

A Review of Ethical Values and Unethical Practices in the Nigerian Building Construction Industry

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Abstract

The building industry remains critical in enabling the three pillars of sustainability, namely: people (social sustainability), planet (environmental sustainability), and profit (economic sustainability). Unfortunately, the Nigerian building construction sector, as with other economies, is fraught with systemic ethical challenges that undermine its potential. By thematically analysing 49 related studies using the PRISMA framework, this study reviewed ethical values and unethical practices, identified core ethical principles relevant to the construction industry, and outlined prevalent unethical behaviours in the sector, including bribery, fraud, money laundering, bid-rigging, and health and safety negligence. It concluded by emphasising multifaceted stakeholder actions from clients, professionals, regulatory bodies, government agencies, and the public to promote ethical conduct and improve the technical integrity and sustainability of construction projects in Nigeria.

Keywords: Professional Conduct, Fraud Prevention, Construction Corruption, Building Standard, Unethical Conduct.

Introduction

As a cornerstone of societal development, the building construction industry plays a crucial role in shaping our physical environment and exerts a profound impact on society. From residential homes to critical infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, transportation systems, and commercial spaces, the industry's outputs have a direct impact on how people live, work, and interact with their surroundings. The industry's outputs contribute not only to physical development but also to environmental sustainability, economic growth, and social well-being of communities (Opoku, 2022; Onwuzuligbo et al., 2025; Umeora et al., 2023; Orewere et al., 2020).

Ofori (2015), Abu Hassim et al. (2010), and Isa et al. (2013) point out that this industry makes a considerable contribution to the economic development and advancement of every nation, regardless of the development level of the nation. The studies further indicated that this industry, apart from making such huge inputs to economic development and progress, also offers employment to up to 10% of the total labour force, including specialised

professionals, skilled and semi-skilled labourers. In Nigeria, for instance, the sector accounts for approximately 70% of the nation's fixed capital formation and employs about 25% of the workforce, making it the largest employer of construction labour in Africa (Isa et al., 2013). Consequent upon this, Shah and Alotaibi (2018) and Opoku (2022) opine that ethical practices are just as important in construction as they are in other fields to optimise its economic, social and environmental-boosting potentials.

Unfortunately, the building construction sector faces systemic ethical challenges that are deeply embedded throughout all stages of building projects, from pre-design and planning, through construction and operation, and even into the end-of-life phase (Oyewobi et al., 2011; Ameh & Odusami, 2010). The industry is faced with some ethical issues that are comprised of, but not limited to, conflict of interest, inflation of bills, professional incompetence, poor work delivery, fraud, bribery, professional misconduct, intimidation, and kickbacks, among several other evils. The consequences of these unethical practices manifest directly and indirectly, adversely affecting the three aspects of holistic sustainability: people, planet, and profit (Opoku, 2022). For instance, studies suggest that the neglect of climate-specific and environmental standards in the design and construction of private and public buildings in Nigeria leads to poor building performance and increased energy consumption. Furthermore, safety negligence leading to building failures engenders reduced confidence and breach of trust among people, alongside the more obvious risk to lives and property, financial loss, reduced quality of life of building occupants, environmental health hazards among many others (Munonye et al., 2021; Odoh et al., 2025; Okoye et al. 2018; Oyewobi et al., 2011; Ebekozi et al., 2023a; 2023b;).

Despite recognising these ethical challenges and their detrimental impacts, existing literature reveals a lack of universally accepted definitions of ethical behaviour, reflecting the concept's context-dependent nature (Halder & Batra, 2024). Moreover, ethical lapses often occur when personal values clash with professional obligations or when weak regulatory oversight allows corporate financial interests to supersede ethical conduct (Amoah & Steyn, 2023; Ofori, 2019), thus highlighting a gap between espoused ethical principles and actual practice. These are particularly pronounced in developing economies, where institutional weaknesses, regulatory failures, and socio-economic pressures exacerbate ethical challenges (Iroha et al., 2024). Therefore, there is a need for a more in-depth understanding of the complexities of ethical behaviour in the building construction industry, particularly concerning the disconnect between ethical frameworks and their practical implementation.

