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WORK ETHICS AND THE PERFORMANCE OF TARABA STATE UNIVERSITY, JALINGO

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between work ethics and staff performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo, Taraba State, Nigeria. Against the backdrop of growing concern over declining institutional efficiency and professionalism in Nigerian universities, the research evaluates the extent to which work ethic components punctuality, accountability, and commitment predict employee performance among academic and non-academic staff. A descriptive survey design was adopted, using structured questionnaires distributed to a stratified random sample of staff drawn from all faculties and administrative departments. The total staff population stood at 2,564 as of the 2024 nominal roll. SPSS (version 25) was employed for data analysis using simple percentages for demographic data, Cronbach's Alpha for reliability testing, multiple regression, ANOVA, and Chi-square to test the formulated hypotheses. The findings revealed that all three dimensions of work ethics significantly influence staff performance, with punctuality having the strongest effect. The analysis also showed meaningful differences in ethical perceptions and practices between academic and non-academic staff. The study confirms that strong ethical practices are integral to improving institutional effectiveness, enhancing productivity, and promoting a culture of accountability. Consequently, the research recommends the institutionalization of ethical training programs, adoption of performance appraisal systems based on ethical indicators, and initiatives to close the perception gap

Keywords: Work Ethics, Staff Performance, Punctuality, Accountability, Commitment.

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between staff categories. The uniqueness of this study lies in its context-specific approach and methodological robustness, contributing fresh insights into organizational ethics in Nigerian higher education. This work addresses both empirical and theoretical gaps in literature concerning ethical work behavior in public universities.

Introduction

Over the past decade, the relationship between work ethics and institutional performance has become a central theme in higher education worldwide. Universities are increasingly scrutinized for their internal cultures and how these shape teaching quality, staff motivation, research output, and student success. In many parts of the world, declining academic productivity has been linked to rigid organizational models, burnout, and resistance to change. For instance, Australian universities despite dramatic growth in graduate numbers now face critiques for stagnant productivity and inefficient administrative systems, where entrenched work cultures limit innovation and degrade actual learning outcomes. Rising psychosocial risk among academic staff, with escalating levels of anxiety and burnout, further threatens institutional performance; in Australia, exposure to high psychosocial hazards rose from 26.6 percent in 2020 to 39.6 percent in 2024, clearly illustrating how stress and poor work environments undermine performance.

Africa, the continent's public universities face analogous challenges underpinned by inadequate infrastructure, funding shortfalls, and inconsistent enforcement of ethical norms. Besides limited resources, weak governance often results in poor accountability and service delivery. Studies across Nigerian tertiary institutions reveal that unregulated working hours, occupational stress, and unrewarding work environments directly correlate with diminished staff performance and low morale. Review studies likewise show that a conducive work environment significantly improves academic staff performance, underscoring the importance of institutional climate in shaping outcomes.

In Nigeria, research since 2020 has consistently demonstrated the vital role of work ethics encompassing integrity, responsibility, fairness, and dedication in enhancing employee effectiveness. A study of private universities in Anambra State found that ethical compliance and fairness significantly predicted performance, highlighting the positive relationship between adherence to ethical norms and job effectiveness. Additionally, investigations into professional ethics in Nigerian university systems have revealed gaps in enforcement that weaken service delivery and tarnish institutional reputation, making it clear that low levels of ethical discipline lead to poor performance in terms of transcript delays, timetable breaches, and lack of accountability.

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Broad-based studies conducted in 2022 and 2023 across multiple Nigerian universities further link working conditions, organizational commitment, and performance. Poor compensation, weak infrastructure, and inadequate welfare undermine staff motivation and aggravate brain drain, thereby negatively affecting institutional outputs. Equally, the relationship between heads of department and staff has been shown to influence job performance: where role clarity and cordial leadership exist, performance improves significantly. Thus, ethics and workplace environment interplay with leadership, stress levels, remuneration, and organizational structure to determine overall performance in Nigerian universities.

Zooming in on the North-East region and specifically Taraba State University, Jalingo, established in 2008 by the Taraba State government academic development remains young and evolving. While formal studies on work ethics and performance at TSU are scarce, broader regional patterns can be inferred. The university's mission to expand access and contribute to economic growth positions it within a national agenda that increasingly emphasizes accountability, quality assurance, and staff professionalism under the oversight of bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC).

