

Work Ethics and Productivity of University Workers in South West, Nigeria

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Abstract. There have been a lot of complaints by students, parents, visitors and academic staff about the productivity of universities workers is generally low with debilitating consequences on their service delivery. There is therefore the need to investigate the predictive process of work ethics as determinant of productivity of staff of universities in South-West, Nigeria.

This study adopted the descriptive survey research method. The population for the study comprised all staff of universities in South-West, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 1558 non-teaching staff (734 senior and 824 junior). This was selected through the multi-stage proportional stratified random sampling technique for the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile ($r = 0.86$). Two null hypotheses were tested in the study while two research instruments were used for data collection. Analysis of data was done using Multiple Regression Analysis. Results were tested for significance at 0.05 levels.

Findings revealed that work ethics jointly and individually predicted productivity ($F_{3,1501}=355.402$; $p<.05$). Work ethics ($Beta=-0.016$; $t=-.573$; $p>.05$) was not a potent predictor of organizational productivity. Work ethic ($Beta=-0.271$; $t=10.341$; $p<0.05$) as independent variable were however not the most potent predictors of the productivity. It was also observed that, ownership type and staff cadre had no significant moderating influence on the joint and individual contributions of work ethics to the prediction of organizational productivity of staff of the universities in South-West, Nigeria. Therefore, the conclusion was reached and it was recommended that universities should

always strive to establish strong work ethics for their staff. More so, public and private universities should design and circulate code of conduct as well work ethics policy to cover senior and junior staff so as to enhance productivity among their staff.

Keywords: Work Ethics, University senior/junior staff and Productivity

1. Introduction

In today's global economy, organisations incorporate programmes like total quality management, employee involvement, job enrichment, skill-based pay, gain sharing, welfare packages, and training facilities to gain a competitive edge. The objective of such intervention is to increase the firms' productivity by controlling employees' behaviour on the job and active contribution towards achieving organisational objectives, and thus, building strong productivity (Sumita: 2004). Casual observations show that students are always complained about the uncooperative attitudes of non-teaching staff of universities in South-West, Nigeria. Students often queue for several hours at the doors of Faculty Officers and Administrative Officers thus wasting man-hour that could have been used for learning. Further observations show that official records are not well kept, and minutes are often poorly written. Staff members come late to work while some of them leave their office desks to hawk materials around the campus. Others do not show up in their offices, and those who do neglect students when they request for their administrative

support. Some of them are not student- friendly. Upon this background, their productivity is jeopardized. The focus of this research is on staff of universities. However, this is not to say that academic staff are faring better.

In organisations, management of people at work is an integral part of the management process which should be focused upon. Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007) posited that an average worker is the source of quality and productivity gain which does not hinge on capital investment but on employees who are a fundamental source of improvement. Thus work ethics carries a chunk of the percentage when productivity is discussed.

An organisation is considered effective based on the degree to which it achieves its goals. The achievement of organisational goals is through engendering the spirit of cooperation and sense of commitment and satisfaction among employees. In order to get employees committed and productive in their jobs, there is need for a friendly work environment that would take care of the needs of the employees in terms of work ethics, the issue that work ethics is demonstrated by the worker to positively influence productive in order to achieve the goal of the organisation. The provision of a friendly work environment would go a long way in influencing employees' behaviour and motivating them to be active in order to achieve the desired goals of their organisations.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Concept of Productivity

The belief that individual employee's performance has implications for organisational productivity has been prevalent among researchers, academics and practitioners. The interest in this area has recently been intensified. However, Wright and McMahan (2002) have argued that, collectively, employees in an organisation can also provide a unique source of competitive advantage that is difficult for competitors to replicate.