The aim of this study, therefore, is to review and synthesise existing studies on ethical values and unethical practices within the building construction industry, with a focus on the Nigerian context. Specifically, the study will explore core ethical principles guiding decision-making in the sector, identify unethical practices most prevalent in this sector, and the challenges enabling these practices. Furthermore, the study will identify actionable steps which various stakeholders must employ to effectively sustain ethics in the industry

through the various stages of a building project, thus providing effective and context-specific interventions to inform industrial, professional and policy-based decisions.

Theoretical Framework

Ethical considerations in building construction are typically viewed through the theoretical lenses of virtue ethics, deontology ethics and utilitarianism ethics (as a type of consequentialism ethics) (Poon & Hoxley, 2010). Together, these form the 3 most common theories which guide the determination of right from wrong (Kaptein & Wembe, 2011; Stos, 2018).

According to these sources, deontology, derived from the Greek word "deon", meaning "duty," emphasises the importance of moral duties/rules and posits that certain actions are inherently right or wrong, regardless of their consequences. Therefore, this Kantian ethics argues that ethical actions are performed out of a sense of duty, guided by universalisable moral principles or categorical imperatives binding in all circumstances (Kaptein & Wembe, 2011). In the context of the construction industry, this implies that professionals are ethically bound to uphold professional codes of conduct, building regulations, and safety standards even when doing so might conflict with cost savings or job completion.

Utilitarianism, advanced by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, is a consequentialist ethical theory that focuses on the outcomes or consequences of actions and holds that the morally right action is the one that produces the greatest happiness or well-being for the greatest number of people (Kaptein & Wembe, 2011; Stos, 2018). In essence, the evaluation of the rightness of an action considers the impact of that action on the well-being of all parties concerned, including the environment. In construction ethics, therefore, utilitarianism supports actions that ensure public safety, environmental protection, and long-term economic viability, even if they require short-term sacrifices or incur additional costs (Poon & Hoxley, 2010).

Virtue ethics, developed by Aristotle, is a character-based ethical theory that emphasises the importance of developing good character traits or virtues (eudaimonia) and places a greater emphasis on these rather than on following rules or weighing the consequences of actions (Kaptein & Wembe, 2011; Stos, 2018). Thus, in the building industry, this means that ethical conduct should be internalised and habitual, rather than merely imposed by external codes.

These three ethical theories are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they offer complementary lenses through which the complex ethical landscape of Nigeria's building construction industry can be examined. While deontology provides the rule-based structure needed for accountability, utilitarianism offers a pragmatic evaluation of consequences, and virtue ethics cultivates the internal moral compass necessary for a sustainable ethical culture. Thus, from an integrated perspective, they reinforce the importance of aligning personal values (the person) with professional obligations (the process/purpose) and societal expectations (the product/outcome), as depicted in Figure 1.

