

Work Ethics and Organizational Performance in The Nigerian Public Service: A Study of Delta and Rivers States, Nigeria

Etika Kerja dan Kinerja Organisasi dalam Pelayanan Publik di Nigeria: Sebuah Studi di Negara Bagian Delta dan Rivers, Nigeria



Azuka Nwachuku^{1*}, Onofere Princewill Okereka², Akpomuvire Mukoro³

¹²³ Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Science, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

¹²³ P.M.B. 1, Abraka Delta State, Nigeria

officialazukanwachuku@gmail.com^{1*}; opokereka@delsu.edu.ng²; akpomuviremukoro@delsu.edu.ng³

Corresponding author: officialazukanwachuku@gmail.com^{1*}

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Keywords

Work Ethics;
 Organizational
 Performance;
 Work Attitude;
 Workplace
 Commitment;
 Teamwork;
 Workplace Discipline

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of work ethics on organizational performance in the public service sectors of Delta and Rivers states. Using a cross-sectional research design, data were collected through a structured survey from a sample of 506 employees randomly selected from both states. The study was grounded in labour process theory and agency theory. Labour process theory highlights how organizations can limit employee autonomy by implementing control mechanisms to enhance work performance. Meanwhile, agency theory emphasizes the use of decision-making rights to ensure effective governance, management, and the establishment of incentives and sanctions within an organization. A systematic random sampling method was used to select survey respondents, and the data were analyzed using Pearson's product-moment correlation and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that work ethics encompassing work attitude, workplace commitment, teamwork, and workplace discipline, had a significant and positive impact on organizational performance in the public services of Delta and Rivers states. Additionally, the study identified a linear positive relationship between work ethics practices and organizational performance. This indicates that work ethics not only hold sentimental value but are also critical for enhancing public service performance and sustaining service delivery in Nigeria. The study concluded that work ethics positively influence organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states' public service. The ethical principles outlined in the Nigerian public service code play a key role in guiding civil servants towards behaviors that improve organizational outcomes. As a recommendation, leaders in the public service of Delta and Rivers states, as well as across Nigeria, should prioritize staff training on workplace ethics. Such efforts would help improve employee attitudes, commitment, teamwork, and discipline, ultimately fostering better performance amidst evolving workplace dynamics. The study was limited to the public service sectors in Delta and Rivers states. It is recommended that future research expand to include other states across Nigeria to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Kata Kunci

Etika Kerja;
 Kinerja Organisasi;
 Sikap Kerja;
 Komitmen di Tempat
 Kerja;
 Kerja Sama Tim;
 Disiplin di Tempat
 Kerja

ABSTRAK

Studi ini meneliti dampak etika kerja terhadap kinerja organisasi di sektor layanan publik di negara bagian Delta dan Rivers. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian cross-sectional, data dikumpulkan melalui survei terstruktur dari sampel 506 karyawan yang dipilih secara acak dari kedua negara bagian. Studi ini didasarkan pada teori proses ketenagakerjaan dan teori agensi. Teori proses ketenagakerjaan menyoroti bagaimana organisasi dapat membatasi otonomi karyawan dengan menerapkan mekanisme kontrol untuk meningkatkan kinerja kerja. Sementara itu, teori agensi menekankan penggunaan hak pengambilan keputusan untuk memastikan tata kelola, manajemen, dan penetapan insentif dan sanksi yang efektif dalam suatu

	<p><i>organisasi. Metode pengambilan sampel acak sistematis digunakan untuk memilih responden survei, dan data dianalisis menggunakan korelasi momen-produk Pearson dan analisis regresi berganda. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa etika kerja yang mencakup sikap kerja, komitmen di tempat kerja, kerja tim, dan disiplin di tempat kerja, memiliki dampak yang signifikan dan positif terhadap kinerja organisasi dalam layanan publik di negara bagian Delta dan Rivers. Selain itu, studi tersebut mengidentifikasi hubungan positif linier antara praktik etika kerja dan kinerja organisasi. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa etika kerja tidak hanya memiliki nilai sentimental tetapi juga penting untuk meningkatkan kinerja layanan publik dan mempertahankan pemberian layanan di Nigeria. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa etika kerja secara positif memengaruhi kinerja organisasi dalam layanan publik di negara bagian Delta dan Rivers. Prinsip etika yang diuraikan dalam kode layanan publik Nigeria memainkan peran penting dalam membimbing pegawai negeri menuju perilaku yang meningkatkan hasil organisasi. Sebagai rekomendasi, para pemimpin dalam layanan publik di negara bagian Delta dan Rivers, serta di seluruh Nigeria, harus memprioritaskan pelatihan staf tentang etika di tempat kerja. Upaya tersebut akan membantu meningkatkan sikap, komitmen, kerja sama tim, dan disiplin karyawan, yang pada akhirnya mendorong kinerja yang lebih baik di tengah dinamika tempat kerja yang terus berkembang. Studi ini dibatasi pada sektor layanan publik di negara bagian Delta dan Rivers. Direkomendasikan agar penelitian di masa mendatang diperluas untuk mencakup negara bagian lain di seluruh Nigeria guna memberikan pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif tentang topik tersebut.</i></p>
<p>Article History Send 23th January 2025 Review 14th May 2025 Accepted 31th May 2025</p>	<p>Copyright ©2026 Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora) This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC-SA license. Akses artikel terbuka dengan model CC-BY-NC-SA sebagai lisensinya.</p>



