



Impact of Work Ethics on Employee Performance: A Focus on Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the intricate relationship between work ethics and employee performance within the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, addressing persistent challenges of organizational effectiveness and ethical conduct. However, in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, the consistent decline in work ethics and employee performance has raised concerns about systemic inefficiencies and ethical lapses. This study examined the challenges hindering work ethics and employee performance, using Equity Theory as the theoretical framework to explore the role of fairness and equity in motivating employees. The study adopted a descriptive research design, with a population of 2,878 civil servants drawn from five selected ministries in Akwa Ibom State. A sample size of 350 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, and a stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across the ministries. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and statistical analyses, primarily utilizing the Chi-square test for data interpretation. Findings revealed significant correlations between ethical behaviors and employee performance, with 82.8% of respondents affirming that ethical conduct substantially improves overall job performance. The study identified key challenges including inconsistent disciplinary policy application, limited ethical training, and variations in performance evaluation mechanisms. Key findings demonstrated that 85.7% of respondents believed ethical standards directly impact job performance, while 77.1% acknowledged the critical role of transparency and integrity in organizational effectiveness. The research unveiled notable disparities in policy implementation, with only 74.3% of participants confident in the existing disciplinary frameworks' effectiveness in deterring unethical behaviors. The study also found that perceptions of inequity negatively impacted employee morale, fostering dissatisfaction and reducing adherence to ethical practices. The study concluded that addressing these challenges is critical to improving employee performance and ethical compliance in the Akwa

Ibom State Civil Service. Recommendations included strengthening transparency in disciplinary actions, providing equitable training opportunities, ensuring fairness in promotions and rewards, improving salary structures, and reducing political interference in administrative processes.

Keywords: Work Ethics, Employee Performance, Civil Service, Akwa Ibom State

I. Introduction

Ethics plays a crucial role in modern bureaucracies, serving as the foundation for the legitimate use of power and authority (Samara, 2021). In the public sector, ethics transcends mere philosophical discourse; it addresses the morality underpinning decisions and actions while defining the roles and responsibilities of civil servants as stewards of public trust (Khalid, 2020). Simply put, ethics in the public sector is the moral compass that guides public servants in delivering government services efficiently and responsibly (Obikeze, 2011). This guiding principle ensures that actions align with societal values and are subjected to scrutiny by stakeholders, including citizens (Fatile, 2013).

Work ethics, as a subset of organizational ethics, encompasses values such as diligence, accountability, respect, and professionalism in the workplace (Eze, Samara, & Parada, 2020). These values shape how employees approach their duties and responsibilities, influencing their decisions and actions. For public sector employees, adherence to sound work ethics is essential as their roles have a direct and profound impact on society. Civil servants who embody positive work ethics are not only more productive but are also better positioned to foster public trust and confidence (Yuniawan & Udin, 2020). In practical terms, work ethics are shaped by an individual's values, experiences, and environmental influences (Pahlawi & Fatonah, 2020). For civil servants, these ethics are tied to the collective norms of their organizations and the expectations of the society they serve. Public servants who adhere to ethical practices are seen as role models, capable of influencing organizational



culture and enhancing the overall performance of their institutions (Maduabum, 2012). However, in many cases, unethical behaviors such as corruption, favoritism, and mismanagement have significantly eroded the credibility and efficiency of public sector organizations, particularly in Nigeria (Khalid, 2020).

The Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, like other public sector institutions in Nigeria, has faced numerous challenges stemming from poor work ethics. Practices such as bribery, embezzlement, and nepotism have negatively impacted employee performance and the delivery of public services (Seteolu, 2001). The persistence of such unethical behaviors has contributed to widespread inefficiencies, undermining efforts to achieve institutional goals and improve service delivery. Researchers have identified several factors contributing to the erosion of work ethics in the public sector, including inadequate motivation, politicized recruitment processes, and insufficient training (Husin & Kernain, 2019; Maduabum, 2012). These issues are compounded by systemic corruption and a lack of accountability, which further diminish employee morale and productivity. According to Samara (2021), factors such as appropriate technology, adequate resources, and positive work ethics are essential for driving productivity in any organization. Unfortunately, these elements are often absent in the Nigerian public sector, including the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.

The low productivity and inefficiency in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service underscore the need for a thorough examination of the relationship between work ethics and employee performance. This study aims to explore how work ethics influence employee behavior and performance in the state's civil service, identify the challenges hindering ethical practices, and propose actionable solutions to improve productivity and service delivery.