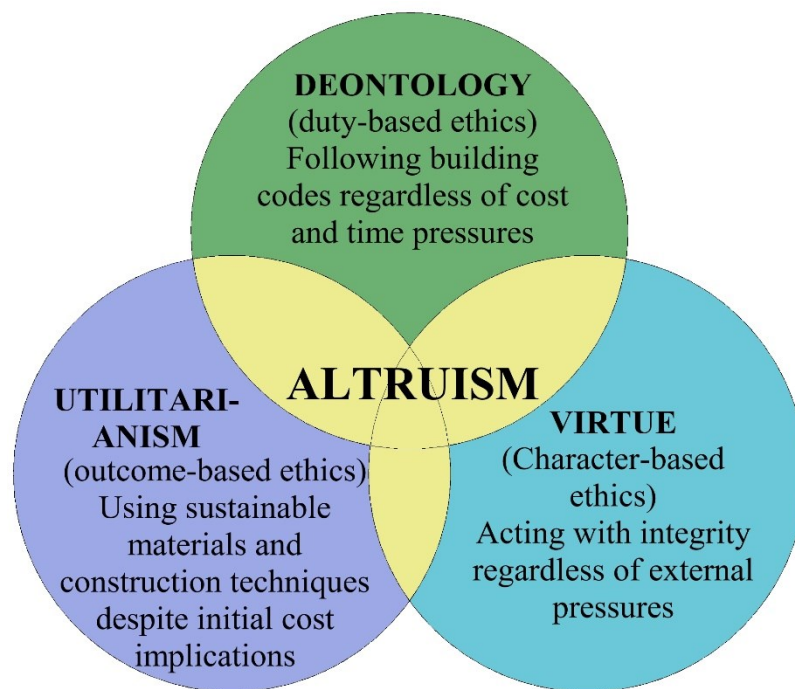


Figure 10: The integrated theory perspective

Methodology

This study employs a systematic review methodology. A comprehensive search strategy was carried out, including search terms, databases, and inclusion/exclusion criteria. The search was carried out through Google Scholar, Scopus, and relevant government websites. Records were included if they met the following criteria: English language; peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings; publication date between 2010 and 2024; focus on both ethics and the construction industry; and relevance to the Nigerian context. The exclusion of duplicate and purely theoretical/philosophical publications resulted in a final set of 49 publications for the analysis. Relevant data were then extracted from the included studies and analysed thematically to provide a holistic overview of the ethical landscape in the Nigerian building construction industry. The preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram of the study is shown in Figure 2.

