

Effects of Professional Ethics on Organizational Performance: A Study of Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of professional ethics on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. The objectives of the study was to understand how ethical practices such as ethical leadership, accountability, integrity and transparency affect organizational performance in the civil service, particularly the Ministry of Education in Anambra State. The study was anchored on the Ethical Leadership Theory introduced by scholars such as Brown, Treviño, and Harrison in 2005, and utilized descriptive survey research design. Data were collected only from primary sources through the use of questionnaire, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 24. The findings revealed that all the four coefficients; ethical leadership, accountability, integrity, and transparency, have significant positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education. The study concluded that professional ethics is a critical driver of organizational success and should be prioritized to ensure sustained productivity and improved service delivery. Among other recommendations, the study suggests that the ministry should institutionalize ethical leadership through capacity-building programs such as workshops and training. These initiatives will equip leaders with the knowledge and skills to model ethical behaviors, foster trust, and inspire employees toward higher performance.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Professional ethics in organizations are essential for fostering an environment of trust, accountability, and efficiency. These principles guide the behavior of employees and managers, ensuring that actions align with both legal standards and moral imperatives. Globally, the impact of professional ethics on organizational performance has been widely recognized. Ethical practices in the workplace lead to numerous positive outcomes, including enhanced reputation, improved employee morale, and increased profitability. When employees adhere to ethical standards, organizations are more likely to build trust with stakeholders, which is critical for long-term success (Trevino and Nelson, 2017).

In the context of developing countries, the relationship between professional ethics and organizational performance is equally significant but often more complex. Issues such as corruption, lack of regulatory enforcement, and socio-economic challenges can hinder the implementation of ethical practices. Nevertheless, there is growing recognition that promoting ethical behavior is crucial for development. In countries like India, ethical organization practices have been linked to improved operational efficiency and better stakeholder relationships (Banerjee, 2020).

Focusing on Africa, the challenge of embedding professional ethics within organizations is multifaceted. Many African nations grapple with systemic corruption, weak institutions, and a lack of transparency, which can severely impact organizational performance. However, there are notable efforts to promote ethical standards. For instance, the African Union's Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption aims to enhance governance and accountability across the continent (UNECA, 2016).

In Nigeria, professional ethics play a pivotal role in organizational performance, particularly in the public sector. Nigeria's history of corruption and mismanagement has had far-reaching consequences for its economic and social development. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index consistently ranks Nigeria among the most corrupt countries, highlighting the pervasive nature of unethical practices (Transparency International, 2020). This situation has spurred various initiatives aimed at combating corruption and promoting ethical behavior. The establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) reflects the government's commitment to addressing these challenges (ICPC, 2021).

In Anambra State, the Ministry of Education, Awka, serves as the focal point for this study. Anambra State is known for its emphasis on education and has been a leader in educational achievements within Nigeria. The Ministry of Education in Awka is responsible for overseeing the implementation of educational policies, managing public schools, and ensuring that the state's educational standards are upheld. Given the critical role of the ministry, understanding the effects of professional ethics on its performance is of paramount importance.

The motivation for this study stems from the recognition that ethical behavior within the Ministry of Education can significantly impact its effectiveness in delivering educational services. Despite this wide recognition, there is a paucity of empirical data on the effect of professional ethics on organizational performance. Moreover, while there is a substantial body of literature on corruption and governance in Nigeria, there is a need for more focused studies that examine the specific

effects of professional ethics on organizational performance within key sectors like education. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the effect of professional ethics on organizational performance with focus on Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Reports and studies have highlighted several ethical challenges that undermine performance in public organizations. These challenges include corruption, favoritism, embezzlement of funds, and lack of accountability among staff and organizational leaders. These unethical practices have led to inefficiencies in the management of resources, poor policy formulation and implementation, and a general lack of trust among stakeholders. For example, procurement processes are often marred by lack of transparency, leading to the misallocation of funds and substandard delivery of organizational resources and infrastructure. Additionally, political interference and inadequate training on ethical standards further exacerbate these issues, creating an environment where unethical behaviour can thrive unchecked.

The implications of this prevailing situation are severe and far-reaching. For instance, the persistent ethical lapses within public institutions in Anambra State have resulted in significant setbacks in the educational sector. Students are deprived of quality education due to delivery of substandard educational materials and infrastructure, which affects their academic performance and future prospects. The inefficiencies and delays in policy implementation hinder the progress and development of the educational system, making it difficult to achieve the state's educational goals. Moreover, the erosion of trust among stakeholders diminishes the credibility of the Education Ministry, leading to disengagement and lack of cooperation from parents, teachers, and the broader community. In the long run, these issues contribute to a cycle of poor educational outcomes that hinder the socio-economic development of Anambra State. Addressing these ethical challenges is crucial for revitalizing the ministry's performance and ensuring that it fulfills its mandate to provide high-quality education to all students in the state. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the effect of professional ethics on organizational performance with focus on Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- i. To investigate the effect of ethical leadership on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
- ii. To ascertain the effect of accountability on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
- iii. To explore the effect of integrity on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
- iv. To explore the effect of transparency on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. To what extent does ethical leadership affect organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka?
- ii. How does accountability affect organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka?
- iii. In what way does integrity affect organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka?

- iv. How does transparency affects organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka?

1.5 Hypotheses

- i. H₀: Ethical leadership has no significant effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
H₁: Ethical leadership has significant effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
- ii. H₀: Accountability has a negative effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
H₁: Accountability has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
- iii. H₀: Integrity has a negative effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
H₁: Integrity has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
- iv. H₀: Transparency has a negative effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
H₁: Transparency has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Professional Ethics

Professional ethics is a branch of applied ethics that examines the ethical principles and moral or ethical problems arising in a professional environment. It encompasses a wide range of areas including the duties of professionals to their clients, employers, and society as a whole, as well as the standards and expectations for professional behavior (Banks, 2018). The concept of professional ethics is critical as it guides professionals in making decisions that comply with legal standards and enhance the integrity and trustworthiness of their profession (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019).

The foundation of professional ethics lies in the understanding that professionals are in positions of trust and power, and their actions can significantly impact others' lives. This is particularly true in fields such as medicine, law, and accounting, where the decisions and actions of professionals can have profound consequences (American Medical Association (AMA), 2021; American Bar Association (ABA), 2021). Professional ethics, therefore, serves as a guideline to ensure that professionals act in a manner that is not only legal but also morally sound and socially responsible (Harris, Pritchard, and Rabins, 2019).

One of the fundamental components of professional ethics is the establishment of a code of ethics or conduct. These codes are often developed by professional organizations and serve as a framework for ethical behavior within a specific profession. For example, the AMA's Code of Medical Ethics provides guidance to physicians on issues such as patient confidentiality, informed consent, and the ethical practice of medicine (AMA, 2021). Similarly, the ABA has established the Model Rules of Professional Conduct, which outline the ethical obligations of lawyers (ABA,

2021). These codes are essential as they provide clear expectations for behavior and help professionals navigate complex ethical dilemmas (Banks, 2018).

