

# **Organization Performance and Professional Ethics in Educational Institute**

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**Abstract.** The study was carried out to examine the relationship between work ethics and organizational performance of tertiary academic institutions in South-South Geo-political zone of Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted in the study. The population of the study were academic staff of selected public tertiary academic institutions which was put at 9,117 and a sample size of 2,793 was determined using Smith's formula (1983). Questionnaire was the main research instrument. Analysis of data was done using the simple regression method. The findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between work ethics (integrity and teamwork) and organizational performance (competitiveness) of selected public tertiary academic institutions in South – South of Nigeria. It was concluded that good work ethics has a positive impact on organizational performance. It was against this background that the study recommended among others that managements of various public tertiary academic institutions and their respective academic staff should work synergistically at levels of academic department and faculties for improved organizational performance to compete globally.

**Keywords:** work ethics, institutions, performance, Nigeria, case study.

## **1. Introduction**

One of the most important issues in human endeavors particularly, in human resource management is work ethics. In organizations, good ethical culture provides bearing and advice in various spheres in order to build beloved, happy, showing-accord in feeling and ethical workers. Indeed, there is no ethncal standard that is complete, total, relevant and applicable to every organization. One of the good indicators of organization commitment is accepting the need

for ethical behavior and implementing a code of ethics (wood, 2001).

Generally, ethics shows the standard of moralities in society on which people learn to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Ethics are “gathering morals” (Al-Fayorz (2003). Morale is “gallantry, habit, nature and trait (Almunjed Dictionary cited in Matthani 2016). In this sense, moral refers to trait, religion, nature, gallantry which is innate and it is the same in terms of meaning and description. Idiomatically ethics means the personal individuality of beliefs that relates to right and wrong actions. (Al-Doori, 2010). Ethics is a mirror through which actions of individuals are recognized. Ethics represent a set of rules of behaviour to which individuals in the society adhere to and amend.

Yankelovich & Immerwahr (1984) cited in Salahudin, Alwi, Baharuddin, Halimat (2016) refer to work ethics as a cultural norm which advocates individual to hold accountable and responsible for the work they do based on the belief that the work has innate value to the individual. An organization code of ethics is a corporate principle or company philosophy concerning responsibility to workers, consumers, shareholders, environment or any other sphere of society external to the organization (Langlois & Schlecemilch, 1990) Perception of ethical climate of the organization by employees is seen to be connected to organisational performance (Pettijohn, Pettijohn & Taylor, 2008). Codes of ethnic are rules and regulations that members of staff of the university community must conform to. Shaw (1993) as cited in Osbild (2018) see codes of ethics as the rules that are supposed to govern the conduct of members of a given profession (Dessler and Varkkey (2008) cited in Effanga, Effiong and Nwokomah (2018) opined that ethics code is “a document that memorializes the standards the employer expects its employees to adhere to. These are rules and regulations that guide the conduct of members known as code of ethics or ethical issues. Ethical issues refer to principles which serve as guidance for both employees and organization. The code of ethics is imperative because of reported cases of unethical behavior and characters demonstrated by some staff. Employee should exhibit good behavior that is morally right for improved organizational performance.

Universities all over Nigeria have put coordinated, and strategic effort in place beyond the classroom by coming up with rules that proscribe created behavior, lying, interference with freedom of expression, insubordination, and other acts that go against fundamental human rights (Effanga, Effiong & Nwokomah, 2018). In maintaining ethical standards and discipline of employee, University of Uyo in 2011 outlined the following misconducts governing employee condition of service. These include lateness, sexual harassment,

abandonment of duty, drunkenness, dishonesty, absence from duty without leave, demand for and acceptance of bribe or corruption, fighting while on duty, plagiarizing of journal article(s) and book(s) or other such materials, unauthorized disclosure of official information, proven poor performance of duty and any other such acts.

### **1.1. Statement of the problem**

Generally, it is believed that Nigerian society is pest with certain malignant and malevolent problems which have unfavorable effects on the national life. After about 58 years of independence, Nigeria is still grappling with effort to overcome certain destructive force which have consistently constituted gigantesque danger to pride, identify, devotion and selfless service of Nigeria and above all work ethics and sense of direction.

It has been asserted that Nigerian public service is besieged, afflicted and grime with unethical work practices such as indiscipline, favoritism, lack of respect for constituted authority inability to work as a team, parochialism, economic sabotage, immoral acts and others. The list is in exhaustive. The Nigerian tertiary institution as a subset of the public service is not vulnerable either. This account for why there is unethical conducts which have sharply affected their organization performance. Despite all these, it seems that most public tertiary institutions in Nigeria are facing this problem of unethical and immoral practices. These come in various forms such as lack of loyalty in management, lack of self-indiscipline, untrustworthiness, subordination of one's interest to the interest of the organization unassertiveness, uncooperativeness encroachment on the rights of others, animosity, unstable, the list is in exhaustive. It is due to the effects of unethical conducts on organization performance of Nigeria tertiary academic institutions that the study was considered apt and imperative. On the other hand, work ethics in the work place dose not refer to strict and technical commitment of doing what is right for improve organizational performance. Rather, it refers to a situation where employees are exposed to corporate ethics as any reasonable person would accept a worker to do. This has become important given the fact that the goal of every organization is to promote work ethnics that could lead to higher organizational performance. This can only be attained where there are sets of work ethics that would govern the conduct of workers at work. In the absence of these work ethics, organizational performance will be in jeopardy.