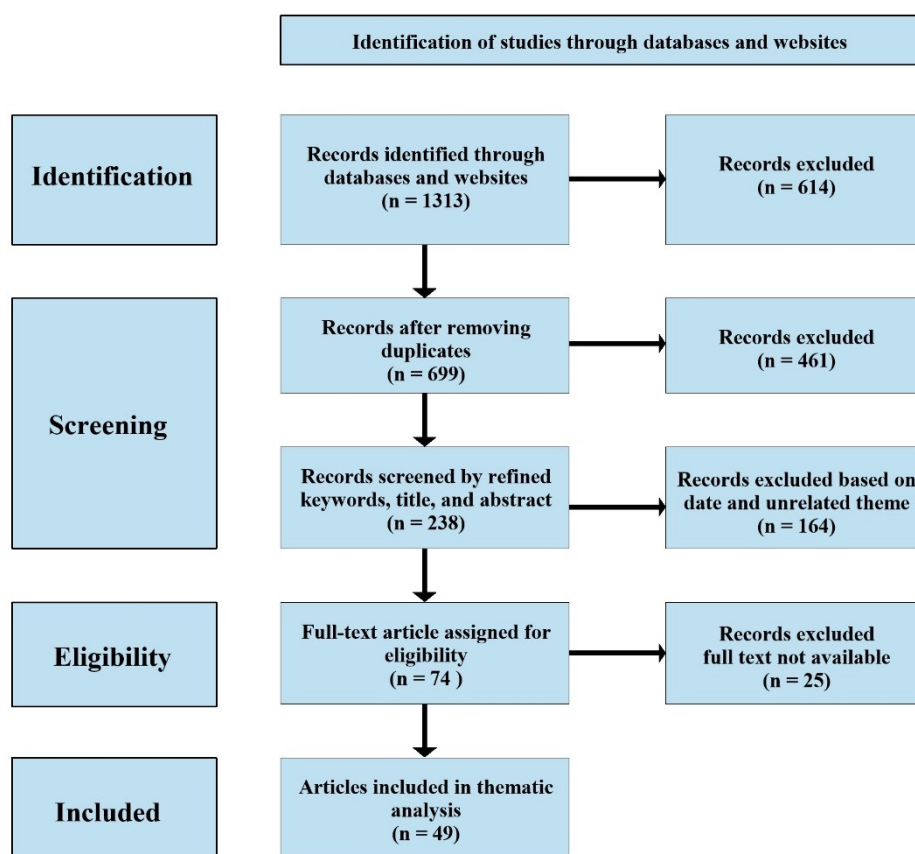


Figure 2: PRISMA flowchart adopted for the study

Results and Discussions

Ethics and Values in Construction

Ethics is fundamental for every performing business and industry. In the construction industry, ethics is increasingly recognised as a key determinant of project success, quality assurance, and stakeholder trust (Dindi et al., 2019; Abdul-Rahman et al., 2010). Despite this consensus, the literature reveals a persistent lack of universally accepted definitions of ethical behaviour, reflecting the concept's context-dependent nature (Halder & Batra, 2024). While Man-Fong Ho (2011) defines ethical behaviour as actions deemed morally and legally acceptable by society, Dindi et al. (2019) emphasise conformity to individual, professional, organisational, and societal values. These definitions, although diverse, underline the core notion of ethics as behaviour grounded in principles of rightness and goodness.

The multidimensionality of ethics is evident in the construction industry, where three intersecting domains (business/management ethics, professional ethics, and personal ethics) are frequently explored (Dindi et al., 2019). Man-Fong Ho (2011) discussed that management ethics pertain to organisational norms and principles that guide decision-making, often influenced by corporate governance structures and regulatory frameworks. Professional ethics, addressed by Abdul-Rahman et al. (2010), focus on adherence to

industry-specific codes of conduct, particularly within the architecture, engineering, and surveying professions. Personal ethics, by contrast, highlight the influence of individual moral frameworks, which are typically shaped by cultural background, religious beliefs, and personal experiences (Dindi et al., 2019).

However, the interplay between these ethical domains is rarely seamless, as studies suggest that ethical lapses often occur when personal values clash with professional obligations or when weak regulatory oversight allows corporate interests to supersede ethical conduct (Amoah & Steyn, 2023; Ofori, 2019). These tensions are particularly pronounced in developing economies, where institutional weaknesses, regulatory failures, and socio-economic pressures exacerbate ethical challenges (Iroha et al., 2024). In response to these challenges, the International Ethics Standards Coalition (IESC, 2021) has outlined a comprehensive ethical framework comprising twelve core principles, ranging from accountability and transparency to respect and trust, which aim to harmonise global ethical expectations while providing a foundation for localised ethical practice for improved quality.

Core Ethical Principles in Construction

Standard of service: A high standard of service from construction professionals is essential for ensuring satisfactory building performance. This entails employing a workforce with appropriate qualifications and demonstrating a commitment to executing construction work in accordance with accepted minimum standards. Ameh and Odusami (2010) emphasised that client trust is strengthened when building designers and workers on site maintain a high standard of service for optimal building performance. Iroha et al. (2024) attributed building failures in Nigeria to site managers' negligence and construction professionals' inadequate project management knowledge. While knowledge, competence, skills, experience, and personal ability of construction professionals are crucial for ensuring building integrity, it is important to note that a high standard of service extends beyond structural stability to encompass environmental performance and optimising occupant comfort. For instance, optimising building features requires adequate knowledge and implementation of building characteristics to maximise the building envelope's performance (Echeta et al., 2023a; 2023b). Yet, some contractors, influenced by clients or driven by profit motives, alter approved building plans during construction, which compromises the structure's integrity and performance.

Lawfulness: Strict compliance with environmental and professional laws is fundamental in high-risk industries such as the construction sector. Contractors, as principal agents in the building process, bear ethical and legal responsibility to ensure that their operations conform to established regulatory standards. This is especially pertinent in light of the Building Regulation Act, which delineates statutory rules governing the construction and structural integrity of buildings (Fagbenle & Oluwunmi, 2010). These legal frameworks must be implemented rigorously and reinforced with institutional mechanisms to ensure

adherence, given that compliance tends to be minimal in the absence of mandatory enforcement (*ibid*).