In all organisations, emphasis is being placed on productivity and this explains the great attention

paid to it and the concern always expressed by various administrators about improving productivity. The chief executive of organisations and all those in authority continue to buoy up workers to put in their best so as to increase productivity. Consequently, managers are motivating their workers and this will translate the organisational plan into practical reality. The main focus of management is what to do to enhance optimal efficiency thereby increasing productivity. Output can be increased by maximal combination of resources; both human and material resources can be combined maximally by effectively performing and managing functions that motivate workers. The sole aim of any organisation is to attain optimal efficiency; hence, the Chief executive and supervisors of organisations strive towards the attainment of optimal efficiency.

Garret and Poole (2005) and further re-echoed by Ojeniyi (2015) described productivity as a volume measure of output to a volume measure of input. They further said that measuring productivity in schools requires a measure of both efficiency and effectiveness. In the educational system, productivity refers to the ratio between the total educational outputs and the resource input utilised in the production process. Productivity must be applied to all facets of the organisation including services, and information technology is giving new insights into productivity concepts and measurements. The effectiveness of an organisation (schools for example) can be determined by the extent to which their goals are achieved. Productivity can be viewed in terms of how the schools meet their objectives or the extent to which their objectives are achieved.

Aboyade (1980) explained that productivity is the hallmark of development and economic prosperity while low productivity is the bane of underdeveloped nations. Many organisational variables and practices could influence productivity. These may include effective leadership, effective motivational strategies, effective delegation, effective conflict management strategies, effective teaming etc. Productivity is the key factor in the development of a nation, and the welfare of its people. It is

also the parameter for measuring organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Productivity is the relationship between the amount of one or more inputs and the amount of outputs from a clearly identified process. The most common measure is labour productivity, which is the amount of labour input (such as labour hours or employees) per physical unit of measured outputs. Another measure is materials productivity, in which the amount of output is measured against the amount of physical material input (Osterman, 2010). Yet, another measure of productivity is termed “total productivity”.

There have been complaints by students, parents, visitors and academic staff about the level of productivity of non-teaching staff of Universities. For instance, official records are not well kept, minutes are often poorly written, some of non-teaching staff leave their office desks to hawk materials around the campus. Others do not come to their offices. For those who do, when students request for their administrative support, they tend to neglect them, and some of them are not student-friendly. Upon this background, their organisational productivity is jeopardised.

One of the core objectives of management is to increase staff efficiency by getting maximum productivity at the minimum cost. Productivity is a key issue in organisational management and administration. It is one of the parameters used in measuring the growth of an organisation. Organisational productivity is therefore, a function of staff productivity, which in turn is a function of staff commitment to the growth of the organisation. Different researchers have laid emphasis on different factors as correlate of productivity.

According to Pogson (2002), the provision of adequate welfare package and comfortable work environment with commendable work ethics are major organisational factors that would enhance staff commitment to organisational productivity. Productivity in an organisation can be, in principle, influenced by a wide range of internal and external variables which may be categorised as general factors; organisational and technical factors; and human factors.

In line with the assertion of Taiwo (2010), human factors were adjudged to comprise social and psychological conditions of work, physical fatigue, wage incentives, trade union and labour management relations, among others. The human factors take into consideration the fact that the work environment must be safe and healthy, with no hazards and undue risks; that the opportunity to use talents effectively to acquire new skills and knowledge for advancement must be present; that employees at all levels have occasions to develop their capabilities through problem solving and planning. Also, the social climate of the organisation is free from prejudice and rigid classifications, and job does not take excess time and energy from other aspects of human life.

Ethics is the philosophical study of the moral value of human conduct and of the roles and principles that ought to govern it moral philosophy. Although, the terms ethics and morality may sometimes be used interchangeably, philosophical ethicists often distinguish them using ethics to refer to theories and conceptual studies relating to good and evil, and right and wrong, and using morality and its related terms to refer to actual, real-world beliefs and practices concerning proper conduct. In general usage, ethics is used to describe standards of behaviour between individuals, while the term moral or immoral can describe any behaviour. Work ethics pertain to a person's attitudes, feelings and beliefs about work. The state of a person's work ethics determines how that person relates to occupational responsibilities and the degree of his or her positive and productive approach to work.