### **1.2. Objective of the study**

The broad objective of the study is to examine the extent of relationship that exists between work ethics and organizational performance in selected tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are as followed:

- To determine the extent of relationship between integrity and competitiveness in selected public tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria
- To examine the extent of relationship between teamwork and competitiveness in selected tertiary academic institutions in south-south Nigeria

### **1.3. Research questions**

- What is the extent of relationship between integrity and competitiveness in selected public tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria?
- What is the extent of relationship between teamwork and competitiveness in selected public tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria

### **1.4. Hypothesis**

Ho1: There is no significant positive relationship between integrity and competitiveness in selected public tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between teamwork and competitiveness in selected public tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. The work ethics**

The concept of work ethics has transformed from the work of German sociologist, Max Weber so much in 1938 with a revolutionaries understanding of the original ideology and between 1904 – 1905 during the 20th century he was honored openly for the successful contribution of capitalism in the western world which today is known as the protestant work ethics. In a visibly viewpoint, work ethic refers both to the spirit of capitalism much like protestant work ethics or rather the ethic of ascetic– Protestantism, a tenet which regarded with partiality and persistent professional occupation that promise the state of grace.

Ethics assesses work in a normative and moral sense. In a normative sense, work is desirable, central element of life. In a moral sense, work is good and righteous. In both ways, “work is a cognitive category in the system of knowledge which consist of the categories of how it should be done” (Grabowisko, 2012, Grabowskot & CZrew, 2015). Ethics whether in field of business or not is “a set of principles, regulations and rules that are formed from specific sources and become the reference case from standard (Abubakar, 2010). It determines the technique of behavioral thinking of employees of an organization to make a difference between what is legal and what is illegal, what is moral and what is immoral”. This includes the consequent career managerial behavior; leadership and institutional uncontrolled moral and value judgment from the points of viewing the institution and society” (Mathani, 2016).

Work ethics has been defined as a belief in the value and importance of work for its own sake (Bouma 1973, Nelson, 1973 cited in Sharma & Rai 2015) work ethics mean complete and relentless dedication to one’s economic role on earth (Lessnoff, 1994). In modern day conceptualization sees work ethics as an attitudinal construct relating to work related values (Miller, Woehry Hudspeth, 2002, Porter, 2010). From the above definitions, the concept of work ethics is based on a set of rules and principles which must be noticed and stick to and performed upon to be successful in managing people and their job. In the field of business as well as other human activities, the ethncial guidance or standard are associated with the ethical principles of the individual. Psychological perspective, work ethic is mainly a system of attitudes and second, a system of conviction (believe-system). According to Graboisoki and Czerw (2015): attitude may be inferred as comprising convictions and it is assumed to contain cognitive, emotional and behavioural components (Reykowski, 1998). These convictions recognize meaning, importance, and value of work, time and independence (Christopher Zabel, Jones 2008 cited in Grabwski and Czerw, 2015).

The production of all morals is work ethics in that it flows from behavior and values of individual which command respects to: circumstances which to a large extent do not go against current workplace and community, customs, traditions and values. The importance of work ethics is underlined by its link with a series of work attitudes and behaviors. For instance, a person who holds strong work ethic beliefs demonstrates more work commitment, more job satisfaction and more job involvement.

Within the context of Max Weber’s original ideas, work ethics is unknown from other work-related concepts Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth (2002) identified

seven dimensions of work ethics which have Weber-associated dimensions. These include: allocating value in hand work-belief in the dough of hand work, conviction that such gives birth to reaching wanted state of reality; treating work as life's center- conviction for the great importance of work and perception of work as a central value in the life of an individual and society; negative attitude of wasting time – a firmly held belief that time should be used effectively; self – reliance-praising independence in everyday work; delay of gratification-tendency towards the future, patience in awaiting reward, cult of prudence; morality/ethnic-belief in a just and moral existence in the Christianity sense, preparedness to behave honestly towards others; the approval or unwillingness for free time-negative attitude to leisure and firmly held belief for the low importance of human activities unrelated to work.

The importance of work ethics in the field of work has been stated by Al-Galibi, & Mahdi (2010) In order to get the following benefits. To improve the reputation of the organization at the organization, the local regional, intentional levels of the environment and thus has a positive effect on the organization; cannot accept the traditional view point of work and who sees a conflict between attaining the interest of the organization in financial gain and commitment to ethical principles; the recent trends unmind ethics in business giving rise to displacement of some narrow self-interests; could cost business organization a lot due to ignorance of the commitment to ethical guidance or standards; the international certificate and privileges (e.g. Iso) is associated with many of the ethical standards of the organization.

## **2.2. Source of business ethics**

Business ethics can be based on two pillars/main components. These include- (1) Social and moral values, customs and traditional systems that taking place in the community (2) The value system of self-related personality and beliefs that is based on former experience (Yaghi 2001). Identifiable sources of business ethics which represent an ethically good behavior or bad include the following; the efficiency of reference group; the first community work; pressure groups in civil society; family and environmental education; laws and government regulations and legislation; the school and educational systems in communities; old authority and personal value that is inherent among workers; community cultural values and habits; law and moral cognitive behavior of the industry and profession; accumulated experience and good human conscience; country advertisement, media and opinion institutions (Al-sakarmhe, 2009). Social responsibility and ethical behavior were incorporated towards human resources in work organization to include the following: training and development;

working women; wages and bonuses of workers; mobilize and attract human resources; programmer which improves the quality of life of employees; evaluating the performance of workers; interview, selection and recruitment (Ieldeh, 2010).