Introduction

Organizations rely on individuals to act ethically, which involves behaving in ways that align with personal values, organizational values, and societal norms. Unethical behavior among employees can negatively impact individuals, teams, and overall organizational performance. Thus, fostering ethical behavior among employees is a critical asset for organizations, offering a competitive edge that is difficult to replicate. In public organizations, performance has shown a declining trend. For example, research by Goebel and Weißenberger (2017), as cited in Mangaoang (2020), identified poor performance in U.S. organizations as a result of a lack of principles like integrity, time management, and accountability among public officers. Similarly, Kakucha, Simba, and Ahmed (2018) highlighted that embezzlement, lack of accountability, and unethical employee behavior were primary contributors to poor performance in Kenyan state corporations. These issues point to the significance of ethical practices in determining organizational outcomes, emphasizing the need for further study on the relationship between ethics and performance. The benefits of an ethical work climate were demonstrated by Vig and Dumicic (2016), who found that ethical values within organizations help reduce role ambiguity and provide clarity for ethical decision-making. A positive perception of an ethical climate increases job satisfaction and commitment among employees, while a lack of ethical alignment between an organization and its employees can lead to stress and dissatisfaction. Sapovadia and Patel (2013) further argue that ethical climates interact with various factors to influence employees' decisions to act ethically or unethically, ultimately affecting their attitudes and performance. In today's globalized and competitive environment, ethical practices are essential for fostering mutual trust and shaping employer-employee relationships. Ethical decision-making has become critical in the corporate world, as it encompasses fairness, good conduct, and equitable treatment. Conversely, unethical practices can increase legal and financial risks, cause workplace stress, reduce job satisfaction, and lower organizational performance (Al-Mahjob, 2018; Abongo et al., 2019).

Work ethics have become a central topic in management and business, given their role in evaluating employee behavior and overall organizational performance. The pursuit of organizational goals and employees' desire for equity have affected integrity, discipline, and workplace etiquette, thereby influencing organizational outcomes (Banks, 2014). Institutions worldwide maintain codes of corporate governance to manage ethical performance (Sunanda, 2018), yet corporate scandals persist, highlighting the need for stronger ethical frameworks. The lack of adherence to ethical values has also been identified

as a contributing factor to leadership challenges in African countries (Agbude & Etete, 2013). For instance, Kenya, Mauritius, and South Africa have advanced ethical governance through frameworks such as South Africa's King II Report on Corporate Governance. However, nations like Tanzania and Nigeria have struggled with corruption and unethical practices over the years, which have damaged institutional reputations and moral standards among workers and leaders.

While significant research has been conducted on work ethics and organizational performance in developed nations (2014; Sunanda, 2018; Kibugi, 2023), less attention has been given to developing countries like Nigeria. This research gap has motivated the current study, which seeks to establish the link between work ethics and organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service. The study's general objective was to examine the causal relationship between work ethics and organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers states. The specific objectives included:

- i. Assessing the relationship between work attitude and organizational performance.
- ii. Exploring the link between workplace commitment and organizational performance.
- iii. Investigating the impact of teamwork on organizational performance.
- iv. Determining the effect of workplace discipline on organizational performance

Workplaces implement various strategies to assess adherence to ethical standards. Key indicators include discipline, teamwork, commitment, and attitude (Baaba, 2021). Attitude reflects our thoughts, beliefs, and emotions regarding different aspects of our environment. Two significant job attitudes, job satisfaction and organizational commitment greatly influence workplace behavior. Research highlights factors such as job characteristics, treatment by colleagues and managers, work relationships, and stress levels as determinants of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Baaba, 2021).

Attitudes shape perceptions and judgments about work environments. Organizational leaders focus on employees' attitudes toward their jobs, careers, and organizations to achieve individual and organizational goals. Positive attitudes like satisfaction and involvement enhance employee performance and overall organizational outcomes. Job satisfaction, defined as the extent of favorable or unfavorable feelings about one's job, is an affective attitude reflecting likes or dislikes (Cabrera & Estacio, 2022).

While job satisfaction can positively impact productivity, this relationship is not always consistent. Some employees achieve high productivity due to monetary incentives or career advancement opportunities rather than intrinsic job satisfaction. Fair

compensation also contributes to job satisfaction by affirming employees' efforts (Sengupta, 2020).

