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## INTEGRITY AND ORGANISATIONAL REPUTATION OF 2-STAR HOTELS IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

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**Article Received: 21 November 2025**

**Article Revised: 11 December 2025**

**Published on: 31 December 2025**

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.7007>

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify any associations between corporate integrity and reputation among the 2-star hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Through a literature review, the study investigated the relationship between organisational reputation and integrity. A survey was the research approach employed in this study. Researchers in this study polled 313 hotel employees from the top 10 2-star establishments in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Based on the data given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), we were able to calculate a sample size of 169. Respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire in order to gather data. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 23.0, was used to study the link between integrity and measures of desired identity and corporate image, which are criterion variables. The data analysis led to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis and the rejection of the first two null hypotheses. The empirical results of the study suggest that 2-star hotels should put an emphasis on integrity by being trustworthy, truthful, and faithful in all of their interactions with the public. As a result, businesses in the hotel sector will be able to forge stronger bonds with key players in the tourist sector and earn their trust. In addition, the actions and words of the company's top brass should set an example of openness, honesty, and responsibility for all employees.

**KEYWORDS:** Integrity, Desired Identity, Corporate Image, Organizational Reputation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Companies nowadays face a complex and ever-changing business climate characterized by abrupt and unexpected shifts (Gardner, 2000). In today's competitive business world, service organisations' public personas and the impression they convey to clients are crucial to their success. By maintaining a positive reputation, the organisation can gain the trust and credibility of society, which will help it achieve its aims and goals (Baur & Schmitz, 2011, Roper & Fill, 2012). Historically, businesses have primarily focused on making a profit for their shareholders. However, in recent years, they have shifted their attention to include stakeholders and the community, with an emphasis on ethical standards (Steyn, 2003). Consistency and efficacy in reaching internal employees and customers patronage in the market are influenced by an organization's reputation, image, or identity. Marken (2002) argues that the ability to innovate, acquire and retain talent, govern quality management, and provide high-quality products and services are the four pillars upon which a company's reputation rests. Reputation is the degree to which members of the general public, customers, investors, and employees feel positively or negatively about a business (Uçar, Gulmez, Mutlu, Erbaş, Gez, 2015). Furthermore, as stated by Prado (2008), an organization's reputation is the cumulative view that stakeholders have of the company over time, shaped by the impressions conveyed by the company's statements and actions.

According to Tamunomiebi and Adoki (2020), businesses should conduct in a trustworthy manner that shows they trust the other party to meet their obligations in a way that benefits everyone. The relevance of ethics in establishing and maintaining business partnerships has increased in the services sector as a whole, as a result of the high degree of uncertainty and intangibility inherent in service transactions. The reputation that hospitality businesses cultivate is crucial to their long-term viability and prosperity. One of the cornerstones of moral business conduct is honesty and transparency. A company's credibility with its customers, the community at large, and other stakeholders is heavily influenced by its level of honesty and transparency. A person with integrity is one who, in accordance with their own set of moral principles and beliefs, is able to behave consistently and truthfully. Therefore, the public or stakeholders may have more faith in a company if it demonstrates a high degree of integrity.

Nonetheless, a number of research in developed economies and with big businesses have looked at how integrity affects corporate reputation (Awang, 2009). The connection between trustworthy managers and successful companies in Nigeria was studied by Nwinyokpugi and Nwibere (2014). Managers' candour substantially boosted their organisations' productivity, according to the findings. Nkiinebari (2014) conducted research on workplace honesty and cooperation in Nigeria. Paluku (2016) investigated the relationship between employee engagement and company reputation in retail firms located in Wobulenzi-Luweero City, Uganda. The results showed that the chosen retailing businesses had extremely high levels of employee engagement and corporate image. Sholokwu and Olori (2016) investigated the management philosophies and corporate credibility of Rivers State oil and gas firms in Nigeria. The results showed that management style and the firm's standing are strongly correlated.

There has obviously been a plethora of research on the ideas of integrity and the reputation-building process for organizations. Literature from industrialised nations like the US, France, Japan, UK, and Nigeria, among many others, has lavishly addressed positive ethical behaviours and the advantages they provide. In spite of all the research, there is still a shortage of data on the correlation between corporate reputation and integrity in emerging nations like Nigeria. It is important to remember that academics must employ Nigerian organizations for organizational research if the results of studies conducted in Western environments are to have any real-world value for Nigerian organizations. Consequently, this research set out to examine the 2-star hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, to see how organizational reputation relates to integrity. In particular, you should think about the following questions:

1. How does integrity affect desired identity in the 2-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria?
2. How does integrity affect corporate image in the 2-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria?