Professional ethics also involves the concept of accountability. Professionals are expected to be accountable for their actions and decisions, both to their clients and to society at large. This accountability is often enforced through professional regulatory bodies, which have the authority to discipline members who violate ethical standards (Davis and Stark, 2021). For example, medical boards can revoke the licenses of doctors who engage in unethical behavior, while bar associations can disbar lawyers who breach their ethical obligations (ABA, 2021). This system of accountability helps to maintain public trust in the profession and ensures that professionals are held to high ethical standards (Harris, Pritchard and Rabins, 2019).

The principles of professional ethics are often rooted in broader ethical theories and principles, such as utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Utilitarianism, for instance, emphasizes the importance of the consequences of actions and suggests that professionals should act in ways that maximize overall happiness or well-being (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019). Deontology focuses on the adherence to duty and rules, suggesting that professionals have a moral obligation to follow ethical guidelines regardless of the outcomes (Koehn, 2018). Virtue ethics emphasizes the importance of moral character and the development of virtues such as honesty, integrity, and compassion (Kline, 2020). These ethical theories provide a foundation for understanding and analyzing ethical issues in a professional context (Beauchamp and Childress, 2019).

2.1.2 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is a broad concept that encompasses the efficiency and effectiveness with which an organization achieves its objectives. It is measured through various dimensions including financial outcomes, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement. Understanding and improving organizational performance is critical as it directly impacts an organization's ability to sustain competitive advantage, foster innovation, and achieve long-term success.

One foundational aspect of organizational performance is financial performance, which typically includes metrics such as revenue growth, profitability, return on assets, and return on equity. Financial performance is crucial as it provides a tangible measure of an organization's success and sustainability. Various theories and models, such as the Balanced Scorecard developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992), emphasize the importance of not solely focusing on financial metrics but also integrating non-financial indicators to get a comprehensive view of performance.

Operational efficiency is another critical dimension of organizational performance. It involves the effective use of resources to produce goods and services and deliver value to customers. This includes optimizing processes, reducing waste, and enhancing productivity. Lean management principles, derived from the Toyota Production System, emphasize the elimination of waste and continuous improvement, which are essential for enhancing operational efficiency (Womack and Jones, 2016). The implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices also underscores the importance of quality in operations, focusing on customer satisfaction, employee involvement, and continuous improvement (Deming, 2016).

Customer satisfaction is a pivotal component of organizational performance. An organization's ability to meet or exceed customer expectations directly influences its reputation, market share, and profitability. Models such as the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml,

and Berry (1988) measure service quality across dimensions such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. High levels of customer satisfaction are often correlated with customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and repeat business, all of which are vital for an organization's long-term success.

2.1.3 Accountability

Accountability is a fundamental concept in both individual and organizational contexts, denoting the obligation of an individual or entity to account for their activities, accept responsibility for them, and disclose the results transparently. This concept is pivotal in governance, management, and leadership, as it ensures that actions align with established standards and expectations, thus fostering trust, reliability, and efficiency.

At its core, accountability involves a clear set of expectations and the mechanisms to enforce them. It requires individuals or organizations to answer for their actions, make amends where necessary, and accept the consequences of their decisions and behaviors. This process promotes ethical behavior, reduces the risk of misconduct, and enhances overall performance (Bovens, 2017).

One key dimension of accountability is answerability. This means that individuals or organizations must provide explanations and justifications for their actions. For instance, in the public sector, government officials are accountable to the public and must explain their policies, decisions, and actions. This answerability is often facilitated through mechanisms like audits, reports, and public hearings, which help ensure transparency and responsiveness (Mulgan, 2020).

Another critical aspect of accountability is responsibility. Responsibility involves the obligation to perform duties and tasks to a certain standard and to uphold certain ethical and professional norms. This aspect of accountability is essential for maintaining integrity and trust within an organization or society. When individuals or organizations are responsible, they adhere to their roles and meet the expectations set forth by stakeholders, which can include employers, customers, and the public (Dubnick and Frederickson, 2021).

Mechanisms for ensuring accountability are diverse and context-dependent. In organizations, these mechanisms might include performance evaluations, audits, and reporting systems. Performance evaluations provide a structured approach to assess how well individuals meet their responsibilities and contribute to organizational goals. Audits, whether financial or operational, offer an objective assessment of an organization's adherence to laws, regulations, and internal policies. Reporting systems ensure that information flows appropriately within and outside the organization, keeping stakeholders informed and engaged (Behn, 2021).

In governance, accountability mechanisms are often formalized through legal and regulatory frameworks. For instance, democratic governments are held accountable through elections, legislative oversight, and judicial review. These mechanisms ensure that government officials act in the public interest and adhere to the rule of law. Similarly, corporate accountability is reinforced through regulations such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which mandates rigorous financial disclosure and internal controls to protect investors from fraudulent activities (Mulgan, 2023).

2.1.4 Integrity

Integrity is a fundamental ethical principle that denotes a steadfast adherence to a moral code and a consistent demonstration of honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness. It is a vital characteristic for individuals and organizations alike, forming the bedrock of trust, credibility, and ethical behavior.

In both personal and professional contexts, integrity involves aligning one's actions with their values and principles, thereby fostering an environment of reliability and respect.

At the heart of integrity is the concept of honesty. Honesty involves being truthful and transparent in one's actions and communications. An individual with integrity does not deceive, lie, or manipulate facts to their advantage. Instead, they are forthright, providing clear and accurate information regardless of the consequences. This honesty builds trust, which is essential for healthy relationships and effective collaboration (Solomon, 2018).

Trustworthiness is another core component of integrity. Trustworthiness means being dependable and reliable, ensuring that others can count on you to act consistently with your words and commitments. A trustworthy person fulfills promises, meets obligations, and acts responsibly. This reliability fosters a sense of security and confidence among colleagues, clients, and other stakeholders, which is crucial for building and maintaining strong relationships (Hosmer, 2015).

Fairness is also integral to the concept of integrity. Fairness involves treating others with equality, impartiality, and justice. It requires making decisions that are unbiased and just, considering the rights and needs of all parties involved. An individual with integrity strives to be fair in their dealings, avoiding favoritism and discrimination. This commitment to fairness helps build an inclusive and equitable environment, where everyone is treated with respect and dignity (Rawls, 2017).

Integrity is closely related to ethical behavior and moral principles. It involves adhering to ethical standards and principles even when it is inconvenient or disadvantageous. This adherence requires moral courage—the willingness to stand up for what is right, even in the face of adversity or pressure. Moral courage enables individuals to maintain their integrity in challenging situations, ensuring that their actions are aligned with their ethical beliefs (Kidder, 2015).

In the professional context, integrity is crucial for leadership and organizational success. Leaders with integrity serve as role models, setting a standard for ethical behavior within the organization. They demonstrate consistency between their words and actions, thereby earning the trust and respect of their employees and stakeholders. This trust is essential for effective leadership, as it fosters an environment where employees feel confident in their leaders' decisions and direction (Ciulla, 2018).