Employee involvement, characterized by engagement in work and decision-making, empowers employees to influence work processes using their skills and knowledge. This approach decentralizes organizational hierarchies, promoting autonomy and self-regulation (Sengupta, 2020; Leonard, 2018).

Workplace commitment, encompassing affective, continuous, and normative dimensions (Meyer & Allen, 1997), significantly impacts organizational outcomes like employee performance and retention (Folorunso, Adewale, & Abodunde, 2014). Commitment stems from various factors: alignment with organizational values, costs of leaving, or a sense of obligation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Different theories explain workplace commitment. Behavioral theory links commitment to actions taken, transactional theory ties it to perceived investments in the organization, and attitudinal theory focuses on identification with the organization (Mercurio, 2015). Strong workplace commitment improves productivity, retention, and the work environment. Organizations must create environments fostering such commitment to achieve high performance (Baaba, 2021).

Teamwork has become a critical aspect of modern work structures. Defined broadly, it involves collaboration to achieve common goals. Effective teamwork enhances cooperation, skill development, and productivity, while fostering strong work relationships (Rusconi, 2019).

Teamwork facilitates efficiency through division of labour and specialization, resulting in cost savings and improved organizational outcomes. However, poor teamwork and ineffective leadership can lower morale and reduce motivation (Salman & Hassan, 2016).

Discipline involves adherence to organizational rules and regulations, ensuring proper conduct and fostering a secure work environment (Ezigbo & Court, 2016). Effective discipline reduces absenteeism, presenteeism, and missed deadlines, boosting efficiency and productivity (Baaba, 2021). Discipline addresses behavioral deviations caused by conflicting employee interests. In its absence, organizations face ineffectiveness and incompetence. Employees are more likely to adhere to rules if they perceive the organization as fair (Idris & Alegbeleye, 2015; Nwosu & Ugwuera, 2015).

In summary, attitudes, commitment, teamwork, and discipline collectively influence organizational performance. Ethical standards and supportive environments are

essential for fostering these attributes, ultimately enhancing productivity and achieving organizational goals.

A theory represents an organized body of thought rooted in general principles, standards, rules, or personal ideals. These foundations serve to justify specific moral judgments, albeit sometimes retrospectively when additional information becomes available. Various theories have been proposed to explore the potential links between work ethics and organizational performance. This study, however, is grounded in Ethical Theory and Agency Theory.

Austin (1959) introduced ethical theory to analyze decision-makers' goals in the workplace. This theory emphasizes adherence to ethical principles that lead to successful outcomes in decision-making. While individuals typically favor a specific decision-making style, they may adapt it based on situational factors. Within teams, understanding the decision-making styles and rules of all members is crucial for effective collaboration. To comprehend ethical theory further, it is essential to consider the shared objectives that decision-makers aim to achieve. These goals include beneficence, least harm, respect for autonomy, and justice (Moore, 2003): a). **Beneficence**: This principle guides decision-makers to prioritize actions that are right and good. It emphasizes generating the greatest possible good, akin to the principle of utility, which seeks the largest ratio of good over harm (Fred, 1978), b). **Least Harm**: When no choice seems beneficial, this principle encourages minimizing harm and limiting its impact to the fewest people. It also underscores a greater responsibility to "do no harm" than merely to benefit others (Moore, 2003). c). **Respect for Autonomy**: Autonomy involves enabling individuals to make decisions about their lives. People should have as much control as possible over their own experiences, as they best understand their motivations, emotions, and capabilities (Moore, 2003), d). **Justice**: This principle advocates for fairness in decision-making, ensuring that decisions are consistent and justified, especially in exceptional cases (Moore, 2003).

Ethical theory promotes actions that maximize happiness and opposes those that cause harm, aiming for societal betterment. It is a reason-based framework for evaluating the morality of actions, although its application in organizations has certain limitations (Martin et al., 2022). In the public sector, decision-makers are expected to model moral behavior, which raises their teams' moral consciousness and improves job satisfaction and organizational performance. Organizations must act purposefully and proactively to achieve desired worker performance while adhering to ethical norms and best practices.

Agency theory, also referenced in this study, is rooted in traditional and naturalistic theoretical frameworks (Olsen, 2013). Although developed in the 1970s, its foundational ideas trace back to earlier works on property rights, organizational economics, contract law, and political philosophy, particularly the writings of Locke and Hobbes. Key contributors to the theory's development include Ross, Mitnick, Alchian, Demsetz, Jensen, and Meckling (Iyowuna & Davies, 2021). Agency theory focuses on the relationship between principals (e.g., owners) and agents (e.g., employees), where decision-making authority is delegated to agents. Two key issues arise in this relationship:

1. **The Agency Problem:** Occurs when principals and agents have conflicting interests, making it difficult for principals to verify agents' actions.
2. **Risk-Sharing:** Principals and agents may have differing attitudes toward risk, leading to divergent preferences for behavior (Agaptus, 2011).