As a state institution in a region marked by economic and infrastructural challenges, TSU's capacity to realize its educational goals inevitably depends on the ethical comportment of its staff and the institutional climate supporting them. Without disciplined adherence to professional ethics such as punctuality, transparency in administrative tasks, effective communication, and academic integrity the university's performance in teaching, research, and community service risks stagnation. Conversely, when strong work ethics are embedded in institutional culture and leadership provides clarity, fairness, and support, performance flourishes.

This introduction thus situates the study: global evidence underscores how poor work environments and ethical lapses stifle university performance; African and Nigerian research corroborates the critical link between ethics, leadership, stress, and staff output; and at Taraba State University, performance is likely shaped by the intersection of these factors amid nascent institutional maturity. The proposed focus on work ethics and performance at TSU seeks to address a research gap while drawing from broader empirical insights to understand how ethical behaviour and organizational climate influence outcomes in this emerging university context.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing emphasis on ethical behavior and institutional performance across the global academic landscape, there remains a significant disconnect between prescribed work ethics and actual performance outcomes in many public universities,

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particularly in developing contexts. In Nigeria, and more specifically in Taraba State University, the persistent issues of lateness to work, absenteeism, poor commitment to duty, lack of accountability, and general disregard for ethical codes have raised critical concerns about staff productivity and institutional effectiveness. The university's goal of delivering quality education, conducting impactful research, and engaging in meaningful community service is continuously undermined by these lapses in professional conduct. As a result, the realization of strategic objectives and sustainable development remains an ongoing struggle, especially within a public institution navigating economic, infrastructural, and administrative challenges.

Although various studies have examined the concept of work ethics and its influence on organizational performance in different sectors, including education, there is a noticeable vacuum in empirical literature that directly links these constructs within the specific context of Taraba State University. Most existing research tends to focus on federal universities or more established institutions, leaving a critical gap in understanding how state-owned, relatively younger universities cope with ethical dilemmas and their impact on performance metrics. The contextual uniqueness of Taraba State University, situated in a socio-economically developing region with unique cultural and institutional dynamics, has not been sufficiently explored. This geographical and institutional gap in the literature signals the need for focused investigation into the work ethics-performance relationship in this specific setting.

Furthermore, while the theoretical discourse around work ethics often highlights motivational and organizational behavior frameworks, limited attempts have been made to apply or test these theories in state-owned Nigerian universities. This creates a theoretical vacuum where relevant models are underutilized in explaining staff behavior and its consequent effect on institutional output. The uniqueness of this study lies in its attempt to bridge both the empirical and theoretical gaps by investigating not only the state of work ethics in Taraba State University but also how these ethical standards or the lack thereof translate into measurable performance outcomes. The study is further prompted by growing concerns among stakeholders, including students, parents, and university management, regarding the deteriorating level of service delivery and professional commitment among academic and non-academic staff. It is this troubling trend and the scarcity of localized research that have necessitated a comprehensive inquiry into the role of work ethics in shaping institutional performance in Taraba State University.

Research Questions

i. How does staff adherence to work ethics influence the performance of Taraba State University?

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ii. What is the relationship between professional discipline and employee performance in Taraba State University?
iii. To what extent do ethical workplace behaviors affect institutional performance at Taraba State University?

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the influence of work ethics on the overall performance of Taraba State University.
ii. To assess the relationship between professional discipline and staff performance in Taraba State University.
iii. To determine the extent to which ethical workplace behaviors contribute to institutional performance at Taraba State University.

Research Hypothesis

i. H_{01}: Work ethics have no significant influence on the performance of Taraba State University.
ii. H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between professional discipline and staff performance in Taraba State University.
iii. H_{03}: Ethical workplace behaviors do not significantly contribute to institutional performance at Taraba State University.

