclose all immigration and migration laws, and code of conducts, duty not to manifest the prejudicial sentiments of tribalism, racism, duty not to request for bribe before carrying out the assigned tasks or duties, duty not dump documents over refusal or non-payment of bribe, duty not to falsify accounts to cover up embezzlement or misappropriation, duty to use money or other assets for the exact purpose for which they are meant to be used, duty to obey all the formal rules and regulations of the establishment, duty to not play truancy, duty not to seek financial or sex gratification for services to be rendered, duty of confidentiality, duty to levy immigration-related charges accurately and according to law, not to falsify or doctor official immigration or migration documents, duty to keep non-classified information open for easy accessibility, obligation to resume duty on time, not showing preferential treatment to some members of the public to the exclusion of others, engaging members of the public in meaningful interactions in respect of the issues directly affecting, not diverting public funds and other asset facilities meant for the public to private use, duty to keep offices easily accessible, not feigning to be too busy when actually less busy, duty not to lie to members of the public, duty not to pass bucks to the members of the general public in order to cover up acts of irresponsibility or incompetence, duty to welcome criticisms and complaints and to respond to them honestly and expeditiously, duty not to deceive the public, duty not delay service delivery unnecessarily either by not refusing to move documents to the designated or next authority for action or withholding authorization or postponing stamping or signing, duty to listen to members of the public, etc.

The objective of this study is to determine:

- To ascertain the extent to which trustworthiness relates to time saving in the Nigerian Immigration Service in Rivers State.

- To ascertain the extent to which trustworthiness relates to cost reduction in the Nigerian Immigration Service in Rivers State.

In carrying out the study, two research hypotheses were stated, which include:

- There is no significant relationship between trustworthiness and time saving in the Nigerian Immigration Service in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between trustworthiness and cost reduction in the Nigeria immigration service I River State.

Operational Framework

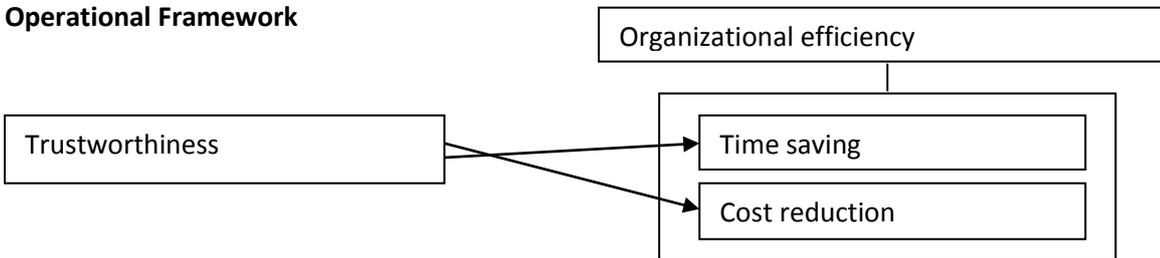


Figure 1: Operational Framework: trustworthiness and organizational efficiency of the Nigerian immigration establishment in rivers state.

Desk Research, 2018

Theoretical foundation

However, in this article focus was on reviewing relevant sets of literature which were directly related to the variables raised in the specific objectives and repeated in the research questions of this study. The theory of deontology otherwise called categorical imperative theory propounded by Immanuel Kant (1797) is the theoretical context upon which this study is hinged. The theory of deontology states that there are clear communicative behaviors that are and are not ethical, so all individuals should avoid behaving unethically in communication. It further holds that a person should only act on the principles that she or he would want everyone else to always act upon. Kant's *universal law* is *categorical* because there are absolutely no exceptions under any conditions, and it is *imperative* because it is a necessary duty to which everyone must adhere. In essence, Kant theorized that organizations could only be efficient when the managers prioritize and integrate communicative ethics into their mainstream of service delivery. To prioritize and integrate communicative ethics connotes rendering of services and handling of information pertaining to such services and organization in the manner that

reflects honesty, transparency, accountability, responsibility, trustworthiness, accuracy, obedience, tolerance, among others. In light of this theory, it will be unethical for the top officials of the Nigerian Immigration service to inflate contract fees or pad the budgets for personal gain; to treat their subordinates unfairly by not paying them as when due, intimidating them, leading not by example, not allowing their participation in decision making, punishing them out of personal hatred, withholding pensioners' gratuities for personal gain, delaying their promotion unnecessarily over favouristic or tribal sentiments or their refusal to offer bribe or sexual gratification.