Statement of the Problem

The Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, like many public sector organizations in Nigeria, faces significant challenges related to poor work ethics. Unethical behaviors such as bribery, nepotism, embezzlement, and absenteeism have undermined employee performance and service delivery. Despite various reform efforts, the civil service continues to grapple with low productivity, lack of accountability, and inefficiencies. In this study, attempt is made to provide answers to the following questions:

- a. What is the relationship between ethical behaviours and employees' performance in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service?
- b. How does the existing disciplinary policy correlate with unethical behaviors in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service?

Concept of Work Ethics

Work ethics refers to the moral principles and values that guide behavior and decision-making in the workplace. It embodies a commitment to professionalism, integrity, responsibility, and respect for organizational goals and objectives. According to Yuniawan and Udin (2020), work ethics govern what employees perceive as right or wrong, influencing their conduct and performance. In the public sector, work ethics serves as a foundation for fostering accountability, transparency, and efficient service delivery, ensuring that public servants act as stewards of public trust (Samara, 2021). Work ethics are not only intrinsic to individual behavior but also reflect the organizational culture and societal norms, making them vital for the effective functioning of any organization (Fatile, 2013).

Work ethics, as defined by Omisore and Adeleke (2015), refers to "a set of principles relating to morals, especially as they apply to human conduct." It embodies an ethically sound attitude that is deemed good and acceptable by the majority within an organization, group, community, or society. These principles are often translated into public norms that shape behavior and decision-making. Although ethics and morals are frequently used interchangeably, they differ slightly in meaning. Ethics involves the adoption of rules, standards, and codes of conduct within specific institutions or professions, commonly referred to as work ethics.

Work ethics can be defined as a set of principles that outline acceptable behavior and attitudes within the workplace. Eze, Samara, and Parada (2020) described work ethics as values that encompass the right attitude, behavior, and respect for others, promoting effective communication and teamwork. Maduabum (2012) highlighted that work ethics encapsulate what is morally correct and acceptable within an organization, forming the foundation for employee accountability and productivity. Similarly, Pahlawi and Fatonah (2020) referred to work ethics as principles relating to morals as they apply to human conduct in the workplace, emphasizing that ethical behavior directly impacts organizational performance and societal perception.



The significance of work ethics cannot be overstated in any organization, regardless of its sector. For institutions to achieve their goals and objectives, adherence to established rules and regulations is essential for guiding employees' attitudes and behavior (Gberevbie, 2017). Abdullah and Halim (2016) emphasize that work ethics are crucial for public servants, as they underpin effective and efficient service delivery. A positive work ethic fosters increased productivity and ensures high-quality outcomes. An individual's attitude, feelings, and principles toward organizational responsibilities reflect their work ethics, which can be categorized as positive or negative, productive or unproductive (Oyelade, 2017). Heelas (2002) further explains that "work ethics of whatever variety involve the ascription of value to work. Work is valued as a means to some end." For example, work ethics are often highlighted as a key characteristic of successful participants in sports. Irrespective of the context, work ethics are commonly associated with individuals who demonstrate diligence, commitment, and a strong sense of responsibility in their tasks.

Concept of Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the degree to which individuals fulfill their roles and responsibilities in achieving organizational objectives. It encompasses the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness with which employees execute their tasks. In the public sector, employee performance is critical for ensuring efficient service delivery, accountability, and the achievement of governmental goals (Husin & Kernain, 2019). Public sector performance is often evaluated based on its ability to meet the needs of citizens while maintaining transparency and resource efficiency (Maduabum, 2012). Employee performance can be defined as the measurable outcomes or results of an employee's work relative to predetermined organizational goals and standards. According to Tahar and Sofyani (2020), employee performance is the capacity of employees to achieve specific tasks effectively within a set timeframe using available resources. Obiora, Chinyere, and Henrietta (2016) emphasize that in the public sector, performance is linked not only to individual achievements but also to the overall impact on public service delivery and societal well-being.

Work Ethics and Employees' Performance

Work ethics significantly influence employees' performance in any organization. Strong work ethics promote behaviors and attitudes that

enhance efficiency, productivity, and the overall achievement of organizational goals. In the public sector, where service delivery is a core function, work ethics play a critical role in shaping employees' ability to perform effectively and meet the expectations of stakeholders. According to Abdullah and Halim (2016), work ethics are essential for maintaining organizational standards and ensuring employees align with established codes of conduct. For instance, in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, employees who adhere to work ethics such as punctuality, accountability, and integrity are more likely to deliver quality services, meet deadlines, and maintain public trust. Conversely, employees with poor work ethics may engage in absenteeism, corruption, or inefficiency, which can lead to substandard service delivery and reduced organizational performance.

