

The Role of Ethical Values in Achieving Competitive Superiority: A Review of Integrity and Transparency

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Abstract:

This study investigates how organizational commitment to integrity and transparency fosters competitive superiority within Algerian business organizations. Employing a descriptive-analytical approach, data were collected from a purposive sample of 74 employees at Condor Electronics through a structured questionnaire.

Statistical analyses using SPSS (version 26) revealed that employees perceive high levels of integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority within the organization. Results further indicate significant positive correlations between integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority, with regression analyses confirming that both integrity and transparency exert a measurable impact on competitive superiority. The study contributes to the growing literature on business ethics by empirically demonstrating that ethical principles can serve as strategic assets, and it offers actionable recommendations for managers seeking to strengthen their organizations' competitive positions.

Keywords: Integrity; Transparency; Competitive Superiority; Condor Organization.

Jel Classification Codes : M21; M19.

ملخص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية إسهام التزام المنظمات بالزاهة والشفافية في تعزيز التفوق التنافسي داخل مؤسسات الأعمال الجزائرية، وباستخدام المنهج الوصفي-التحليلي، تم جمع البيانات من عينة قصدية مكونة من 74 موظفًا في شركة كوندور إلكترونيكس عبر استبيان منظم.

وأظهرت التحليلات الإحصائية باستخدام برنامج (SPSS الإصدار 26)، أن الموظفين يدرسون مستويات مرتفعة من الزاهة والشفافية والتفوق التنافسي داخل المؤسسة، كما بينت النتائج وجود علاقات ارتباط إيجابية ودالة إحصائية بين الزاهة والشفافية والتفوق التنافسي، وأكدت تحليلات الانحدار أن كلاً من الزاهة والشفافية لهما تأثير ملموس في التفوق التنافسي.

وتسهم هذه الدراسة في إثراء الأدبيات المتنامية حول أخلاقيات الأعمال من خلال الزهنة تجريبياً على أن المبادئ الأخلاقية يمكن أن تُعدّ أصولاً استراتيجية، كما تقدم توصيات عملية للمديرين الراغبين في تعزيز المواقف التنافسية لمؤسساتهم.

الكلمات المفتاح: الزاهة؛ الشفافية؛ التفوق التنافسي؛ مؤسسة كوندور إلكترونيكس.

تصنيف JEL: M21؛ M19.

I. Introduction:

Modern organizations operate in highly dynamic environments characterized by rapid technological advances, intensified competition, and an unprecedented flow of information. In such contexts, sustainable competitive superiority increasingly depends on intangible factors, including organizational values and employee behaviors, rather than on scarce resources alone. Among these intangible factors, integrity and transparency have emerged as central themes in contemporary management scholarship, reflecting a growing recognition that ethical practices are indispensable for long-term organizational success.

Historically, competitive advantage was derived from physical or financial resources, then shifted to the efficiency of resource utilization. Today, however, organizations focus on intangible assets—values, principles, and ethical conduct—as critical drivers of sustainable distinction. Integrity, encompassing honesty, fairness, and responsibility, and transparency, ensuring openness and clarity in decision-making, not only reduce unethical practices but also foster trust, employee engagement, and customer loyalty.

Given the intensifying global competition and the need for organizations to differentiate themselves ethically as well as strategically, this study examines the interplay between integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority at Condor Electronics, a leading Algerian company in the household and technological appliances sector. Specifically, it seeks to (1) clarify the conceptual foundations of integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority; (2) assess employee perceptions of these variables; and (3) empirically test the relationships among them.

- Research Problem:

Despite the increasing emphasis on business ethics, many organizations still struggle to translate values such as integrity and transparency into tangible strategic outcomes. In Algeria, where economic institutions face challenges including a loss of trust, insufficient transparency, and weakened employee loyalty, the question remains: **to what extent does employees' commitment to integrity and transparency contribute to achieving competitive superiority?** This study addresses this central question by focusing on Condor Electronics as a case study.