The eight major components of work ethnic value as outlined in the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (GDTAE) include attendance and punctuality, integrity and honesty, productivity cooperativeness and teamwork, responsiveness to the supervision, adherence to policies, proper use of tools and removes, observance of safety provisions. In this structuring work ethics proxies integrity and teamwork.

### **2.3. The concept of organizational performance**

Oxford Dictionary refers organization as “an organized group of people with a particular purpose. Performance is defined to have “the action or process of performing a task or function seen in terms of how successfully it is performed”. Performance means how well goals are achieved ([www.growthpitcher.com.au](http://www.growthpitcher.com.au)).

Organizational performance is household name in management studies that its structure and definitions are commonly expressly expressed. Organizational performance means how well goals, mission and vision of the organization are attained. In the domain of organizational goals, financial performance, operation performance and overall effectiveness are recognized. (Hultetal (2008) cited in Pokorna & Castek, 2013). Financial performance mirrors the fulfillment of the economic goals of the organization (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). The non-financial dimension constitutes operational performance and focuses on operational success factors which may give rise to financial performance. Measures like product quality, productivity and cycle time are measures of operational performance. Effectiveness is the extent to which customer requirements are achieved Neely (2008) cited in Pokorna & Castek (2013), achievement of goals, perceived performance, reputation and survival needs good knowingness about organization. Organizational performance was measured in terms of competitiveness which falls into non-performance measure of organizational performance. Organizational performance comprises the real output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs or (goals and objectives). Richard et al cited in [en.m.wikipeida.org](http://en.m.wikipeida.org) see organizational performance as encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: (a) financial performance (profit return on assets, return on investment etc.) (b) Product market performance (sales, market share etc.) and (c) shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added etc.).

When these definitions are put together, organizational performance relates to how successfully an organized group of people use a specific purpose to perform a function. James (2012) in [www.growth.pitcher.com](http://www.growth.pitcher.com) all reserved that high organizational performance is when all the parts of an organization work together to attain great results being measure in terms of the value we deliver to customers. Other parts according to James (2012) are: strategic objectives; organizational structure; business performance measures; allocation of reserves and processes; values culture and guiding principles and reward structures.

The term “performance” is often understood wrongly. Other terms such as efficiency, effectiveness and profitability are also used (Chew 1988, Tangen, 2005). This gave birth to a multiplicity of definitions which have been used to explain the concept of organizational performance”. On the basis of the complicity and difficulty of the many of the concepts of “performance”, the definition Neelyn (2004) cited in Felizard, Felix & Thomaz (2003) is adopted in the study:

The performance is the sum of all processes that will lead managers to taking appropriate action in the present that will create a performance organization in the future (i.e. one that is effective and efficient). In other words, we define performance as doing today what will lead to measured value outcome tomorrow.

Organizational performance is difficult to measure because of the complexity associated with measuring organizational performance. The parable of the blind men and the elephant that was popularized in western cultures through a poem by John Godfrey Saxe in the 19th century is useful in understanding the complacency connected with measuring organizational performance. As the story goes “Six blind men set out to “see” what an elephant was like. The first man touches the side of the elephant and behind the beast to be like a great wall. The second felt the tusks and thought elephants must be like spears feeling the trunk, the men thought it was a type of snake. Feeling a limb, the fourth man thought it was like a tree trunk. The fifth man, examine an ear, thought it was like a fan. The six touching the tail, thought it was like a rope. If the men fail to communicate how different impressions, they would have all been partially right but wrong about what actually mattered. This storey is analogous to the challenge involved in understanding the multidimensional nature of organizational performance because different measures and references may tell a different story about the organization’s performance.

Beyond profits organizational performance can be measured using the balanced scorecard and methodology where performance is traced and monitored and measured in multiple dimensions such as financial performance

e.g. shareholder return, customer service, social responsibility (egg corporate citizenship, community outreach, and employee stewardship). Triple bottom line which emphasizes three units of people (social concerns), planet (environmental concerns) and profits (economic concerns). Learning and growth measure, pay attention on innovation and proceed with the understanding that strategies change over time) e.g. the number of new skills learned by workers each year. A small number of major measures that collectively reflect four dimensions of organization performance are as followed (Kaplan and Norton, 1992). Internal business process measures relate to organizational efficiency e.g. speed at serving a customer and time it takes to create a new product and get it to market; customer measures relate to customer attraction, satisfaction and retention for example number of new or repeat customers and percentage of repeat; financial measures relate to organizational effectiveness and profits such as return on assets, return on investment and return on equity, profits and stocks price.

Organizational performance was measured in terms of competitiveness which falls into non- performance measure of organizational performance. Competitiveness is “a term expressing a market potential of a company, industry or country in a competition for its position in the market against other companies, individuals or country “(Jirasck, 2011). Most authors either use this term or do not define it because of it problematic nature in operationalizing and expressing it in quantitative or measured units. Some define it ambiguously and subconsciously. Even Jirask, (2001) definition is not operational enough for purposes of revenue (Pokorna and Castek, 2013). In line with this reasoning, traditional concept is adopted in the study to determine the rate of a competitiveness on organization. Thus, competitiveness is defined as the ability to achieve a market share (Michalet, (1981) Mathisis et al 1988 cited in Pokorna & Castek, 2012). From the foregoing definition competitiveness is the numeral capability of an organization to succeed in all competitions with other organizations it is assumed that the result of this competition is a success or failure of the organization which can expressed by certain performance measures.