The relationship between work ethics and employee performance is both direct and multifaceted. Work ethics influence performance by shaping the attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes of employees. Below are key aspects of this relationship:

- a. **Accountability and Responsibility:** Employees with strong work ethics take responsibility for their actions and are accountable for their tasks. This directly impacts performance as they ensure tasks are completed with precision and in a timely manner. For example, in a public hospital setting, a nurse who adheres to ethical standards will prioritize patient care, leading to improved health outcomes and higher satisfaction among service recipients (Gberevbie, 2017).
- b. **Commitment and Dedication:** Commitment to organizational goals is a hallmark of strong work ethics. Employees who are committed and dedicated often go beyond their job descriptions to achieve excellence. In the Nigerian civil service, officers who demonstrate dedication by staying late to complete essential tasks or attending to public needs efficiently exemplify the positive impact of work ethics on performance (Oyelade, 2017).
- c. **Integrity and Transparency:** Integrity fosters trust and reliability in an organization. Employees with high integrity avoid unethical practices such as bribery, favoritism, or embezzlement. For instance, civil servants who manage public funds transparently ensure resources are utilized effectively, directly enhancing performance metrics such as project completion rates and cost-efficiency (Adewale, 2016).
- d. **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Ethical employees value teamwork and respect their colleagues, creating a harmonious work



environment. This fosters collaboration and collective problem-solving, which is essential for achieving public sector goals. For instance, in Akwa Ibom State, the success of community-driven projects such as road construction or water supply is often linked to the collaborative efforts of ethical employees (Seteolu, 2001).

For instance, in 2022, Akwa Ibom State's Ministry of Health implemented a punctuality monitoring program. Employees who consistently arrived on time and adhered to work schedules demonstrated improved efficiency, leading to a significant reduction in patient waiting times. The introduction of the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) in Nigeria reduced ghost worker practices. Ethical adherence by employees in utilizing the system ensured transparency and accountability, boosting performance and saving billions in government expenditure (Khalid, 2020). The Akwa Ibom State Civil Service recently recognized exemplary employees for their adherence to work ethics. One notable instance involved a public works engineer who declined bribes and insisted on using quality materials for road construction, resulting in durable infrastructure that benefited the community.

The relationship between work ethics and employee performance is evident in the public sector, as demonstrated by numerous examples and practical outcomes. By fostering accountability, commitment, integrity, and teamwork, work ethics not only enhance individual performance but also contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery. As organizations and governments continue to emphasize ethical conduct, the performance of employees is expected to improve, creating a foundation for sustainable development and public trust.

Challenges Hindering Work Ethics and Employee Performance in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Work ethics and employee performance are critical components of an effective civil service system, as they directly influence the quality of public service delivery. In the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, upholding ethical standards and achieving optimal performance among employees remain significant concerns. Various challenges, ranging from systemic issues to individual shortcomings, hinder the ability of civil servants to perform their duties ethically and efficiently. Factors such as inconsistent disciplinary enforcement, lack of adequate training, poor remuneration, and political interference contribute to a work

environment that discourages ethical compliance and lowers productivity. Understanding these challenges is essential to developing targeted solutions that promote accountability, fairness, and efficiency in the civil service.

i. **Inconsistent Enforcement of Disciplinary Policies:**

A significant challenge in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service is the inconsistent application of disciplinary measures across different departments and hierarchical levels. Employees often perceive favoritism and partiality in handling cases of misconduct, which undermines trust in the system. As Eze and Okeke (2022) note, inconsistent enforcement of disciplinary policies creates a culture of impunity, reducing the effectiveness of ethical guidelines. For instance, during a review in the Ministry of Works, employees criticized management for bias in implementing disciplinary actions. Senior officers guilty of absenteeism received mere warnings, whereas junior staff faced harsher penalties for similar offenses. Such disparities foster resentment and reduce adherence to ethical standards.

ii. **Lack of Adequate Training on Ethical Standards:**

Although training programs exist, their irregularity and limited scope hinder their effectiveness. Adepoju and Obafemi (2021) emphasize that training and development are critical tools for promoting ethical compliance in public service. However, in Akwa Ibom State, many employees lack a comprehensive understanding of the civil service's ethical code, leading to unintentional violations. A 2023 survey among civil servants revealed that over 40% of respondents believed training opportunities were inequitably distributed, with urban offices receiving more attention than rural ones. This gap leaves staff in rural offices ill-equipped to navigate ethical dilemmas, affecting their performance and compliance with workplace ethics.

