

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK ETHICS AND TEACHERS PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Helen Chinelo Onuorah (PhD)

Department of Educational Management and Policy
Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka,
Anambra State, Nigeria.

Email Address: hc.onuorah@unizik.edu.ng

&

Dr Uyanwa Chinyelu Uzoamaka,

Department of Educational Management and Policy,
Faculty of Education, Tansian University-Umunya,
Anambra State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised all the 5,949 teachers in the 268 public secondary schools in the six Education Zones in Anambra State. To ensure a representative selection of teachers for the study, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed to reduce the population of 5,949 teachers across 268 public secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State to a sample size of 540 teachers. Two structured questionnaires developed by the researcher were used to collect data for the study. The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by subjecting the instrument for scrutiny by three experts. These experts are lecturers from the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. To determine the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was carried out on 20 teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis on the data collected yielded reliability coefficients of 0.84 for QTWE and 0.85 for QTJP. Data for the study were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The finding of the study revealed that there is a high positive relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Furthermore, the finding of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings of the study the researcher recommended among others that Principals of public secondary schools should organise periodic

professional development programmes focusing on ethical standards, commitment and professionalism.

Keywords: Teacher, Work Ethics, Job Performance, Public, Secondary Schools

Introduction

Nigeria's education system is structured into three main sectors: basic education, post-basic/senior secondary education and tertiary education. Basic education comprises nine years of compulsory schooling, which is divided into six years of elementary education and three years of junior secondary education. Post-basic education consists of three years of senior secondary education, while tertiary education encompasses universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, offering undergraduate, graduate and vocational training opportunities (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). Secondary education in Nigeria is divided into two stages: junior secondary, which lasts for three years and senior secondary, which also spans three years. The junior secondary phase provides students with foundational knowledge in both pre-vocational and academic subjects, while the senior secondary phase expands the curriculum to incorporate vocational and academic disciplines. The primary objective of secondary education is to prepare students for higher education and equip them with essential skills for meaningful participation in society (Ige, 2020). The attainment of secondary education goals in Nigeria is largely dependent on teachers, who serve as the backbone of the educational system.

Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth execution of academic activities. Teachers contribute to both their personal growth and the overall performance of the school by demonstrating positive behaviours within and beyond the school environment. The success of a school largely depends on teachers' ability to effectively manage their responsibilities and adhere to school schedules (Onuorah et al., 2022). At the secondary school level, Onuorah and Agogbua (2023) opined that achieving teaching and learning objectives primarily rests on teachers. Thus, teachers' job performance is integral to the achievement of school goals.

Job performance refers to the act of successfully carrying out assigned tasks. Within the school system, a teacher's job performance can be defined as the range of responsibilities undertaken by educators to achieve both immediate classroom objectives and the broader educational goals (Omenyi & Emengini, 2020). These responsibilities include effectively covering the prescribed scheme of work, administering and grading continuous assessments consistently, managing difficult students without disrupting the learning process and preparing well-structured lesson plans, among other essential duties (Aigboje et al., 2023). Teachers' job performance in the context of this study refers to the extent to which educators effectively carry out their

instructional, administrative and professional responsibilities in a school setting (Onyekwelu, 2024). It encompasses various aspects, including lesson planning, classroom management, student assessment and participation in extracurricular activities. Sadly, public secondary schools in Nigeria, particularly in Anambra State, face significant challenges related to teachers' job performance. There are evident shortcomings in the conduct of teachers responsible for implementing the secondary education curriculum in the state. Some teachers reportedly fail to attend school without justifiable reasons, arrive late and engage in various forms of professional misconduct. Similarly, Dunu (2023) observed that certain teachers frequently arrive late, are often absent from school and display a negative attitude towards teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Supporting this perspective, Ebiem and Ikediugwu (2023) noted that some teachers exhibit a lack of dedication to their responsibilities, demonstrating poor work ethics.

Work ethics manifest in diligence, dedication and discipline in carrying out assigned tasks. Organisational leaders often stress the importance of strong work ethics to enhance employees' efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, work ethics function as a cultural norm that attributes moral significance to conscientious job performance, based on the belief that work holds inherent value. Nwogbo and Ugwuoke (2022) defined work ethics as the accepted standards guiding employees' personal and social well-being, their attitudes towards work, self-discipline and commitment to assigned responsibilities. Ughamadu et al.