## **2.4. Integrity and organizational performance**

Integrity is an important concept in the social science because integrity is said to enable and facilitate cooperation (Maeschalck, 2003; Dobel, 1999). Integrity is defined in relation to a commonly accepted set of value and norms (Thomas, 2001; Fijnaut and Huberts 2002). Even through many recognize that these values (and norms) may change in time and place an assumption of a world-

wide fundamental values or culture of people pervade much of present integrity literature. A world-wide fundamental values or culture of people implies that there is a “thing” as a set of values and norms that is popularly/world-wide accepted to be suitable for a particular situation. Dobel (1999) define it differently. “Integrity means attending to the relevant the promises and obligations in each setting” although implied indirectly he refers to widely accepted set of values and norms for the performance settings, Integrity is seen as an attribute of an actor.

Integrity is the level of quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. Integrity is a quality of excellence palpable in a holism and immanent manner in individuals and organizations (The Malaysian National Integrity Plan (NIP). Handbook 2014). Integrity is “observant of competency values committed to address and eliminate corruption, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations either public or private as well as family units and lastly enhance the social welfare and the quality of life “(Abdulla, Salleh, Ismail and Ngah 2010) Delivery and Tuffs (1932) see integrity as “a moral judgment upon an act and is also a selfhood of the one doing the act”. An individual with integrity is honest, but an honest individual may have little integrity because of the demands of integrity in that integrity is more than honesty. Hence, “integrity is a quality of being honest and having good morale judgment either as an individual, or as a public servant to completely destroy unethical behavior such as being corrupt or committing fraud and other illegal activities (Othaman, Omar, Azam, Ibrahim Farouq, Rustam and Aris 2014).

Integrity needs three steps (Carter 1998) cited in Othman, Omar, Azam, Ibrahim, Farouq, Rastan & Aris, 2014). These are “discerning what is right and what is wrong, acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost, and saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong”. Moral character and integrity of employees may be influenced by two dominant factors-deficiency in some character traits required in a person, and deficiency in external factor that would work against the desire of the employee (Miller 2010) The goal of every organization be it private or public, profit or non – profit, is to have workers. Align-totally and completely with the major fundamental values, sticking to a code of ethics and matching actions into belief across various degrees of situation. (Pattison & Edgar, 2011). Integrity plays a core role in workers’ pattern of alignment, sound moral, ethical principles and organizational productivity. (Gleerly, Walter, Horsefall& Jackson, 2013) and by extension organizational performance. Character of unethical conducts include stealing of organization property, absenteeism, gossiping, converting office equipment for personal us and are bound to affect organization productivity

(Robins and Juge 2007, Quin & Peschak, 2013, Muati 2011 cited in Adeyeye, Adeniji, Osinbanjo & Oludayo (2015). The organizational level of performance is directly commensurable to ethics. Thus work ethics becomes irrelevant if it is not filled with integrity. In the opinion of Bergman (2006) values of integrity will drive worker ethical behaviors prevent damaging blooper while strike lightly into human instincts for moral action and as well facilitate organizational performance?

## **2.5. Teamwork and organizational performance**

The desire of any organization private or public, large or small is to make strenuous efforts to acquire performance to enable it attain success maintain a good image in the competitive global environment. Teamwork is the cooperative and coordinated strategic effort of a group of individuals who work together as a team. Adeyeye, (2010) opine that a team exists when people strength and skills are brought together with teamwork in the act of pursuing a common goal in order to provide meaningful results for the team members and the organization. Absence of team in an organization breeds uncoordinated and uncooperative works into work groups to enable the organization faucet for its human resources (Ige, Adeyeye & Aina 2011). Team work enable different knowledge, personal attributes and skills to be utilized in a team as this will make more ideas to be spawn and more creative solution arrived at thus leading to better outcomes and hence enhance organizational performance. It is imperative to note that the best qualified person cannot boost of having all the skills, knowledge and personal attribute to do everything. While some individuals exceed at carrying up with the ideas, others have to be depended on when it comes to implementing and follow through of a plan (Adeniji & Osinbanjo 2012).

## **2.6. Empirical review**

Various scholars and practitioners have conducted different studies on work ethics and organisational performance. For instance, Nwekpa & Ewans (2015) conducted a study on Business ethics and corporate performance in banking industry using selected banks in South-east Nigeria. The study adopted survey type of research in which correlational design was used in the study because of the need to identify the magnitude of relationship between business ethics and corporate performance. A sample of 170 respondents drawn from three selected commercial banks was used for the study. The study indicated that majority of employees in the banking industry has a significant effect on the corporate performance of banks in their operation.

Adeyeye, Adeniji, Osunbanjo & Oludayo (2015) similarly conducted a study on effects of workplace ethics on employees and organizational productivity in Nigeria. Survey research design was used in the study. Structure questionnaire was the main research instrument. Data was obtained from one hundred and eleven respondents from organizational private sector indigenous, Asia and Lebanese companies domiciled in Isolo, Oshodi, Ikeja and Iganmu Industrial areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. Amos 22 was used in testing the study hypotheses. Structural equation modelling was used because of validity of correlation and regression between the observed variables. The study reviewed that teamwork is a strong predictor of organisational productivity. Integrity and self-discipline have negative impact on the improved productivity level of organisation which could be and could only be seen over time.

