

Influence of Business Ethical Practices on Production Performance in the Manufacturing Sector: A Focus on Zimtile Private Limited, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of business ethical practices on production performance within the Zimbabwean manufacturing sector, specifically at Zimtile Private Limited. It addresses the pressing issue of declining production efficiency, which has led to financial challenges, including high customer turnover and employee attrition. Employing a pragmatic research approach combining positivist and constructivist paradigms, the study utilized a mixed-methods design involving open and closed questionnaires, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews with 214 participants. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis, revealing that good corporate governance, financial integrity, and labor rights significantly impacted production performance. Contrary to expectations, corporate social responsibility was not statistically significant in determining production outcomes. The findings indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between business ethical practices and production performance; however, production performance was better explained by other factors beyond ethics. The study concludes that while ethical practices play a role, optimizing production efficiency remains the primary goal for manufacturing organizations. It recommends integrating ethical considerations into all organizational processes and adopting innovative methodologies, such as the Industrial Internet of Things and Lean Manufacturing, to enhance performance and sustainability in the sector.

Key Words: *Business ethics, production performance, production efficiency, corporate governance, financial integrity, labour rights*

Introduction

For centuries, the dichotomy of good versus evil, right versus wrong, has been explored in literature, religious texts, and films, reflecting the constant battle between ethical and unethical behavior in society (Industrial Psychology Consultants, 2020). This dynamic is no different in corporate settings, where organizations strive to present themselves as ethical, yet frequently face public scandals involving unethical practices. Such behavior often results in public relations crises, disruptions in operations, financial losses, and in extreme cases, the complete collapse of organizations.

In both the corporate world and academic circles, business ethics has become a highly topical issue (Grigoropaulo, 2019). Research shows an increasing trend of businesses failing due to unethical practices (Lings, 2014). Ethical initiatives, such as compliance programs, codes of conduct, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and ethical training workshops, have been developed over the past decades to promote ethical behavior among business participants (Varma, 2009). Despite these efforts, over 85% of global organizations still face challenges in maintaining ethical standards (Rossy, 2011).

Corporate scandals stemming from unethical business practices continue to plague industries worldwide, causing significant harm to stakeholders. According to the Global Business Ethics Survey (2018), 40% of employees believe that their organizations have weak ethical cultures, and 60% of consumers claim that business ethics influence their purchasing decisions (Industrial Psychology Consultants, 2020). Such unethical conduct can result in economic repercussions, including unemployment, reduced tax revenue, increased poverty, and reputational damage (Dupont & Karpoff, 2019).

No organization is immune to scandals. Notable corporate failures like Volkswagen, Lehman Brothers, and Enron highlight the pervasive nature of unethical behavior, even among industry giants (Hamilton & Micklethwait, 2016). In developing countries like Nigeria, unethical practices have led to large-scale corporate failures, as evidenced by the collapse of 26 banks in 1997 (Magaya, 2016).

In Zimbabwe, unethical business practices have contributed to the persistent failure of manufacturing organizations to meet their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), further exacerbating economic difficulties (KPI Institute, 2021). Despite efforts such as the introduction of the National Code of Corporate Governance Zimbabwe (Zimcode) in 2015, Zimbabwe still ranks poorly on the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2020). The Zimbabwean manufacturing sector has been prone to scandals despite the hard lessons of the 2001–2009 economic difficulties seen through spiraling

hyperinflation (Chigudu, 2015). Several large manufacturing organisations, including J.C. Conolly & Sons and Medlog Zimbabwe (ZWSC, 2018), were involved in labour and civil related cases. According to New Ziana (2022), Zimbabwe manufacturing organisations were still struggling with the issue of the government adopting some inconsistent policies at the expense of business. These include among others, management of the parallel market, arbitrage and the informalisation of currency markets. These downstream effects have led to continued unethical business practices according to CZI (2021).

Zimtile, Zimbabwe's leading manufacturer of concrete roof tiles, has faced significant ethical challenges in recent years, resulting in declining production performance, financial instability, and a loss of stakeholder confidence. Despite its historical success, Zimtile has struggled to meet its financial objectives, resulting in delisting from the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange and cancellation of export markets (Zimtile End of Year Report, 2021). This study sought to explore the impact of business ethical practices on the production performance of Zimbabwean manufacturing firms, using Zimtile as a case study.

Statement of the problem

In Zimbabwe, the performance of manufacturing organizations has declined, preventing them from fulfilling stakeholder commitments (Dzanya, 2020). A report by the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) in 2021 indicated that 26% of manufacturing firms experienced reduced output. For Zimtile, this has manifested in an overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) of just 69%, leading to financial constraints, high employee turnover, and unsatisfactory customer retention (Zimtile End of Year Report, 2021). Despite implementing various business strategies aimed at improving production performance, the desired changes have not materialized. While existing research highlights the importance of ethics in public organizations, few studies have examined the relationship between business ethics and production performance in the private manufacturing sector, particularly in Zimbabwe. This study aimed to address this gap.

Research objectives

The research objectives which guided the study were to:

1. Identify the business ethical practices that significantly impact production performance in manufacturing organizations.
2. Determine other factors influencing production performance in the manufacturing sector.

3. Assess the relationship between ethical behavior and production performance in the context of Zimtile Private Limited.