**Fig.1: Operational Framework of the study variables**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Background of the Study**

One of the social foundational theories that serves as a compass for this investigation is virtue ethics theory. The virtue ethics theory makes emphasis on building ethics and reputation. The virtue ethics theory is a practical approach for nurturing ethical mindfulness in various aspect of life, hence, reason for adopting the theory. According to Slote (1997), any ethical system that does not rely on universally accepted moral principles, norms, or laws is known as virtue ethics. You may find out what kind of positive or negative attributes people might have that could motivate them in a specific scenario by looking at the virtue framework. It asks what a person should be and how their deeds reveal their character. By posing the question of what values and principles one should maintain while interacting with important people in one's professional and personal life, this framework helps to illustrate the connection between ethical conduct and organizational reputation.

### **The concept of Integrity**

According to Bittel (2005), one who possesses integrity is able to consistently act in accordance with their individual moral values and belief systems. Culture also plays a role in shaping one's morality, values, and beliefs. Honesty is the cornerstone of any successful business relationship. As to the findings of Bittel (2008), this holds true for the interaction between employers, employees, and firm consumers. No leader can achieve success if they lack integrity, which is why the model rests on this principle. You can rely on them to tell the truth, stand up for what's right, and be careful to keep their word. According to their framework, leaders must strike a balance between being respectful and taking responsibility for one's actions in order to maintain integrity. Integrity encompasses the leadership philosophy, practices, and culture of an organization. A culture of honesty and transparency must permeate the whole organization, beginning with the actions and words of the top leaders. The top brass of the company needs to come together on a common set of principles. If a company's leadership has fostered a culture of honesty and transparency, then we can trust them when doing business with them. We have faith that the corporation will consistently meet our demands and requirements in a predictable and trustworthy manner throughout our relationship. According to CoveyLink and Worldwide (2006), the company's leadership and governance structure effectively detects and controls risk, allowing for trustworthy and open business operations.

Trust and productivity are two outcomes of a culture that values honesty and transparency. On the other hand, organizations with low integrity tend to have the following traits: a high turnover rate among employees; the board's limited access to information, officials, and employees; the unanticipated occurrence of financial events; the unwillingness to formalise policies and procedures; the overstatement of leadership's achievements; and the absence of trust (suspicion and paranoia), honesty, and transparency. High integrity organisations are characterised by strong relationships, collaboration, innovation, transparency, staff morale, respected customer loyalty, and constructiveness. One of the cornerstones of moral business conduct is honesty and transparency. A company's credibility with its customers, the community at large, and other stakeholders is heavily influenced by its level of honesty and transparency. Therefore, the public or stakeholders may have more faith in a company if it demonstrates a high degree of integrity.

### **Concept of Organisational Reputation**

Corporate identity, projected image, business performance, and stakeholder concerns all play a role in shaping an organization's reputation (Brown, Dacin, Pratt, & Whetten, 2006). One of the most valuable intangible assets of a business is its reputation, which influences its profitability, generates advantages over the competition in the long run, and increases the value of the business itself. Key variables in creating value for all parties involved, as stated by Roig, Garcia, Tena & Monzonis (2006), are the reliability of a business and the excellence of its products and services. Market pricing premiums, strong relationships with supply chain partners, competitive product positioning, and increased customer loyalty are just a few of the marketing benefits that can accrue to a firm with a solid reputation (Balmer, 2011). According to Tkalac and Vercic (2007), one way to study organizational reputation is as an image and identity function. The company's culture is the foundation upon which employees' identities are constructed. Elewar, Karaosmanoglu, and Paterson (2005) list elements like current practices, values, and behaviours as its constituent parts. An organization's image is the mental picture it presents to outside parties. This impression is shaped by their current impressions of the company's identity and their direct or indirect experiences (Balmer & Greyser, 2002; Melewar, Karaosmanoglu & Paterson, 2005).