iii. **Weak Transparency in Reward and Promotion Systems:**

Perceptions of inequity in promotions and rewards significantly affect employee morale and performance. Public servants frequently cite favoritism or political interference in promotion processes as a major issue. Nwagbara and Ekwere (2023) highlight that equitable promotion systems enhance employee motivation and commitment to ethical standards. In 2022, several employees from the Ministry of Education expressed frustration after being overlooked for promotions despite meeting performance benchmarks, while others with political connections advanced more quickly. This sense of unfairness



demotivates employees and undermines their commitment to ethical work practices.

iv. **Inadequate Monitoring and Supervision:**

The absence of rigorous monitoring mechanisms to track employee performance and adherence to ethical standards creates room for inefficiency. Olaleye and Adebayo (2022) assert that effective supervision is essential for upholding work ethics and promoting accountability. In some departments, supervisors fail to enforce punctuality or task completion, leading to a culture of laxity. A notable instance occurred in the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, where lax supervision resulted in widespread absenteeism among staff, negatively impacting service delivery. Without consistent oversight, employees are less motivated to uphold high standards of work ethics.

v. **Poor Remuneration and Delayed Salaries:**

Financial constraints significantly hinder employee performance and adherence to ethical practices. Delayed payment of salaries and inadequate remuneration contribute to a lack of motivation and an increased likelihood of unethical behaviors such as bribery or corruption. Akpan and Etuk (2023) note that financial dissatisfaction often drives unethical practices, as employees seek alternative means to supplement their income. For instance, in 2022, widespread delays in salary payments sparked protests among junior civil servants, who argued that their financial struggles made it challenging to focus on ethical practices or achieve optimal performance. Reports of civil servants demanding unofficial "facilitation fees" to expedite processes highlight the consequences of financial dissatisfaction.

vi. **Political Interference and Nepotism:**

Political involvement in administrative processes often undermines meritocracy in the civil service. Decisions regarding recruitment, placement, and resource allocation are frequently influenced by political interests rather than objective assessments. Musa and Ahmed (2021) identify political interference and nepotism as significant obstacles to effective civil service performance. In 2023, the appointment of unqualified individuals to critical roles based on political patronage in the Ministry of Environment demoralized competent employees and weakened overall organizational performance. Such practices erode trust and discourage ethical behavior among employees.

Addressing these challenges requires strategic interventions to create a supportive environment for work ethics and performance. Enhancing transparency in disciplinary actions, equitably distributing training opportunities,

ensuring fairness in rewards and promotions, improving salary payments, and reducing political interference are critical steps. Implementing these measures will strengthen ethical behavior and optimize employee performance in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.

Theoretical Framework

The study employed Equity Theory as its (theoretical) framework. J. Stacy Adams first introduced this theory in 1963, highlighting the significance of perceived fairness in shaping employee motivation, conduct and performance. The theory posits that employees assess their input-output ratios—efforts, skills and time invested (inputs) compared to rewards, recognition and benefits received (outputs)—against those of their colleagues within the organization. If the comparison is viewed as equitable, it promotes motivation and adherence to ethical standards. However, perceived inequities can lead to diminished morale, unethical behavior, or withdrawal from responsibilities. Equity Theory offers a crucial framework for comprehending the relationship between fairness and work ethics within the civil service. When employees perceive fairness in organizational policies—such as equal opportunities for promotions, transparent reward systems and unbiased disciplinary measures—they are more likely to uphold ethical behavior and strive for elevated performance levels. Although the theory presents a compelling argument, its application can vary across different organizational contexts, this variability underscores the complexity of human behavior in the workplace.

This study is in alignment with Equity Theory; the findings indicate that both transparency and integrity are essential for performance, evidenced by a mean score of 3.14 in Table 5. Employees who perceive fairness (and equitable treatment) within ethical governance mechanisms—such as the consistent application of disciplinary policies, as shown in Table 6—are, however, more motivated to uphold ethical standards and enhance their productivity. Similarly, the study found that regular training on ethical codes, which received a mean score of 3.09, fosters a shared understanding of organizational expectations. This, in turn, reinforces the sense of fairness and equity among employees. For instance, public servants in Nigeria who perceive transparency in salary structures and equitable opportunities for career advancement are less likely to engage in unethical practices like absenteeism, favoritism, or corruption. Although this may seem counterintuitive, it is evident that



they are more inclined to provide quality public services, as highlighted by Abdullah & Halim (2016).