Furthermore, work ethics and have also been identified as major concept that apply to productivity and determine the level of productivity in an organisation. Ford (2010) emphasised that the application of work ethics and welfare package concepts can be influenced by several variables such as age, culture, emotions, personality traits, desires, and individual differences among other factors.

The concept of work ethics was first defined in 1904 by a German sociologist, Max Weber who argued that the protestant characterisation of work values supported the spirit of capitalism by emphasising the importance of continuance, and hard work and by providing moral justification for the accumulation of wealth. In his work on work ethics, Pogason (2002) sought to explain the fact that people pursue wealth and material gain (the achievement of profit) for its own sake not because of necessity.

The influence of work ethics on productivity cannot be over emphasised as it determines the degree to which individual staff places organisational activities and work at or near the centre of their lives (Mudrack, 1997). Work ethics can be seen as an attitudinal construct that reflects deeply-held values regarding the fundamental place of work in one's life. Accordingly, people who possess these values will have a strong work ethics (Pogason, 2002). Some of the values connected to the concept of work ethics include hard work, autonomy, fairness, wise and efficient use of time, delay of gratification and the intrinsic value of work.

Miller, Woehr and Huchpeth (2002) further described work ethics as a constellation of attitudes and beliefs pertaining to work behaviour just as they emphasised the work ethics variable as a motivational construct reflecting in behaviour. Work ethics vary from individual to individual and has great implication on the way individuals/employees behave in a work environment or an organisational set-up. Several studies, one of which is by Redmond (2010) indicated a link between work ethics and work-related outcomes productivity. While Cortezee (2005) indicated that those with strong work ethics may tend to have negative attitudes towards the poor and unemployed, Pogason (2002) suggested that those with strong work ethics work harder, persist longer, and produce more of repetitive, monotonous tasks than others and are highly competitive.

There is no doubt that both the public and the private Universities in Nigeria, no less than the other countries, are committed to staff development. However, studies on productivity

and productivity have not yet resolved the identified problems. Therefore, this study focuses on the extent to which work ethics jointly and individually predict productivity of staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria. It is the quest of this researcher to find out the level at which these interactions happen in Universities in the South-West, Nigeria.

3. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

HO1: There is no significant contribution of work ethics to the prediction of the productivity of non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

HO3 There is no significant moderating influence of ownership on the contribution of work ethics, to the prediction of the productivity of non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

4. Methodology

Research Design: This study adopted the descriptive survey of ex-post – facto type

Population: The population of the study comprised all the 28,506 senior and junior staff of universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample consisted of One thousand five hundred and fifty-eight (1558) non-teaching staff – seven hundred and thirty-four senior staff (734), and eight hundred and twenty-four junior staff (824). These were selected through the multi-stage proportional stratified random sampling technique. At the first stage, three States were randomly selected from the six States in the South-West. The three states that emerged were Oyo, Osun and Ogun States.

Instrumentation: For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of two (2) instruments for data collection. Respondents completed the work ethics questionnaire. Productivity instrument was completed by their boss. Productivity in this study was measured by a Productivity Scale (OCS) adopted from Allen and Meyer (1990) and reworked with inputs from the Annual Appraisal Form for Non-

teaching staff of Olabisi Onabanjo University. It has validity of 0.8542 and a reliability index of 0.7654. Work Ethics was measured using the adopted Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP) developed by Miller, Woeher, and Hudspeth (2001). It has a revalidated validity value of 0.7864 and a test-retest reliability measure of two weeks interval with PPMC which yielded a co-efficient of 0.8623.

Method of Data Collection

For the purpose of administering the instruments in order to collect data for this study, the services of two (2) research assistants were employed, the respondents were given twenty four (24) hours to complete the instrument. The researcher and the two research assistants went back to collect them the following day. After collecting the filled protocol by the respondents, the staff productivity forms were given to the bosses/heads of departments (HOD) of the concerned staff to assess their productivity. These were retrieved after two days.