- Research Questions:

Derived from the main research problem, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are integrity and transparency conceptualized and practiced in the workplace?
2. What is meant by competitive superiority, and why is it important for business organizations?
3. What is the level of employee awareness of integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority at Condor Electronics?
4. What is the nature of the relationships between these variables from the employees' perspective?

- Research Hypotheses:

To answer these questions, the study tests the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Employees at Condor Electronics demonstrate a high level of awareness of integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority.
- **H2:** There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority from the employees' perspective.
- **H3:** Integrity and transparency exert a statistically significant influence ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on competitive superiority from the employees' perspective.

- Significance of the Study:

Scientific Significance:

This research addresses a relatively underexplored nexus between integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority in management literature, especially in the context of Algerian institutions. By focusing on intangible organizational elements, it complements and extends previous research on business ethics and strategic management. It also responds to an urgent need for empirical studies examining the behavioral determinants of organizational performance in environments marked by ethical and governance challenges.

- Practical Significance:

Practically, the study provides managers and decision-makers with evidence-based insights on how reinforcing integrity and transparency can enhance their organizations' competitive standing. It also identifies the actual level of these values at Condor Electronics, thereby helping leaders design targeted interventions to strengthen ethical practices and, in turn, competitive superiority.

- Research Objectives

Building on the above, the study aims to:

1. Clarify the theoretical foundations of integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority and highlight their role in organizational success.
2. Assess empirically the levels of integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority as perceived by employees at Condor Electronics.
3. Test the study's hypotheses concerning awareness, correlation, and influence relationships.
4. Offer practical recommendations for researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers in Algerian organizations.

II. Integrity and Transparency:

Integrity is considered a fundamental ethical value that reflects an individual's commitment to the principles of honesty, justice, and responsibility in carrying out professional duties. It entails avoiding favoritism or nepotism and ensuring that rules and regulations are applied fairly and equally to all, without discrimination or personal bias. (Alshaibani, 2014, p. 56).

Integrity has also been defined as a set of values associated with honesty, loyalty, and trustworthiness in the workplace (Charad, 2013, p. 149). Employees in organizations are expected to demonstrate honesty and fairness in performing their duties, while refraining from any practices that may compromise their neutrality or independence. They are further required to uphold truthfulness in all interactions and avoid behaviors that conflict with the organization's interests. (Salam & Besachi, 2018, p. 153).

Transparency, on the other hand, is one of the main pillars that reinforces integrity, as it fosters a clear and open work environment that reduces the likelihood of corruption and misconduct. (Aladhaila & Altarawneh, 2010, p. 66). Transparency serves as a cornerstone of integrity because it contributes to combating corruption and favoritism, while clarifying both rights and responsibilities. (Maino & Arrous, 2020, p. 74). Linguistically, transparency denotes clarity, absence of ambiguity, and full comprehension of the picture. (Hoch, Bommer, & Dulebohn, 2020, p. 104).

Transparency can be understood as the process of exchanging information and actions openly and clearly, whereby organizational decision-making procedures are accessible to everyone, and information is provided to employees according to their job requirements. This in turn enhances efficiency and productivity. (Rawlins, 2021, p. 349).

Transparency also plays a critical role in recruitment practices, as human resource managers are expected to provide clear and detailed job descriptions that explicitly outline roles and responsibilities. (Mahdi & Gaoussi, 2025, p. 93).

Furthermore, transparency—as a fundamental feature of human relations—acquires particular importance in the workplace. In both private and public organizations, transparency strengthens trust between leaders and employees, clarifies vision and goals, and enhances employees' sense of belonging and loyalty, which motivates them to perform at their best for organizational success. (Teece, 2023, p. 29).

Operational definition of Integrity: The employee's commitment to honesty and fairness in fulfilling tasks, while avoiding any behavior that conflicts with the organization's interests, including favoritism or conflict of interest.