The study focused specifically on the influence of business ethical practices on production performance, measured using Overall Equipment Efficiency (OEE). While various metrics exist for assessing production performance—such as throughput, demand forecasting, and production costs—this research prioritized production efficiency as it is regarded as a straightforward and effective means of monitoring and enhancing manufacturing processes (Dhara & Sharma, 2018). The sample included participants directly involved in Zimtile Private Limited's production processes. Notably, the study did not encompass the broader topic of organizational performance, as production performance is a contributing factor.

Regarding limitations, the study acknowledged the broad nature of ethics, concentrating solely on its impact on production performance within Zimbabwean manufacturing organizations. It focused exclusively on Zimtile Private Limited, which operates two factories in Harare and Bulawayo, thus identifying a specific research gap. Data were gathered from a limited sample of stakeholders, including employees, investors, suppliers, community members, and customers, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings.

Literature review

Theoretical Underpinning

Business ethics encompasses various theories that highlight either the consequences of actions or the duties involved in ethical decision-making. This study draws upon three key theories: Deontology, Teleology, and Lean Manufacturing.

Deontology Theory

Deontology, rooted in biblical ethics, emphasizes the nature of actions based on established rules rather than their outcomes (De George, 2015). Shelton and Smith (2021) describe this as a divine command theory, where ethical parameters are derived from God's directives. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant is a prominent figure in this field, asserting that morality is determined by adherence to duty rather than the consequences of actions (Benlahcene et al., 2018). This theory opposes consequentialist views, arguing that actions should be judged based solely on their inherent nature and the obligations they fulfill (Benlahcene et al., 2018). Despite its alignment with biblical principles, deontological ethics is often overshadowed by utilitarianism in business practices, though it remains a compassionate framework that some organizations adopt.

The deontology theory is well suited for evaluating governance practices like corporate integrity and labour rights, as these often require unwavering adherence to ethical codes. However, the theory's rigidity might limit its application in dynamic, outcome-focused business settings.

Teleology Theory

Teleology, popularized by William Paley, derives from the Greek word *telos* and is classified as consequentialist ethics. This theory posits that actions are morally right if they lead to desirable outcomes, specifically greater overall satisfaction compared to harm (Benlahcene et al., 2018). It advocates for actions that maximize happiness for all stakeholders involved, regardless of the means used to achieve those ends (Benlahcene et al., 2018). Teleological theories include egoism, which focuses on individual satisfaction, and utilitarianism, which aims to benefit the greatest number of people (Northouse, 2016).

This theory might justify unethical means if the ends are perceived as beneficial, posing risks in governance contexts. However, its focus on results aligns with the study's aim to correlate ethical behavior with production performance metrics.

Lean Manufacturing Theory

Lean Manufacturing (LM) theory, introduced by Womack in 1991 and formalized by Jones and Roos in *Lean Thinking* (1996), is a production control method aimed at eliminating waste and optimizing efficiency (Dhara & Sharma, 2018). This theory emphasizes empirical data-driven decision-making and the continuous improvement of manufacturing processes. Various metrics have been proposed to measure the impact of lean practices, focusing on attributes like Kaizen, Just In Time, and Quality Control (Bayou & Korvin, 2008). Overall Equipment Efficiency (OEE) serves as a key indicator of lean performance, reflecting machinery performance through throughput, product quality, and downtime, while also considering broader measures of efficiency (Dhara & Sharma, 2018).

This theory, does not inherently consider ethical dimensions, requiring integration with other frameworks like Deontology or Teleology. However, its operational focus ensures that the study remains grounded in measurable improvements, complementing the ethical perspectives provided by Deontology and Teleology.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 below provides a bird’s eye view of the research so as to understand wholly the influence of business ethical practices on production performance