To ensure effective governance, principals must transfer decision-making authority while maintaining oversight. Agency theory highlights the importance of contracts that balance behavior-oriented and outcome-oriented approaches, such as salaries versus performance-based incentives (Agaptus, 2011).

The theory has been applied across various contexts, from macro-level issues like regulatory policy to micro-level phenomena like accountability and impression management. It emphasizes the role of ethics and effective governance in improving organizational performance (Vargas-Hernandez & Cruz, 2018).

Ethical theory is criticized for being overly demanding, as it expects individuals to prioritize the best outcomes consistently. It does not account for changes in moral character or the complexity of calculating happiness and suffering (Austin, 1959). Additionally, critics argue that its practicality is limited in situations requiring exhaustive analysis of all potential outcomes.

Agency theory, on the other hand, is criticized for its narrow focus on self-interested agents and its failure to consider the social context of principal-agent relationships. It assumes that individuals are motivated solely by financial gain, overlooking non-monetary incentives and the role of opportunity in ethical behavior (Organ, 1988).

Ethical theory highlights the connection between work ethics and organizational performance, asserting that workers' activities must align with ethical principles for optimal results. It advocates for mechanisms to monitor and guide employee behavior, emphasizing discipline, integrity, teamwork, and quality. Similarly, agency theory underscores the importance of effective governance and decision-making to enhance performance. Both

theories provide frameworks for understanding ethical conduct and its impact on organizational success. Employees with strong work ethics are more likely to be committed and satisfied, contributing to improved organizational outcomes. By embedding ethical principles and fostering strong principal-agent relationships, organizations can enhance overall performance and employee engagement.

Method

This study employed a cross-sectional survey research design, as it involved measuring both the independent and dependent variables simultaneously across various subgroups without any alteration, manipulation, or control of the variables under investigation (Obasi, 2000). Specifically, the independent variable, work ethics, and the dependent variable, organizational performance, were measured concurrently without any direct or indirect influence, inducement, control, or manipulation at any point.

The total population for the study comprised 28,249 management and staff from the civil services of Delta and Rivers States. This included 13,120 personnel from the Delta State civil service, with 5,683 junior staff on salary grade levels 01–06 and 7,437 senior staff on salary grade levels 07–17 (Delta State Civil Service Commission, 2023). Similarly, the Rivers State civil service consisted of 15,129 personnel, including 6,394 junior staff on salary grade levels 01–06 and 8,735 senior staff on salary grade levels 07–17 (Rivers State Civil Service Commission, 2023). These categories were selected because they are integral to the policy-making processes of the state civil services.

The sample size of 652 respondents was determined using the sample size determination table by Gill and Johnson (2010). For a population of 28,249, the table recommends a minimum sample size of 652 respondents at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Sample Size Determination			
	Variance of the Population P=50%		
	Confidence Level=99% Margin of Error		
Populatio	5	3	1
50	46	49	50
75	67	72	75
100	87	95	99
150	122	139	149
200	154	180	198
250	181	220	246
300	206	258	295

400	249	328	391
500	285	393	485
600	314	452	597
700	340	507	672
800	362	557	763
1000	398	647	943
1500	459	825	1375
2000	497	957	1784
3000	541	1138	2539
5000	583	1342	3838
10000	620	1550	6228
25000	643	1709	9944
50000*	652*	1770	12413
100000	656	1802	14172
250000	659	1821	15989
500000	660	1828	15984
1000000	660	1836	16244

Source: Gill and Johnson (2010)

This study employed the systematic random sampling technique, which was chosen because it ensures that every subject in the sampling frame has an equal chance of selection in an unbiased and systematic manner (Obasi, 2000). Data collected from primary sources underwent quantitative analysis, aligning with the descriptive approach adopted for examining the research issues. The questionnaire data were compiled, coded, and input into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 23.0, 2020) for analysis. Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, including gender, age, marital status, education, employment status, and years of service in the organization. To test the hypotheses, Pearson's product-moment correlation and multiple regression analysis were conducted at a 0.05 significance level. These methods were deemed appropriate given the nature and objectives of the study

Result and Discussion

Bivariate analysis examines the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The decision rule for interpreting the results is as follows: if $P < 0.05$, the hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant relationship between the variables; if $P > 0.05$, the hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant relationship between the variables.

H₁: There is no significant relationship between work attitude and organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service.

Table 2: Correlation of Work Attitude and Organizational Performance

	Variables		Work Attitude	Organizational Performance
Spearman's rho	Work Attitude	Correlation Coefficien Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 506	.857** .000 506
	Organizational Performance	Correlation Coefficien Sig. (2-tailed) N	.857** .000 506	1 506

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 2, presents the analysis of the relationship between work attitude and organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers States using Spearman's correlation coefficient. The results revealed a very strong positive and significant relationship between work attitude and organizational performance ($\rho=0.857$, $P=0.000<0.05$ \rho = 0.857, \, P = 0.000 < 0.05 $\rho=0.857$, $P=0.000<0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, affirming that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between work attitude and organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers States.