The failure to internalise lawfulness as both a legal and ethical obligation can have catastrophic consequences. For instance, when professionals substitute legal specifications with personal experiential judgments, which are often without due technical validation, they undermine both regulatory objectives and ethical accountability. Chendo (2015) corroborated the issue of non-compliance with existing laws in Nigeria, inferring this to be the cause of the collapse of a four-storey building under construction at Abagana Estate. Such incidents underscore the practical importance of integrating ethical standards with regulatory practices to uphold public safety and professional credibility in the built environment.

Transparency: Transparency, particularly in procurement and project execution, is a proven antidote to corruption (Park & Blekinsopp, 2011; Bertot et al., 2010). Yet, transparency initiatives are often cosmetic, lacking institutional backing or public access to information. Ofori (2019) establish a strong correlation between transparency and corruption levels, suggesting that ethical breakdowns are more likely where opaque practices persist. In Nigeria, opaque tendering, lack of public accountability, and selective information sharing are entrenched norms that undermine ethical governance (Ibidapo-Obe, 2020; Ibem et al., 2018), thus providing an enabling environment for bribery, favouritism and resource misappropriation.

Honesty and Trust: Honesty is central to ensuring quality performance, building a strong reputation and fostering trust in construction projects (Shah & Alotaibi, 2018; Bello et al., 2024). However, dishonesty pervades construction, leading to fragmented trust among stakeholders across various economies (Bello et al., 2024; Shah & Alotaibi, 2018). This lack of ethical conduct manifests at various stages, from the manipulation of design specifications that compromise project quality to dishonest bidding practices that undermine fair competition (Shah & Alotaibi, 2018; Amoah & Steyn, 2023; Harris et al., 2019). During contract execution, dishonesty regarding quality and progress erodes trust between contractors and clients, while unethical claims handling further exacerbates disputes (Amoah & Steyn, 2023; Harris et al., 2019).

The fragmentation of trust among stakeholders (architects, contractors, clients, and quantity surveyors) reflects a systemic ethical breakdown, corroding the collaborative ethos that construction projects demand, and replacing cooperation with adversarialism (Aderibigbe et al., 2023). Without a foundation of mutual trust, even well-structured contracts are susceptible to disputes and litigation, ultimately undermining project outcomes.

Responsibility: Responsibility is not just adhering to best practices as an obligation, but also the attitude of owning up to one's actions and the resulting impacts. This is particularly important as poor ethical decisions may translate to huge financial losses and damage to corporate image (Harris et al., 2019). It requires all stakeholders, including professionals,

firms, regulatory bodies, and artisans, to contribute to ethical construction outcomes, such that high standards are maintained at every stage. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, responsibility is often diffused or deflected, with blame-shifting becoming common after structural failures (Iroha et al., 2024; Ichendu et al., 2024). Linking ethical responsibility to sustainability provides an opportunity for aligning moral obligation with long-term industry goals such as resilience and environmental stewardship (Liong et al., 2024; Emeka-Okoli et al., 2024).

Accountability: True accountability involves not just internal audits and oversight, but public transparency and the capacity for sanctions. Oyewobi et al. (2011) critique the performative nature of accountability in Nigeria's construction industry, where ethical frameworks often exist more in appearance than in enforcement. Their study reveals that while procedures may be in place to suggest compliance with ethical norms, these are frequently undermined by weak institutional capacity, lack of transparency, and limited mechanisms for redress. For accountability to be meaningful, it must be coupled with legal enforceability, whistleblower protections, and civic engagement, which are largely absent in Nigeria (Okafor et al., 2020; Ayo & Iwara, 2022).