This paper looked at an ethical issue of trustworthiness as a yardstick for determining organizational efficiency.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness depicts a person or a process or an organization that is worthy of being trusted. Trustworthiness as a communication ethics demands that things, processes, organizations and people must be subject to communicative values and behaviours that encourage and enthrone the principle of trust. Communication is considered

trustworthy, therefore ethical, when it can be relied upon by the trusting party. Organizational efficiency is subsumed into ethically driven organizations because once there is trust on the part of the organizations trusted, the wheel of progress and efficiency will continue to rotate in their favour. Hosmer (2005) was of the view that many economists, psychologists, sociologists and management theorists united on the importance of trust in the conduct of human affairs. Rotter, Chance & Phares (2002) argued that a generalized expectancy of trust and distrust can be an important determinant of behaviour. Golembiewski & McConkie (2003) stated that there is no single variable which so thoroughly influences interpersonal and group behaviour as does trust. Hirsch (2000) reemphasized its importance for exchange or services when he explained that trust was a 'public good' necessary for the success of economic transactions. Bok (2000) went even further and claimed that when trust is destroyed, societies (or organizations) falter and collapse. Lewis & Weigert (2005) agreed that trust was indispensable in social relationships. Zucker (2004) followed with the statement that trust was vital for the maintenance of cooperation in organizations and society and necessary as grounds for even most routine everyday interactions. All the foregoing underscores the fact that no organization can exist to seek efficiency without first prioritizing trust as its cardinal ethical objective. The scholars tried to show how the ethical communication principle of trust links to organizational efficiency. Once there is no trust, there equally exists no efficiency. Hosmer (2005) noted that the synonymy of trust would seem to be confidence. Again, Zand (2002) agreed no less that confidence is implicitly synonymous with trust, but emphasized the importance of giving up control over outcome. That would mean that trust refers to reposing confidence on the party to be trusted by the trusting party and the latter having no control of what will happen over his reposing such confidence in the party trusted. Hosmer (2005) noted that at this point, trust is now an individual decision based upon optimistic

expectations or confidence about the outcome of an uncertain event given personal vulnerability and lack of personal control over the actions of others.

Organizational Efficiency

One of the validations of organizational performance is efficiency. Organizational efficiency is an indispensable factor in the life of any organization. This is because no business-oriented organizations with the cardinal aim of profit maximization will drive the contents of production of goods and services without first looking at how to make the optimal use of their scarce resources at disposal (input) to get the goods or services provided at a reduced cost and time (output). That is when to say that such organizations are efficient. Davis & Pett (2016) defined efficiency as the amount of output obtained from a given input. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (2009) had defined *efficiency* as either the production of a greater quantity of outputs without changing input levels, or the production of the same quantity of outputs with a reduction in the input levels. Efficiency measures the relationship between inputs and outputs or how successfully the inputs have been transformed into outputs (Low, 2000). Organizational efficiency will be the degree of an organization's ability to fulfill its mission with the smallest costs or resources. According to Siengtai (2012), as any organization is created for a cause, it should better be created in such a way that it costs less to its creators (or owners, operators, employees etc.) to get to the desired goals. That may require process improvement, but more than anything – finding the right people to do the job. The efficiency may be ultimately measured in monetary terms. Organizational efficiency is a measure of the relationship between organizational inputs (resources) and outputs (goods and services provided). Romero (2013) emphasized that organizational efficiency reflects the improvement of internal processes of the organization, such as organizational structure, culture and community. Excellent organizational efficiency could improve entities' performance in terms of management,

productivity, quality and profitability (Romerio, 2013). The Pinprayong & Siengthai (2012) introduced seven dimensions for the measurement of organizational efficiency which include:

- Organizational strategy: that is a set of workable plans for driving the organizations. It also has to do with putting a round peg in a round hole in an organization, meaning putting the right persons and resources in right places in the right quantity and at the right time;
- Corporate structure design: Bureaucratic setting that is transparent, not complex, easily accessible and democratic;
- Management and business system building: Management and business organization that are open, fair and teamwork-oriented is bound to support efficiency;
- Development of corporate and employee styles: Corporate style is the manifestation of what the leadership of an organization is or does. What the leadership of an organization is or does is the reflection of its cultural practices or values. Thus, development of corporate style has to do with evolving good and quality leadership styles. For a leadership to support efficiency, it be competent, democratic, open-minded, fair, employee-participation driven and prioritize the employees job trainings at short and long term basis. At that other end, the leadership has to put in place and entrench cultural practices and values in the workplace to which the work styles and life of employees must align;
- Motivation of staff commitment: It is any conscientious effort of the management towards boosting the morale of the employees or their subordinates. It is a psychological aspect of managing the employees or subordinates in order to attain efficiency;
- Development of employee's skills: This has to do with offering employees the requisite in-job and out-job trainings with a view to harnessing and improving their knowledge, skills and competence;

- Subordinate goals: It points to setting of organizational goals in the manner that is attainable and clear to all the employees or subordinates. Blurred or unclearly stated goals defeats efficiency.

Increased organizational efficiency makes implementation both cheaper and smoother, but it is less useful if the plan being implemented was a bad plan. For example, if a business is able to produce and bring to market winter coats at less cost than its competitors in a tropical nation, that business is efficient, but the decision to sell winter coats in that climate was almost certainly foolish and misguided. Despite this, organizational efficiency is still important to planning because it enables plans that are otherwise impossible. For example, if a business' competitor has an entrenched position in a market but is less efficient in producing products, that business can enter the market through selling its products at lower prices that it can afford because of its lower production costs (Charnels, Cooper & Rhodes, 2007). At this juncture, it is imperative to distinguish efficiency from effectiveness. According to Romerio (2013) and Mouzas (2006), those two concepts might look synonymous, yet as the findings revealed they have a distinct meaning. Drucker (1970) described the former as doing things right and the latter as doing the right things. Efficiency is said to touch mostly on management; that is taking the right decisions at the right time, while effectiveness relates mostly to leadership; that is achieving the set goals of the organization. While efficiency is the means to the ends, effectiveness is the end. This is because one has to make and pursue the right decisions and use the right and quality resources at right quantity, place and time in order to achieve the set goals. Efficiency is about how well an organization can achieve its outputs with the resources that it has, whereas effectiveness is about how well those outputs contribute to the organization's goals. Efficiency is oriented towards successful input transformation into outputs, where effectiveness measures how outputs interact with the economic

and social environment. In simple terms, organizational effectiveness relates to goal attainment. An individual, group or an organization, that achieves their goals are said to be effective, and have used their resources to achieve an effective outcome. But does this also mean they have used their resources efficiently? Perhaps a couple of examples would easily clarify the difference between the two concepts. Consider a manager who develops and implements a training course and then trains the maximum number of employees, in the shortest period of time and at the cheapest possible cost. This person would be considered highly efficient because no-one could have done it better; their output for inputs expended is the maximum possible. What though, if this training course had nothing to do with the organization's objectives and was a complete waste of time for everyone who attended? We would then qualify our evaluation and state that whilst the manager was highly efficient he/she was not effective. Likewise if the same person developed a training program that was critically important to the ability of the organization to achieve its objectives, we would define this person as effective. However, if the program used five times the amount of resources that it could have used it would be considered effective but not efficient (Davis & Pett, 2016). The achievement of organizational efficiency has always been a prime interest of organizational managers. However over more recent times, with the realization that efficiency and effectiveness do not necessarily equate (ie, our previous example highlights organizational activity may be efficient but not effective or effective but not efficient) there has been a strong emphasis on the attainment of both these concepts (Davis & Pett, 2016).