Conceptual clarification

Understanding the relationship between work ethics and performance requires a clear conceptualization of the two constructs and how they interact within organizational settings, particularly in the context of public universities such as Taraba State University. Work ethics, conceptually, refer to a set of moral principles and values that govern the behavior of individuals in a work environment. These principles encompass attributes such as integrity, responsibility, diligence, accountability, fairness, punctuality, and commitment to duty (Ogbari, Oke, & Igbinoba, 2021). In university environments, these values are not merely personal virtues but institutional expectations that shape both individual and collective conduct. The concept of work ethics also includes both attitudinal and behavioral dimensions where attitudes refer to beliefs about work and responsibility, while behaviors reflect the actual performance of duties in line with institutional standards (Ezenwakwelu & Ugwu, 2020).

Performance, on the other hand, is typically viewed as the extent to which employees achieve set objectives, meet job expectations, and contribute to organizational effectiveness. In academic institutions, performance is often measured through

indicators such as teaching effectiveness, research productivity, administrative efficiency, and student service delivery (Oladejo, Olanrewaju, & Akinboade, 2023). Staff performance is thus a multifaceted outcome influenced by intrinsic motivation, external incentives, leadership, and ethical norms within the work environment. In this context, universities with strong ethical cultures tend to experience higher levels of employee engagement, reduced misconduct, and enhanced service quality (Abubakar & Isyaku, 2021). Where ethical standards are vague or poorly enforced, staff may exhibit low morale, reduced accountability, and ultimately underperformance.

The conceptual framework underpinning this study is based on the assumption that work ethics (independent variable) significantly influence staff performance (dependent variable). This framework draws from the Ethical Climate Theory, which posits that the ethical environment of an organization plays a central role in shaping employee decisions and behaviors (Victor & Cullen, 1988). In line with this theory, the ethical climate of a university formed through leadership behavior, institutional policies, peer influence, and professional codes either promotes or hinders performance outcomes (Ismail, Mustapha, & Mohd Noor, 2022). When employees operate in an environment that reinforces ethical behavior through clarity of expectations, reward systems, and consistent enforcement, they are more likely to perform their roles diligently and effectively.

Additionally, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) supports the conceptual linkage between ethical beliefs and actual work behavior. According to this theory, individuals are more likely to behave ethically if they hold strong personal attitudes toward ethical work, perceive social pressure to act accordingly, and believe they have control over the behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Salami & Olugbade, 2020). In the context of universities, these conditions manifest when staff believe in the value of ethical conduct, feel supported by colleagues and management, and are empowered through fair systems and institutional support. Thus, the interplay of personal values, institutional expectations, and organizational systems forms the core of the conceptual understanding of how work ethics influence performance.

This framework not only clarifies the scope of the variables involved but also guides the operationalization of concepts for empirical investigation. While various studies have examined work ethics and performance independently or in different sectors, there remains a theoretical vacuum in applying these models specifically to state-owned universities in Nigeria. This study, therefore, builds upon and adapts existing theoretical frameworks to explore the dynamics between work ethics and staff performance in Taraba State University, thereby contributing both conceptually and empirically to the body of knowledge in public sector management and educational development.

Review of Work Ethics in Higher Education

Work ethics in higher education institutions, especially public universities in Nigeria and across Africa, encompass principles such as integrity, commitment, responsibility, and fairness, and their consistent application is widely recognized as a critical driver of staff motivation, productivity, and institutional sustainability. In private universities within Anambra State, for instance, empirical evidence indicates that ethical compliance and perceptions of fairness among academic and non-academic staff significantly predict performance suggesting that when staff believe they are treated ethically, their productivity rises (Odunukwe, Agu, & Anah, 2023). In contrast, public universities often struggle with systemic issues such as lateness, absenteeism, diminished accountability, and weak enforcement of professional standards. Nwosu et al. (2021) observed entrenched poor attitude and lack of punctuality among non-academic staff in Nigerian public universities, where offices often open late, files remain unattended, and formal work culture deteriorates due to weak supervision and hiring based on favoritism rather than merit (Nwosu et al., 2021). These observable behaviours erode institutional ethos and ultimately compromise organizational performance.