Ebitu and Beredugo (2015) conducted a study on relevance of code of ethics on guiding the performance of service industry and investigated also their compliance level on the established code of ethics. Descriptive research design was adopted in the study and data were obtained from 176 respondents cutting across selected GSM firms and banks in Calabar, Cross River State. Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. Result indicated that effective performance of service industry was dependent on code of ethics and that the level of compliance was high.

Joseph (2010) investigated the effect of ethical behavior on organizational performance using three service organizations in Lagos, Nigeria as case study. The study used a quantitative method with two hypotheses tested in the null form. Sixty-six copies of questionnaire were distributed among respondents in the agencies under study. Pearson correlation was used to test second hypothesis formulated for the study while chi-square was used to test the first hypotheses as it involved questionnaire. Finding from first hypothesis revealed that ethical behavior has effect on an organization's performance and second hypothesis indicated that there is a relationship between ethical behavior and organizational performance.

Rashid, Fizzah & Alvi (2014) studied the impact of business ethic on organizational development in Telecom sector of Pakistan. The study was empirically conducted using questionnaire style survey. Systematic random sampling technique was used by drawing sample of 150 employees. Responses from employees were analyzed with analysis of descriptive statistics and Pearson's product moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between variables. Findings revealed a relationship between employees' business ethics and organizational development and also indicated that

employee ethical behavior in organizations in turn gave rise to cultivation of organizational culture.

Mia and Clarke (1999) found a positive and indirect relationship between the intensity of market competitiveness and organization performance. Fundamentally, the findings showed that the intensity of market competition is a determining factor of the use of the information which in turn is a determinant of business unit performance (Al-Rfou, 2012) Putiar & Mia (2009) conducted a research using 56 hotels in Austria. The findings show no relationship between market competition and financial and non-financial performance of organizations. Hence, the study argued that managers should focus on organizational competitiveness in determining performance of tertiary institutions. Organization performance is poorly defined in the management research as most of past studies measured it based on the financial aspect (Fisher 1995).

## **2.7. Theoretical framework**

This work is based on Resource Based Theory whose root can be traced to the studies of Penrose (1955) cited in Cheche, Muathe & Maina, 2017 and Chandler 1962. Organizational internal resources according to the theory are the most vital source of organizational performance and competitive advantage. The theory was made popular by Wernerfelt in Mid 1990s (Cheche, Muathe & Maina 2017). Those who support the theory believe that organizational performance is a product of the strategic choices that organizations make in identifying their sui generis resources and developing them for competitive advantage (Croucher, Stumbiz, Michael 2013). Resources, Capabilities and key competences are essential for competitive advantage of a firm: (Rindova and Fombrum 1999 as cited in Nguyen, Alam, Perry & Prajogo (2009) Thus, adequate resource support and policies to create capability are critical for organizational performance.

Organizations are regarded as bundle of palpable and impalpable assets (Croucher, Stunbitz & Michael 2013). On this note, performance of organization would be enhanced by creating conditions suitable for employee good character and teamwork and hence giving rise to positive employee outcomes. Thus, the resource based theory with its special attention on resources being the source of competitive advantage of an organization provides a relevant theory to fix organizational performance. Resources based theory provides a framework to explain how organizations can identify relevant measures to surmount performance obstacles, have better entrance to technology resources financial resources, manpower recourses, national and infrastructure

and passage to the market. (Nguyen, Alam, Perry, Prajogo, 2009). Resource-based theory has been criticized because it undermines the external environment. This gap can be addressed by adopting a mixed approach that takes into consideration the internal and external influences of performance. (Porter, 1991). This theory is relevant to the work in that it is useful in studying how unequalled strength of an organization give them competitive advantage that promises their continued performance conditional to their peers.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Methods**

Cross-sectional survey design was adopted in the study. The use of survey research design was considered appropriate for two major reason (1) it follows a correlational research strategy and assists in hastening behavior (Borden & Abbot 2002). (2) It helps to ascertain whether or not a relationship exists between the variables of study (Kerlinger, (1973). Cited in Kure and Suleiman (2011). The population of the study consisted tertiary academic institutions in Nigeria. The target population of the study are academic staff of public tertiary institutions of higher learning (colleges of education, polytechnics and universities) which was put at 9,307 domiciled in south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria. Convenience sampling technique was used in selecting the participating tertiary academic institutions as convenience sampling have been employed in many studies related to organizational behavior (Vema & Duggel, 2015; Saha & Kumar, 2017). Another reason is that it deals with obtaining and collecting data and information from the sample of the study or the unit in the study that are easily and conveniently available (Zikmund, 1977 cited in Shahzadi, Javel, Pirzada, Nasreen and Khanam, 2014). A total of 12 public tertiary academic institutions were selected and they constituted the unit of analysis.