Unethical Behaviours in the Building Construction Industry

Unethical behaviour remains endemic in the Nigerian construction industry, as with other economic and developmental contexts, having been identified to take on several forms according to Oyewobi et al. (2011), Shah and Alotaibi (2018), Amoah and Steyn (2023), Adeyemo and Amade (2016), Adnan et al. (2012), Okoye et al. (2018), Locatelli et al. (2024), and Unger and Ferwerda (2011). They include:

- i. Bribery: This is an act of influencing or manipulating a process or decision using monetary and non-monetary means to secure an unfair advantage on project approval, inspection outcomes, contract award and others.
- ii. Fraud: Deceitful practices to obtain financial or other advantages, such as falsifying documents, misrepresenting qualifications, or inflating costs.
- iii. Extortion: A type of blackmail whereby one party threatens the other party with adverse consequences unless the other party meets listed demands.
- iv. Bid Rigging: Unlawful conspiracy between competitors to manipulate the bidding process and inflate prices, undermining fair competition.
- v. Overbilling: increasing unit prices for activities that are planned to occur earlier in the project to raise cash flow,
- vi. Change Order Games: Winning projects with an artificially low bid and later submitting numerous change orders to recover profits.
- vii. Claim Games: Submitting false or exaggerated claims to unjustly obtain additional payments from project owners.
- viii. Money Laundering: Moving assets or cash acquired by criminal activity from one place to another to hide the source of finances.

- ix. Cover pricing: Submitting a non-competitive bid at a deliberately high price, often in collusion with other bidders, to deceive clients about competition.
- x. Health and Safety Negligence: Failing to provide proper safety measures, equipment, or training to workers, thereby exposing them to avoidable risks and accidents.
- xi. Use of Substandard Materials: Deliberately using low-quality or counterfeit materials to cut costs, leading to unsafe structures and potential future failures.
- xii. Environmental Violations: Engaging in activities like illegal dumping, destruction of protected ecosystems, ignoring erosion controls, or polluting local water sources without proper mitigation measures.
- xiii. Manipulative Environmental Reporting: Falsifying environmental impact assessments or reports to obtain permits or avoid fines, thus hiding real project risks.
- xiv. Labour Exploitation and Discrimination: Employing workers under unfair conditions, including underpayment, poor working conditions, forced labour, or discrimination based on race, gender, or nationality.
- xv. Conflict of Interest: Making professional decisions influenced by undisclosed personal or financial interests, compromising fairness and transparency.
- xvi. Falsified Project Capabilities: Overstating a firm's experience, resources, or technical ability to win contracts, leading to underperformance and project risks
- xvii. Money Laundering: intentionally and illegally concealing the origin of money obtained from illicit means. While money laundering is not a construction-specific unethical behaviour, the construction industry is frequently exploited as a laundering vehicle due to its complex financial structures and high transaction values of asset, price fluctuations and speculation within the market, difficulties in assessing the true value of a house, and the fact that the legal owner is not necessarily the economic owner.

These unethical behaviours take on both overt and covert forms, and fall under at least one of the following broad groups: fraud/bribery/corruption, safety violations, environmental damage, labour rights abuses, and intellectual dishonesty. Furthermore, the prevalence of these unethical behaviours in various economic, social and technological contexts suggests that they are not isolated cases but a normalised ethical breakdown in the global system (Abu Hassim et al., 2010), thus necessitating institutional reform, professional capacity-building, and a cultural shift within the industry (Oladinrin & Ho, 2016). While some result in immediate and heavy loss of lives and property, others result in a gradual decline in ecological health and erode public trust.