Organizational integrity involves embedding ethical values and principles into the organization's culture, policies, and practices. Organizations with integrity operate transparently, uphold ethical standards, and hold themselves accountable for their actions. They prioritize ethical conduct in their business operations, ensuring that their decisions and practices reflect their values and commitments. This organizational integrity builds credibility and trust with customers, employees, investors, and the broader community, contributing to long-term success and sustainability (Paine, 2018).

The concept of integrity is also vital in governance and public administration. Public officials with integrity are expected to act in the best interest of the public, upholding principles of transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior. Integrity in governance ensures that public resources are managed responsibly and that decisions are made fairly and impartially. This fosters public trust and confidence in governmental institutions, which is crucial for the effective functioning of democracy (Lewis and Gilman, 2015).

Integrity has significant implications for personal development and self-respect. Living with integrity involves aligning one's actions with their values and principles, which fosters a sense of self-respect and fulfillment. Individuals who consistently act with integrity are more likely to experience personal satisfaction and well-being, as their actions reflect their true selves and their commitments to their ethical beliefs (Erikson, 2018).

The importance of integrity is underscored by its role in maintaining and enhancing relationships. Whether in personal or professional settings, integrity fosters trust and respect, which are the foundations of healthy and productive relationships. By acting with integrity, individuals and organizations can build strong, lasting relationships based on mutual trust and respect, which are essential for collaboration, cooperation, and success (Kouzes and Posner, 2016).

Integrity is not without its challenges. Maintaining integrity can be difficult, especially in environments where unethical behavior is tolerated or even encouraged. Individuals may face pressure to compromise their integrity for personal gain, organizational success, or to conform to social norms. Overcoming these challenges requires a strong commitment to ethical principles and the moral courage to uphold them, even in the face of adversity (Trevino, Weaver, and Reynolds, 2016).

The cultivation of integrity requires a conscious and continuous effort. It involves self-awareness, reflection, and a commitment to personal and professional growth. Individuals can cultivate integrity by regularly reflecting on their values and actions, seeking feedback, and striving to align their behavior with their ethical principles. Organizations can foster integrity by promoting ethical leadership, establishing clear ethical standards, and creating an environment that supports ethical behavior (Brown and Treviño, 2016).

Education and training also play a crucial role in developing integrity. Ethical education and training programs can help individuals understand the importance of integrity, recognize ethical dilemmas, and develop the skills to make ethical decisions. By incorporating ethics into education and professional development, organizations and institutions can cultivate a culture of integrity that supports ethical behavior and decision-making (Rest and Narvaez, 2018).

While maintaining integrity can be challenging, it is crucial for personal fulfillment, organizational success, and effective governance. Cultivating integrity requires self-awareness, reflection, education, and a continuous commitment to ethical principles. By prioritizing integrity, individuals and organizations can build trust, foster respect, and achieve long-term success and well-being.

2.1.5 Transparency

Transparency is a critical concept in various domains including governance, business, and organizational management, signifying openness, communication, and accountability. It refers to the practice of being open and honest about activities, decisions, and processes, allowing stakeholders to have insight and understanding into operations and policies. Transparency builds trust, mitigates corruption, and enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of operations.

In governance, transparency is fundamental to democratic processes and the rule of law. It ensures that citizens have access to information about governmental activities, decisions, and expenditures. This openness allows for public scrutiny, which is essential for holding public officials accountable. Transparency in governance is facilitated through mechanisms such as freedom of information laws, public records, open meetings, and transparent budgeting processes. These

mechanisms empower citizens to participate in decision-making processes and to hold their government accountable for its actions (Fox, 2017).

The concept of transparency in governance is closely linked to the principle of accountability. Accountability requires that government officials are answerable for their actions and decisions, and transparency provides the information necessary for this accountability. Without transparency, it would be challenging for citizens and oversight bodies to monitor government activities and ensure that officials are acting in the public interest. Transparency also helps to prevent corruption by exposing potential abuses of power and ensuring that public resources are used appropriately (Hood, 2016).

In the business world, transparency is equally important. It involves the disclosure of financial information, business practices, and decision-making processes to stakeholders such as investors, employees, customers, and regulators. Transparent business practices build trust and credibility, which are essential for maintaining good relationships with stakeholders. Companies that operate transparently are more likely to attract investment, retain customers, and foster a positive working environment (Tapscott and Ticoll, 2016).

Financial transparency is a crucial aspect of corporate transparency. It involves the accurate and timely disclosure of financial statements, earnings reports, and other relevant financial information. This openness ensures that investors and other stakeholders have the information they need to make informed decisions. Financial transparency is enforced through regulatory frameworks such as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) regulations in the United States and the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) globally. These regulations mandate that companies provide accurate and comprehensive financial disclosures (Bushman and Smith, 2016).

Operational transparency is another important dimension, involving openness about business practices, supply chains, and operational processes. This transparency is increasingly demanded by consumers who want to know how products are made, whether companies are adhering to ethical labor practices, and the environmental impact of business operations. Companies that provide this level of transparency can differentiate themselves in the marketplace and build stronger brand loyalty (Doorey, 2021).

Transparency in decision-making processes is also critical in organizational management. This involves being open about how decisions are made, who is involved in the decision-making process, and the criteria used to make decisions. When employees and other stakeholders understand these processes, they are more likely to trust and support the decisions made. Transparent decision-making fosters a culture of trust and collaboration within organizations, which can enhance performance and employee satisfaction (Bennis, Goleman, and O'Toole, 2018).

Transparency is not only about providing information but also about ensuring that the information is accessible and understandable. Information should be presented in a clear, concise, and user-friendly manner, avoiding technical jargon and overly complex language. This accessibility is crucial for ensuring that all stakeholders, regardless of their expertise or background, can understand and use the information provided. Effective communication strategies, including the use of visual aids and interactive platforms, can enhance the accessibility of information (Fung, Graham, and Weil, 2017).

The digital age has significantly impacted transparency, providing new tools and platforms for sharing information. The internet and social media have made it easier for organizations to disseminate information quickly and widely. These technologies have also increased the demand for transparency, as stakeholders now expect instant access to information. However, the digital age also presents challenges for transparency, such as the risk of information overload and the spread of misinformation. Organizations must navigate these challenges carefully, ensuring that they provide accurate and relevant information while managing the potential downsides of digital transparency (Meijer, Curtin, and Hillebrandt, 2018).

One of the key benefits of transparency is the building of trust. Trust is a critical component of any relationship, whether between government and citizens, businesses and customers, or employers and employees. When organizations are transparent, they demonstrate that they have nothing to hide and are willing to be open about their operations and decisions. This openness fosters trust, which can lead to greater cooperation, loyalty, and engagement from stakeholders (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, 2015).

Transparency also enhances accountability by making it easier to monitor and evaluate actions and decisions. When information is readily available, it becomes easier to assess whether individuals and organizations are meeting their responsibilities and obligations. This monitoring can help to identify and address issues before they become significant problems, thereby improving overall performance and effectiveness. Accountability mechanisms such as audits, evaluations, and performance reviews rely on transparency to function effectively (Mulgan, 2020).