Methods of Data Analysis: A general description of data was undertaken using mean, and standard deviation while the hypotheses were analysed with the Multiple Regression

Analysis. Results were tested for significance at 0.05 levels.

5. Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant contribution of work ethics to the prediction of the productivity of non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Responses to the Variables in Hypothesis One.

Descriptive Statistics of the responses

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Productivity	96.0892	35.47538	1502
Work ethics	237.0413	47.77639	1502

Table 1 revealed the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses to the variables measured in hypothesis one. For productivity, the mean score = 96.0892; standard deviation = 35.47538 while for each of the dependent variables the following mean scores and standard deviations were observed: work ethics mean = 237.0413; standard deviation = 47.77639; training policy mean = 52.7557; standard deviation = 10.88879; welfare package mean = 41.7663; standard deviation = 10.82090

Table 2: Model Summary of the Contribution of Work Ethics, to Productivity

Multiple R = 0.577 ^a R-Square = 0.333 Adjusted R-Square = 0.331 Standard Error = 29.00955						
Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	Sig.	Remarks
Regression	628364.4	1	209454.789	248.891	.000 ^a	Reject HO
Residual	1260648.0	1498	841.554			
Total	1889012.4	1501				

a. Predictors: (Constant) work ethics.

b. Dependent Variable: productivity

Table 2 reveals significant composite contribution of the independent variables; work ethics, to the prediction of the dependent variable, productivity ($F_{1,1501} = 248.891$; $p < .05$). This means that work ethics, predicted the productivity of the non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The analysis also yielded a co-efficient of multiple regression of 0.577^a and multiple R-square of 0.333 and adjusted R-square = 0.331 indicating

that all the independent variables (work ethics, training policy and welfare package) accounted for 33.1 % of the variance in the productivity of non-teaching staff of universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant moderating influence of ownership on the contribution of work ethics, in the prediction of the productivity of non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Public Universities Staff's Responses to the Variables in Hypothesis Three

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Productivity	96.0140	35.51305	1210
Work ethics	237.0702	47.73395	1210

a. Selecting only cases for which ownership of institution is public university

Table 3 reveals descriptive statistics of responses to the variables measured in public universities. For productivity, the mean score = 96.0140; standard deviation = 35.51305 while for each of the independent variables, the following mean scores and standard deviations were observed; work ethics mean = 237.0702; standard deviation = 47.73395;

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Private Universities Staff's Responses to the Variables in Hypothesis two

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Productivity	96.4007	35.37789	292
Work ethics	236.9212	48.03383	292

a. Selecting only cases for which ownership of institution is private university

Table 4 revealed descriptive statistics of responses to the variables measured in private universities. For productivity, the mean score = 96.4007; standard deviation = 35.37789 while for each of the dependent variables, the following mean scores and standard deviations were observed; work ethics mean = 236.9212; standard deviation = 48.03382

Table 5: Moderating Influence of Ownership on the Contribution of Work Ethics to Productivity

Public universities						
Model	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P
R = .576 ^a R ² = .332 Adj. R ² = .330	Regression	505998.0	1	168666.002	199.665	.000 ^a
	Residual	1018765	1206	844.747		
	Total	1524763	1209			
Private universities						
Model	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P
R = .580 ^a R ² = .336 Adj. R ² = .329	Regression	122351.9	1	40783.958	48.564	.000 ^a
	Residual	241862.2	288	839.799		
	Total	364214.1	291			

a. Predictor: (Constant), work ethics,

b. Dependent variable: productivity

Table 5 revealed no significant moderating influence of ownership on the contribution of work ethics, to the prediction of the productivity of staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria. When type of ownership was introduced as a moderating variable, the independent variable (work ethics) still significantly predicted the productivity of non-teaching staff in public universities ($F_{1,1209} = 199.665$; $p < .05$) and private universities ($F_{1,291} = 48.564$; $p < .05$). Therefore, the postulated null hypothesis which stated that there will be no significant moderating influence of ownership of work ethics, to the prediction of the productivity of non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria is accepted. This means that the independent variable (work ethics) made significant composite contribution to the prediction of the productivity of the non-

teaching staff in both public and private universities.