Operational definition of Transparency: The clarity of organizational decisions, information, and procedures, and their accessibility to employees and stakeholders in a way that builds trust and enhances organizational effectiveness.

III. Competitive Superiority:

The concept of **competitive superiority** is among the critical topics that has sparked debate among scholars concerning its precise definition. However, most definitions converge in emphasizing that competitive superiority represents the added value that an organization achieves in comparison to its competitors. (Jabbar & Khalediya, 2021, p. 89)

While the **Cambridge Dictionary** defines "superiority" as the quality of being better or stronger than others, and "competition" as the strong desire to win or succeed, it does not explicitly define "competitive superiority." Nonetheless, in Western literature, the concept is often treated as analogous to "competitive advantage". (Cambridge, 2024) Several Western scholars have contributed significantly to clarifying the nature of competitive superiority. **Hofer** defines it as the areas in which an organization outperforms its competitors within the same industry. (Dan & Charles, 1979, p. 86). **Ulrich & Lake** argue that competitive superiority is achieved through two

main factors: customer-perceived value and outstanding performance. (Ulrich & Lake , 2019, p. 89).

Similarly, **Czepiel** views it as the ability to provide products or services superior to those of competitors, and to sustain this advantage over time. (Czepiel, 2009, p. 43). **Porter** stresses the organization's ability to develop innovative ways of working that surpass competitors, applied in practice to create a distinctive reality. (Micheal, 1993, p. 48). **Pitts & Lei** contend that competitive superiority arises from exploiting organizational resources and internal strengths to create value that competitors cannot replicate. (David & Robert, 2016, p. 162). Meanwhile, **Richard & R.J** describe it as the unique position that an organization holds and seeks to maintain and develop. (Daniel, 2012, p. 11). **Tuominen & Hyvonen** add that achieving competitive superiority requires not only technological innovation but also flexible and creative management systems capable of leveraging technology effectively. (Matti & Hyvonen, 2014, p. 278).

According to **Kotler**, competitive superiority lies in distinguishing oneself from competitors by offering greater services and value to customers—either through reduced prices or by providing additional benefits that justify higher prices. (Philip & All, 2015, p. 421). **Daveni** further explains that competitive superiority is the driving force that highlights organizational excellence and enables adaptation to environmental challenges. (Daveni, Dagnino, & Smith, 2020, p. 27). Similarly, **Michael et al.** argue that it is the ability to deliver products and services that create added value for customers, consistently exceeding competitor offerings while ensuring sustainable long-term profits. (Micheal , Stewart, & Lyman, 2012, p. 83). **Joanna** emphasizes that competitive superiority reflects the organization's ability to transform its competitive advantages into outcomes that surpass those of rivals. (Katarzyna & Joanna, 2016, p. 59). **Othman & Jassem** describe it as the positive perception held by current and potential customers toward the organization's brands, products, and services, making it their preferred choice in the market. (Othman & Jassem, 2011, p. 234).

- Finally, **Benaouda & Hairech** underscore its strategic importance, noting that competitive superiority enables organizations to survive and grow in highly competitive environments, shields them from competitors' strategies and market fluctuations, and enhances their capacity for innovation and adaptability. (Benaouda & Hairech, 2021, p. 93).

Operational definition of Competitive Superiority: The organization's ability to leverage its internal resources, strengths, and innovation to deliver products and services that create superior customer value, ensuring a sustainable and distinctive position in the market compared to competitors.

IV. Methods and Materials:

To achieve its objectives, the study employed a multi-method approach combining descriptive, analytical, and inductive methods:

- **Descriptive Method:** Used to present a comprehensive theoretical framework for the key study variables (integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority).
- **Analytical Method:** Applied to examine the relationships among the variables using field data collected from the case organization.
- **Inductive Method:** Enabled the researchers to draw conclusions and test hypotheses based on empirical evidence.

1. Study Population and Sample:

This study targeted employees of **Condor Electronics**, one of the leading Algerian companies in the field of home appliances and technological products. Due to the workload and production pressures within the company, the management established an internal regulation governing employees' participation in scientific and field studies. This regulation stipulates that no more than **100 questionnaires** may be distributed in any study, in order to avoid any potential impact on workers' productivity or on the production chain.