(2024) described work ethics as the behavioural norms that regulate individuals or groups within the workplace, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines that contribute to organisational productivity and success. Edo and Bulopakaye (2024) further characterised work ethics as a fundamental aspect of an organisation's responsibilities, encapsulating employees' dedication to core organisational values and principles. Work ethics provide a framework for decision-making within an organisation, incorporating legal and regulatory requirements, internal policies and procedural guidelines. Essential ethical principles such as integrity, honesty, respect and fairness are expected from employees and stakeholders in various areas, including service delivery, product quality, health, safety and operational efficiency. Furthermore certain factors like gender has been suggested to influence the relationship between work ethics and teachers performance

Gender plays a significant role in shaping work ethics and job performance among teachers, influenced by societal norms, cultural expectations and individual characteristics. Research indicates that female teachers often exhibit higher levels of dedication and ethical conduct in their professional responsibilities. Harðardóttir et al. (2019) found that women scored higher on the multidimensional work ethic profile and achieved better academic grades compared to men, suggesting a stronger work ethic among females. Conversely, male teachers may excel in areas requiring assertiveness and leadership. Rathod (2023) revealed that male employees exhibited significantly higher job performance and job

satisfaction compared to their female counterparts. However, it's important to note that these findings may not be universally applicable, as it has not been empirically proven to be true in Anambra State. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate the relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher's observations indicate that poor job performance among teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State is a growing concern. Some teachers arrive late to school, while others frequently absent themselves from work without valid reasons. In many instances, teachers fail to prepare lesson plans or adequately cover the required curriculum, leaving students ill-equipped for assessments and external examinations. Also, some teachers neglect their responsibility of marking students' assignments and tests, thereby denying learners valuable feedback essential for academic improvement. Beyond classroom-related duties, certain teachers exhibit a lack of commitment to school activities, such as staff meetings, extracurricular programmes and administrative responsibilities. Some are observed to display a passive attitude towards disciplinary measures, allowing cases of student misconduct to escalate. Furthermore, there are reports of teachers engaging in secondary employment during school hours, diverting their attention from their primary responsibility of educating students.

These lapses in job performance not only hinder students' academic progress but also contribute to a decline in the overall standard of education in public secondary schools in Anambra State. If such issues persist, the ability of these institutions to fulfill their role in human capital development may be severely compromised. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate the relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined the:

1. Relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

2. What is the relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Methodology

The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in South-East, Nigeria. The population of this study comprised all the 5,949 teachers in the 268 public secondary schools in the six Education Zones in Anambra State. To ensure a representative selection of teachers for the study, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed to reduce the population of 5,949 teachers across 268 public secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State to a sample size of 540 teachers. This approach allowed for a balanced distribution of respondents across the different zones. In the first stage, the total number of teachers in each education zone was considered to determine a proportional allocation of the sample. The Aguata Zone, which had 1,120 teachers, contributed 102 teachers to the

sample. The Awka Zone, with 950 teachers, had 86 teachers selected. The Nnewi Zone, which had 1,100 teachers, contributed 100 teachers to the sample. The Ogidi Zone, with 780 teachers, had 71 teachers selected. The Onitsha Zone, which had the highest number of teachers at 1,200, contributed 109 teachers to the sample. Finally, the Otuocha Zone, which had 799 teachers, had 72 teachers selected.

Two structured questionnaires developed by the researcher were used to collect data for the study. The first instrument was titled "Questionnaire on Teachers Work Ethics (QTWE)". It contains 18 items on teachers work ethics. The second instrument was titled "Questionnaire on Teachers Job Performance (QTJP)". It contains 19 items on teachers job performance. Both instruments were structured on 5-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by subjecting the instrument for scrutiny by three experts. These experts are lecturers from the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. To determine the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was carried out on 20 teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The application of Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis on the data collected yielded reliability coefficients of 0.84 for QTWE and 0.85 for QTJP. Out of 540 copies of the instruments administered to the respondents, 503 copies were completed and returned in good condition. The 503 copies of instrument returned amounted to 93% questionnaire return rate. The 37 copies of

the instrument not well completed or lost amounted to 7% questionnaire lose rate. The 503 copies of the instrument returned was considered adequate and used for the analysis of data.

Furthermore, data for the study were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The decision rule followed Price et al. (2017), interpreting correlation coefficients on a scale from very low (0.00–0.20) to very high (0.80 and above), with positive values indicating a direct relationship and negative values

showing an inverse relationship. Hypotheses were assessed based on p-values: if $p \leq 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship; if $p > 0.05$, it was retained, suggesting no significant correlation.