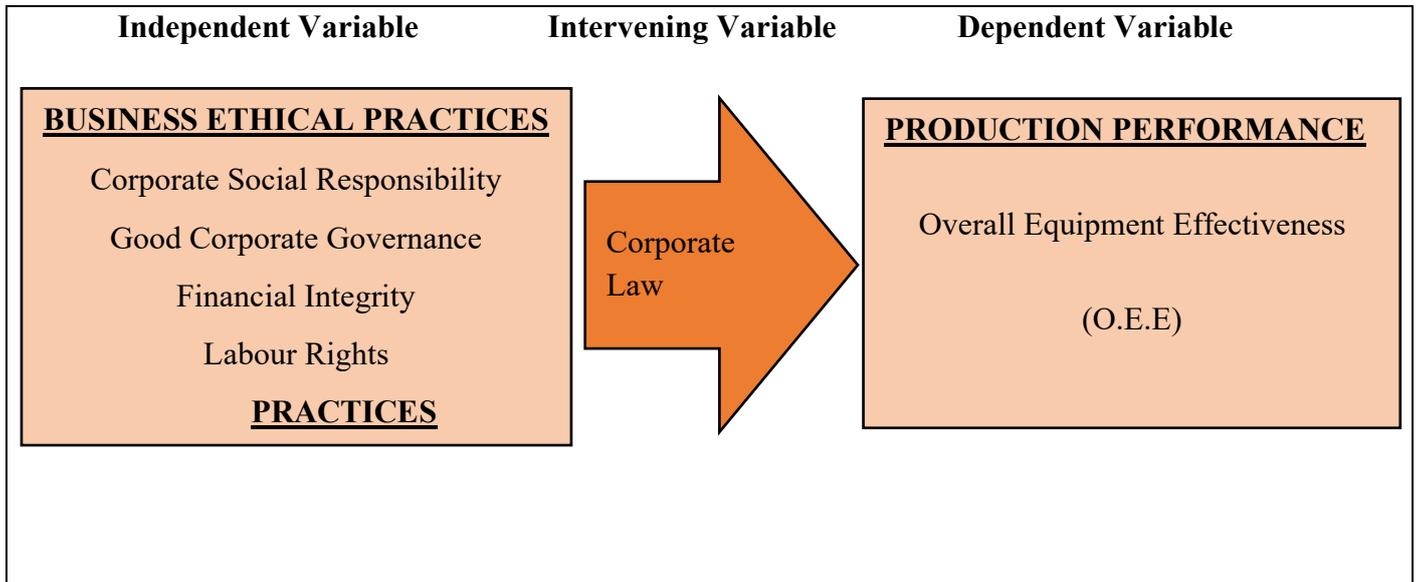


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed by the Researcher (2022)

Understanding Business Ethics

Business ethics is a complex and evolving concept that varies based on the ethical perspectives organizations adopt. It is defined as the application of ethical values and morals to business processes, playing a vital role in shaping organizational conduct and stakeholder interactions (Grigoropoulos, 2019). Ethics, as described by Etuk (2014), focuses on preferred human conduct, while Beredugo and Ebitu (2015) view it as a framework of moral principles guiding behaviour. Turyakira (2018) emphasizes that business ethics encompasses core values such as honesty, fairness, and integrity, ultimately equipping participants to navigate moral complexities in strategic decisions (Ugoani, 2019).

Key ethical practices relevant to this discussion include Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Good Corporate Governance, Financial Integrity, and Labour Rights. CSR emphasizes the responsibility of organizations to operate sustainably and ethically, drawing from biblical principles, such as environmental stewardship (Byars & Kurt, 2018). The Triple Bottom Line framework by John Elkington highlights the need for organizations to balance social, environmental, and economic impacts (Byars & Kurt, 2018). Good corporate governance fosters transparency and accountability, contributing to sustainable

growth (OECD, 2015), while financial integrity addresses ethical dilemmas in financial dealings, promoting a culture of honesty (Byars & Kurt, 2018).

Labour rights emphasize fair treatment and compensation for employees, which are crucial for enhancing productivity and organizational loyalty (CFSI, 2018). Corporate law provides a regulatory framework ensuring that business operations align with societal moral standards, thereby promoting ethical behaviour (Industrial Psychology Consultants, 2020). In terms of production performance, Zimtile Pvt Ltd has struggled to achieve its target of 85% Overall Equipment Efficiency (OEE), facing challenges that may be linked to unethical practices. Understanding the relationship between ethical practices and production outcomes is essential for Zimtile's success as it navigates its performance challenges.

Formalism Principle in Business Ethics

Kantian ethics, popularized by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, emphasizes formalism, which posits that there are fixed natural laws in ethics that apply universally without room for interpretation (Knowles, 2014). For instance, practices like slave labor are unequivocally deemed wrong. Kantian virtue ethics suggests that individuals should act rightly regardless of personal interests. While fully implementing this principle in a business context may be challenging, organizations can selectively adopt certain absolute ethical standards while allowing flexibility for ambiguous situations. Additionally, divine command theory integrates ethical decision-making with cultural norms, highlighting that business ethics should align with moral principles derived from religious teachings, as seen in Israel's historical context (NKV, 2019).

Utilitarianism, articulated by thinkers like John Stuart Mill, advocates for actions that maximize benefits for the majority (Knowles, 2014). This principle is illustrated in the biblical account of Jesus raising Lazarus, where the chief priests rationalized a decision that favored the majority over the individual (NKV, 2019). In business, utilitarianism suggests that decisions should prioritize the greatest good for stakeholders, yet it often proves difficult to apply practically, as organizations cannot consider the well-being of competitors. While utilitarianism focuses on outcomes, it may neglect the humane treatment of stakeholders.

Egoism, as described by Knowles (2014), is the pursuit of individual benefit regardless of the broader consequences. It emphasizes maximizing one's own advantages, often at the expense of others. Ethical egoism can be classified into individual and universal forms, where individual egoism concerns personal interests, and universal egoism pertains to everyone acting in their best interests, only considering others to the extent that it serves their

own goals. This principle is generally unpopular among moral philosophies, as it often fails to address conflicts in business settings. Lastly, relativism posits that morals are shaped by the values and traditions of specific groups (Knowles, 2014). This principle is evident in biblical laws, such as those governing business conduct, and illustrates how organizations define their values within the framework of national laws, which can complicate ethical practices in multinational contexts.

Empirical Literature Review

The study reviewed eight recent case studies relevant to the research, encompassing two from the USA, one from West Africa, two from East Africa, one from Southern Africa, and two from Zimbabwe.

One significant focus was on the challenges corporations face in integrating ethics into their strategic management processes. McManus and White (2011) highlighted that despite the necessity of ethical commitments, organizations often struggle to align their strategic decisions with ethical principles, especially in light of rising corporate scandals. Their research emphasized the need for ethics to be a central component in strategic management, proposing that ethical considerations must guide decision-making to ensure long-term organizational success.