Based on this directive, we distributed the number of questionnaires authorized by the company's management. After the collection and screening process, it was found that **74 valid questionnaires** were suitable for analysis. The questionnaires were distributed randomly to ensure adequate representation of the various job categories and levels of experience within the company.

2. Data Collection Tools:

To gather diverse and reliable data about the phenomenon under study, several methods were considered, including observation, interviews, and document analysis. However, the primary tool was a **structured questionnaire**, carefully designed based on multiple academic sources and refined with expert input to ensure validity and reliability.

The questionnaire comprised four sections:

- **Introductory Section:** Explained the study's objectives and assured respondents of the confidentiality of their responses.
- **Demographic Information:** Collected data on gender, age, education level, job type, and years of experience.
- **Integrity and Transparency Items:** Measured employees' perceptions of these values.

Table 1. Questions on the Integrity and Transparency variable in the questionnaire

Content of the phrase	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Integrity					
I strive to achieve the organization's objectives without regard to my personal interests.					
I avoid accepting gifts or money from others for personal gain.					
Employees avoid resorting to cheating or fraud in carrying out their tasks.					
Employees avoid mediation and favoritism in performing their work.					
Transparency					
I provide all the information I have with complete clarity					
The tasks and duties assigned to each employee are clear and publicly communicated.					
Laws and regulations are announced and updated to remove ambiguity and obscurity.					
Recruitment policy is based on competence and merit, with clear and publicly stated criteria.					

Source: Prepared by the researchers after being reviewed by a panel of experts.

- **Competitive Superiority Items:** Assessed perceptions of the organization's competitive standing.

Table 2. Questions on the Competitive Superiority variable in the questionnaire

Content of the phrase	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Competitive Superiority					
The organization strives to improve quality at the lowest possible cost.					
The organization works to minimize its production costs as much as possible.					
The organization seeks to innovate and develop effective methods and approaches to reduce costs.					

The organization offers its products at lower prices compared to other competitors.					
I have sufficient knowledge and skills to adapt to new changes and developments.					
The organization is able to meet multiple and diverse customer requests.					
The organization responds to customer needs and answers their inquiries.					
Our organization is characterized by flexibility in changing machinery, equipment, and production methods.					
The organization continually works on developing and improving its products.					
The organization encourages creative ideas and initiatives to improve and develop work.					
Employees have the ability to present numerous innovative ideas and improvement proposals.					
The organization takes the creative aspect into consideration in its operations.					
The organization is keen to provide high-quality products to its customers.					
The organization's products are distinguished by their quality compared to competitors' products.					
The organization seeks to reduce defect rates in its delivered products.					
The organization is keen to adopt a clear quality management strategy.					
The organization focuses on delivering its products on time.					
The organization uses the latest methods and technologies in providing services accompanying the product.					
The organization excels in the speed of delivering its products compared to other competitors.					
The organization assumes responsibility for the consequences of delays in product delivery.					

Source: Prepared by the researchers after being reviewed by a panel of experts.

An open-ended section at the end invited respondents to provide additional comments or suggestions related to the topic.

3. Cronbach's Alpha: A Measure of Reliability

Cronbach's alpha typically ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating stronger internal consistency. A value below 0.6 reflects weak reliability, between 0.6 and 0.7 indicates acceptable stability, between 0.7 and 0.8 suggests good stability, and values above 0.8 demonstrate excellent reliability. (Azzam, 2015, p. 29)

Table 3. Reliability coefficient of the study variables using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Study variables	Number of questions	Coefficient value
Integrity and Transparency Variable	08	0.919
Competitive Superiority Variable	20	0.932
Study Variables as a Whole	28	0.949

Source: Authors' calculation using SPSS.