## **Measures of Organizational Reputation**

### **Desired Identity**

An organization's stated goals and the promises it makes to its clients are the building blocks of its desired identity, which may be defined as a collection of distinctive messages that help an organisation establish or strengthen its reputation. According to Keller (2003), a brand's identity is a key component in the brand's ability to endure and expand into new products and markets. Ideas like "brand identity" and "organisational identity" stem from this phrase. Brand identity, on the other hand, stands for particular qualities and characteristics, is associated with the corporate brand, and serves as a market signal for the items that a company offers (Buil, 2015). According to Melewar (2003), an organization's identity serves as a strategic instrument for achieving goals and objectives, as well as a valuable resource and competitive advantage. A strong sense of identity aids businesses in recruiting top talent, drawing in new consumers, and keeping the ones they already have loyal. According to Ljubojevic & Ljubojevic (2008), it has the potential to be a crucial component in achieving competitive performance, which in turn can be useful when seeking funding from external sources. The desired identity of a brand is its core identity plus all the other unique connections that make up the brand and convey a promise or commitment to consumers. Even as a brand expands into new markets and product lines, its fundamental identity—that timeless and essential feeling—remains constant (Ghodeswar, 2008).

### **Corporate Image**

According to Tran, Nguyen, and Melewar (2015), a company's image is a combination of factors such as ideology, brand name, reputation, and delivery system quality, as well as an attitude or body of subjective knowledge. A common meaning of "corporate image" refers to "the general impression that stakeholders have of an organisation based on their past interactions with that organisation, both positive and negative, which they then internalise and use whenever they hear or see the name of that organisation" (Bravo, Pina, and Montaner, 2009). "Corporate image" can also mean how an organisation is seen by its own members. As a subset of this condition, stakeholders' perceptions of a corporation are also discussed (Bouchet, 2014). Consequently, the picture is never static. As a result of changes brought about by the actions of businesses, remarks made by influential parties like tax authorities, and coverage in the media, it is constantly evolving. The public's perception of a company is allegedly affected by all these factors.

### **Integrity and Organizational Reputation**

The effect of employee integrity on the decrease of industrial strikes among Nigerian industrial workers was studied by Idowu (2012). Two hundred and thirty participants were selected for the study using a stratified sample method. The participants represented both public and private sectors. We used two sets of surveys, with three subscales each, to collect information. We ran t-tests and regression analyses on all of the study's hypothesised difficulties using 0.05 alpha levels. Results demonstrated that integrity on the part of employees significantly contributed to the decrease in industrial strikes when taken as a whole.

Ukonu and Gideon (2016) examined the role of integrity building in the workplace in sustaining corporate image in the Nigerian health business, with the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital serving as a case study. The overarching goal is to analyse the role that integrity training in the workplace has had in maintaining positive public perception of health care providers in Nigeria. The findings of this study highlight the critical role that developing an ethical workplace culture plays in preserving a company's reputation, especially in the healthcare sector. The expansion, improvement, and development of any economy's industrial sector are, in essence, dependent on the quality of its industrial corporate image. As a result, NIC has decided to take action in order to calm the rising tensions that may have escalated at UATH and other institutions, involving issues such as inter-union disputes and the tangled web that is the interaction between employers and employees.

Paluku (2016) investigated the relationship between employee engagement and organisational reputation in retail firms located in Wobulenzi-Luweero City, Uganda. Focussing on non-financial aspects, the study examined employee engagement in connection to organisational reputation. Researchers employed a correlational approach and a purposive sampling strategy. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires and evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistics. The person-product moment correlation coefficient was used to assess the hypothesis. Both employee engagement and company image were found to be exceptionally good at the selected retail firms.

Sholokwu and Olori (2016) investigated the management styles and organisational reputations of oil and gas firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. This research aimed to examine the management practices and organisational reputation of oil and gas businesses in Rivers State. The Taro Yamane algorithm was used to pick 343 responses from a pool of 2400. Twelve