6. Summary of Findings

The major findings of this study are summarised below:

- (i) Work ethics predicted the productivity of the non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria.
- (ii) Ownership type, that is, a university being public or private had no significant moderating influence on the composite contribution of work ethics to the prediction of the productivity of the non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

7. Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis which stated that “There is no significant contributions of work ethics, to the prediction of the productivity of the non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria” was rejected. This means that work ethics significantly predicted the productivity of the non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The implication is that productivity of non-teaching staff of universities would be enhanced when adequate attention is paid to workers’ work ethics. The reason for this finding may not be farfetched. This is because issues of ethics, are germane in many organisations and the level to which an organisation attends to such issues may impact on the productivity of workers. Therefore, to ensure greater productivity, adherence to work ethics, should be encouraged for workers, especially in universities. This finding is in accordance with Fiorito (2007) who concluded that work ethics had significant impact on workers’ productivity in a service organisation. Key to the future success of any company lies in the work ethics of its workers and its ability to manage, train, develop, and reward a satisfied, and motivated workforce at all levels of its organisation (Miller, 2002). This cannot be accomplished unless changes in work-related values are understood. Interestingly, while most organisations have human resource management policies and procedures that mirror the company’s culture and are influenced by the root national culture, they are not always attuned to the values of the changing workforce (Simola & Sutton, 2002). Work ethics exhibits itself in the approach of workers in any organisation to her customers. The idea is that as people exert their effort to getting things done in an organisation, they also expect in equal proportion welfare services that may compensate for efforts exerted (Yesufu, 1962; Fashoyin, 1982; Ordia, 1989). The third hypothesis stated that, “There is no significant moderating influence of ownership on the contribution of work ethics to the prediction of the productivity of the non-teaching staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria”. This hypothesis was accepted because the independent variable predicted the

productivity in both public and private universities.

The finding on the third hypothesis revealed that there is significant contribution of work ethics to the prediction of productivity of non-teaching staff of public and private universities in South-West, Nigeria. This implies that when ownership type was introduced as a moderating variable, there was still a significant composite contribution of work ethics to the prediction of the productivity of the non-teaching staff of both public and private Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The variables (work ethics) significantly made contributions to workers’ productivity in both public and private universities. This shows that irrespective of ownership type (public or private), committed employees will remain with the organisation. Through the years, numerous research studies have been conducted to determine the accuracy of this statement. In the end many have concluded that committed employees remain with the organisation for longer periods of time than those who are less committed. Brown (2003) hypothesised and found it to be true that the more committed an employee is, the less of a desire he or she has to leave the organisation. These “highly committed” employees were found to have a higher intent to remain with the company, a stronger desire to attend work, and a more positive attitude about their employment. He concluded that “commitment was significantly and inversely related to employee turnover.” Also, Brown (2003) in his study established productivity and business advantages to the company that had a commitment strategy. The study concluded that employees that had a higher level of commitment would also have a higher level of “turnover cognitions”.

8. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that work ethics predicted the productivity of staff of Universities in South-West, Nigeria. Work ethics is a potent predictors of staff productivity in both public and private universities. This factor also predicted the productivity of staff irrespective of their cadre. Intervention strategies to promoting staff productivity must target the independent variables in order to ensure that the deficiencies

are addressed. Thus, every resource should be directed to the welfare of staff, enhance training opportunities and facilitate proper work ethics. It is therefore incontrovertible that improvement in work ethics of both junior and senior non-teaching staff will lead to improve commitment and higher productivity.

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