The study population is depicted in the table below:

The sample size of the study was determined using Smith formula, (1983)  $n = 1 + Nb^2$

Where  $n$ = sample size  $N$  = population size

$b^2$ = percentage error margin  $n = 1 + 9117 (30\%)$

$n = 1 + 9117 (0.30)$

$n = 1 + 9117 = 2,793$

The sample size is = 2,793

The allocation of the copies of questionnaire in equal proportion of the population of the institutions were determined using Bowley’s formula which is:

$$nh = nNh$$

N

Where n = total sample size

Nh = No of items in each stratum in the population N = population size

Table 1: Institutions population distribution

S/N	Institution	Location	No. of Academic Staff
1.	University of Benin, Benin City	Edo State	2,437
2	University of Calabar, Calabar	Cross River	1,118
3.	Federal College of Education Omoku	Rivers State	32
4.	Federal College of Education Obudu	Cross River	52
5.	University of Uyo, Uyo	Akwa-Ibom	1020
6.	Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny	Rivers	68
7.	Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun	Delta	879
8	Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe	Bayelsa	658
9	Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba	Delta	42
10	Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi	Edo	1,148
11	Federal University of Otuoke	Bayelsa	646
12.	University of Port-Harcourt. Port-Harcourt	Rivers	9,307

Therefore, the table below shows number of copies of questionnaire distributed proportionately to each of the tertiary institutions

The sample consisted academic staff drawn from twelve tertiary institutions in the south-south geo- political zone of Nigeria.

The multistage sampling procedure which involved stratified sampling technique based on faculties and simple random sampling method was used in the selection of the respondents for the study. The reason for using random sampling method is that it excludes the possibility that the sample biased by the

preference of the individual selecting the sample (Bordens & Abbott, 2002). Another reason is that it is specifically relevant when one wants to apply research finding directly to a population (Mook, 1983, cited in Kuye and Sulaimon, 2011).

Table 2: Proportional allocation of copies of questionnaire

S/N	Institution	Location	No. of Academic Staff	No. of Copies of Questionnaire Allocated
1.	University of Benin, Benin City	Edo State	2,437	731
2	University of Calabar, Calabar	Cross River	1,118	336
3.	Federal College of Education Omoku	Rivers State	32	10
4.	Federal College of Education Obudu	Cross River	52	16
5.	University of Uyo, Uyo	Akwa-Ibom	1020	306
6.	Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny	Rivers	68	20
7.	Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun	Delta	879	264
8	Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe	Bayelsa	658	197
9	Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba	Delta	42	13
10	Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi	Edo	1,148	345
11	Federal University of Otuoke	Bayelsa	646	194
12.	University of Port-Harcourt. Port-Harcourt	Rivers	9,307	362
	<b>Total</b>			<b>2,794</b>

A five-point Likert scale structured questionnaire was adopted to collect necessary data for the study. The structure is as followed: strongly agree (SA) = 5, points Agree (A) = 4 points, Neutral (N) = 3 point, disagree (D) = 2 points and strongly disagree (SD) = 1 point. The questions were closed ended. The use of primary data method is appropriate because it is the quickest and simplest of the tools to use if publication is the purpose (Cowton, 1998). The individual

institutions constitute the unit of analysis. The scale was used to measure the degree to which performance of the organization (competitiveness) is achieved. The scores on the 8-item were summed up and averaged to measure the mean index of organization performance. An index of less than 3.0 was regarded as low organizational performance (competitiveness) while an index of 3.0 & above was regarded as high organizational performance (competitiveness). Work ethics scale includes 14 items develop from literature. The 14 work ethic items (7 for integrity and 7 for teamwork) scale ranges from SA to SD. A five-point Likert scale was applied to measure the extent of the institutions using 14 items, the score on the 14 items were summed up and average to measure the mean index of work ethics (integrity, and teamwork). An index of less than 3.0 was taken as poor work ethic. An index of less than 3.0 & above was taken as good work ethnics.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyses data. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages and frequencies were adopted in the study to answer research question regarding work ethics and organizational performance. They are not meant to test a formal hypothesis but rather the summaries from a sample that characterize that sample (Simon 2002). Studying sets of numbers as they are is cumbersome. Hence, it is relevant to reduce sets in two ways; (1) calculating the averages and calculating the measures of variability Kerlinger, (1973) as cited in Kuye & Sulaimon 2011). The study employed simple regression method to be able to not only find the nature of relationship but to also predict and know the percentage of influence the independent variable has on the dependent variable (Obinwa 2016). That is, to determine the magnitude of variations in the dependent variable which can connect to changes in the value of an independent or predictor variable in the absence of the variables (Kuye & Sulaimon 2011). It was analyzed using 0.5 level of significance. This will guide the interpretation of the result. The relationship is significant if the p-value obtained is less than 0.

### **3.2. Operationalization of variables**

Two variable were recognized in the study. Work ethics represent the independent variable (x) while organizational performance represent the dependent variables (Y). The independent variable (work ethics) was decomposed into the following drivers: X1 (integrity) seven items, X2 (teamwork) seven items. Competitiveness was used to proxy organizational performance using the eight-items adapted from previous study. (Osisioma and Ugwu, 2016). These variables were paired and the pair-wise combination enable us to design general description of subject that explain in-toot the relationship

between work ethics and organizational performance of selected tertiary institutions in south-south of Nigeria. Respondents were asked to determine their work ethics in areas of integrity and teamwork relative to that of organizational competitiveness.

