

Corporate Ethical Values and Sustainable Competitive Advantage: The Strategic Roles of Integrity and Transparency in the Electronics Industry

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Abstract:

In an increasingly competitive and ethically demanding business environment, organizations are called upon to translate ethical values into strategic outcomes. This study examines the relationship between integrity, transparency, and sustainable competitive advantage among employees at Condor Electronics, a leading Algerian manufacturer of household and technological appliances. Using a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 74 valid questionnaires (out of 100 distributed) using a 28-item instrument validated by academic referees and tested for reliability (Cronbach's α ranging from 0.919 to 0.949). The results indicate that employees hold a high level of awareness of integrity, transparency, and sustainable competitive advantage. Pearson correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships between integrity and sustainable competitive advantage, and between transparency and sustainable competitive advantage. Simple linear regression analysis further confirmed that both integrity and transparency exert statistically significant, independent effects on sustainable competitive advantage, explaining 32.9% and 22.5% of its variance, respectively. These findings suggest that ethical capability anchored in integrity and transparency constitutes a meaningful, though not exclusive, driver of sustainable competitive advantage, offering practical implications for managers seeking to strengthen ethical practices at Condor Electronics and comparable Algerian manufacturing firms.

Keywords: Integrity; Transparency; Sustainable Competitive Advantage; Business Ethics; Condor Electronics; Algeria.

Jel Classification Codes : M10; M14; L25.

I. Introduction:

In an increasingly volatile and technologically dynamic business environment, the possession of physical and financial assets alone may be insufficient to sustain a competitive position over time. Contemporary strategic perspectives therefore place greater emphasis on intangible resources and organizational capabilities as foundations for creating and sustaining competitive advantage. Hall highlights the strategic importance of intangible resources and capability differentials in explaining sustainable competitive advantage, (Hall, 1993) while the dynamic capabilities perspective further emphasizes firms' ability to renew and reconfigure their resources in response to environmental and technological change (Teece D. , 2023). Within this broader view of organizational capabilities, ethical capability represents a potentially important but less explored dimension. Within this broader view of organizational capabilities, ethical capability represents a potentially important but less explored dimension.

Buller and McEvoy argue that organizations can develop and sustain ethical capability through practices and organizational conditions that support ethical decision-making and responsible conduct (Buller & McEvoy, 1999). Building on this perspective, the present study conceptualizes business ethics not merely as a compliance-oriented concern, but as a potentially strategic organizational capability whose contribution to sustainable competitive advantage warrants empirical examination.

Historically, competitive advantage was derived primarily from the possession of physical or financial resources, before shifting toward the efficiency with which such resources were utilized. Today, however, organizations increasingly rely on intangible assets values, principles, and ethical conduct—as critical drivers of sustainable competitive distinction. Integrity, which encompasses honesty, fairness, and responsibility, contributes to reducing unethical practices such as corruption and favoritism (Barney, 1991). Integrity encompassing honesty, fairness, and responsibility and transparency ensuring openness and clarity in decision-making do more than reduce unethical practices; together, they foster trust, employee engagement. (Rawlins, 2021)

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 sustainable competitive advantage; (2) assess employee perceptions of these variables; and (3) empirically test the relationships among them.

- Research Problem

Despite the growing attention given to business ethics, many organizations still find it difficult to translate values such as integrity and transparency into concrete strategic outcomes. Within the Algerian business context, the question remains: **to what extent does employees' commitment to integrity and transparency contribute to achieving sustainable competitive advantage?** 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 sustainable competitive advantage, and why is it important for business organizations?
3. What is the level of employee awareness of integrity, transparency, and sustainable competitive advantage at Condor Electronics?
 - What is the nature of the relationship between integrity, transparency, and sustainable competitive advantage 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 sustainable competitive advantage.
 - **H1a:** Employees demonstrate a level of awareness of integrity that is significantly higher than the scale midpoint (3.00).
 - **H1b:** Employees demonstrate a level of awareness of transparency that is significantly higher than the scale midpoint (3.00).
 - **H1c:** Employees demonstrate a level of awareness of sustainable competitive advantage that is significantly higher than the scale midpoint (3.00).
- **H2:** There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between integrity, transparency, and sustainable competitive advantage from the employees' perspective.
 - **H2a:** There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between integrity and sustainable competitive advantage from the employees' perspective.
 - **H2b:** There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between transparency and sustainable competitive advantage from the employees' perspective.
- **H3:** Integrity and transparency exert a statistically significant influence ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on sustainable competitive advantage from the employees' perspective.
 - **H3a:** Integrity exerts a statistically significant influence ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on sustainable competitive advantage from the employees' perspective.
 - **H3b:** Transparency exerts a statistically significant influence ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on sustainable competitive advantage from the employees' perspective.