In addition to building trust and enhancing accountability, transparency can also drive innovation and improvement. When organizations are open about their practices and challenges, they create opportunities for learning and collaboration. Stakeholders can provide valuable feedback and insights that can help to identify new solutions and improve existing processes. This collaborative approach can lead to more innovative and effective outcomes, as diverse perspectives and ideas are brought to bear on problems (Healy and Palepu, 2021).

However, achieving transparency is not without its challenges. One of the main challenges is balancing transparency with confidentiality and privacy. Organizations must be careful not to disclose sensitive or proprietary information that could harm their competitive position or violate privacy rights. This requires careful consideration of what information should be shared and how it should be communicated. Policies and guidelines can help to navigate these challenges, ensuring that transparency is maintained while protecting sensitive information (Florini, 2017).

2.3 Accountability and Organizational Performance

The effect of accountability on organizational performance has been a significant topic of study across various fields, including public administration, management, and organizational behavior. Accountability refers to the obligation of individuals or organizations to account for their activities, accept responsibility, and disclose the results transparently. It is a fundamental aspect of organizational governance and performance management systems.

Several studies have highlighted the positive impact of accountability on organizational performance. According to Bovens (2017), accountability mechanisms ensure that organizations operate transparently, leading to enhanced trust and credibility among stakeholders. This transparency is crucial for organizational effectiveness, as it fosters an environment of trust, reduces information asymmetry, and facilitates better decision-making processes. Furthermore, it

creates a culture of responsibility where employees and managers are more likely to adhere to organizational goals and standards, thereby improving overall performance.

In the public sector, accountability is often linked to improved service delivery and efficiency. Meier and O'Toole (2016), suggested that when public officials are held accountable, they are more likely to prioritize the needs of the public, resulting in better resource allocation and enhanced service outcomes. This is particularly important in public administration, where the primary objective is to serve the public interest. Effective accountability mechanisms ensure that public resources are used efficiently and ethically, thereby increasing the performance and trust in public institutions.

However, the relationship between accountability and organizational performance is not always straightforward. Vance, Lowry, and Eggett (2015), argued that excessive or improperly implemented accountability measures can lead to negative outcomes, such as stress, reduced job satisfaction, and a decrease in performance. This occurs when accountability is perceived as punitive rather than developmental. In such scenarios, employees may become more focused on avoiding blame rather than pursuing innovative or effective solutions, which can stifle creativity and hinder performance.

Moreover, the type and context of accountability mechanisms also play a crucial role. Lerner and Tetlock (2019), differentiated between process accountability, which focuses on the methods and procedures used to achieve outcomes, and outcome accountability, which emphasizes the results. While both forms are essential, they have different implications for organizational performance. Process accountability encourages adherence to best practices and standards, ensuring consistency and reliability in operations. In contrast, outcome accountability drives a results-oriented culture, where the primary focus is on achieving specific targets and objectives. Balancing these forms of accountability is key to optimizing organizational performance.

Accountability is also closely related to organizational culture. Denison and Mishra (2015), highlighted that a culture of accountability fosters an environment where employees are empowered to take ownership of their actions and decisions. This empowerment leads to higher levels of engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction, all of which contribute to improved organizational performance. A positive accountability culture promotes continuous learning and improvement, as employees are encouraged to reflect on their performance, seek feedback, and make necessary adjustments.

In the corporate sector, accountability is often linked to corporate governance and ethical behavior. Organizations with robust accountability frameworks tend to have better governance practices, which in turn enhance their performance. According to a study by Jensen and Meckling (2016), effective accountability mechanisms reduce agency problems by aligning the interests of managers with those of shareholders. This alignment ensures that managerial decisions are made in the best interest of the organization, leading to better financial performance and sustainability.

Furthermore, technological advancements have transformed how accountability is managed in organizations. The advent of digital tools and platforms has made it easier to track, monitor, and report on various aspects of organizational performance. For instance, performance management software enables real-time tracking of employee performance, making it easier to hold individuals accountable for their tasks and responsibilities. This technological integration enhances transparency and efficiency, leading to improved organizational performance (Aguinis, 2016).

Despite the benefits, implementing effective accountability systems poses several challenges. One significant challenge is ensuring that accountability mechanisms are fair and unbiased. When accountability systems are perceived as unfair, they can lead to resistance, decreased morale, and reduced performance. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to design accountability frameworks that are transparent, equitable, and based on clear criteria and standards (Behn, 2021). Additionally, organizations must provide adequate support and resources to help employees meet accountability expectations. This includes providing training, feedback, and opportunities for professional development, which are essential for fostering a culture of accountability and enhancing performance.

2.4 Integrity and Organizational Performance

The effect of integrity on organizational performance is a critical area of investigation in the fields of management, organizational behavior, and ethics. Integrity, often defined as the adherence to moral and ethical principles, plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture, trust, and overall effectiveness. The presence of integrity within an organization influences various aspects, from leadership to employee behavior and ultimately to organizational outcomes.

Integrity in leadership is a foundational element for fostering an ethical organizational culture. Leaders who exhibit high levels of integrity serve as role models, establishing standards of behavior that employees are likely to emulate. According to Simons (2002), behavioral integrity, or the alignment between words and actions, significantly impacts employee trust and organizational commitment. When leaders consistently demonstrate integrity, it enhances their credibility and inspires employees to adhere to ethical standards, which positively influences organizational performance.

Moreover, integrity in leadership contributes to better decision-making and strategic management. Brown and Treviño (2016), argued that ethical leaders are more likely to make decisions that consider the long-term consequences and the welfare of all stakeholders. This ethical consideration not only ensures compliance with legal and regulatory standards but also promotes a positive organizational reputation. A strong reputation for integrity can attract and retain customers, investors, and top talent, all of which are crucial for sustained organizational success.

2.5 Transparency and Organizational Performance

The effect of transparency on organizational performance is a significant topic of research within the fields of management, public administration, and organizational behavior. Transparency refers to the openness and clarity with which an organization communicates information to its stakeholders. This includes the disclosure of financial performance, operational processes, decision-making criteria, and other relevant activities. Transparency is often considered a cornerstone of good governance and ethical business practices, influencing various dimensions of organizational performance.

Several studies highlight the positive impact of transparency on organizational performance. According to Heald (2016), transparency enhances trust between the organization and its stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors, and the public. This trust is crucial for fostering a cooperative and supportive environment, which can lead to improved organizational outcomes. When stakeholders believe that an organization operates transparently, they are more likely to engage positively, support organizational initiatives, and contribute to its success.

In the realm of corporate governance, transparency is linked to better financial performance and investor confidence. Bushman, Piotroski, and Smith (2018), argued that transparent financial reporting reduces information asymmetry between management and investors. This reduction in information asymmetry leads to more accurate valuation of the organization, lower cost of capital, and increased investment. When investors are confident in the accuracy and reliability of financial information, they are more likely to invest, thereby enhancing the organization's financial stability and growth prospects.

Transparency also plays a vital role in enhancing internal organizational processes. According to O'Neill (2016), transparency in decision-making and communication processes promotes accountability and responsibility among employees and managers. When organizational goals, strategies, and expectations are communicated clearly, employees are better aligned with the organizational vision and are more likely to perform effectively. Clear communication reduces misunderstandings, improves coordination, and fosters a culture of accountability, where employees understand the consequences of their actions and decisions.