separate oil and gas companies in Rivers State sent representatives to fill in the survey. The descriptive survey research method included the use of questionnaires to collect data. To examine the demographic data and questionnaire items, we used basic percentages and mean scores. To test all seven hypotheses, we used SPSS, a statistical tool for the social sciences, and the Spearman's Rank Correlation statistical method with a significance level of (0.01). According to the results, there is a direct relationship between management style and the standing of the company. Organisational culture significantly moderates the association between managerial practices and organisational reputation, according to another discovery from Rivers State's oil and gas companies. Management practices have an impact on the reputation of oil and gas companies in Rivers State, according to the study's findings. The stated hypotheses that would direct the investigation originated from the literature review.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between integrity and desired identity in the 2-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between integrity and corporate image in the 2-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to characterise the population or phenomenon under investigation, A cross-sectional survey design was employed in the investigation. Three hundred and thirteen individuals were a part of the study's population. Each participant was an employee of a two-star hotel in Rivers State that was listed in the Rivers State Yellow Pages Directory (the official database of the state's businesses and industries): [www.expedia.co.uk/2starhotelsporttharcourt](http://www.expedia.co.uk/2starhotelsporttharcourt)). Therefore, the study used the table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to figure out how many people to sample. The chart indicated that out of the total population, 159 employees from 2-star hotels in Nigeria made up the study's sample. The researcher employed questionnaires given to specific hotel employees as a source of primary data for the study. The study employed face validity, which involves having experts review a draft of the research instruments and rate how effectively they cover all the ideas used in the study variables. Research instrument dependability was assessed using Nunally's (1978) Cronbach's alpha test coefficient in order to ascertain the level of significance. The reliability of the instrument was demonstrated by the results. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was also used to test the hypotheses that were provided.

**Table 1 Reliability Test Result**

Study Variables	Number of Cases	Reliability Coefficients
Integrity	3	0.886
Desired Identity	3	0.731
Corporate Image	3	0.920

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

**Test of Hypotheses**

With a 95% confidence interval and a 5% significance threshold, we assessed our hypotheses using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). To find out how likely it is to accept or reject the null hypothesis for  $p > 0.05$  and  $p < 0.05$ , respectively, we utilised the 0.05 significance level.

**How does integrity affect desired identity in the 2-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria?**

**Table 2 Correlations Analysis on Integrity and Desired Identity.**

		Integrity	Desired Identity
Integrity	Pearson Correlation	1	.611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	151	151
Desired Identity	Pearson Correlation	.611**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	151	151

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

Source: SPSS Output 23 (2020)

***Hypothesis 1: Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant relationship between integrity and desired identity in the 2-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria***

The study found a strong positive and statistically significant association between desired identity and integrity, as shown by the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) in table 2 ( $r = 0.611^{**}$ ) and a ( $P-v = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, we accept the null hypothesis and assert that, in the 2-star hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, there is a strong and significant association between integrity and the desired identity.

**How does integrity affect corporate image in the 2-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria?**

**Table 3 Correlations Analysis on Integrity and Corporate Image**

		Integrity	Corporate Image
Integrity	Pearson Correlation	1	.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	151	151
Corporate Image	Pearson Correlation	.527**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	151	151

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

Source: SPSS Output 23 (2020)

**Hypothesis 2: Ho<sub>2</sub> There is no significant relationship between integrity and corporate image in the 2-Star Hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.**

The study found a moderate association between corporate image and integrity, as indicated by the positive and moderate correlation with a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) of 0.527\*\* and a P-value of 0.000 < 0.05, as shown in table 3. We conclude that there is a strong correlation between corporate image and integrity in the 2-star hotels of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and we adopt the alternative hypothesis as a result.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**Integrity and Organizational Reputation**

The findings corroborate and contradict the conclusion of previous studies. better levels of repute were linked to better levels of individual production, according to Turnipseed (2002). We found that ethical behaviour boosts public reputation, and these other studies have shown the same thing. So, we may make the educated guess that being ethical boosts both reputation and performance. The study's results, which are in line with those of Ukonu and Gideon (2016), show that firm image is greatly affected by workplace integrity building. This is especially true in the health industry. The strength of an economy's industrial corporate image is crucial to the growth, development, and improvement of that economy's industrial sector. While Organ (1988) did note that organisational citizenship behaviour might be seen as an individual action, it was later recognised that the big picture of an organization's overall environment is what matters most. Individuals' efforts to go above and beyond in their roles are important, but organisations can only advance their machinery and gain an advantage over rivals that are less committed to organisational citizenship behaviour when it comes to the collective impact of group level behaviour.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Finally, the study provides a thorough understanding of the problem by empirically examining the relationship between corporate reputation and integrity at 2-star hotels in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. According to the study's findings, service businesses, and the hotel industry in particular, should prioritise integrity among all employees and managers based on the results of the link between the factors test. This will help the organisation establish trust with its stakeholders by fostering honesty and consistency in their dealings with them. Equally important is the fact that CEOs' actions and words should set an example of openness and responsibility throughout the organisation.

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