H₂: There is not significant relationship between workplace commitment and organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service.

Table 3: Correlation of Workplace Commitment and Organizational Performance

	Variables		Workplace Commitment	Organizational Performance
Spearman's rho	Workplace Commitment	Correlation Coefficien Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 506	.817** .000 506
	Organizational Performance	Correlation Coefficien Sig. (2-tailed) N	.817** .000 506	1 506

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 3, displays the analysis of the relationship between workplace commitment and organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers States, using Spearman's correlation coefficient. The results indicate a very strong positive and significant relationship between workplace commitment and organizational performance ($\rho=0.817$, $P=0.000<0.05$ \rho = 0.817, \, P = 0.000 < 0.05 $\rho=0.817$, $P=0.000<0.05$). As a

result, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that workplace commitment has a very strong positive and significant relationship with organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers States.

H₃: There is not significant relationship between teamwork and organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service.

Table 4: Correlation of Teamwork and Organizational Performance

	Variables		Teamwork	Organizational Performance
Spearman's rho	Teamwork	Correlation	1	.823**
		Coefficien		.000
	Organizational Performance	Sig. (2-tailed) N	506	506
		Correlation	.823**	1
		Coefficien	.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed) N	506	506

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 4, presents the analysis of the relationship between teamwork and organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers States, utilizing Spearman's correlation coefficient. The findings revealed a very strong positive and significant relationship between teamwork and organizational performance ($\rho=0.823$, $P=0.000<0.05$, $\rho = 0.823$, \backslash , $P = 0.000 < 0.05$, $\rho=0.823$, $P=0.000<0.05$). Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected, reaffirming that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between teamwork and organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers States.

H₄: There is not significant relationship between workplace discipline and organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service.

Table 5: Correlation of Workplace Discipline and Organizational Performance

	Variables		Workplace Discipline	Organizational Performance
Spearman's rho	Workplace Discipline	Correlation	1	.795**
		Coefficien		.000
	Organizational Performance	Sig. (2-tailed) N	506	506
		Correlation	.795**	1
		Coefficien	.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed) N	506	506

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 5, illustrates the relationship between workplace discipline and organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers States, using Spearman's correlation coefficient. The analysis revealed a strong positive and significant

relationship between workplace discipline and organizational performance ($\rho=0.795$, $P=0.000<0.05$, $\rho = 0.795$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between workplace discipline and organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers States.

Influence of Work ethics on Organizational Performance in Delta and Rivers States Public Service

Since correlation does not imply causation, a multiple regression analysis was done to verify the influence of work ethics on organizational performance in Delta and Rivers States public service. A multiple regression was used to estimate the impact of work ethics that was decomposed into four dimensions (work attitude, workplace commitment, teamwork, and workplace discipline) on organizational performance. The multiple regression analysis which was conducted at 5% level of significance was used to further test hypotheses formulated for this study. Summary result of test is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Independent Variables	Unstandardised Coefficients	Standardised Coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Beta		
Constant	-.627		-2.139	.0350
work Attitude	.305	.200	3.240	.0055
Workplace Commitment	.450	.213	3.239	.0100
Teamwork	.442	.208	3.385	.0103
Workplace Discipline	.317	.227	3.530	.0000
R	.849			
R ²	.657			
Adjusted R ²	.623			
F	75.344**			

*Significant at 0.005 level

Dependent variable: Organizational performance

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

The coefficient of $R=0.849$ indicates a statistically significant correlation between organizational performance and the four-work ethics, as demonstrated in Table 6. Additionally, the model shows that the coefficient of determination ($R^2=0.657$) reveals that work ethics account for 65.7% of the variation in organizational performance, while other factors not included in the model explain the remaining 34.3% of the unexplained variance. In other words, this study considers important variables that are essential for predicting organizational performance

in the public service of Delta and Rivers States. As such, multicollinearity was not a concern, as the model shows no autocorrelation. Moreover, Table 6, indicates that the alpha value of 0.05 is greater than the p-value (Sig. 0.000), signifying the significance of the F-statistic ($F=75.344$). This suggests that the model accurately reflects the relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. Consequently, the variance in organizational performance is significantly explained by the independent variables (work attitude, workplace commitment, teamwork, and workplace discipline). Regarding the influence of the independent variables on organizational performance, the model reveals that work attitude significantly affects organizational performance ($\beta=0.305, p<0.05$), while workplace commitment ($\beta=0.450, p>0.05$), teamwork ($\beta=0.442, p>0.05$), and workplace discipline ($\beta=0.317, p>0.05$) also have significant influences. However, workplace commitment and teamwork made a unique statistical contribution to the model.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the impact of work ethics on organizational performance in the public services of Delta and Rivers states. The findings indicated a higher number of male employees compared to females, suggesting that male employees are more focused on work ethics and organizational performance. The majority of employees were in middle management, indicating that many staff members possess a comprehensive understanding of work ethics and organizational performance. Most employees were aged between 31 and 40, showing they are mature enough to recognize how work ethics can influence organizational performance. The study also found that married employees were more likely to consistently adhere to work ethics, which could enhance their commitment to organizational performance. Furthermore, most employees held a first-degree qualification, suggesting that their understanding of work ethics and organizational performance could consistently improve organizational effectiveness. Lastly, the majority of employees had 11 to 15 years of experience, indicating they had sufficient time in their roles to understand workplace challenges, including unethical behavior and poor organizational performance.