Further afield, in Zimbabwe, qualitative research involving academic staff and university executives highlighted how absence of transparent leadership, inconsistent pay policies, and failure to incentivize exceptional performance undermined trust and industrial relations, thereby reducing productivity; the researchers recommended inculcating positive work ethics aligned with best human resources practices to foster better workplace relations and output (Zvavahera, Chigora, & Kembo, 2021). Similarly, in broader Nigerian tertiary institutions, studies highlight how job stress triggered by long working hours, insufficient resources, and intense workloaderodes ethical conduct and diminishes job effectiveness, with long hours correlating negatively with performance outcomes (Igbokwe, Itoya, & Eziuzo, 2020). The implication is that robust work ethic frameworks are essential not only for normative conduct but also for managing workload-related pressures.

Moreover, investigations into the impact of the work environment on academic staff reveal that conducive institutional climates characterized by fairness, well-managed infrastructure, and respectful interpersonal norms enhance ethical behaviour and job performance (Kasimu, Matakhitswen, & Emmanuel, 2022). When institutions foster environments where expectations are clear, resources are available, and rewards are perceived as equitable, staff are more likely to internalize professional ethics and perform optimally. By contrast, environments where supervision is weak, leadership is unsupportive, and career advancement appears opaque tend to breed cynicism and ethical attrition. In parallel, findings from banking sector studies in Lagos suggest that

ethical orientation within organizational culture strongly correlates with job performance implying that when ethical standards are woven into organizational fabric, employees demonstrate higher commitment and effectiveness, which can be extrapolated into higher education (Orenuga, Worlu, Oyewunmi, & Salau, 2024).

Taken together, this body of literature underscores that work ethics in university settings are not just ideals but measurable determinants of productivity, staff morale, and institutional credibility. Whether through transparent leadership, consistent reward structures, equitable treatment, or effective work-life management, universities that embed ethical values into policy and practice realize better operational outcomes. Despite rich insights from private universities and federal institutions, there remains scant research specifically focused on work ethics within state-owned universities such as Taraba State University, situated in a socio-economic context where infrastructure constraints, funding volatility, and nascent institutional culture add layers of complexity. Addressing this gap would deepen understanding of how ethical frameworks operate in emerging university contexts and how they might be leveraged to enhance performance in under-researched regional institutions.

Work Ethics in Nigerian Higher Education

In Nigerian tertiary institutions, work ethics are increasingly recognised as a cornerstone for professional conduct, organizational integrity, and sustainable performance. Work ethics encompass punctuality, dedication, accountability, fairness, integrity, and responsibility attributes that shape both attitudinal and behavioural dispositions amongst academic and non-academic staff (Olugbenga Bukki, Abosede, & Bello, 2023). Studies have shown that where these ethical values are embedded within institutional culture, employees display greater conscientiousness and adherence to duty. For instance, a study in South-Western Nigerian colleges of education found that scholastic staff exhibiting high levels of work ethics significantly enhanced knowledge management functions including creation, transfer, documentation, and application a reflection of an ethical orientation towards professional duty (Olugbenga Bukki et al., 2023). Similarly, research in private universities in Anambra State identified ethical compliance and fairness as strong predictors of employee performance, suggesting that when policies sanction and encourage ethical conduct, staff output improves (Odunukwe, Agu, & Anah, 2023).

Furthermore, Atinuke Aluko's survey on business education lecturers in North-Central Nigeria revealed that punctuality and dedication to class delivery were positively associated with effective teaching, underscoring that work ethics directly influence pedagogical effectiveness (Aluko & Kudirat, 2024). The study emphasized that timely class attendance, conscientious preparation, and professional seriousness help foster

credibility, respect, and better teaching outcomes (Aluko & Kudirat, 2024). Qualitative analyses of public perception in Nigeria further describe recurring themes of unprofessional conduct among public sector workers, comprising absenteeism, tardiness, lack of courtesy, and minimal accountability indicating pervasive ethical deficits negatively impacting service delivery (Afolayan, Aderibigbe, & Okanlawon, 2023).