Results

Research Question One

What is the relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation between Work Ethics and Teachers Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	r	Remarks
Work Ethics	503	0.74	High positive relationship
Teachers Job Performance			

The result of the Pearson's correlation (r) presented in Table 1 shows that the relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State was 0.74. This value indicates a high positive relationship. This suggests that as teachers work ethics increases, their job performance increases at a high rate. Thus, there is a high positive relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between Work Ethics and Job Performance of Male and Female Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	r	Remarks
Male			
Work Ethics	161	0.72	High positive relationship
Teachers Job Performance			
Female			
Work Ethics	342	0.76	High positive relationship
Teachers Jon Performance			

Table 2 presents the result of the Pearson's correlation between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The Pearson's correlation (r) obtained for the male sample was 0.72, which indicates a high positive relationship. For females, the r was 0.76. This value shows a very high positive relationship between social work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. When compared to the value obtained for the male teachers, the relationship between the two variables was stronger among the female teachers. Thus, there is a high positive relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Test of Significance of the Relationship between Work Ethics and Teachers Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	R	p	Remark
Work Ethics	503	0.74	0.00	Significant
Teachers Job Performance				

The results in Table 3 show that there was a significant positive relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State, $r = 0.74$, p value is less than 0.05. Since the p -value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Test of Significance of the Relationship between Work Ethics and Job Performance of Male and Female Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	R	<i>p</i>	Remarks
Male				
Work Ethics	161	0.72	0.000	Significant
Teachers Job Performance				
Female				
Work Ethics	342	0.76	0.000	Significant
Teachers Jon Performance				

Data in Table 4, there was a significant positive relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State, $r = 0.72$, $p < 0.05$ (for males) and it was $r = 0.76$, $p < 0.05$ (for female). Since the p -values for both groups were less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there was a significant positive relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that there is a high positive relationship between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding suggests that teachers who uphold strong work ethics are more likely to

demonstrate higher levels of commitment, responsibility and professionalism in their roles. A high positive relationship between work ethics and job performance implies that when teachers adhere to ethical standards and maintain a strong sense of duty, they are more likely to prepare adequately for lessons, engage students

effectively, complete assigned tasks on time and contribute to a positive learning environment. Conversely, a lack of work ethics may result in absenteeism, lateness, lack of lesson preparation, ineffective classroom management and overall poor job performance, which can negatively impact students' learning outcomes. This finding is in agreement with Edo and Bulopakaye (2024) who reported that a strong work ethic fosters organisational productivity and ensures that employees perform their responsibilities with dedication and accountability. Nwogbo and Ugwuoke (2022) revealed that teachers with high ethical standards are more likely to be committed to their duties, maintain positive relationships with students and colleagues and contribute meaningfully to the achievement of educational goals. Furthermore, findings of the study revealed that a significant relationship exists between work ethics and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The findings suggests that improving work ethics among teachers can lead to improved classroom instruction, better student outcomes and enhanced overall school performance, ultimately contributing to the development of a well-rounded and morally upright workforce for society.

The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between work ethics and job performance of male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding of the study further revealed that female teachers exhibited a higher relationship between work ethics and job performance compared to their male counterparts. This suggests that female

teachers may be more diligent, committed and disciplined in their professional responsibilities. Supporting this finding, Harðardóttir et al. (2019) observed that women scored higher on the multidimensional work ethic profile and achieved better academic grades compared to men, which suggests that females generally demonstrate a stronger work ethic. This higher work ethic among female teachers may be attributed to their tendency to be more detail-oriented, responsible and conscientious in executing their duties. Their commitment to ethical standards, punctuality and consistency in task completion may explain their higher job performance levels. Conversely, Rathod (2023) found that male employees displayed significantly higher job performance and job satisfaction compared to their female counterparts, suggesting that while men may not always score as high as women in work ethic, they may compensate through other attributes such as leadership skills, problem-solving abilities and resilience in challenging situations. The test of hypothesis revealed a significant positive relationship between work ethics and job performance among male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. These findings highlight the importance of promoting a balanced work culture that supports both male and female teachers in performing their duties.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, researcher concludes that work ethics have a significant positive relationship with teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state. A high

positive relationship was observed between work ethics and job performance among both male and female teachers, with female teachers demonstrating a stronger connection between the two variables. This suggests that teachers who adhere to ethical standards, display commitment and maintain professionalism tend to perform better in their roles. It is therefore imperative that measures are taken to improve teachers' work ethics in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Principals of public secondary schools should organise periodic professional development

programmes focusing on ethical standards, commitment and professionalism. These development programmes will reinforce the importance of work ethics in improving teachers' job performance.

2. Since female teachers demonstrated a higher relationship between work ethics and job performance, policies should be developed to support both male and female teachers in leveraging their strengths. Providing mentorship programmes and leadership training can help improve male teachers' engagement while reinforcing female teachers' ethical work habits.

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