In the public sector, transparency is often associated with improved service delivery and public trust. Piotrowski and Van Ryzin (2017), suggest that when government agencies operate transparently, they are more likely to be perceived as legitimate and trustworthy by the public. This perception can lead to higher levels of citizen engagement and cooperation, which are essential for effective governance and service provision. Transparent operations in public administration help to reduce corruption, ensure the efficient use of resources, and improve the quality of public services.

Moreover, transparency is crucial in enhancing organizational reputation and stakeholder relationships. According to Fombrun and Van Riel (2018), an organization's reputation is significantly influenced by its perceived transparency. Organizations that consistently communicate openly and honestly are more likely to build strong, positive relationships with stakeholders. This reputation for transparency can serve as a competitive advantage, attracting customers, partners, and top talent, which in turn enhances organizational performance.

However, the implementation of transparency is not without challenges. Excessive transparency can lead to information overload, where stakeholders are overwhelmed with too much information, making it difficult to discern what is essential. According to Albu and Flyverbom (2019), while transparency can enhance accountability and trust, it must be managed carefully to avoid unintended consequences, such as misinterpretation of information or loss of competitive advantage. Organizations must strike a balance between being open and protecting sensitive information that could be detrimental if disclosed.

The impact of transparency on organizational performance is also influenced by the organizational culture and leadership. Leaders play a critical role in fostering a culture of transparency. According to Rawlins (2008), transparent leaders who communicate openly and honestly with employees set the tone for an organizational culture that values openness. This culture encourages employees to share information, collaborate, and engage in continuous improvement, leading to enhanced performance. Furthermore, organizations that prioritize transparency are more likely to implement effective communication channels and feedback mechanisms, which are essential for continuous learning and development.

Technological advancements have also transformed the ways in which transparency is implemented and perceived in organizations. The rise of digital platforms and social media has made it easier for organizations to share information with a wide audience quickly and efficiently. According to Tapscott and Ticoll (2016), digital transparency enhances stakeholder engagement by providing real-time access to information and facilitating interactive communication. This digital shift has the potential to improve organizational agility and responsiveness, contributing to better performance. Overall, Organizations that effectively implement transparency practices are better positioned to achieve sustainable success and resilience in a dynamic environment.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Ethical Leadership Theory. Ethical Leadership Theory has emerged as a significant framework within organizational behavior, focusing on the impact of leaders' ethical conduct on their followers and the overall organizational environment. Introduced by scholars such as Brown, Treviño, and Harrison in 2005, Ethical Leadership Theory integrates the principles of ethical behavior and leadership, highlighting the crucial role leaders play in establishing and maintaining ethical standards within organizations. These scholars posited that ethical leaders are both moral persons and moral managers, embodying and promoting ethical values through their actions and decisions.

At its core, Ethical Leadership Theory rests on several key tenets. Firstly, ethical leaders are characterized by personal integrity and moral virtue. They are seen as honest, trustworthy, and fair, consistently demonstrating ethical behavior in both their personal and professional lives. This moral person dimension ensures that ethical leaders are role models for their followers, setting a standard for behavior within the organization. Secondly, ethical leaders are moral managers. This involves actively managing ethics within the organization by setting clear ethical standards, communicating these standards to followers, and reinforcing them through rewards and punishments. Ethical leaders engage in transparent decision-making processes, encourage open communication about ethical issues, and provide guidance to employees on ethical matters.

Another fundamental tenet of Ethical Leadership Theory is the emphasis on the leader's role in creating an ethical organizational culture. Ethical leaders influence the organizational climate by fostering an environment of trust, respect, and fairness. They ensure that ethical considerations are integrated into the organization's strategic objectives and daily operations. This approach not only enhances the ethical behavior of individual employees but also promotes collective ethical standards, leading to a more cohesive and ethically responsible organization.

Despite its robust framework and wide acceptance, Ethical Leadership Theory has faced several criticisms. Critics argue that the theory may oversimplify the complex nature of ethics and leadership. Ethical behavior is often context-dependent, and what is considered ethical in one situation may not be in another. Thus, the theory may not fully capture the nuances and variability of ethical decision-making in different contexts. Additionally, some scholars suggest that Ethical Leadership Theory places too much emphasis on the individual leader, potentially neglecting the role of organizational structures, policies, and external factors in shaping ethical behavior. This focus on individual leaders may overlook the systemic issues that contribute to ethical lapses within organizations.

Another criticism is the potential for ethical leadership to be perceived as paternalistic or overly prescriptive. Employees may feel that ethical leaders impose their personal values on the

organization, leading to resistance or ethical dilemmas when employees' personal values differ from those of the leader. This could result in a lack of genuine ethical engagement among employees, as they may adhere to ethical standards out of obligation rather than personal conviction.

Despite these criticisms, Ethical Leadership Theory remains highly relevant and applicable to contemporary organizational contexts, particularly in this study. The Ministry of Education, being a public sector organization, operates under high ethical scrutiny and public accountability. Ethical leadership is essential in ensuring that the Ministry upholds integrity, transparency, and accountability in its operations, which are critical for gaining public trust and achieving its educational objectives.

Applying Ethical Leadership Theory to this study can provide valuable insights into how ethical leadership practices influence the behaviour of staff and propel them to greater performance. Ethical leaders in the Ministry of Education can set a strong ethical tone at the top, promoting ethical behavior among employees and fostering an organizational culture that prioritizes ethical considerations in decision-making and service delivery. This can enhance employee morale, reduce instances of unethical behavior such as corruption or favoritism, and improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Ministry.

Moreover, ethical leadership can contribute to better stakeholder relationships. In the context of the Ministry of Education, stakeholders include staff, students, parents, teachers, and the broader community. Ethical leaders can build trust and credibility with these stakeholders by demonstrating a commitment to ethical principles, thereby enhancing the Ministry's reputation and legitimacy. This can lead to increased stakeholder support and cooperation, which are essential for the successful implementation of educational policies and programs.

Furthermore, Ethical Leadership Theory can help identify potential barriers to ethical behavior within the Ministry and develop strategies to address them. For instance, by understanding the importance of ethical leadership, the Ministry can implement training programs to develop ethical leadership skills among its managers and leaders. This can create a ripple effect, as these leaders, in turn, promote ethical behavior among their subordinates, leading to a more ethical and performance-oriented organization.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted descriptive survey research design.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire which was designed and administered to 280 employees of the Anambra Ministry of Education, Awka. Also focus group discussion guide and in-depth interview were also tools used in eliciting data from respondents.