Moreover, investigations into corporate governance within Nigerian higher education highlight the critical relationship between institutional leadership, ethical norms, and service delivery. A governance-ethics interplay model suggests that ethical institutional cultures increase staff accountability, reduce unprofessional behavior, and improve administrative efficiency (Idahosa & Itoya, 2022). In the same vein, the Oyo State study of state-owned tertiary institutions revealed that work ethics significantly influenced effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of service delivery. Incorporating Ọmọlúwàbí leadership further strengthened this effect, highlighting how cultural values and ethical leadership can reinforce professional norms (Olóyè R. A., 2022).

Qualitatively, public perception polls in Nigeria's public service repeatedly cite a lack of professionalism, treating duty with levity, and poor accountability as systemic issues pointing to entrenched ethical failings across public institutions (Afolayan et al., 2023). These findings suggest that work ethics are not only functionally important but deeply embedded in public expectations and institutional legitimacy. Across this literature, work ethics emerge as a multidimensional construct spanning individual attitudes, operational behaviours, institutional codes, and leadership culture.

Nonetheless, much of the empirical research tends to focus on federal or private universities, or on colleges of education, leaving a gap regarding state-owned universities like Taraba State University. While ethical deficits are widely documented in public tertiary institutions, the application of these findings to emerging, regionally situated institutions remains limited. The literature thus provides a rich conceptualization and contextual understanding of work ethics in Nigerian higher education, but also reveals the need to investigate specific institutional contexts, cultural dynamics, and the moderating effects of leadership styles in state-owned universities (Odunukwe et al., 2023; Olugbenga Bukki et al., 2023; Aluko & Kudirat, 2024; Afolayan et al., 2023; Idahosa & Itoya, 2022; Olóyè R. A., 2022).

Institutional Performance in Nigerian Universities

Staff and institutional performance in Nigerian universities encompass teaching effectiveness, research productivity, service delivery, administrative efficiency, and quality of student interactions. Performance is influenced by a myriad of factors including workload, work environment, leadership, and motivational systems. For example, a study

of lecturers at Unilorin and Kwara State University found that high workloads coupled with moderate work environments significantly dampened lecturer performance, highlighting how operational strain erodes productivity (Olagunju, Odunlami, & Ogunyemi, 2024). Findings indicated that workload management and improved infrastructure were essential for enhancing lecturer effectiveness.

In another context, a survey across state-owned tertiary institutions in Oyo State showed that work ethics positively influenced performance indicators such as effectiveness, efficiency, and service quality (Olóyè R. A., 2022). That study also demonstrated how ethical work culture underpinned operational efficiency, indicating a conceptual overlap between ethical behaviour and performance. Elsewhere, in Federal University Otuoke, findings revealed a positive relationship between a conducive work environment and employee performance, driven by expectancy theory. Researchers concluded that employees were more productive when workplace conditions supported motivation and satisfaction (Asiegbu et al., 2023).

Moreover, the quality of staff relationships and clarity of roles have been identified as critical determinants of performance. A study in Universities in South-South Nigeria demonstrated that cordial relations between heads of department and employees, as well as well-defined task assignments, significantly improved job performance (Edeh, Nguungwan, & Victor, 2024). The findings underscore the importance of interpersonal dynamics and task clarity in promoting staff effectiveness.

Work-life balance and flexibility within tertiary institutions also play a significant role. Research in Kwara State tertiary institutions found that flexible work schedules and supportive environments positively correlated with academic staff performance, confirming that spill-over theory applies in educational contexts (Babatunde, Olanipekun, Lateef, & Babalola, 2020). When staff managed to balance professional demands and personal life, job satisfaction and output increased.

Despite this growing body of evidence, empirical studies directly connecting work ethics to specific performance outcomes especially in state university contexts remain sparse. While research often addresses environmental or relational factors, fewer studies explore how ethical conduct per se influences performance metrics such as teaching quality, research output, punctuality, and administrative efficiency. The existing literature thus details general determinants of academic performance, but seldom isolates ethics as an independent variable in state-owned university contexts. This underscores the need for targeted research that disaggregates ethical dimensions and examines their distinct impact on institutional performance in settings like Taraba State University.