METHODS

In this study, descriptive research method or approach was used. Ndaji (1984) defined the descriptive research as concern with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions, prevailing

practices, beliefs, attitudes and ongoing processes. The study equally utilized to a large extent secondary data to examine the impacts of trustworthiness and organizational efficiency in immigration services in river state. Ham (1971) defined population as the group of objects, elements or units about which the study made some conclusion. It is a census of all the elements, subjects of interest and may be finite or infinite (Asika 1991). In line with the purpose of this study, our population for this study comprised all 1000 officers of the Nigerian Immigration Service at the Federal Secretariat at Rumuola in Obio-Akpor L.G.A. of Rivers State. The sample size of the study consisted of 250 officers of the Nigerian Immigration Service of whom were randomly selected from the Federal Secretariat at Rumuola in Obio-Akpor L.G.A. of Rivers State. This study was a correlative study and as such had a combination of qualitative and quantitative variables. Qualitative variables encompassed all the relevant theoretical and conceptual postulations that form the basis for the study, while quantitative elements include all the figures and data that were collected and collated which were further subjected to a thorough quantification by applying appropriate statistical tools of analysis. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire code-named Relationship between Communication Ethics and Organizational Efficiency Assessment Questionnaire (RCEOEAQ).

RESULT AND FREQUENCY ANALYSIS

In this section, the output of the primary data was presented. Analysis was carried out on individual variables and measures. Mean scores and standard deviations were also illustrated. The presentation began with the independent variable. It then proceeded to the dependent variable. These were all scaled on the five (5) point Likert scale (ranging from 1: **SD**=strongly disagree, 2: **D**=disagree, 3: **N**=neutral, 4: **A**=agree and 5: **SA**= strongly agree).

On analysis, for the purpose this study, we adopted 5 point likert scale in our questionnaire, having response categories in the order of SA =5, A=4, U=3,

D=2 and SD=1. Going by this, the interpretation of our mean was according to Asawo's (2009) categorization where all responses with mean value

(x) between 1-2 as being low, 2.5-3.5 as being moderate, 3.5 – 4.5 as high and 4.5 above as very high.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis Presenting the Trustworthiness as Ethical Communication Tool Relate to Efficiency of the Nigerian Immigration Service

S/No.	Items	Male: N= 140			Female: N= 110		
		\bar{x}	SD	Remark	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
19.	The officers of the establishment are well notable for keeping promises thereby increasing our reputation.	2.45	1.10	Disagree	2.30	1.23	Disagree
20.	The officers of the establishment can be trusted because they never ask for bribes before rendering the services.	2.48	1.21	Agree	2.24	1.10	Agree
21.	The establishment can be relied upon for useful information to the public all the time, of which attracts goodwill and confidence from the public	2.36	1.31	Agree	2.27	1.31	Agree
22.	The trustworthiness of the establishment is unassailable that it needs not to spend time and much energy to convince people to partner with it.	2.49	1.02	Agree	2.43	1.12	Agree
23.	Being trustworthy is telling people around you the truth, but such is not obtainable in this establishment	2.57	0.96	Agree	2.62	0.92	Agree
24.	Being trustworthy is not taking undue advantage of others for advancement of personal gain, but such value is not here	2.39	1.20	Agree	2.41	1.04	Agree
25.	Being trustworthy is not to engage in gossips about others or colleagues but this is not obtainable in this establishment.	2.47	1.22	Agree	2.36	1.21	Agree
Grand Mean (\bar{x} \bar{x})		2.46	1.15		2.38	1.13	