Another study by Maicibi et al. (2013) examined criminal and unethical behaviors in organizations, particularly in the context of misleading advertising and asset misuse in the USA. This research underscored the importance of human resources management in navigating ethical dilemmas to maintain organizational health. The findings indicated that failure to address such unethical practices could lead to significant setbacks, including potential legal repercussions. The study called for further exploration in this area, given the persistent prevalence of unethical behaviors in organizations worldwide.

Kehinde (2010) investigated the effects of ethical behaviors on organizational operations in Nigeria, revealing a positive correlation between ethical conduct and business performance. The research recommended implementing a robust code of ethics to guide employee behavior. Similarly, Msanze (2013) assessed the impact of employee ethical conduct on organizational performance in Tanzania, finding a significant relationship between ethical behavior and overall performance. This study highlighted that while ethical conduct is crucial, it is just one of many variables influencing organizational success. Furthermore, Mgaya (2016) explored workplace ethics within non-profit organizations in Tanzania, concluding that ethical practices are essential for mitigating issues like bribery and corruption, although they represent only one aspect of organizational performance.

Lloyd et al. (2014) analyzed ethical business practices in South Africa's automotive industry, finding that organizations with established codes of ethics and strong governance structures demonstrated higher ethical standards. In Zimbabwe, Chigudu (2015) and Chigudu (2020) conducted studies focusing on ethical conduct in the public sector, revealing legislative gaps that hindered effective ethical practices. Both studies indicated a relationship between ethics and organizational performance, particularly in public institutions, but noted a lack of research in the private manufacturing sector. This gap led to the current study, which aims to investigate the influence of business ethical practices on production performance specifically within Zimbabwe's private manufacturing sector, using Zimtile as a case study.

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks were developed in alignment with the study's objectives, emphasizing the established link between ethics and organizational performance. The research sought to fill the gap in literature regarding the private manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe, comparing findings with previous studies across various sectors and regions to validate or challenge existing conclusions regarding the impact of ethical practices on production performance.

Methodology

The study adopted a pragmatism approach, blending quantitative and qualitative methods to enhance understanding (Creswell, 2011). The target population comprised 700 individuals, including employees, managers, suppliers, clients, and community members, with a sample size of 248 determined through stratified sampling techniques (Momoh, 2021).

The study utilizes mixed methods, combining surveys (quantitative), interviews, and focus group discussions (qualitative), ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Surveys were used to gather broad, quantifiable data from employees, clients, and suppliers. This method captured diverse perspectives on ethical practices and production efficiency. Whereas, Interviews provided in-depth insights from managers, who offered detailed accounts of organizational strategies and ethical challenges. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Captured community perspectives on CSR activities, offering context-specific data that complemented other findings (Abawi, 2017; Kumar, 2011).

This triangulation ensured that findings were robust, valid, and reflective of multiple stakeholder viewpoints.

The Participants were employees, managers, suppliers, clients, and community members, representing the ecosystem of Zimtile's production processes. The Information Sought was the participants' perceptions of ethical practices (e.g., corporate governance,

labor rights) and their impact on production performance metrics like efficiency and output quality.

Stratified Random Sampling was used for employees, suppliers, clients, and community members, ensuring representative data across demographics and roles. Purposive Sampling was applied for managers, whose expert insights into organizational governance and strategy were critical to the qualitative analysis.

A pilot study validated the research instruments, achieving acceptable reliability scores (Cronbach's Alpha) across various constructs (UCLA, 2022). Ethical considerations were prioritized, ensuring participant consent and confidentiality. Overall, the methodology established a robust framework for investigating business ethical practices.

Presentation and Discussion of Study Findings

The findings were categorized into demographic data and main results, which include descriptive and inferential analyses.

Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The overall response rates were 86% for questionnaires, 92% for interviews, and 80% for FGDs, yielding a cumulative response rate of 85%, deemed excellent (Mungenda & Mungenda, 2012). The sample was predominantly male, with 72% of questionnaire respondents identifying as male and 28% as female. This aligns with findings from LFCLS (2021), indicating a male-dominated workforce in many industries.

Gender and Ethical Awareness

Among the respondents, 64% of men were strongly aware of business ethical practices compared to 56% of women. A notable %age of women (3%) reported being unaware of these practices, highlighting potential gender disparities in ethical awareness.

Age

The majority of respondents were aged between 30 and 39 years, with fewer participants in the 50-59 age range. This contrasts with LFCLS (2021), which indicated a higher proportion of younger employees in the workforce.

Age and Organizational Policy Awareness

Older respondents (50-59 years) showed stronger adherence to organizational policies, with 70% reporting compliance, while younger respondents (18-29 years) had the lowest adherence rates. This suggests a correlation between age and maturity regarding policy adherence.

Education

The educational background of the respondents indicated that 51% had ordinary level education, 31% held college certificates or diplomas, 12% had bachelor’s degrees, and 6% had postgraduate degrees. This educational distribution suggests a general understanding of business ethics among manufacturing sector employees.