The results of the reliability analysis showed that all study dimensions demonstrated a high level of internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the dimensions of integrity and transparency was **0.919**, for the variable of competitive superiority it was **0.932**, and for the study as a whole it reached **0.949**. These high values indicate that the tools used for data collection are highly reliable, and that the results obtained are both stable and generalizable.

4. Normal distribution test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

In order to confirm that the study data follow a normal distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was conducted, and the following results were obtained:

Table 4. Results of the normal distribution test for the study variables (K-S)

Study variables	Test value	(Sig) value
Integrity and Transparency Variable	0.076	0.088
Competitive Superiority Variable	0.094	0.062
Study Variables as a Whole	0.064	0.200*

Source: Authors' calculation using SPSS.

The results of Table (02) indicate that the (Sig) values for the study variables and their dimensions (integrity and transparency, competitive superiority) were all greater than the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). Specifically, the probability values were **0.088** for integrity and transparency, **0.052** for competitive superiority, and **0.200** for the study as a whole. Since all values exceeded the significance level, this confirms that the data follow a normal distribution, allowing for the use of parametric tests.

5. Presentation and analysis of personal and functional data of the study sample

Table 5. Distribution Of Samples According To Personal And Functional Data

Personal and Employment Data	Data	Repetitions	Percentages
Gender	Male	59	%72.7
	Female	15	%27.3
	Total	74	%100
Age	Less than 30 years	15	%20.3
	From 31 to 40 years	42	%56.8
	From 41 to 49 years	16	%21.6
	More than 50 years	4	%1.4
	Total	74	%100
Educational Level	Secondary school and below	3	%4.1
	Specialized diploma	11	%14.9
	University diploma	52	%70.3
	Post-graduate diploma	8	%10.8

	Total	74	%100
Nature of Job	Administrative	20	%27
	Production	40	%54.1
	Technical	14	%18.9
	Total	74	%100
Experience	Less than 5 years	19	%25.7
	From 6 to 10 years	30	%40.5
	From 11 to 20 years	21	%28.4
	More than 21 years	4	%5.4
	Total	74	%100

Source: Authors' calculation using SPSS.

The results of Table (03) indicate that the study sample in Condor is predominantly male, representing **72.7%**, compared to **27.3%** females. This gender gap is attributed to the nature of the organization's work, which requires physical effort and technical skills typically associated with male-dominated roles, while females are fewer and mainly occupy administrative positions. In terms of age, the largest group falls between 31 and 40 years old (**56.8%**), followed by those under 30 (**20.3%**), reflecting a youthful workforce with promising potential. Regarding education, the majority hold university diplomas (**70.3%**), consistent with the prevalence of technical and production jobs, which constitute **54.1%** of positions. Finally, most employees have less than 10 years of experience (**66.2%**), indicating that the organization relies heavily on young, recently graduated talents, benefiting from their qualifications, energy, and enthusiasm.

6. Testing the level of awareness of study variables :

Table 6. Mean and Standard Deviations of the Study Variables as a Whole

Study variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	General Direction
Integrity dimension	4.284	0.589	3	High
Transparency dimension	4.341	0.666	2	High
Competitive superiority variable	4.468	0.427	1	High
General level of study	0.425	0.377	/	High

Source: Authors' calculation using SPSS.

The analysis of the awareness level of the study variables (integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority) using means and standard deviations, as shown in Table (04), revealed the following: integrity scored a high level with a mean of 4.284 (ranked 3rd); transparency also recorded a high level with a mean of 4.341 (ranked 2nd); and competitive superiority achieved the highest level with a mean of 4.468 (ranked 1st). Overall, the study variables registered a high level of awareness, supporting the first hypothesis that employees of Condor Electronics demonstrate strong awareness of integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority.