Equity Theory emphasizes the importance of perceived fairness in influencing employees' ethical behaviors and performance. By promoting transparency, consistency and inclusiveness within organizational practices, the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service can enhance employee motivation. This, in turn, strengthens adherence to ethical standards and improves overall service delivery. The findings of the study confirm (the) relevance of Equity Theory, as they demonstrate that fairness in ethical governance positively affects employee performance. However, gaps in equity can hinder organizational objectives. Therefore, integrating equity-centered policies and practices is essential for sustainable improvements in public service efficiency.

II. Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design, which allows for an in-depth exploration of the relationship between work ethics and employee performance in the public sector. The descriptive design is appropriate because it facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation without manipulating the study environment. The population of this study is 2,878 respondents, representing personnel across five selected ministries in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. The selected ministries include the Ministry of Health (824 personnel), Ministry of Works (467 personnel), Ministry of Education (423 personnel), Ministry of Finance (187 personnel), and Ministry of Agriculture (977 personnel). These ministries were chosen due to their pivotal roles in the civil service structure and their relevance to the study objectives.

Table 1: Distribution of Population Across Selected Ministries

S/N	Selected Ministries	Population of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Ministry of Health	824	28.63%
2	Ministry of Works	467	16.23%
3	Ministry of Education	423	14.70%
4	Ministry of Finance	187	6.50%
5	Ministry of Agriculture	977	33.95%
	Total	2878	100%

Source: Akwa Ibom State Civil Service Verification Schedule, (2024)

The sample size for the study was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, which is widely recognized in social science research for calculating sample sizes. For a population of 2,878, the required sample size is approximately 350 respondents at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. To ensure

proportional representation of respondents across the selected ministries, proportionate stratified random sampling was employed. The sample size for each ministry was calculated based on its percentage contribution to the total population. The breakdown is as follows:

Table 2: Sample Size Distribution

S/N	Selected Ministries	Population of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Sample Size
1	Ministry of Health	824	28.63%	100
2	Ministry of Works	467	16.23%	57
3	Ministry of Education	423	14.70%	51
4	Ministry of Finance	187	6.50%	23
5	Ministry of Agriculture	977	33.95%	119
	Total	2878	100%	350

The proportionate stratified sampling technique ensures that each ministry is adequately represented in the sample, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the study findings. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire tailored to gather information on work ethics and employee performance. The questionnaire consisted of both

closed-ended and open-ended questions to allow for quantitative and qualitative insights. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, while inferential statistics, including the Chi-square test, was employed to test the study hypotheses and examine relationships between variables.



Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents and analyzes the data collected through the primary instrument of data

collection, the questionnaire. A total of 350 completed questionnaires were successfully retrieved from the staff of five selected ministries in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.

Table 3: Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (N= 350)	Percentage %
Sex:		
Male	175	50%
Female	175	50%
	350	100%
Age:		
18-45	175	50%
45-55	88	25.14%
55-65	70	20.%
65-75 and Above	17	4.86%
	350	100%
Educational Qualification:		
FSLC	35	10%
ND	70	20%
B.Sc	210	60%
Others	35	10%
	350	100%
Staff Categories		
Senior Staff	120	34.3%
Junior Staff	180	51.4%
Management/Executive Staff	50	14%
	350	100%

Source: Field Survey Data, (2024)

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study illustrate the distribution of participants by sex, age and educational qualification. The table reveals a balanced distribution between male and female respondents, each group comprising 50% of the sample size (175 respondents each). This parity in gender representation ensures that the study captures diverse perspectives; however, it also helps to avoid biases associated with gender dominance, thus making the findings more generalizable across the public sector workforce. The age distribution highlights that approximately half of the respondents (50%, n=175) fall within the 18-45 age bracket, indicating a youthful and potentially more active workforce in the selected ministries. Respondents aged 45-55 make up 25.14% (n=88), while those aged 55-65 constitute 20% (n=70). A smaller proportion, 4.86% (n=17), belongs to the 65-75 and above category, which reflects the presence of older employees, possibly in supervisory or advisory roles. Although this spread suggests that the ministries employ a diverse age

range, it could influence work ethics and performance differently because of generational factors.