Work Experience

The researcher administered questionnaires and conducted interviews to gather data and the experience and results are as shown in Figure 2 below

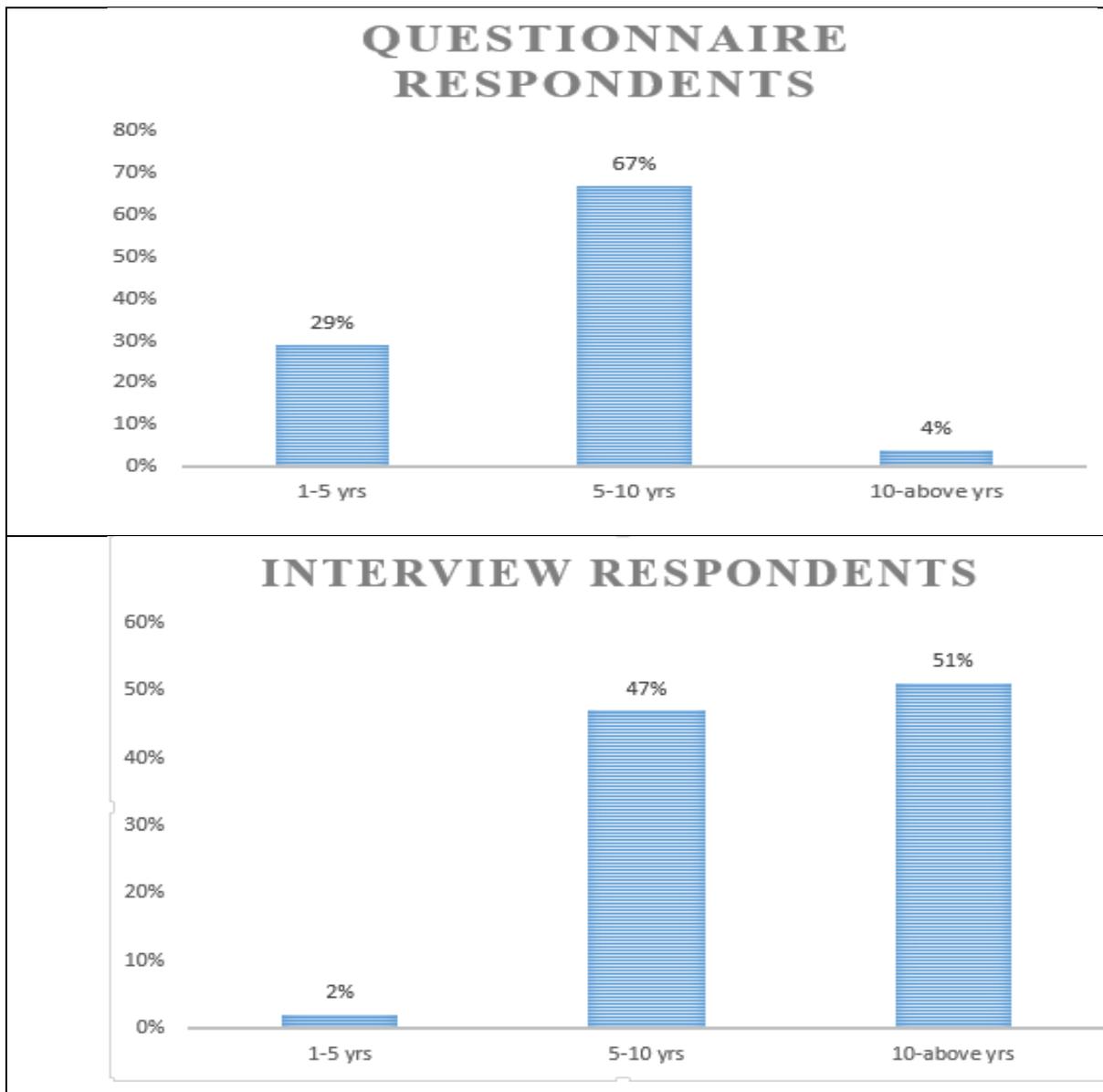


Figure 2: Respondent’s Experience

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The Figure 2 above shows that majority 67% indicated that they have been with their current employer between 5-10 years followed by 29% with 1-5 years of manufacturing experience. Those with 10 years and above constituted the smallest %age of 4%.

Regarding the interview participants, who were mainly Zimtile management, the data show that 51% had experience of more than 10 years followed by those who had 5-10 years who constituted 47%. Those with 1-5 years constituted as little as 2%. From this distribution of work experience, it can be concluded that the responses they provided in the research were based on personal experiences at Zimtile.

Work Experience and Application of Ethical Practices on Daily Operations

The research on the working experience and the application of ethical practices on daily operations was conducted and the following figure below shows the results