7. Testing the correlation between study variables

This section aims to examine the correlation between the main and sub-variables of the study using analytical statistical methods represented by Pearson's correlation coefficient, which is consistent with parametric tests. The results showed that all correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), indicating the existence of a strong positive correlation. This supports the acceptance of the second hypothesis, which states that there is a statistically significant correlation at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the study variables (integrity and transparency, competitive superiority) from the perspective of employees at the Algerian Condor Electronics organization.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Values between Study Variables

Independent variable	Dependent variable (competitive superiority)
Integrity dimension	0.511**
Transparency dimension	0.451**
(α ≤ 0.05) The correlation is significant at the significance value(**)	

Source: Authors' calculation using SPSS.

8. Regression variance test between study variables

This section seeks to determine the influence relationships between the study variables using analytical statistical methods, represented by regression variance analysis and simple linear regression, as presented in the following table:

Table 6. Results of simple linear regression analysis of the impact

The impact	Significance level	R ²	R	T	(β)		
/	0.000	/	/	8.885	2.687	Constant	Integrity dimension
There is	0.000	0.329	0.574	5.947	0.416	Dimension	
Y = 2.687 + 0.416x ₃ + ε						The equation	
	0.000			10.775	3.148	Constant	Transparency dimension
There is	0.000	0.225	0.474	4.569	0.304	Dimension	
Y = 3.148 + 0.304x ₂ + ε						The equation	
(*) Statistically significant at the significance level (α ≤ 0.05)							Standard error

Source: Authors' calculation using SPSS.

The results of Table No. (06) indicate that the integrity dimension, as one of the independent variables, has a significant effect on competitive superiority as a dependent variable among Condor employees. The significance value of the integrity dimension was **(0.000)**, which is lower than the assumed level (α ≤ 0.05). The correlation coefficient (R) reached **(0.574)**, while the coefficient of determination (R²) indicated that integrity explains **(32.9%)** of the variance in competitive superiority. This means that integrity has a moderate to strong effect, whereas the remaining variance is attributed to other factors not included in the proposed model. The regression coefficient (β = **0.416**) confirms that a one-unit increase in integrity leads to a 0.416 increase in competitive superiority.

Similarly, the transparency dimension also showed a significant effect on competitive superiority, with a significance value of **(0.000)**, less than (α ≤ 0.05). The correlation coefficient (R) was **(0.474)**, and the coefficient of determination (R²) revealed that transparency explains **(22.5%)** of the variance in competitive superiority, which indicates a moderate effect. The regression coefficient (β = **0.304**) shows that a one-unit increase in transparency results in a **0.304** increase in competitive superiority.

Accordingly, these findings confirm the acceptance of the third hypothesis, which states the existence of a statistically significant influence relationship between the study variables, with integrity having a relatively stronger effect than transparency.

VI. Conclusion:

This study set out to examine the role of integrity and transparency in achieving competitive superiority at Condor Electronics. By combining theoretical review with empirical analysis, it produced both conceptual and applied insights:

- **Integrity** is more than an administrative norm; it reflects deep-seated ethical values that prioritize fairness and organizational interests over personal gain.
- **Transparency** builds trust among stakeholders by ensuring openness, rational discussion, and disclosure of facts, creating a productive work environment.
- **Competitive superiority** emerges when organizations leverage their unique human, material, financial, and technological resources to deliver superior value, build a strong reputation, and anticipate customer needs.

The empirical findings confirmed high awareness levels of integrity, transparency, and competitive superiority among employees, as well as strong correlations and significant influence relationships between these variables.

Recommendations

- **Promote Ethical Leadership:** Strengthen integrity, transparency, and accountability at all organizational levels to combat corruption and reinforce leadership credibility.
- **Enhance Communication:** Increase openness in sharing decisions and procedures to build trust with employees and customers.
- **Invest in Human Capital:** Provide continuous training and professional development to sustain quality and excellence.
- **Foster Flexibility and Innovation:** Adapt production and marketing strategies to evolving market conditions and customer preferences.
- **Monitor Key Performance Factors:** Track pricing, costs, and delivery times to maintain competitiveness and strengthen market position.
- **Encourage Creativity and Development:** Allocate resources to innovation to ensure distinctiveness and long-term sustainability in the competitive market.

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