The educational qualifications of the respondents indicate that a significant majority possess a Bachelor's degree (60%, n=210), highlighting the importance placed on higher education in the civil service. Those holding National Diplomas (ND) comprise 20% (n=70), whereas a mere 10% (n=35) only have First School Leaving Certificates (FSLC). Furthermore, an additional 10% (n=35) are categorized as "Others," which may encompass postgraduate qualifications or various professional certifications. This data implies that the ministries prioritize a highly educated workforce, which could, however, lead to improved adherence to work ethics and enhanced employee performance.

The distribution of personnel within Akwa Ibom State Civil Service indicates a hierarchical framework encompassing three distinct categories of staff. Senior staff, accounting for 34.3% of the overall workforce, represents a significant middle



tier of employees who likely play crucial roles in operational management and technical expertise. With 120 individuals in this category, they form a substantial segment of the organizational structure; however, they also serve to bridge the gap between junior staff and management. Junior staff constitutes the largest proportion of the workforce, at 51.4%, which translates to 180 employees. Management

and executive staff, on the other hand, represent the smallest category, comprising only 14.3% of the total workforce, with just 50 individuals. This structure illustrates the complex interplay of roles within the organization, although it raises questions about resource allocation and personnel development.

Table 4: Ethical Behaviours and Employees' Performance

S/N		SA	A	SD	D	MEAN	STD. DEV
	Ethical conduct significantly improves overall job performance	140 (40%)	150 (42.9%)	40 (11.4%)	20 (5.7%)	3.26	0.82
	Employees with high ethical standards receive better evaluations	120 (34.3%)	160 (45.7%)	50 (14.3%)	20 (5.7%)	3.09	0.79
	Regular training and workshops for Akwa Ibom State civil servants on ethical code of conducts guarantees high performance in the state service	110 (31.4%)	180 (51.4%)	40 (11.4%)	20 (5.7%)	3.09	0.75
	Disciplinary policies deter unethical behaviors	100 (28.6%)	170 (48.6%)	50(14.3%)	30 (8.6%)	2.97	0.85
	Transparency and integrity are crucial for performance	130 (37.1%)	160 (45.7%)	40 (11.4%)	20 (5.7%)	3.14	0.79

The data indicates a notably favorable perception of the impact of ethical behaviors on employee performance within the civil service. The initial assertion, "Ethical conduct significantly improves overall job performance," exhibits the highest level of consensus, as 40% of participants strongly agree, while 42.9% affirmatively agree. This considerable 83% positive response (with a mean of 3.26) suggests a pervasive belief that ethical conduct is essential for attaining high-quality work outcomes in the civil service. Evaluation practices for employees reflect a similarly affirmative trend; 34.3% strongly agree and 45.7% agree that elevated ethical standards are associated with superior performance evaluations. The mean score of 3.09 implies that the civil service acknowledges and prioritizes ethical behavior as a vital element of professional assessment. This correlation between ethical conduct and performance recognition could, however, foster a robust motivational framework for upholding high ethical standards, because it aligns organizational values with employee expectations.

Training has emerged as a crucial strategy for enhancing performance; indeed, 31.4% of participants strongly agree, while 51.4% also agree,

that regular workshops and training focused on ethical codes of conduct ensure high performance. The high mean score of 3.09, coupled with a low standard deviation of 0.75, indicates a consistent belief (among respondents) in the transformative potential of ethical education. This finding suggests that the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service regards continuous learning and ethical training as indispensable mechanisms for improving organizational performance. However, disciplinary policies garnered slightly more moderate support, with 28.6% strongly agreeing and 48.6% agreeing that such policies effectively deter unethical behaviors. The lowest mean score of 2.97 implies that, although respondents acknowledge the value of disciplinary mechanisms, there may be opportunities for enhancement in policy implementation or overall effectiveness. Furthermore, the slightly higher standard deviation of 0.85 indicates a wider range of opinions regarding the impact of disciplinary measures.

Transparency and integrity are widely regarded as essential for optimal performance; with 37.1% of respondents expressing strong agreement and 45.7% agreeing overall. The mean score of 3.14



(reflecting a significant organizational commitment) to open and honest workplace practices is noteworthy. This perception—however—suggests that employees perceive clear, ethical communication and principled behavior as fundamental for attaining high performance standards within the civil service. The consistently high mean scores, which range from 2.97 to 3.26,

combined with relatively low standard deviations (0.75 to 0.85), indicate a remarkable consensus across various dimensions of ethical behavior and performance. Although this suggests a mature organizational culture, it also highlights the value placed on ethics as a vital element of professional excellence in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.