3.3 Population of the Study.

The population size of this research work is made up of employees of Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. The Anambra State Ministry of Education has staff strength of 280 workers which was used as the population of the study (Anambra state Civil Service Commission annual report, 2023). Since the population size of 280 employees in the Ministry is of manageable

proportion, the researchers decided to adopt the whole population, since the population was manageable.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected for this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation) and the inferential statistics (factor analysis, t-test statistics and the linear regression model) were used to test the hypotheses. The demographic profiles was processed using descriptive statistics. Objectives one to four were subjected to factor analysis for the purpose of data reduction in order to avoid having spurious result. Thereafter, the four objectives were processed using descriptive statistics (like percentages, mean and standard deviation) and the regression model of the Ordinary Least Square (OLS). T-test and F-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses of the study and the overall fitness of the model. All the analyses were done using SPSS version 23. Linear regression model of the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) approach was used to analyze the objectives in order to ascertain the influence and also determine the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable in the conceptualized model of the study. The use of Ordinary Least Square (OLS), was informed by the fact that under normality assumption for α_i , the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimator is normally distributed and is said to be best, unbiased linear estimator (Gujarati and Porter, 2008).

Thus, the model of this study, is stated as follows:

The functional form of the model is

$$OP = f(EL, ACC, INT, TRP) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

The mathematical form of the model is

$$OP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EL + \beta_2 ACC + \beta_3 INT + \beta_4 TRP \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

The econometric form of the model is

$$EC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EL + \beta_2 ACC + \beta_3 INT + \beta_4 TRP + \alpha_i \dots\dots (3)$$

Where; OP = Organizational Performance

EL = Ethical Leadership

ACC = Accountability

INT = Integrity

TRP = Transparency

β_0 = Intercept of the model

$\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = Parameters of the model

α_i = Stochastic error term

3.9 Apriori Expectations

Table 3.2: Economic a priori expectation

Parameters	Variables		Expected Relationships	Expected Coefficients
	Regressand	Regressor		
β_0		Intercept	(+/-)	$0 < \beta_0 > 0$
β_1	EAC	EL	+	$\beta_1 < 0$
β_2	EAC	ACC	+	$\beta_2 < 0$
β_3	EAC	INT	+	$B_3 < 0$

β_4	EAC	TRP	+	$\beta_4 < 0$
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Source: Researchers' compilation

The economic apriori expectation refers to the theoretical expectations of each of the nature of relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. A positive '+' sign indicates that the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is direct and moves in the same direction i.e. increase or decrease together. On the other hand, a '-' shows that there is an indirect (inverse) relationship between the dependent and independent variables i.e. they move in opposite or different direction.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

Factor Analysis

The variables of the objectives were variously subjected to factor analysis using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA), with the aid of SPSS version 24. Prior to performing PCA, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the rotation method is the varimax with Kaiser Normalization. The PCA was initially used to process the data because the researcher sought to reduce large amount of data to uncover the underlying principal factors that explain the topic under investigation.

Table 4.1.1: Factor Analysis Results with Varimax Rotation on Effect of Ethical Leadership on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Comp extracted	Organizations led by ethical leaders tend to have a better reputation, both internally and externally which can lead to increased organizational performance.	
Ethical Leadership 1	Ethical leadership fosters a positive work environment, which increases employee satisfaction and morale for high performance.	0.912
Ethical Leadership 2	Organizations led by ethical leaders tend to have a better reputation, both internally and externally which can lead to increased organizational performance.	0.931
Ethical Leadership 3	Ethical leadership fosters better relationships with all stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and the community, which can improve overall performance.	0.865
Ethical Leadership 4	Ethical leaders encourage open communication and collaboration, which can lead to increased innovation as employees feel safe to share ideas and take risks.	0.919
Ethical Leadership 5	A positive ethical climate can lead to better overall performance as employees are motivated to work towards the organization's goals.	0.920
Cum % variance		81.7%

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Note that items eigen values of variables less than 0.4 were excluded.

Table 4.1.6 above shows the eigen values with respect to items regarding effect of ethical leadership on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. Although one principal component emerged, the output shows that the appropriate label for the item is “organizations led by ethical leaders tend to have a better reputation, both internally and externally which can lead to increased organizational performance”. The import of this is that the main construct that influences organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka with respect to ethical leadership is, organizations led by ethical leaders tend to have a better reputation, both internally and externally which can lead to increased organizational performance.

Table 4.1.2: Factor Analysis Results with Varimax Rotation on Effect of Accountability on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Comp extracted	Accountability mechanisms can deter unethical behavior and reduce the likelihood of errors leading to improve performance.	
Accountability 1	Accountability mechanisms can deter unethical behavior and reduce the likelihood of errors leading to improve performance.	.932
Accountability 2	Accountability frameworks establish clear goals and performance expectations, helping employees understand what is required of them.	.878
Accountability 3	Accountability enhances performance monitoring which allows for timely corrections and improvements, leading to better overall performance.	.903
Accountability 4	A culture of accountability promotes a sense of ownership and pride in work which can attract and retain talent, further contributing to organizational success.	.851
Accountability 5	When employees know they are accountable for their work, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated to perform at their best leading to overall organizational performance.	.922
Cum % variance		78.3%

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Note that items eigen values of variables less than 0.4 were excluded.

Table 4.1.7 above shows the eigen values with respect to items regarding the effect of accountability on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. One principal component emerged; the output shows that the appropriate label for the item is that “Accountability mechanisms can deter unethical behavior and reduce the likelihood of errors leading to improve performance”. This implies that the key variable influencing organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka with respect to accountability is that accountability mechanisms can deter unethical behavior and reduce the likelihood of errors leading to improve performance.

Table 4.1.3: Factor Analysis Results with Varimax Rotation on Effect of Integrity on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Comp extracted	Integrity in organizational practices leads to public trust, which is crucial for long-term success.
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Integrity 1	Integrity in organizational practices leads to public trust, which is crucial for long-term success.	0.946
Integrity 2	A culture of integrity encourages open communication and collaboration, leading to innovation which is essential for improve performance.	0.901
Integrity 3	Organizations that prioritize integrity tend to have higher employee morale which is crucial for enhancing organizational performance.	0.912
Integrity 4	Integrity fosters a positive and supportive workplace culture leading to increased job performance.	0.944
Integrity 5	Organizations with a reputation for integrity are more likely to attract positive media attention and public support which can enhance the organization's performance.	0.892
Cum % variance		82.6%

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Note that items eigen values of variables less than 0.4 were excluded.

Table 4.1.8 above shows the eigen values with respect to items regarding effect of integrity on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. Although one principal component emerged, the output shows that the appropriate label for the item is “integrity in organizational practices leads to public trust, which is crucial for long-term success.” The import of this is that the main construct that influences organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka with respect to integrity, is integrity in organizational practices leads to public trust, which is crucial for long-term success.

Table 4.1.4: Factor Analysis Results with Varimax Rotation on Effect of Transparency on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Comp extracted	Transparency in policies, procedures, and performance metrics can lead to higher satisfaction levels among employees, leading to improved performance.	
Transparency 1	Organizations known for their transparency are more attractive to top talent that can enhance their performance.	0.879
Transparency 2	When procedures and criteria are clear, it reduces confusion and redundancy, leading to more efficient operations.	0.960
Transparency 3	Transparency in operations and decision-making processes fosters trust among employees, stakeholders, and the public leading improved performance.	0.950
Transparency 4	When everyone is aware of how decisions are made and resources are allocated, it builds a sense of trust and reliability in the organization which can enhance their performance.	0.921
Transparency 5	Transparency in policies, procedures, and performance metrics can lead to higher satisfaction levels among employees, leading to improved performance.	0.961

Cum % variance

86.0%

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Note that items eigen values of variables less than 0.4 were excluded.