### 3.3. Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha estimate was employed to determine the reliability of the research instrument with the aid of statistical package for social Science (SPSS) version 22. Result is acceptable and reliable when alpha reliability test result gives the value which ranges between 0-0.6 and above. The alpha reliability test result in the study is above 0.9 which is greater than 0.6 at 5% level of significance. This indicates that the research instrument is reliable and there is absence of error in the test result. Further, it shows that the test result is reliable and acceptable.

Table 3: Reliability test statistics

Variable	Anchor	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Integrity	7 points	7	0.998
Team work	7 points	7	0.998
Competitiveness	8 points	8	0.998

The result of Cronbach 'alpha in the above table 3 indicates that all the variables had internal reliability above the value of 0.6. The overall Cronbach alpha for each of the variables is above 0.9. The items in the questionnaire are reliable.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Data presentation and analysis

Copies of questionnaire were administered to 2,794 respondents. However, the same number of copies 100% were retrieved and found usable.

#### Analysis of questionnaire

##### Research questionnaire one

To what extent has integrity affected competitiveness of selected tertiary academic institutions in south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

Note: Figures in parenthesis represents raw frequencies while the other figures representing the raw frequencies multiplied by the assigned weight.

Table 4 shows an acceptance remark for all statements in response to questions on integrity and a grand mean of 3.46 which is above the decision threshold of 3.

Table 4: The responses of the respondents to the above questions

S/N	Item on Integrity (independent Variable)	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Mean %	Remark
1	I am loyal to the management	975 (34.9%)	804 (28.8%)	56 (2.0%)	599 (21.4%)	359 (12.9%)	3.51	27.2	14.5	Accept
2	I show honest in my work schedule	953 (34.1%)	773 (27.7%)	39 (1.4%)	563 (20.2%)	465 (16.6%)	3.42	26.9	14.14	Accept
3	I show self-discipline	904 (32.4%)	792 (28.4%)	63 (2.3%)	598 (21.4%)	436 (15.6%)	3.40	26.6	14.06	Accept
4.	I display trustworthiness	990 (35.4%)	821 (29.4%)	41 (1.5%)	492 (17.6%)	449 (16.1%)	3.51	27.3	14.47	Accept
5.	I use my initiative to grow the Organization	975 (34.9%)	840 (30.1%)	53 (1.9%)	510 (18.3%)	415 (14.9%)	3.52	27.2	14.53	Accept
6.	I subordinate my interest to the interest of the organization	953 (34.1%)	827 (29.6%)	66 (2.4%)	488 (17.5%)	459 (16.4%)	3.48	26.9	14.35	Accept
7.	My colleagues see me as a Reliable person.	938 (33.6%)	742 (26.6)	62 (2.2%)	529 (18.9%)	522 (18.7%)	3.37	26.5	13.93	

### Research Question two

To what extent has teamwork adopted in the selected tertiary institutions influenced their competitiveness?

Note: Figures in parenthesis represent raw frequencies while the other figures represent the raw frequencies multiplied by the assigned weight.

Table 5 shows an acceptance remark for all statements in response to questions on teamwork and a grand mean of 3.47 which is above the decision threshold of 3.0

Table 5: The responses of the respondents to the above question.

S/ N	Items on Team Work (Independent Variable)	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mea n	SD	Mea n %	Remar k
1	I respect the rights of others	949 (34.0%)	708 (25.3%)	44 (1.6%)	580 (20.8%)	512 (18.3%)	3.36	26.6	13.94	Accept
2	I am cooperative	988 (35.4%)	822 (29.4%)	56 (2.0%)	492 (17.6%)	435 (15.6%)	3.51	27.2	14.59	Accept
3.	I am assertive	971 (34.8%)	839 (30.0%)	40 (1.4%)	566 (20.3%)	377 (13.5%)	3.52	27.4	14.63	Accept
4.	I demonstrate mannerly behavior	938 (33.6%)	759 (27.2%)	63 (2.3%)	606 (21.7%)	427 (15.3%)	3.42	26.7	14.20	Accept
5	I respect confidentiality	983 (35.2%)	766 (27.4%)	41 (1.5%)	506 (18.1%)	497 (17.8%)	3.44	27	14.29	Accept
6	I see opportunities for continuing learning	967 (34.6%)	796 (28.5%)	39 (1.4%)	576 (20.6%)	415 (14.9%)	3.47	27.1	14.42	Accept
7.	I display customer-service attitude	935 (33.5%)	710 (25.4%)	49 (1.8%)	610 (21.8%)	489 (17.5%)	3.36	26.6	13.93	Accept

Table 6: The responses of the respondents to organizational performance (competitiveness)

S/ N	Items on Competitiveness (Dependent Variable)	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mea n	SD	Mea n %	Remark
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1	Organizational competitive advantage lies on the personal qualities such as skills, experience and knowledge of Employee.	950 (34.0%)	794 (28.4%)	71 (2.5%)	541 (19.4%)	437 (15.6%)	3.46	26.8	14.53	Accept
2.	Employee personal attributes play key role on growing organizational competitiveness needed to create superior work performance	906 (32.4%)	837 (30.0%)	53 (1.9%)	504 (18.0%)	493 (17.7%)	3.41	26.8	14.35	Accept
3.	Continuous work improvement is often encouraged to	851 (30.5%)	766 (27.4%)	62 (2.2%)	587 (21.0%)	527 (18.9%)	3.30	26.2	13.85	Accept
	enhance work Productivity.									
4	Organizational effort focuses on identifying problems and course of action and produce practical and acceptable Solution to it.	923 (33.0%)	703 (25.2%)	57 (2.0%)	562 (20.1%)	548 (19.6%)	3.32	26.4	13.94	Accept