The study tested four hypotheses, with the first hypothesis confirming a strong positive and significant relationship between work attitude and organizational performance

in Delta and Rivers states public service. This result is in line with Goebel and Weißenberger (2017), who found a significant and positive correlation between work attitude and organizational performance in the United States, and Agbola et al. (2015), who reported similar findings in Nigerian private universities. Omisore and Adeleke (2015), as well as Sunanda (2018), support this by emphasizing the importance of work attitude in improving organizational performance. Additionally, Mulugeta (2020) highlighted the connection between organizational commitment, job security, job satisfaction, and better organizational outcomes such as financial performance and labour productivity.

The study also found that work attitude significantly influences organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service. Sunanda (2018) concurs, suggesting that organizations with ethical work environments perform better by controlling misconduct and preventing exploitation. A positive work attitude enhances workplace efficiency by fostering creativity, innovation, integration, and improving quality. Baaba (2021) further supported the idea that ethical behaviors, such as punctuality and avoiding misuse of resources, contribute to organizational success. AlShehhi et al. (2020) demonstrated that a positive work attitude leads to greater employee involvement and commitment, enhancing organizational performance. Agboola et al. (2015) suggested that promoting positive workplace attitudes can improve employee involvement in decision-making, retention, and overall performance.

Regarding hypothesis two, the study found a strong positive and significant relationship between workplace commitment and organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service. This finding was supported by Qing et al. (2020), who also showed that workplace commitment positively influences public sector organizational performance. Vance (2006), Adewale et al. (2015) and Okolie et al. (2024) further emphasized the importance of workplace commitment in boosting worker efficiency, which is essential for organizational success. Farouk and Jabeen (2018) found that organizations with strong workplace ethics see economic benefits, suggesting that a lack of commitment can lead to poor performance.

For hypothesis three, the study found that teamwork significantly influences organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service. This result aligns with studies by Jones et al. (2007) and Umar and Sha'awa (2020), who identified teamwork as a key factor in improving performance. Baaba (2021) and Rusconi (2019) both noted that teamwork promotes job specialization, efficiency, and increased productivity, all of which contribute to organizational performance. However, Ogbonnaya (2019) warned that

excessive job demands could negatively impact employee well-being, although strong affective commitment can mitigate these effects. A lack of teamwork culture, according to Yunus et al. (2023), may hinder organizational success by reducing trust and collaboration among employees.

Finally, for hypothesis four, the study confirmed that workplace discipline positively influences organizational performance in Delta and Rivers states public service. This was supported by Dumisan (2012), Umar and Sha'awa (2020), and Baaba (2021), who all found that workplace discipline significantly contributes to improved performance. Ezigbo and Court (2016) and Sokoh and Okolie (2023) noted that self-discipline and group discipline foster organizational success, while Nwosu and Ugwuera (2015) argued that disciplined behavior aligns employee actions with organizational goals. The absence of proper discipline can lead to inefficiency and incompetence, as highlighted by Baaba (2021) and Mulugeta (2020), whose research showed that effective discipline is essential for enhancing organizational performance.

Conclusion

This study enhances the understanding of how work ethics influence organizational performance in the public services of Delta and Rivers states. It reveals a consensus among stakeholders in these regions that effective work ethics are crucial for improving organizational performance in the public sector. The findings highlight the existing gap in understanding the relationship between work ethics and organizational performance. Specifically, the study demonstrates that the four key aspects of work ethics such as work attitude, workplace commitment, teamwork, and workplace discipline positively and measurably impact organizational performance in the public service of Delta and Rivers states. The analysis indicates that work ethics practices in the public sector are generally rated above average, suggesting a strong prevalence of these practices. This is likely due to the high value placed on maintaining workplace ethics in pursuit of optimal organizational performance. The study also reveals a clear positive correlation between work ethics and organizational performance, suggesting that work ethics not only hold sentimental value but are also vital for the effectiveness and sustainability of public service delivery in Nigeria.

One of the key findings is that workplace commitment and teamwork have a more significant impact on organizational performance than work attitude and workplace discipline. Therefore, public services that prioritize work ethics are likely to achieve higher organizational performance, while those with lower levels of work ethics may struggle with

lower performance outcomes. In recent years, Nigeria's public service has undergone significant physical and administrative changes aimed at improving productivity and service quality. However, alongside these productivity goals, attention must also be paid to ethical issues to ensure efficient public service delivery. Neglecting ethical considerations could lead to long-term problems affecting the quality and sustainability of public service performance.