Table 4.1.9 above shows the eigen values with respect to items regarding the effect of transparency on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. One principal component emerged; the output shows that the appropriate label for the item, is transparency in policies, procedures, and performance metrics can lead to higher satisfaction levels among employees, leading to improved performance. The import of this is that the main construct that influences organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka with respect to transparency, is transparency in policies, procedures, and performance metrics can lead to higher satisfaction levels among employees, leading to improved performance.

Descriptive Statistics Result

Table 4.1.5: Effect of Ethical Leadership on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Variables	N	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Ethical leadership fosters a positive work environment, which increases employee satisfaction and morale for high performance.	277	4.30	0.716	Accepted
Organizations led by ethical leaders tend to have a better reputation, both internally and externally which can lead to increased organizational performance.	277	4.51	0.911	Accepted
Ethical leadership fosters better relationships with all stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and the community, which can improve overall performance.	277	4.13	0.551	Accepted
Ethical leaders encourage open communication and collaboration, which can lead to increased innovation as employees feel safe to share ideas and take risks.	277	4.38	0.701	Accepted
A positive ethical climate can lead to better overall performance as employees are motivated to work towards the organization's goals.	277	4.06	0.945	Accepted
Grand Mean		4.28	0.765	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2024)

All the variables met the theoretical mean threshold of 3.0 which is the established mean cut-off. Thus, the descriptive statistics suggests that ethical leadership has influenced organizational performance commitment in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka with a grand mean of 4.28.

Table 4.1.6: Effect of Accountability on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Variables	N	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
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Accountability mechanisms can deter unethical behavior and reduce the likelihood of errors leading to improve performance.	277	4.25	1.113	Accepted
Accountability frameworks establish clear goals and performance expectations, helping employees understand what is required of them.	277	3.65	1.172	Accepted
Accountability enhances performance monitoring which allows for timely corrections and improvements, leading to better overall performance.	277	3.74	1.055	Accepted
A culture of accountability promotes a sense of ownership and pride in work which can attract and retain talent, further contributing to organizational success.	277	3.52	1.066	Accepted
When employees know they are accountable for their work, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated to perform at their best leading to overall organizational performance.	277	3.48	1.382	Accepted
Grand Mean		3.73	1.158	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

As shown in table 4.1.11, all the variables in the accountability phenomenon construct met the theoretical mean threshold of 3.0. We, therefore, conclude that accountability has influenced organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka with a grand mean of 3.73.

Table 4.1.7: Effect of Integrity on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Variables	N	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Integrity in organizational practices leads to public trust, which is crucial for long-term success.	277	4.37	0.862	Accepted
A culture of integrity encourages open communication and collaboration, leading to innovation which is essential for improve performance.	277	4.32	0.652	Accepted
Organizations that prioritize integrity tend to have higher employee morale which is crucial for enhancing organizational performance.	277	4.26	0.738	Accepted
Integrity fosters a positive and supportive workplace culture leading to increased job performance.	277	4.34	0.738	Accepted
Organizations with a reputation for integrity are more likely to attract positive media attention and public support which can enhance the organization's performance.	277	4.36	0.823	Accepted
Grand Mean		4.33	0.763	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

As shown in Table 4.1.12, all the variables meet the theoretical mean threshold of 3.0 which is the established mean cut-off. Thus, the descriptive statistics suggests that integrity has influenced organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka with a grand mean of 4.33.

Table 4.1.8 Effect of Transparency on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Variables	N	Mean	Std Dev	Remark
Organizations known for their transparency are more attractive to top talent that can enhance their performance.	277	3.93	1.060	Accepted
When procedures and criteria are clear, it reduces confusion and redundancy, leading to more efficient operations.	277	4.29	0.725	Accepted
Transparency in operations and decision-making processes fosters trust among employees, stakeholders, and the public leading improved performance.	277	3.86	1.094	Accepted
When everyone is aware of how decisions are made and resources are allocated, it builds a sense of trust and reliability in the organization which can enhance their performance.	277	4.38	0.775	Accepted
Transparency in policies, procedures, and performance metrics can lead to higher satisfaction levels among employees, leading to improved performance.	277	4.48	0.627	Accepted
Grand Mean		4.19	0.856	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Table 4.1.13 presents the mean scores assessing the impact of transparency on organizational performance in the Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. The results indicate that all variables exceed the theoretical mean threshold of 3.0. Consequently, the descriptive statistics suggest that transparency has significantly influenced organizational performance in the ministry, as reflected in a grand mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 0.856.

Regression Analysis Result

Table 4.1.9: Regression Result on Effect of Professional Ethics on Organizational Performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Model	B	Std. error	T	Sig.
Constant(C)	0.075	0.091	28.579	0.000
Ethical Leadership	0.399	0.064	11.098	0.273
Accountability	0.356	0.088	15.749	0.000
Integrity	0.526	0.003	10.046	0.006
Transparency	0.389	0.062	11.143	0.025
R	0.929			
R²	0.863			

Adj. R²	0.860	
F-statistic	331.601	0.000

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Dependent Variable: Organisational Performance

To examine the effect of professional ethics on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka, the weighted mean of the four independent variables were regressed on the dependent variable to enable us determine the nature of relationship between the dependent and independent variables, the overall fitness of the model using the F-statistics and probability value and the level of significance of the independent variables in influencing the dependent variables was determined using the t-test and probability value. The table above shows the regression result. It also shows the precision of the model which was analyzed using economic a priori criteria and statistical criteria.

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

The t-test is used to know the statistical significance of the individual parameters at 5% significance level. The result is showed on table 4.6.1 below.

Table 4.2.1: Summary of T-Statistics

Variables	t-cal (t_{cal})	Sig.	Conclusion
Constant(C)	0.075	0.000	Statistically Significant
Ethical Leadership	11.098	0.273	Statistically Significant
Accountability	15.749	0.000	Statistically Significant
Integrity	10.046	0.006	Statistically Significant
Transparency	11.143	0.025	Statistically Significant
F-statistic	331.601	0.000	Statistically Significant

Source: Researchers computation, (2024)

We begin by bringing our working hypothesis to focus in considering the individual hypothesis. From table 4.2.1, the t-test result is interpreted below:

Hypothesis One

H₀: Ethical leadership has no significant effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

H₁: Ethical leadership has significant effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

From table 4.2.1, the t-test value of ethical leadership, is significant. We, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and conclude that ethical leadership has significant effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: Accountability has a negative effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

H₁: Accountability has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

From table 4.2.1, the t-test value of accountability is significant at 0.000 level of significant. We therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate by concluding that accountability has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Hypothesis Three

H₀: Integrity has a negative effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

H₁: Integrity has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

From table 4.2.1, the t-test value of integrity is significant. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that integrity has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

Hypothesis Four

H₀: Transparency has a negative effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

H₁: Transparency has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

From table 4.2.1, the t-test value of transparency is significant. We, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and conclude that transparency has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

4.3 Discussion of Results

Following the analysis of the research questions and the test of hypotheses, the study made some critical findings. The first finding of the study revealed that ethical leadership has significant effect on organizational performance. Ethical leadership fosters a culture of trust, respect, and fairness, which are essential for achieving organizational goals. Leaders who exhibit ethical behavior inspire employees to adhere to high moral standards, thereby enhancing commitment, motivation, and productivity. This finding aligns with the Social Learning Theory, which posits that leaders serve as role models whose behavior influences employees' ethical conduct and work performance.