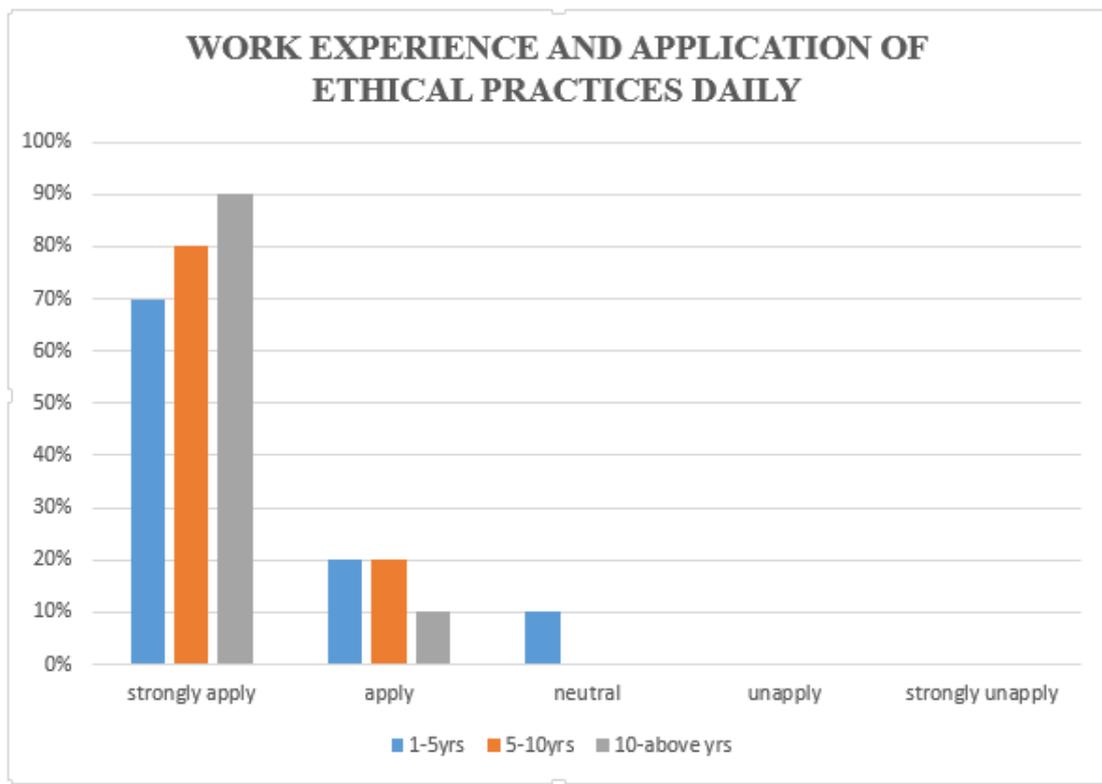


Figure 3: Respondent’s Experience

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Figure 3 above illustrates that majority 90% of respondents indicated that they strongly apply ethical practices on daily basis have been with their current employer for 10 years and above, followed by 80% who had 5-10 years then 70% of those with 1-5 years working experience. 10% of those with 10 plus years of experience apply ethical practices, followed by 20% who had 5-10 years then 20% of those with 1-5 years working experience. Shockingly, 10% of those with 1-5 years’ experience neither apply nor unapply ethical

practices on daily basis. It can be concluded that respondents apply business ethical practices based on their years of work experience.

Male participants who are more educated, have more working experience and aged are aware and apply business ethical practices more than their younger female counterparts who are less educated and experienced according to these findings.

Findings

Objective 1 Findings

The first research objective sought to identify business ethical practices that impact on production performance in manufacturing organisations under review. Below is a presentation on the first research variables of the study from 5 point-Likert scale.

Table 1: Business Ethical Practices

	Statement	A				D
E1	What is the influence of transparent business activities have on production performance	8%	4%	%	2%	7%
E2	Does accepting diversity contribute to production performance	9%	4%	6%	6%	%
E3	Does accepting stakeholder engagement in decision making contribute to production performance	9%	2%	%	4%	%
E4	Does empowering director/manager with independence contribute to production performance	%	5%	3%	8%	7%
E5	Does everyone’s involvement in decision making contribute to production performance	0%	8%	%	%	%
E6	Does paying employees prevailing market wages rate contribute to production performance	2%	9%	4%	%	%
E7	Does the general cost of living contribute to production performance	3%	8%	%	7%	5%
E8	Does the organisation’s ability to pay fair wages contribute to production performance	0%	2%	8%	%	%

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The study indicated that a significant majority of respondents recognized the influence of various manufacturing practices on production performance. Specifically, 99% agreed that Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) has a positive impact, while 98%

acknowledged the benefits of Six Sigma. Additionally, 96% supported the Define Measure Analyze Improve Control (DMAIC) framework, and 92% affirmed the role of Statistical Process Control (SPC). The Single Minute Exchange of Dies (SMED) garnered unanimous support, with 100% agreement regarding its influence. In contrast, only 72% agreed on the impact of the Supplier Input Process Output Customer (SIPOC) model, with 10% dissenting. Overall, 91% of respondents believed that lean manufacturing practices positively influence production performance.

The findings suggest that production performance is significantly affected by unethical practices and external factors, including weak national laws, poor economic policies, and inadequate ethical training. These challenges highlight the importance for organizations to focus not only on improving business ethics but also on enhancing the overall business environment. A transition from traditional methodologies to contemporary approaches in business ethics is essential for achieving better organizational outcomes.

Ultimately, the research underscores that ethical practices are crucial for successful production performance and should be integrated into all operational tasks. The third research objective specifically assessed the influence of ethical behavior on production performance, with detailed insights provided through correlation analysis conducted using SPSS. This emphasizes the need for organizations to prioritize ethical considerations to enhance their production efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 2: Lean Manufacturing Practices

	Statement	A				D
M1	Does Total Productive Maintenance-TPM have influence on production performance	8%	1%	%	%	%
M2	Does Six Sigma have influence on production performance	0%	%	%	%	%
M3	Does Define Measure Analyse Improve Control - DMAIC have influence on production performance	5%	1%	%	%	%
M4	Does Statistical Process Control-SPC to production performance	7%	5%	%	%	%
M5	Does FiveS have influence on production performance	0%	8%	%	%	%
	Does Fish Bone Analysis have influence on production					