- **Significance of the Study**

• **Scientific Significance**

This research contributes to the growing body of literature examining the relationship between business ethics and sustainable competitive advantage, with particular attention to integrity and transparency as organizational capabilities. By focusing on intangible organizational elements within the Algerian business context, it extends prior research on business ethics and strategic management and offers empirical evidence drawn from a case study of Condor Electronics on how these ethical dimensions relate to firms' competitive standing.

• **Practical Significance**

Practically, the study provides managers and decision-makers with evidence-based insights on how reinforcing integrity and transparency can enhance their organizations' sustainable competitive advantage. 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, long-term competitive standing.

- **Research Objectives**

Building on the above, the study aims to:

1. Clarify the theoretical foundations of integrity, transparency, and sustainable competitive advantage and highlight their role in organizational success.
2. Assess empirically the levels of integrity, transparency, and sustainable competitive advantage as perceived by employees at Condor Electronics.

3. Test the study's hypotheses concerning awareness, correlation, and influence relationships.

4. Offer practical recommendations for managers and decision-makers at Condor Electronics, with cautious implications that may inform similar manufacturing and technology firms operating in the Algerian business context.

II. Literature Review

- Integrity:

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 (Isseki & Ferhani, 2026). Integrity has also been defined as a set of values associated with honesty, loyalty, and trustworthiness in the workplace (Becker, 1998). Integrity refers to an organizational commitment to ethical conduct that is internalized in decision-making and organizational culture, encouraging individuals and firms to act responsibly and consistently with ethical standards rather than merely complying with external legal requirements (Frerick, 2010).

- Transparency:

Transparency serves as a cornerstone of integrity because it contributes to combating corruption and favoritism, while clarifying both rights and responsibilities (Jenkins & Ishikawa, 2025). Linguistically, transparency denotes clarity, absence of ambiguity, and full comprehension of the picture. (Hoch, Bommer, & Dulebohn, 2020). 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 B., 2021).

Transparency refers to organizational openness and clarity in decision-making, policies, and information disclosure, enabling stakeholders to understand and scrutinize organizational practices and supporting accountability and good governance (Ball, 2009). 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)

For the purposes of this study, integrity is operationalized as employees perceived commitment to honesty, fairness, responsibility, and impartiality in performing their duties, including avoiding favoritism, personal gain, and conflicts of interest. Transparency is operationalized as employees' perceptions of the clarity, openness, and accessibility of organizational information, decisions, and procedures. These dimensions were measured through structured questionnaire items developed from the relevant literature and reviewed by academic experts.

- Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage refers to a firm's ability to achieve a successful and sustained market position by developing distinctive product strategies, core competencies, unique technologies, and intellectual property, supported by valuable organizational resources and capabilities (Srivastava, Franklin, & Martinette, 2013). This advantage becomes sustainable when it is derived from a value-creating strategy that is not simultaneously implemented by current or potential competitors and whose benefits rivals are unable to duplicate (Barney, 1991). an idea now widely regarded as one of the most accepted premises in strategic management, achieved when organizations develop core capabilities, attract qualified talent, design unique strategies, and acquire intellectual property (Bhat & Darzi, 2018). At the firm level, sustainable competitive advantage emerges when an organization holds a distinctive position that competitors cannot readily replicate, grounded in its internal resources and capabilities and reflected in superior efficiency and effectiveness (Bhandari, Ranta, & Salo, 2022). This is achieved through the organization's ability to bundle and integrate its internal resources and strengths across processes, activities, and organizational levels in ways that differ from those of competitors, thereby sustaining its competitive position over time (Adel, Zeainhom, & Abulsaoud, 2021). In recent strategic management literature, this construct has increasingly been examined through a sustainability lens, understood as a multidimensional concept spanning environmental, social, and economic dimensions that support long-term organizational and economic well-being while preserving ecological systems and meeting social needs without generating adverse consequences (Tarnovskaya, 2023). Accordingly, sustainable competitive advantage can be defined as an organization's ability to maintain, over time, a superior and difficult-to-imitate competitive position relative to its competitors, enabling it to generate superior value through customer experience, operational efficiency, and organizational capabilities within a dynamic competitive environment (Wichitsathian & Ekkaphol, 2025) .