Among the listed unethical behaviours, safety violation and negligence stand out as being a common unethical practice, resulting in preventable injuries, fatalities, structural failures and financial losses, as exemplified in numerous high-profile cases globally and in Nigeria. For instance, the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in Maryland, the United States in 2024

causing about 6 worker fatalities (Shukla et al., 2024); the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire outbreak resulting in 72 deaths (MacLeod, 2018); the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh, which claimed over 1100 lives (Chowdhury & Tanim, 2016); the 2021 21-storey building collapse in Ikoyi, Lagos state that killed over 40 people (Ebekozi et al., 2023b); the school building collapse in Jos in 2019, leading to several child fatalities (Ketkukah et al., 2023), and the 2014 Synagogue Church of All Nations guesthouse building collapse in Lagos Nigeria resulting in over 114 fatalities (Ebekozi et al., 2023a).

On the issue of bid-rigging, in the United Kingdom, for instance, the Office of Fair Trading's investigations between 2013 and 2018 revealed that about 10 construction firms colluded on bids for demolition contracts worth over £150 million, including instances where losing bidders provided artificially high "cover bids" to ensure pre-selected winners secured contracts for projects like the Met Police Training College and Selfridges (London) (Competition and Markets Authority CMA, 2023). Similarly, cases of cost engineering have been cited in Brazil, Australia, Ghana and Malaysia (Lopes & Andrade, 2022; Amoah & Steyn, 2023). While concrete documented examples of these vices in the Nigerian building construction industry are limited, studies such by Youssef et al. (2023) and Adeyemo and Amade (2016) give credence to their existence.

Challenges to Ethical Behaviours in the Construction Industry

Ethical practices and behaviours in the construction industry are often undermined by numerous interconnected challenges that are both contextual and systemic. This is particularly concerning given the complex financial and managerial nature of this high-risk industry.

Economic Pressures and Competition: The highly competitive nature of the industry, exacerbated by the tight margins and the pressure to win bids, often incentivises unethical practices like bid rigging, cover pricing, and cutting corners on materials or safety to reduce costs (Amoah & Steyn, 2023; Adnan et al., 2012). The desire to maximise profit, delayed payment, and financial difficulties often push stakeholders towards unethical actions as a means of survival, thus prioritising financial gain over integrity (*ibid*).

Weak Governance and Regulatory Frameworks: Insufficient or poorly enforced regulations, coupled with a lack of transparency and accountability in procurement processes, create opportunities for corruption, bribery, and fraud (Ayo & Iwara, 2022; Amoah & Steyn, 2023). Ineffective monitoring and a lack of stringent penalties for unethical conduct can also fail to deter such behaviours (Oyewobi et al., 2011), paving the way for a culture of diffused responsibility and blame-shifting, a commonplace culture in the Nigerian construction industry (Iroha et al., 2024; Ichendu et al., 2024).

Sociocultural Norms and Lack of Ethical Leadership: In some contexts, corrupt practices might be perceived as the norm or a necessary part of business (Adnan et al., 2012). Thus, acceptance of kickbacks, bribery, or nepotism as standard operating procedures can create a challenging environment for ethical professionals, as with social pressures and managerial

orders, thus leading individuals to compromise their ethical principles (Ayodele et al., 2011; Adnan et al., 2012; Oladinrin & Ho, 2016).

Lack of Awareness and Training: Insufficient ethical education and training among construction professionals can contribute to unethical behaviours, leading to poor understanding of professional codes of conduct and the potential consequences of unethical actions (Man-Fong Ho, 2011).

Conflicts of Interest: The complex web of relationships between various stakeholders (clients, contractors, consultants, suppliers) can create numerous opportunities for conflicts of interest. These can manifest as biased decision-making, favouritism, or the acceptance of undue benefits, compromising objectivity and fairness (Ayo & Iwara, 2022; Bello et al., 2024).

Strengthening Ethics through Stakeholder Action

Promoting an ethical culture within Nigeria's building construction industry requires coordinated responsibility from all key stakeholders (regulatory bodies, government agencies, professionals, the client and the community). Literature has consistently emphasised that ethical breakdowns are rarely the result of individual failures, but due to systemic weaknesses in professional, institutional, and societal frameworks (Adnan et al., 2012; Abdul-Rahman et al., 2010). Therefore, fostering ethical standards across the industry depends on each stakeholder fulfilling their responsibilities with a strong commitment to honesty, fairness, and due diligence.