This result resonates with similar findings in existing literature. For instance, Brown and Treviño (2016) emphasized that ethical leadership positively correlates with employee performance, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior. They argued that ethical leaders establish a moral climate that promotes collective responsibility and accountability, leading to improved performance. Similarly, a study by Yukl et al. (2018) demonstrated that ethical leadership enhances organizational effectiveness by reducing unethical practices and promoting shared values that align with organizational objectives.

In the Nigerian context, Eneh and Onwuchekwa (2016) found that ethical leadership practices in public institutions significantly improve service delivery and operational efficiency. Their study on public sector organizations in Enugu State corroborated that ethical leadership mitigates corruption and instills discipline, which are critical for achieving organizational excellence.

In this study, the rejection of the null hypothesis highlights the importance of ethical leadership in overcoming bureaucratic inefficiencies and enhancing the quality of education services. The ministry can leverage ethical leadership to ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity in decision-making processes, thereby fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. Overall, the findings reinforce the pivotal role of ethical leadership as a catalyst for organizational success.

The second finding of the study established that accountability has a positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. Accountability ensures that individuals and groups within an organization take responsibility for their actions, decisions, and results. This leads to efficient resource management, timely delivery of services, and the achievement of organizational goals. By fostering a sense of responsibility, accountability reduces inefficiencies and enhances overall performance.

This finding aligns with existing literature. Bovens (2017) argued that accountability is a cornerstone of good governance and organizational success. His study shows that organizations with robust accountability mechanisms experience higher levels of transparency, trust, and stakeholder satisfaction. Similarly, Mulgan (2020) highlighted that accountability strengthens organizational performance by creating systems that reward compliance and penalize non-compliance, fostering an environment of discipline and productivity.

In the Nigerian context, studies have confirmed the positive impact of accountability on organizational performance. For instance, Ume and Ezeh (2018) examined accountability practices in Nigerian public sector organizations and found that they significantly enhance operational efficiency and service delivery. Their study revealed that when public officers are held accountable, corruption and mismanagement are reduced, paving the way for improved organizational outcomes.

The rejection of the second null hypothesis signifies that accountability is vital for improving educational standards. Implementing measures such as regular performance appraisals, financial audits, and transparent reporting mechanisms can ensure that resources are effectively utilized to achieve the ministry's objectives. Moreover, accountability fosters trust among stakeholders, including employees, students, and the public, further enhancing the ministry's reputation and effectiveness. Overall, this finding underscores the indispensable role of accountability in driving organizational performance, consistent with findings from other contexts and sectors.

In addition, this study found that integrity has a positive effect on organizational performance. Integrity, characterized by honesty, consistency, and adherence to moral and ethical principles, is a critical factor in building trust, fostering collaboration, and achieving organizational goals. When leaders and employees demonstrate integrity, it creates a culture of reliability and accountability, which positively impacts performance and service delivery.

This finding aligns with existing research. Becker (20188) highlighted that integrity is a foundational element of ethical behavior and organizational success. The study argues that organizations with a strong culture of integrity experience higher employee morale, reduced instances of unethical practices, and improved stakeholder relationships. Similarly, Palanski and Yammarino (2017) emphasize that integrity is crucial for effective leadership, as it fosters trust and motivates employees to perform at their best.

In the Nigerian public sector, studies also affirm the role of integrity in enhancing organizational performance. Eze and Nwanegbo (2017) examined the relationship between integrity and performance in Nigerian public institutions and found that organizations with a strong commitment to ethical principles are more effective in achieving their objectives. Their study revealed that integrity reduces corruption, enhances transparency, and promotes a sense of fairness, all of which are essential for organizational success.

This result from this study highlights the importance of integrity in addressing challenges such as corruption, favoritism, and inefficiencies. By promoting integrity through policies, training, and exemplary leadership, the ministry can build trust among stakeholders, improve decision-making processes, and achieve its mandate of providing quality education services.

Furthermore, findings from this study revealed that transparency has a positive effect on organizational performance. Transparency, defined as openness in decision-making, operations, and communication, promotes trust, accountability, and efficiency. When organizations operate transparently, they foster a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, which enhances employee performance and stakeholder confidence.

This finding aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of transparency in improving organizational outcomes. According to Heald (2016), transparency enhances decision-making processes and reduces corruption by ensuring that organizational activities are visible and subject to scrutiny. His study highlights that organizations with transparent practices are more likely to build trust among employees and stakeholders, leading to better performance and sustained growth.

Furthermore, Okoye and Onyekachi (2019) investigated transparency practices in the public sector and found that they significantly improve service delivery and reduce inefficiencies. Their study emphasized that transparency fosters public trust and ensures that resources are allocated and utilized appropriately to achieve organizational objectives.

The rejection of the null hypothesis underscores the importance of transparency in overcoming challenges such as resource mismanagement and poor service delivery. Implementing transparent systems, such as open budgeting, regular audits, and stakeholder engagement, can enhance the ministry's operations and contribute to its performance. Transparency also helps to create an ethical work environment where employees are motivated to align their efforts with organizational goals.

5. Findings, conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

1. Ethical leadership has significant positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

2. Accountability has significant positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
3. Integrity has significant positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.
4. Transparency has significant positive effect on organizational performance in Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka.

5.2 Conclusion

The study examined the effect of professional ethics on organizational performance with a focus on the Anambra State Ministry of Education, Awka. The findings revealed that ethical leadership, accountability, integrity, and transparency significantly enhance organizational performance. These elements create a culture of trust, commitment, and efficiency, enabling the ministry to achieve its objectives effectively. The study concludes that professional ethics is a critical driver of organizational success and should be prioritized to ensure sustained productivity and improved service delivery.

5.3 Recommendations

1. The ministry should institutionalize ethical leadership through capacity-building programs such as workshops and training. These initiatives will equip leaders with the knowledge and skills to model ethical behaviors, foster trust, and inspire employees toward higher performance.
2. The ministry should implement robust accountability systems, including regular audits and performance evaluations. These mechanisms will ensure that resources are used effectively and that individuals are held responsible for their actions.
3. The ministry should establish a code of conduct that emphasizes integrity and ethical behavior. In addition to this, reward systems can be introduced to recognize employees who demonstrate honesty and adherence to ethical standards.
4. The ministry should adopt open communication practices and ensure that decision-making processes are transparent. Providing access to information through regular reports and stakeholder engagement sessions will build trust and encourage participation.

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