Table 5: Existing disciplinary policy and unethical behaviors in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

S/N		SA	A	SD	D	MEAN	STD. DEV
1	Disciplinary policies effectively discourage unethical conduct	130 (37.1%)	160 (45.7%)	40 (11.4%)	20 (5.7%)	3.14	0.79
2	Disciplinary measures are consistently applied across all levels	110 (31.4%)	150 (42.9%)	60 (17.1%)	30 (8.6%)	2.97	0.85
3	Employees understand consequences of ethical violations	120 (34.3%)	170 (48.6%)	40 (11.4%)	20 (5.7%)	3.11	0.77
4	Current policy strongly deters workplace misconduct	100 (28.6%)	180 (51.4%)	50 (14.3%)	20 (5.7%)	3.03	0.75
5	Management commits to addressing unethical behaviors	140 (40%)	160 (45.7%)	30 (8.6%)	20 (5.7%)	3.20	0.76

The examination of disciplinary policies uncovers a predominantly favorable perception among civil service employees; there exists a solid consensus regarding the efficacy of ethical governance. The initial assertion about the capacity of disciplinary policies to deter unethical behavior exhibits substantial backing, as evidenced by 37.1% who strongly agree and 45.7% who simply agree. This cumulative 82.8% positive feedback, manifested in a mean score of 3.14, signifies considerable confidence in the deterrent capabilities of the current disciplinary frameworks. However, the uniformity of policy application throughout organizational tiers presents slightly more intricate viewpoints. Although 31.4% strongly endorse and 42.9% agree that disciplinary actions are consistently enforced, the greater proportion of those who strongly disagree (17.1%) implies possible discrepancies in policy application. The diminished mean score of 2.97, combined with a higher standard deviation of 0.85, suggests underlying apprehensions regarding fair treatment and the potential variability in disciplinary tactics across varying levels of hierarchy.

Employees exhibit a discernible comprehension of the repercussions associated with

ethical violations; specifically, 34.3% strongly agree, while 48.6% affirm their awareness of potential consequences. The mean score of 3.11, coupled with a relatively modest standard deviation of 0.77, suggests an effectively communicated ethical framework within the civil service. The current policy's capacity to dissuade workplace misconduct garners moderate support: 28.6% strongly agree and 51.4% concur. However, the slightly diminished mean score of 3.03 indicates that, although the disciplinary framework is viewed as advantageous, there exists potential for enhancement and fortification of its current mechanisms. Because the low standard deviation of 0.75 reflects a consistent viewpoint among respondents, it underscores their shared beliefs regarding the policy's deterrent efficacy.

The dedication of management to confronting unethical behaviors stands out as the most favorably viewed element; 40% strongly agree, while 45.7% express agreement. The highest mean score (3.20) coupled with a low standard deviation (0.76) indicates a robust organizational culture that emphasizes ethical accountability. This implies that leadership is vital in reinforcing ethical standards and upholding institutional integrity. The



consistently elevated mean scores—ranging from 2.97 to 3.20—and relatively modest standard deviations (0.75 to 0.85) reveal an impressive congruence in viewpoints concerning disciplinary policies. However, despite the overall positive perception, the subtle differences in responses indicate potential areas for ongoing enhancement in policy implementation, consistency and communication.

III. Discussion of Findings

The analysis presented in Table 5 emphasizes the significance of ethical behavior in enhancing the performance of employees within the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. Respondents overwhelmingly concurred that ethical conduct substantially improves job performance; in fact, 83% expressed positive sentiments regarding this issue (40% strongly agreeing and 42.9% simply agreeing). The impressive mean score of 3.26, coupled with a low standard deviation of 0.82, illustrates a widespread acknowledgment of the pivotal role that ethical conduct plays in promoting professionalism and productivity. This result suggests, because of the data, that adherence to ethical standards serves as a cornerstone for achieving organizational goals and ensuring quality service delivery. However, there is also strong consensus that employees with elevated ethical standards receive superior evaluations, as indicated by 34.3% strongly agreeing and 45.7% agreeing (mean = 3.09). This correlation between ethical behavior and performance appraisals highlights the recognition of integrity as a vital factor in employee assessments. It also functions as a motivational tool for workers to uphold ethical practices, although some may question the extent of its impact.

The function of training and workshops in fostering ethical behavior emerged as another notable discovery. A substantial number of respondents (31.4% strongly agreeing; 51.4% agreeing—mean = 3.09) contended that consistent training on ethical codes of conduct results in elevated performance levels. The minimal standard deviation (0.75) indicates a uniform belief in the transformative capacity of ethical education. This highlights the necessity for the civil service to institutionalize ongoing learning programs that bolster ethical practices and enhance employee competence. However, the challenge remains in effectively implementing these programs in a way that engages all participants.