Table 1 showed that all the items for male and female staff had their calculated mean values above the criterion mean of 2.50. This result therefore indicated that trustworthiness as ethical communication tool relates to efficiency of the Nigerian Immigration Service in Rivers State. The result was buttressed by the responses elicited from the respondents which revealed that unethical communication practices resulting from lack of trustworthiness such as not keeping promises, asking for bribes before rendering the services, not being reliable upon for useful information, spending time and much energy to convince people to partner with it, not telling people around the truth, taking undue advantage of others for

advancement of personal gain, and engaging in gossips about others or colleagues take place in the establishment and as such cause inefficiency. This result is further affirmed by the calculated values of grand mean for male and female staff, which are all less than the criterion mean of 2.50 (i.e., \bar{x} \bar{x} = 2.46 and 2.36 < 2.50), revealing that Nigerian Immigration Service in Rivers State is still lacking in trustworthiness and as such indulges in unethical communication practices that are inimical to efficiency.

Ho₁ : There is no significant relationship between trustworthiness as ethical communication tool and efficiency-factor of time saving

Table 2: Z-test Analysis of Relationship between Trustworthiness as Ethical Communication Tool and Efficiency-Factor of Time Saving

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Z _{cal}	Z _{table}	Level of Sign.	Decision	Remark
Trustworthiness	140	3.00	0.88						
Time Saving	110	2.61	0.96	248	3.27	1.96	0.05	Reject	Significant Relationship

Table 2 showed that z-calculated was 3.27, while z-table was 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The degree of freedom was 298. Since z-calculated was greater than z-table (i.e., 3.27 > 1.96), the hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there exists a significant relationship trustworthiness as ethical

communication tool and efficiency-factor of time saving.

Ho₂ : There is no significant relationship between trustworthiness as ethical communication tool and efficiency-factor of cost-reduction.

Table 3: Z-test Analysis of Relationship between Trustworthiness as Ethical Communication Tool and Efficiency-Factor of Cost-Reduction.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	Z _{cal}	Z _{table}	Level of Sign.	Decision	Remark
Trustworthiness	140	2.96	1.00						
Cost Reduction	110	2.59	1.12	248	2.69	1.96	0.05	Reject	Significant Relationship

Table 3 showed that z-calculated was 2.69, while z-table was 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The degree of freedom was 248. Since z-calculated was greater than z-table (i.e., 2.69 > 1.96), the hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there exists a significant relationship between trustworthiness as ethical communication tool and efficiency-factor of cost-reduction.

such cause inefficiency. based on the above the article finds that, trustworthiness as ethical communication tool relates to efficiency of the Nigerian Immigration Service in Rivers State. Trustworthiness is communicated by the display of acts or behaviours which are considered worthy. It could be deduced from the result that if the Immigration Service as an organisation is trustworthy, that is likely to attract public confidence, goodwill, cooperation and partnership to its side and boost the good image of the organization.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Trustworthiness as ethical communication tool relates to efficiency of the Nigerian Immigration Service in Rivers State. There is a significant relationship between trustworthiness as ethical communication tool and efficiency-factors of time saving and cost reduction. unethical communication practices resulting from lack of trustworthiness such as not keeping promises, asking for bribes before rendering the services, not being reliable upon for useful information, spending time and much energy to convince people to partner with it, not telling people around the truth, taking undue advantage of others for advancement of personal gain, and engaging in gossips about others or colleagues take place in the establishment and as

CONCLUSION

In overall, communication ethics whose values in this study established as trustworthiness significantly relates to efficiency-factors of time saving and cost reduction. The Nigerian Immigration Service was found to lack the efficiency-driven values as revealed in this study and as such must be repositioned to reflect these essential values to enable it compete more favourably with a lot of competitive advantages required of it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The Federal Government should overhaul the Immigration Service with a view to enthroning the culture and values of communication ethics.
- Officers who have maintained high ethic standards should be publicly commended and rewarded accordingly.
- Only officers with sound ethical records and orientation should appointed into the members of Ethics and Disciplinary unit of the Service.
- Ethics and Disciplinary unit of the Service should evolve a realistic method for checkmating unethical and sharp practices and behaviours among the officers.

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