This study emphasizes the importance of work ethics in fostering strong organizational performance and a positive corporate image in the public sector. Ethical practices in the workplace contribute to creating a healthy work environment, motivating employees, and enhancing organizational effectiveness. Public sector leaders must recognize that knowledge and skills alone are insufficient to improve organizational performance without proper motivation and a strong moral attitude toward work. The study concludes that work ethics positively influence organizational performance in the public services of Delta and Rivers states. Based on these findings, the study offers several recommendations:

- i. Leaders in the public services of Delta and Rivers states, and across Nigeria, should intensify training efforts on workplace ethics to improve employee work attitudes, commitment, teamwork, and discipline in response to workplace dynamics.
- ii. Public service leaders should establish an ethics advisory board responsible for conducting ethics audits, managing ethics manuals, implementing integrity testing, and administering performance rewards to enhance organizational performance.
- iii. Ethical behavior should be rewarded, and unethical conduct should be disciplined within the public service to foster an environment of trust and improve organizational performance.
- iv. Government employees can deliver exceptional services when properly empowered and provided with a conducive work environment. Leaders in the public services of Delta and Rivers states should therefore place greater emphasis on the workplace code of ethics, particularly focusing on work attitude, commitment, teamwork, and discipline.
- v. The study was limited to the public service sectors in Delta and Rivers states. It is recommended that future research expand to include other states across Nigeria to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Acknowledgent

I want to sincerely thank Prof. Akpomuvire MUKORO and Prof. Onofere Princewill OKEREKA for their valuable guidance, insightful feedback, and dedication in making my Ph.D. thesis possible.

Reference

- Abongo, B., Mutinda, R., Senaji, T., & Rintari, N. (2019). Employee work ethics and organization performance: Reviewing the relationship in the Kenyan insurance industry. *Journal of Human Resource and Leadership*, 3(2), 55 – 80.
- Adewale, O. O., James, O. A., Hezekiah, O. F., & Akinrole, O. O. (2015). Work ethics and employees' job performance. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, 12(1), 107 - 117.
- Agaptus, N. (2011). Bureaucratic and systemic impediments to public accountability in Nigeria. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 2 (4). 1-20.
- Agboola, G. M., Epetimehin, O. S., Akinyele, S. T., Ashipaoloye, F. K (2015) Organizational ethics and employee level of productivity in Nigerian private universities. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 7(28), 125 -134.
- Agbude, G., & Etete, P. (2013). Ethical leadership, corruption and irresponsible governance: Rethinking the African dilemma. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(6), 237 – 244.
- Al-Mahjob, J. A. A. (2018). The role of business ethics in improving the quality of job performance. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Organization Management*, 7, 221 - 224.
- AlShehhi, H., Alshurideh, M., AlKurdi, B., & Salloum, S. A. (2020). *The impact of ethical leadership on employees performance: A systematic review*. Proceedings of International Conference on Advanced Intelligent Systems and Informatics (pp. 417-426). Cham: Springer.
- Austin, F. (1959). *Right and reason: Ethics in theory and practice*. Saint Louis: Mosby Company.
- Baaba, A. (2021). Work ethics and employee performance in the civil service of Ghana: an empirical analysis. *ADRRRI Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 18(3), 190 – 206.
- Banks, S. (2014). Reclaiming social work ethics: Challenging the new public management. *Ethics, Critical and Radical Debates in Social Work*, 1, 1 - 24.
- Cabrera, W., & Estacio, A. (2022). Job Attitude as a Factor on Employees Performance. *International Journal of Economics Development Research*, 3(1), 13 - 35. <https://doi.org/10.37385/ijedr.v3i1.254>.