Regulatory bodies: Professional regulatory bodies such as the Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON), Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), Council of Registered Builders of Nigeria (CORBON), Quantity Surveyors Registration Board of Nigeria (QSRBN), Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON), and Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria (TOPREC) should enforce mandatory ethics training and re-certification for professionals, actively monitoring compliance with codes of conduct, applying sanctions for violations, and promoting positive reinforcement through recognition programs that reward ethical behaviour (Ho & Oladinrin, 2019; Adnan et al., 2012; Ameh & Odusami, 2010). Furthermore, given their responsibility to regulate the teaching of the profession in institutions of higher learning, these regulatory bodies, in partnership with the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), should integrate and continuously update ethics into the built environment curricula of universities and polytechnics.

Government Agencies: Government institutions should enhance oversight of construction practices through regular inspections and stricter enforcement of environmental and safety regulations (Amoah & Steyn, 2023; Ofori, 2019). They should also implement transparent e-procurement systems and establish strong whistleblower protections to expose and deter corruption in public projects (Bertot et al., 2010; Okafor et al., 2020; Ibem et al., 2018).

Construction Professionals: Architects, engineers, and builders are the direct agents of ethical or unethical behaviour on project sites. These professionals have a duty to integrate ethical policies into their organisational culture and lead by example (Ho & Oladinrin, 2019). They should resist unethical client demands that compromise building standards, safety, or environmental compliance and support internal peer-accountability mechanisms that promote integrity, transparency, and professional responsibility on project sites (Ameh & Odusami, 2010; Amoah & Steyn, 2023).

Clients and Project Owners: As the funders and primary beneficiaries of construction outcomes, clients must adopt transparent and equitable procurement strategies, including qualification-based selection, fair compensation, and ethics clauses embedded in contracts (Adnan et al., 2012; Halder & Batra, 2024). Contracts should include ethical compliance clauses, and clients must refrain from imposing instructions that compromise standards, safety, or sustainability (Halder & Batra, 2024).

Public and Civil Society: A strong voice in issues of ethical governance and project execution, the public, through community engagement and civil society participation, plays a vital role in demanding accountability and transparency in construction projects, especially where institutional capacity is weak (Ibidapo-Obe, 2020; Ibem et al., 2018). Therefore, community project monitoring (through independent civil societies), participatory budgeting (through town hall meetings) and feedback mechanisms (such as media suggestion outlets) should be employed for advocacy, accountability, ethical governance, and inclusive infrastructure development.

Conclusion

This review has underscored that ethical values in the building construction industry are significantly compromised by a range of unethical practices. Analysis of these practices reveals distinct patterns associated with different stakeholder groups. Clients/owners contribute to unethical conduct through actions such as illegal demands, imposing undue pressure on project managers, and delays in payment processes. Contractors engage in unethical behaviours ranging from bid-rigging to health and safety violations. Consultants' involvement in unethical practices is linked to inadequate supervision and monitoring, as well as implicit and explicit favouritism. Bribes, gifts, and conflicts of interest emerge as common unethical elements across stakeholder groups and project phases. These unethical practices have far-reaching implications. Beyond the immediate risks to project quality and financial loss, they undermine the industry's potential to contribute to broader sustainability goals. Improved ethical practices are crucial for fostering sustainable development by promoting responsible resource management (economic sustainability), minimising environmental damage (environmental sustainability), and ensuring worker safety (social sustainability). Furthermore, ethical conduct enhances economic development by increasing transparency, reducing corruption, and building trust, which attracts investment and promotes fair competition. Ultimately, a commitment to ethical

values in building construction leads to enhanced societal welfare through the creation of safe, functional, and sustainable built environments that serve the needs of communities.

Declaration

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