For the purposes of this study, sustainable competitive advantage is operationalized as employees' perceived level of the organization's ability to maintain a superior and difficult-to-imitate competitive position relative to its rivals, assessed across five interrelated dimensions: cost leadership, product and service quality, operational flexibility, innovation capability, and delivery performance.

IV. Methodology and Research Design:

To achieve its objectives, the study adopted a quantitative, descriptive-analytical research approach based on field survey data. The descriptive approach was used to characterize the study variables and respondent's perceptions, while the analytical approach was employed to examine the hypothesized relationships among integrity, transparency, and sustainable competitive advantage using empirical data collected from the case organization. The study further adopted a hypothesis-testing logic to empirically assess the proposed relationships.

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.					
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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 Sustainable Competitive Advantage variable in the questionnaire

Content of the phrase	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Sustainable Competitive Advantage					
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.					
The organization has the capabilities and expertise needed to adapt effectively 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 maintains reliable and consistent delivery performance compared with its competitors.					

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.

- Measuring Integrity, Transparency, and Sustainable Competitive Advantage: The author previously developed, adapted, and applied the measurement items used to assess sustainable competitive advantage in this study for a doctoral dissertation entitled "The Impact of Commitment to Business Ethics on Achieving Competitive Advantage: An Empirical Field Study," which was defended in 2024 in Algeria. In that study, the instrument was designed to examine the impact of business ethics, including integrity and transparency, on competitive advantage. The competitive advantage measurement items were adapted to the specific organizational context of the study and reviewed by a team of experts to ensure their clarity

and contextual relevance. Following this validation process, the instrument was experimentally applied in the field study. Building on this previous development, expert review, and experimental application, this study reuses the sustainable competitive advantage measurement items, making only the necessary contextual adjustments to ensure their suitability to the current research environment.

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	08	0.919
Sustainable Competitive Advantage	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 sustainable competitive advantage 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	0.076	0.088
Sustainable Competitive Advantage	0.094	0.062
Study Variables as a Whole	0.064	0.200*

Source: Authors' calculation using SPSS.

The results of Table (04) indicate that the (Sig) values for the study variables and their dimensions (integrity and transparency, sustainable competitive advantage) 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 sustainable competitive advantage, 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 (05) 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	4.284	0.589	3	High
Transparency	4.341	0.666	2	High
Sustainable Competitive Advantage	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 (06), 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 sustainable competitive advantage.

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, sustainable competitive advantage) from the perspective of employees at the Algerian Condor Electronics organization.

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Values between Study Variables.

Independent variable	Dependent variable (sustainable competitive advantage)
Integrity	0.511**
Transparency	0.451**
($\alpha \leq 0.05$)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 8. Results of simple linear regression analysis of the impact

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

Source: Authors' calculation using SPSS.

The results of Table No. (08) indicate that the integrity dimension, as one of the independent variables, has a significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage as a dependent variable among Condor employees. The significance value of the integrity dimension was **(0.000)**, which is lower than the assumed level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). The correlation coefficient (R) reached **(0.574)**, while the coefficient of determination (R²) indicated that integrity explains **(32.9%)** of the variance in sustainable competitive advantage. 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 ($\beta = 0.416$) confirms that a one-unit increase in integrity leads to a 0.416 increase in sustainable competitive advantage.

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

Accordingly, these findings confirm the acceptance of the third hypothesis, which states Integrity and transparency exert a statistically significant influence ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on sustainable competitive advantage from the employees' perspective.

VI. Conclusion:

This study set out to examine the role of integrity and transparency in sustainable competitive advantage 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.

- **Sustainable Competitive Advantage** 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 sustainable competitive advantage among employees, as well as strong correlations and significant influence relationships between these variables.

Recommendations

- **Promote Ethical Leadership:** Strengthen integrity, transparency, 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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