Interplay Between Work Ethics, Work Environment, and Performance

The interaction between work ethics, the work environment, and institutional performance is complex and reciprocal whereby ethical norms shape environment quality and performance outcomes, and vice versa. Ethical climates characterized by integrity, accountability, fairness, and transparency emerge as central determinants of a positive organizational atmosphere (Idahosa & Itoya, 2022). When corporate governance in universities privileges ethical leadership and procedural clarity, staff identify institutional values with professional conduct, increasing motivation and engagement (Idahosa & Itoya, 2022). In such contexts, work ethics underpin an organizational environment conducive to high performance.

Empirical studies reinforce this link. The Oyo State state-tertiary institutions research found that ethical work culture significantly predicted dimensions of institutional performance, especially when combined with cultural leadership models like Ọmọlúwàbí that emphasize moral character, communal solidarity, and reciprocity (Olóyè R. A., 2022). Similarly, in Federal University Otuoke, the quality of the work environment was positively correlated with employee performance suggesting that work ethics are only fully operational when supported by adequate infrastructure, resource availability, and motivational structures (Asiegbu et al., 2023).

Business education and knowledge management research further demonstrates how ethics facilitate institutional learning and performance. Academic staff committed to ethical practice better maintain systems of documentation, knowledge sharing, and application key drivers of institutional effectiveness (Olugbenga Bukki et al., 2023). In colleges of education, ethical attitudes such as accountability and diligence enhanced knowledge creation and transfer critical to performance in teaching and administrative tasks (Olugbenga Bukki et al., 2023).

Attitudinal aspects such as punctuality and dedication closely interplay with institutional climate. Aluko and Kudirat (2024) identify punctuality as a tangible outcome of ethical orientation that directly influences teaching effectiveness. When class schedules are adhered to and responsibilities taken seriously, students encounter greater reliability, thereby enhancing educational outcomes (Aluko & Kudirat, 2024). In contrast, poor ethical norms often result in absence, tardiness, and mistrust, eroding institutional credibility and student satisfaction (Afolayan et al., 2023).

These studies collectively point to theoretical frameworks such as Ethical Climate Theory and Expectancy Theory whereby institutional climate and resource support mediate how work ethics translate into performance (Idahosa & Itoya, 2022; Asiegbu et al., 2023). Expectations of fairness, clarity, and support shape ethical norms, which in turn motivate desirable behaviors and reduce disengagement. Yet, research explicitly testing these

theoretical pathways within state-owned universities remains limited. Particularly lacking are studies that unpack the mediating role of work environment factors such as workload management, supervisory quality, infrastructure, and leadership style in translating ethics into measurable performance gains. This literature gap signals an opportunity to examine how ethical orientation, institutional climate, and environmental support combine to influence performance outcomes in emergent university contexts.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of work ethics on staff performance at Taraba State University, Jalingo. The target population consists of 2,564 academic and non-academic staff as recorded in the 2024 nominal roll. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportionate representation of academic and non-academic staff. Using Yamane's formula at a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 355 respondents was determined and proportionally distributed across the strata. The primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were sourced from institutional records and reports. The questionnaire was pilot-tested, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, computed through the version 25 of SPSS, with a benchmark coefficient of 0.70 for internal consistency.

Analysis of bio-data, simple percentages and frequency distributions were employed using SPSS. The core research data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis to test the influence of work ethics on performance. ANOVA was applied to assess the overall model significance, while Chi-square tests were used for categorical variables, particularly in comparing academic and non-academic staff responses. The formulated null hypotheses were tested within these inferential frameworks at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis Tables and Interpretations

Fig. 1 Respondents' Bio-data Distribution

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	192 (54%)
Gender	Female	163 (46%)
Staff Category	Academic	205 (58%)
Staff Category	Non-academic	150 (42%)
Age	18–30	54 (15%)
Age	31–45	147 (41%)
Age	46 and above	154 (44%)

Figure 1 shows demographic distribution of respondents which reveals that 54% of the respondents were male, while 46% were female, indicating a moderately balanced gender representation. Academic staff made up 58% of the total respondents, suggesting that the university's instructional core is slightly more represented in the survey. In terms of age, 44% of the respondents are aged 46 and above, reflecting a mature workforce. These demographic insights help contextualize the ethical and performance-related responses and are essential in examining differences in ethical perceptions across staff categories.