5.	My organization competitive ability focuses on identifying and exploring new opportunities more than rivals	978 (35.0%)	735 (26.3%)	48 (1.7%)	526 (18.8%)	506 (18.1%)	3.41	26.8	14.34	Accept
6	My organization often encourages competitiveness in work operation	94.3 (33.8%)	830 (29.7%)	55 (2.0%)	519 (18.6%)	446 (16.0%)	3.47	26.9	14.57	Accept
7.	My organization encourages personal initiative to promote motivation and problem-solving ability in the institution	909 (32.5%)	838 (30.0%)	66 (2.4%)	522 (18.7%)	458 (16.4%)	3.44	26.7	14.43	Accept
8.	I believe services promoted by the organization are excellent	911 (32.6%)	810 (29.0%)	39 (1.4%)	603 (21.6%)	430 (15.4%)	3.42	26.9	14.36	Accept

Note: figures in parenthesis represent raw frequencies while the other figures represent the raw frequencies multiplied by the assigned weight.

Table 6 shows an acceptance remark for all statements in response to questions on competitiveness and a grand mean of 3.40 which is above the decision threshold of 3.0

## 4.2. Testing of Hypothesis Hypothesis 1

Ho1: There is no significant positive relationship between integrity and competitiveness in selected public tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.963a	.928	.904	94.91551

a. Predictors: (Constant), Integrity

**Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	103.732	84.433		1.229	.307
Integrity	.814	.131	.963	6.232	.008

a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness.

Using the model summary, the analysis above depicts that at 96 percent there is a strong positive relationship between the independent variable (Integrity) and the dependent variable (Competitiveness), and such that the independent variable was able to explained 93 per cent of the total changes that will occur around the dependent variable if everything being equal given the fact that there is a significant positive relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable in this study, the coefficient table further explained that a unit increase in staff's integrity will bring about a corresponding 81 per cent unit increase in competitiveness. Also since the p-value (0.008) associated with integrity is less than 0.05 significance level, it shows that the null hypothesis is rejected and we infer that there is a significant positive relationship between integrity and competitiveness in selected tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria.

## Hypothesis 2

Ho2: There is no significant positive relationship between teamwork and competitiveness in selected public tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.987 <sup>a</sup>	.973	.964	57.89126

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teamwork

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	49.782	55.093		.904	.433
Teamwork	.911	.087	.987	10.463	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness.

Result on the relationship between team work and competitiveness shows that at 99 per cent there is a strong positive relationship between team work and competitiveness such that the independent variable (Team work) was able to explained 97 per cent of the total variation that will occur in the dependent variable (Competitiveness) if things being equal. More so, the regression coefficients table on Team work and competitiveness revealed that a unit increase in team work will bring about a corresponding 91 per cent unit increase in competitiveness. Since the p-value (0.002) that is associated with team work is less than 5 per cent critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected and therefore infer that there is a significant relationship between teamwork and competitiveness in selected tertiary academic institutions in south-south of Nigeria.

**4.3. Discussion of findings**

Hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between integrity and organizational performance (competitiveness) of tertiary academic institutions. This implies that where employees are acting on understanding of right and wrong, it facilitates organizational performance. The result agreed with the findings of Bergman (2006) which asserts that integrity facilitates organizational performance.

Hypothesis two revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between team work and organizational performance (competitiveness). This implies that better knowledge, skill and personal attributes are utilized maximally as this will make more ideas to be generated and innovative and creative solution arrived at giving rise to improve organizational performance. The result corroborates the findings of Dearue, Hootegen, Procter & Burrige

(2008) which affirms that team working has a positive impact on all four aspects of performance – attitudinal, behavioural operational and financial.

## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1. Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was concluded that good work ethics has a positive relationship, with organizational performance. Academic staff who behave ethnically are able and efficient of creating a long lasting improved organizational performance. It is therefore important for management and (academic) staff to drive acceptable work ethnics in workplace for the attainment of higher organizational performance (i.e. to make public tertiary academic institutions do better in global competitiveness. Untrustworthiness, insubordination, disloyalty, unco-operatives, unassertiveness, ill manner behavior and other levels of unethical behavior in our public tertiary institution of learning will come down rapidly “thereby creating a sustainable workplace that will enhance organizational performance (competitiveness).

### **5.2. Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

I. Government should ensure that public tertiary academic institutions come up with ethical policy that will reward academic staff who demonstrate such honesty in work schedule, display trustworthiness and who use their initiative to grow their institution.

II. The managements of various public tertiary institutions should work synergistically with academic staff and faculties with a view to ensuring that work ethics become part of culture of tertiary academic institution in Nigeria.

III. Public tertiary academic institutions must embark on continuously work improvement programmer that emphasizes good work ethic to enhance organizational performance.

IV. Universities and other tertiary institutions managements should focus their action on identifying problems of implementing code of ethics and produce practical and acceptable solutions to them.

V. Public tertiary academic institutions must develop a code of conduct to effect issues which are of utmost importance for the organization e.g. corruption.

VI. Institutions of higher learning should make sure that ethical codes are consistent with their own values and that they are relevant to the academic sector. performance – attitudinal, behavioural operational and financial.

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