Although disciplinary policies were perceived as beneficial for deterring unethical behaviors, the level of agreement was somewhat

lower when compared to other facets, yielding a mean score of 2.97 and a notably high standard deviation (0.85). This suggests mixed perceptions, which may highlight concerns regarding the effectiveness or consistent application of these disciplinary measures. However, respondents did recognize the importance of such policies in upholding workplace decorum. Transparency and integrity were considered essential for performance, with 82.8% of respondents affirmatively endorsing this assertion (mean = 3.14). This strong consensus around the theme emphasizes the belief that open communication, honesty and principled behavior are fundamental to achieving organizational excellence, but there remains an underlying uncertainty about the implementation of these policies.

Table 6 demonstrates that there are generally favorable perceptions regarding the disciplinary policies currently implemented. The majority of respondents concur that these mechanisms (mean = 3.14) effectively deter unethical behavior. The data illustrates a strong deterrent framework; however, it also uncovers potential inconsistencies, as indicated by the varied responses concerning the uniform application of disciplinary measures (mean = 2.97, standard deviation = 0.85). This discrepancy points to areas needing improvement in order to ensure equity and impartiality in the enforcement of policies throughout all levels of the civil service. Respondents exhibited a solid understanding of the repercussions associated with ethical violations, achieving a mean score of 3.11, which signifies effective communication of the ethical framework within the organization. Nevertheless, the slightly diminished endorsement of the policy's deterrent capabilities (mean = 3.03) suggests a necessity for regular reviews and enhancements of the disciplinary framework, so as to preserve its relevance and effectiveness. Management's dedication to combating unethical behavior emerged as the most highly rated aspect (mean = 3.20), reflecting a commendable commitment to fostering a culture of accountability.

The elevated degree of consensus in this domain indicates the significance of top-down enforcement regarding ethical standards (and) the leadership's influence in establishing the tone for organizational conduct. The results illustrate a robust alignment between ethical behaviors, disciplinary policies and employee performance within the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. However, while the general perception is favorable, aspects such as policy consistency and deterrent



effectiveness present opportunities for enhancement. This underscores the necessity of cultivating an ethical organizational culture through ongoing training, transparent leadership and equitable policy implementation, because these factors are crucial for maintaining high performance and professional integrity.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored the relationship between ethical behaviors and employee performance in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, focusing on how ethical practices influence job performance, workplace discipline, and organizational outcomes. The findings revealed a strong positive perception of the role of ethical conduct in enhancing employee performance. Ethical behaviors, including transparency, integrity, and adherence to disciplinary policies, were identified as critical factors contributing to improved performance, motivation, and accountability among civil servants. Furthermore, the study highlighted the significance of regular training and workshops on ethical codes of conduct as a strategy for fostering a culture of excellence and professionalism. While the existing disciplinary policies were largely effective in discouraging unethical behaviors, there is room for improvement in the consistency of policy implementation and communication of ethical standards across all levels of the civil service.

The study concludes that embedding a robust ethical framework, coupled with strong leadership commitment and effective policy enforcement, is essential for sustaining high performance and fostering institutional integrity in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. Addressing areas of inconsistency and strengthening training initiatives will further enhance the alignment of ethical practices with organizational goals, ultimately driving better service delivery and governance.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve ethical behavior and enhance employee performance in the Akwa Ibom State Civil Service:

- i. Regular workshops and training sessions on ethical codes of conduct should be institutionalized to enhance employees' understanding and application of ethical practices in their roles. These programs should emphasize the importance of integrity, transparency, and accountability in achieving organizational goals.
- ii. The civil service should prioritize the uniform application of disciplinary measures across

all levels to address concerns about inconsistencies. Clear guidelines and transparent procedures should be established to ensure that all employees are held accountable, regardless of their position.

- iii. Leadership should actively model and promote ethical behaviors by demonstrating integrity and fostering open communication. This can be achieved through regular monitoring, reporting mechanisms, and recognition of employees who uphold high ethical standards.
- iv. The civil service should improve the dissemination of information on ethical policies and their consequences. This will ensure that employees are well-informed about expected behaviors and the implications of non-compliance.
- v. Ethical behavior should be integrated into employee performance evaluations to encourage adherence to ethical standards. Employees who demonstrate high ethical conduct should be rewarded as a motivation for others to follow suit.

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