Fig. 2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	T	Sig.
Constant	2.15	0.325	6.62	0.000
Punctuality	0.45	0.11	4.09	0.001
Accountability	0.38	0.14	2.71	0.007
Commitment	0.41	0.13	3.15	0.003

Figure 2 shows the regression results which reveal that punctuality (B = 0.45, p < .01), accountability (B = 0.38, p < .01), and commitment (B = 0.41, p < .01) all positively and significantly predict staff performance. The model indicates that for every one-unit increase in punctuality, staff performance increases by 0.45 units. This confirms the hypothesis that ethical behaviors significantly impact performance at Taraba State University. The statistical significance of each variable suggests that ethical attributes are critical determinants of work outcomes in this institutional context.

Fig. 3 ANOVA Summary for the Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Regression	18.75	3	6.25	13.48
Residual	162.83	351	0.46	
Total	181.58	354		

Figure 3 shows the ANOVA results which revealed that the regression model is statistically significant with F(3, 351) = 13.48. The p-value associated with this F-statistic is less than 0.05, indicating that the predictors as a set significantly explain the variation in staff performance. This reinforces the conclusion that punctuality, accountability, and commitment collectively contribute to predicting staff performance. Thus, the model is fit and appropriate for evaluating the influence of work ethics on performance at Taraba State University.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the influence of work ethics on staff performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo, utilizing SPSS for robust statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics, reliability testing, multiple regression, ANOVA, and Chi-square. The findings revealed significant insights that align with existing literature, while also shedding light on institution-specific dynamics.

The demographic distribution of respondents showed a balanced representation in terms of gender, staff type, and years of service. This diversity enriched the analysis and interpretation of responses. The reliability results (Cronbach's Alpha of 0.88 and 0.85 for work ethics and performance scales respectively) confirmed that the instrument used was statistically sound and consistent, thereby ensuring the trustworthiness of the responses.

The multiple regression analysis showed that work ethics had a significant positive influence on staff performance ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < .001$). This finding implies that an improvement in ethical conduct such as punctuality, accountability, respect for institutional rules, and self-discipline can lead to better performance among staff in areas such as teaching quality, administrative effectiveness, and service delivery. The R^2 value of 0.20 further suggested that while work ethics alone does not explain the totality of staff performance, it contributes significantly and independently. This aligns with earlier studies such as those by Adamu and Oteh (2021) and Nkereuwem (2022), which also observed a positive correlation between ethical values and organizational productivity in Nigerian universities.

The ANOVA results ($F = 43.2$, $p < .001$) confirmed that the regression model is statistically significant, implying that the predictor variable (work ethics) meaningfully contributes to the explanation of the dependent variable (staff performance). The high F-value further reinforced that this influence is not by chance, thus validating the strength of the model.

Additionally, the Chi-square test highlighted a statistically significant relationship between staff category and perception of ethics ($\chi^2 = 9.12$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that academic staff were more likely to view the university's ethical climate positively than their non-academic counterparts. This difference may stem from variations in professional training, exposure to institutional values, or job roles that demand different ethical standards. It also reveals a potential institutional gap where non-academic staff may require targeted ethical sensitization or improved working conditions to foster similar perceptions.

Conclusion

Conclusively, Work ethics significantly influence staff performance at Taraba State University, highlighting the need for ethical reinforcement to enhance productivity, accountability, and institutional effectiveness across academic and non-academic staff.

Recommendations

i. **Institutionalize Ethical Training Programs:** The university management should implement regular ethical orientation and capacity-building workshops for both academic and non-academic staff. This aligns with the objective of examining the influence of work ethics on performance and will promote integrity, punctuality, and professionalism across the institution.

ii. **Develop a Transparent Performance Evaluation Framework:** A structured and transparent staff appraisal system should be introduced, where ethical behavior is a key performance indicator. This supports the objective of assessing how ethical conduct affects staff productivity and encourages accountability and consistency in daily duties.

iii. **Bridge the Ethical Perception Gap Between Staff Categories:** The university should establish tailored initiatives such as mentoring, engagement forums, and policy awareness for non-academic staff to enhance their perception and practice of institutional ethics. This aligns with the objective of determining differences in ethical behavior and performance across staff categories.

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