- Dumisan, R. (2012). Employee responsiveness to disciplinary actions. *Human Relations*, 40(8), 507 - 512.
- Ezigbo, C. A., & Court, O. T. (2016). Ethics and integrity in the academic environment. *Journal of Business Administration and Management*, 11(2) 23-28.
- Farouk, S., & Jabeen, F. (2018). Ethical climate, corporate social responsibility and organizational performance: evidence from the UAE public sector. *Social Responsibility Journal*. 14(4) 738-752.
- Fred, F. (1978). *Introductory ethics*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (2010). *Research methods for managers (Fourth Edition)*. Los Angeles: Sage Publishers.
- Hartini, H., Zainal, V., & Hakim, A. (2023). Assessment of National Population and Family Planning Agency Employees as Part of the Implementation of Bureaucratic Reform. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 2, 34 – 47. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i10-44>.
- Idris, S. D. & Alegbeleye, G. I. (2015). Discipline and organizational effectiveness: Study of Nigerian customs service. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 4(8), 88 - 107.
- Iyowuna, M., & Davies, E.O. (2021). Pension fund administration and welfare of retirees in Rivers State civil service commission, 200-2018. *Public Policy and International Affair Academic Journal*, 3(3), 1-37.
- Jones, A., Richard, B., Paul, D., Sloane, K., & Peter, F. (2007). Effectiveness of teambuilding in organization. *Journal of management*, 5(3), 35 - 37.
- Kakucha, W., Simba, F., & Ahmed, A. (2018). Effects of organizational culture on strategic change management in Mombasa county government. *Journal of Human Resource & Leadership*, 2(1), 19-41.
- Kibugi, J. N., Muthoni, N., & Omariba, A. (2023). Impact of ethical practices on performance of Morang's county government in Kenya. *European Modern Studies Journal*, 7(4), 168 – 179.
- Leonard, K. (2018). *Behavior Vs. attitude in employees*. New York: Pearson Education Limited.
- Mangaoang, E. M. D. (2020). *Precarious work in the Philippine public sector: Nuances and prospects for reform*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, S. R., Emich, K. J., McClean, E. J., & Woodruff, C. (2022). Keeping teams together: How ethical leadership moderates the effects of performance on team efficacy and social integration. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 176(1), 127 - 139.

- Meyer, J. P & Allen, N. J (1997). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63(1), 1 - 18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1990.tb00506.x>
- Moore, G. E. (2003). *Principia ethica*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mulugeta, A. (2020). The effect of organizational culture on employees performance in public service organization of Dire Dawa Administration. *Developing Country Studies*, 10(5), 16 - 25.
- Nwosu, O. & Ugwuera, E. (2015). Staff discipline in the Nigerian local government system. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 20 (7): 38-45.
- Obasi. I.N. (2000). *Research methodology in Political Science*. Enugu: Academic Publishing Company.
- Ogbonnaya, C. (2019). Exploring possible trade-offs between organisational performance and employee well-being: The role of teamwork practices. *Human Resource Management Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12238>.
- Okolie, U. C., Mukoro, A., & Otite, A. (2024). [Empirical study of work-life balance and organizational commitment in Tin Can Island Port Terminals, Lagos State, Nigeria](https://doi.org/10.21831/jss.v20i1.71019). *Journal of Social Studies (JSS)*, 20(1), 9 – 25. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jss.v20i1.71019>
- Olsen, J.P. (2013). The institutional basis of democratic accountability. *West European Politics*, 36, 447-473.
- Omisore, B. O., & Adeleke, O. A. (2015). Work Ethics, Values, Attitudes and Performance In The Nigerian Public Service: Issues, Challenges and The Way Forward. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 5(1), 17 – 29.
- Organ, D. W. (1988). *Organizational citizenship behaviour: The good soldier syndrome*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Qing, M., Asif, M., Hussain, A., & Jameel, A. (2020). Exploring the impact of ethical leadership on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in public sector organizations: The mediating role of psychological empowerment. *Review of Managerial Science*, 14(6), 1405 -1432.
- Ravangard, R., Sajjadnia, Z., Jafari, A., Shahsavan, N., Bahmaie, J., & Bahadori, M. (2014). The association between work ethics and attitudes towards organizational changes among the administrative, financial, and support employees of general teaching hospitals. *Journal of Medical Ethics and the History of Medicine*, 7, 83 – 97.
- Rusconi, G. (2019). Ethical firm system and stakeholder management theories: A possible convergence. *European Management Review*, 16(1), 147 -166.

- Salman, W. A. & Hassan, Z. (2016). Impact of effective teamwork on employee performance. *International Journal of Accounting & Business Management*, 4(1), 76 – 85.
- Sengupta, S. (2020). Development of a scale to measure work attitude function among young adults. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8 (3), 32 - 44. <https://doi.org/10.25215/0803.151>.
- Sokoh, G. C., & Okolie, U. C. (2023). Administrative and financial reforms in Nigeria: The panacea for efficient service delivery. *PERSPEKTIF*, 12(1), 1 – 14.
- Sunanda, K. (2018). Impact of work place ethics on employee and organization productivity. *International Journal of Management*, 9(1), 22 – 28.
- Umar, A. I. & Sha'awa, M. (2020). Relationship between organizational ethics and employee performance in airlines industry: Evidence from Nigeria. *Science Journal of Business and Management*, 8(1), 41- 49.
- Vance R. J (2006). Employee engagement and commitment; A guide to understanding, measuring and increasing engagement in your organization. United States: SHRM Foundation Publishers.
- Vig, S., & Dumicic, K. (2016). Impact of commitment to business ethics to nonfinancial business performance. *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems*, 14(2), 165-181.
- Yunus, S., Whitfield, K., & Mostafa, A. (2023). High-performance HR practices, job demands and employee well-being: The moderating role of managerial support. *Journal of the International Society for the Investigation of Stress*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3252>