M6	performance	2%	6%	%	%	%
M7	Does Single Minute Exchange of Dies – SMED have influence on production performance	3%	%	%	%	%
M8	Does Supplier Input Process Output Customer - SIPOC have influence on production performance	0%	2%	8%	%	%

Source: Survey Data (2022)

According to Table 2, a significant majority of respondents recognized the influence of various manufacturing practices on production performance. Specifically, 99% agreed that Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) impacts production, while 98% acknowledged the importance of Six Sigma. The DMAIC framework received 96% agreement, and 92% affirmed the role of Statistical Process Control (SPC). Additionally, 78% supported the idea that FiveS affects production performance, and 100% agreed on the influence of Single Minute Exchange of Dies (SMED). However, only 72% agreed on the Supplier Input Process Output Customer (SIPOC) model's impact, with 10% dissenting. Overall, 91% of the study population believed that lean manufacturing practices positively influence production performance.

The discussions reveal that production performance is significantly affected by various unethical practices and external factors, including weak national laws, poor economic policies, and inadequate ethical training. These challenges highlight the need for organizations to improve both their business ethics and overall environment to enhance performance. The shift from traditional to contemporary methodologies in business ethics is essential for achieving better organizational outcomes. Ultimately, the findings emphasize that ethical practices are crucial for successful production performance and should be integrated into all operational tasks. The third research objective assessed the specific influence of ethical behavior on production performance, further detailed through SPSS correlation analysis.

Table 3: Business Ethical Practices Correlation

		Correlations				
		Production performance	Inclusion in decision making	Accepting diversity at work	Transparency management	Director independence
Production	Pearson	1	.037	*.027	.022	*.012

performance	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.603	.696	.756	.869
	N	210	205	207	204	206
Inclusion in decision making	Pearson Correlation	.037	1	.015	.043	.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.603		.830	.542	.980
	N	205	205	202	199	201
Accepting diversity at work	Pearson Correlation	-.027	.015	1	-.223**	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.696	.830		.001	.627
	N	207	202	207	201	203
Transparency management	Pearson Correlation	.022	.043	*.223**	1	.173*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.756	.542	.001		.014
	N	204	199	201	204	200
Director independence	Pearson Correlation	-.012	.002	-.034	.173*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.869	.980	.627	.014	
	N	206	201	203	200	206
<p>**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)</p> <p>*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)</p>						

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The Pearson product correlation analysis revealed weak relationships between production performance and various workplace factors. Specifically, inclusion in decision-making showed a low positive correlation ($r = 0.037$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that greater inclusion leads to a negligible positive change in production performance. Conversely, accepting diversity at work had a low negative correlation ($r = -0.027$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that increased acceptance of diversity is associated with a slight decline in production performance. Similarly, transparency management also exhibited a low positive correlation ($r = 0.022$, $p < 0.01$), indicating negligible positive effects on production performance. Additionally, director/manager independence was found to correlate negatively ($r = -0.012$, p

< 0.01), implying that greater independence among managers may result in a marginal decrease in production performance.

The Pearson product correlation analysis from Table 3 below revealed varying relationships between production performance and several wage-related factors. Specifically, the correlation between production performance and cost of living wages was low but positively significant ($r = 0.167$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher cost of living wages result in a marginally positive change in production performance. Conversely, the correlation with the ability to pay fair wages was found to be low and negatively significant ($r = -0.101$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that an increased ability to pay fair wages is associated with a slight decrease in production performance.

Additionally, the correlation with prevailing market-related wages was also low and positively significant ($r = 0.072$, $p < 0.01$), indicating negligible positive effects on production performance. In contrast, stakeholder engagement was negatively correlated with production performance ($r = -0.116$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that greater stakeholder engagement may lead to a small decline in performance.

Table 4: Business Ethical Practices Correlation

		Correlations				
		Production performance	Cost of Living	Ability to pay	Prevailing Market rates	Stakeholder engagement
Production performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.161	-.101	.072	-.116
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021	.149	.306	.094
	N	210	205	204	204	208
Cost of Living	Pearson Correlation	.161*	1	-.044	.052	.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021		.536	.465	.178
	N	205	205	199	199	203
Ability to pay	Pearson Correlation	-.101	-.044	1	-.034	.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.149	.536		.632	.124
	N	204	199	202	198	202
Prevailing Market rates	Pearson Correlation	.072	.052	-.034	1	-.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.306	.465	.632		.205
	N	204	199	198	204	208
Stakeholder engagement	Pearson Correlation	-.116	.095	.109	-.089	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.094	.178	.124	.205	
	N	208	203	202	202	205

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Objective 3 Discussions

The study highlighted a weak positive relationship indicating unethical stakeholder behavior, attributed to inadequate ethical practices within the organization. A strong correlation between business ethics and production performance was not established, aligning with findings from previous studies in regions such as the USA and Europe, which also noted a positive yet weak correlation (Msaze, 2016). While weak business ethics may contribute to poor production performance, it should be recognized that multiple factors influence production outcomes, as noted by Hian et al. (2004) and Msanze (2013).

Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypothesis regarding the relationship between business ethical practices and production performance, regression analysis was employed. The null hypothesis (H0) posited no relationship, while the alternative hypothesis (H1) suggested a relationship exists. Independent variables included Corporate Social Responsibility, Good Corporate Governance, Financial Integrity, and Labour Rights, with production performance as the dependent variable.

Regression analysis sought to predict the dependent variable's value based on the independent variables, assessing both magnitude and statistical significance. It was essential to test for normality of residuals to ensure accurate p-values. The model summary included the R value, indicating the strength of correlation, and the R-squared value, reflecting the proportion of variance in production performance explained by the independent variables. Results are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of Regression Model

Model Summary				
Model		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	744 ^a	.524	.424	.36518
a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporate Social Responsibility, Good Corporate Governance, Financial Integrity and Labour Rights				

Source: Survey Data (2022)

As shown in Table 5, the value for R-squared 0.524 indicated that the study independent variables explain about 52.4% of the variance of the dependent variable. It clearly reflects that the independent variables influence production performance in the manufacturing organisation to a greater extent. Therefore, independent variables of this study significantly influence production performance.

Table 6: Coefficients of Multiple Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Labor Rights	.340	.075	.455	4.519	.000
Financial Integrity	.301	.093	.407	3.007	.031

Good Corporate Governance	.499	.069	.576	5.705	.003
Corporate Social Responsibility	.049	.069	.076	.705	.483

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Using a significance level of 5%, an independent variable is considered statistically significant if its p-value is less than 0.05. According to the findings in Table 6, **Financial Integrity** (p-value = 0.032), **Labour Rights** (p-value = 0.000), and **Good Corporate Governance** (p-value = 0.003) were all statistically significant at the 5% level. This indicates that changes in these three business ethical practices positively impact production performance.

In contrast, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** (p-value = 0.483) was not statistically significant at either the 1% or 5% levels, suggesting that its implementation does not affect production performance in manufacturing organizations.

Hypothesis Interpretation of Coefficients

The coefficient for Financial Integrity was 0.301 (p-value = 0.031), indicating that higher Financial Integrity leads to improved production performance. Specifically, a unit increase in Financial Integrity results in a 0.301 increase in the likelihood of good production performance.

For Labour Rights, the coefficient was 0.34 (p-value = 0.00), signifying a significant positive effect on production performance at the 1% level. A unit increase in Labour Rights correlates with a 0.34 increase in good production performance.

Overall, the study concludes that **Good Corporate Governance, Financial Integrity, and Labour Rights** significantly influence production performance in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. However, CSR does not demonstrate a significant impact, despite being widely adopted. The researcher accepts the null hypothesis regarding CSR. Additionally, production performance is affected by various internal and external factors, including weak national laws, poor economic policies, and lack of ethical training, highlighting the complexity of the influences on manufacturing outcomes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study explored the influence of **business ethical practices** on production performance in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector, with Zimtile Pvt Ltd as a case study. The findings showed a weak but positive correlation between ethical practices and production performance. The results indicated that ethics are indeed integral to organizational success, with the majority of respondents supporting the notion that ethical practices, particularly those based on **Biblical principles**, positively impacted performance. Respondents

highlighted the importance of values such as honesty, fairness, and respect in achieving sustainable production performance (Chibarabada, 2015; Dupont & Karpoff, 2019).

Conclusions:

1. **Objective 1:** Ethical practices, such as honesty, objectivity, and fairness, were found to contribute significantly to organizational success. Organizations that integrate ethics into their operations experience enhanced performance, contributing to broader economic development (Rossy, 2011; Hamilton & Micklethwait, 2016).
2. **Objective 2:** Poor production performance in manufacturing organizations was largely attributed to weak business ethics, among other factors like outdated technologies and weak national laws. Improvement in ethical standards and business environments is critical for enhanced production (Mgaya, 2016; CZI, 2021).
3. **Objective 3:** Ethical failings, particularly among organizational leaders, contributed to declining performance. The study advocated for the integration of **Biblical principles** into business practices as a means to foster accountability and integrity, thereby enhancing production outcomes (Msaze, 2013; Shelton & Smith, 2021).

Research Implications: The research identified that ethical factors, though influential, were not the sole determinants of production performance. Other factors, such as **Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT)**, **Lean Manufacturing (LM)**, and team-building initiatives, also played pivotal roles. Organizational culture and policies must support ethical training and the implementation of systems like **whistleblower programs** to combat unethical practices (IPC, 2022; KPI Institute, 2021).

Recommendations:

1. **Biblical Ethics in Business:** Modern organizations should adopt Biblical principles to guide ethical behavior. These principles can serve as a universal standard for integrity and fairness in business (Samir, 2015).
2. **Adoption of IIoT:** Integrating IIoT technology can optimize production efficiency and reduce operational costs, driving higher production performance (AIQ, 2020).
3. **Ethical Compliance:** All participants should adhere to signed codes of ethics, and organizations should introduce whistleblower hotlines to report unethical behavior (Mgaya, 2016). The findings corroborate CFSI (2018), which highlighted that ethical labor practices increase productivity by fostering a committed workforce.
4. **Capacity Development in Ethics:** Continuous training and collaboration with industry participants are necessary to improve ethical standards in business (KPI Institute, 2021).

In conclusion, ethical practices serve as foundational elements for production efficiency, though their efficacy is influenced by broader systemic factors. This study underscores the necessity for organizations like Zimtile to adopt holistic strategies that integrate ethical frameworks with technological advancements, thereby driving sustainable growth. Future studies should expand beyond a single organization and include various sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and education. Research should also investigate the potential of IIoT and other advanced technologies in boosting production performance across different industries (AIQ, 2020).

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