

The Role of Work Ethics in Improving Employee Performance in Telecommunications Companies: A Case Study of Algeria Telecom Company

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Abstract:

This study examines the relationship between work ethics and employee performance. The main objective was to identify the role that work ethics (through a set of work ethics dimensions) can play in improving employee performance through indicators such as efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, and quality. Questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of respondents consisting of Algeria Telecom employees. Due to the small size of the study population, the total sampling method was adopted. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that work ethics plays a significant role in improving employee performance by improving effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and quality.

Key words: Work, Ethics, Employee performance, Key Performance Indicators (KPI), Algeria Telecom Company.

Jel Classification Codes: L29

1. INTRODUCTION

Over time, business organizations, including service organizations, have realized that customer satisfaction is the key to success. As a result of increasing competition, many service companies are seeking to differentiate their services through customer satisfaction. They have also become aware that they have ethical, environmental and social responsibilities towards

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other stakeholders in society. (Aksoy, Buoye, Fors, Keiningham, & Rosengren, 2022). So, their main concern today is how to satisfy customers. (Gremmler & Brown, 1996).

Since services are intangible, service companies find it more difficult to assess customer satisfaction. It has therefore become essential for them to understand the factors that can influence customer satisfaction. To identify these factors, numerous studies have been conducted, most of which have concluded that success in customer satisfaction in service companies depends on many direct and indirect factors. Among these factors we find employee performance. The quality of customer service in companies is often affected by poor employee performance and a lack of training in the necessary skills (Setiawana, Junaedia, & Chandraa, 2021). Therefore, it is in the interest of employers to nurture the intrinsic motivations of employees if they want them to align with the organization's goals (Camilleri, Troise, & Morrison, 2024).

Employee performance is always dependent on various organizational factors, such as job satisfaction, engagement, commitment, work environment, competencies, and other subjective factors such as self-confidence and entrepreneurial spirit. Monitoring these factors helps management enhance employee performance. This is crucial because once performance is undesirably affected by these factors, it can be difficult to realize organizational purpose.

Employee performance is always a function of various organizational factors, such as job satisfaction, engagement, commitment, work environment, skills, and other personal factors such as self-confidence and an entrepreneurial mindset. Monitoring these factors can help management to boost employee performance. This is very important because once performance is negatively affected by these dimensions, it may be difficult to achieve organizational goals.

Given the critical importance of employee performance, much research has been conducted to define and measure it. The ethical considerations adopted by individuals within an organization have been the subject of major studies in recent years, as unethical employee behavior significantly tarnishes a company's reputation (Valentine & Barnett, 2007). Despite this,

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research examining the perceived impact of work ethics on employee's performance remains limited. However, today's business landscape underscores the urgent need for empirical investigation on the impact of good work ethics on individual job satisfaction and performance (PANIGRAHI & AL-NASHASH, 2019).

Telecommunications companies are among the service providers that struggle to satisfy customers. Customers in the telecom sector, whether businesses or individuals, have the option of switching from one service provider to another due to the tough competitive market, where customers seek better services at lower prices. Annual customer turnover in the telecom sector ranges from 10% to 67%. Attracting a new customer costs between 5 and 10 times more than retaining an existing one (Othman & Kamarohim, 2022). In this context, business ethics can make a difference. They are critical in enabling telecom companies to retain customers and acquire new ones.

In Algeria, Algeria Telecom is one of the largest telecommunications companies. It is a leader. Since its inception, it has set three main objectives: increasing the supply of telephone services and facilitating participation in various telecommunications services for the largest number of users, especially in rural areas; increasing the quality and variety of services offered, making them more competitive in the market; and developing and enhancing national telecommunications networks and the effectiveness of their delivery using various technological means.

By surveying the opinions of a sample of employees working at Algeria Telecom Setif, the aim of this study was to learn more about how high or low work ethics can contribute to encouraging or discouraging employee performance. It discusses the role of work ethics in improving employee performance through indicators of effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and productivity.

2. THEORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

In this section, we present the conceptual framework of the study variables and previous studies, which will help us to build the study model and develop appropriate hypotheses.

2.1 Employee performance Concept and its indicators :

Employee performance is one of the most important variables that have attracted researchers' interest for decades (Jankingthong & Rurkkhum, 2012). It has been defined in various ways and from multiple perspectives. According to Armstrong & al, work performance reflects the result of work that is closely related to the organization's goals (Armstrong & Baron, 1998). It was defined as the work results that can be achieved by an individual or group of individuals in an organization, in accordance with their respective authorities and responsibilities, in order to legally achieve the organization's objectives, without violating the law, and correspondingly with the organization's ethics (Setiawana, Junaedia, & Chandraa, 2021). For their part, (Rokima & Tentamab, 2020) explain that performance reflects the level of achievement of a program, task, or policy in determining the organizational goals, objectives, vision, and missions defined by the organization's strategy.

According to Cambell's theory, employee performance is multidimensional. At the very least, we can distinguish between work performance and contextual performance (Campbell J. P., 2012). More recently, an analytical framework for employee performance was proposed through a systematic, multidisciplinary literature review (Koopman, et al, 2011). It was concluded that job performance consists of four general, broad dimensions. The first dimension, task performance, refers to the activities that employees perform to contribute to the overall performance of the organization. The second dimension, contextual performance, refers to employee activities that enhance organizational effectiveness by supporting the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which central job tasks are performed. The third dimension, adaptive performance, refers to an employee's ability to adapt to changes in his tasks and in the work environment (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007). The fourth dimension is counterproductive work behavior, which is behavior that

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negatively affects the organization's performance (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002).

To evaluate employee performance, we can use so-called employee performance indicators (KPIs). According to (Nugraha & Handayani, March 2024), KPIs are tools for measuring how well an employee has accomplished his job. The main KPIs used to evaluate employee performance vary across organizations and sectors, but there are some common indicators. In a study by (Koopmans, Bernards, Hildebrandt, De Vet, & Van der Beek, 2013), The results showed that out of 26 indicators related to the task performance dimension, five were identified: quality of work (69%), planning and organizing work (56%), focus on results (46%), setting priorities (45%), and work efficiency (44%). These can be relied upon as indicators of employee performance.

Generally, there are many indicators that can be used to judge employee performance, but the most common are those related to effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and quality. These terms are defined as follows (Debebe, 2022 ; Robbins & Judge, 2012):

1. Effectiveness: It is related to the extent to which the set goals are achieved.
2. Efficiency: It is measured by the relationship between the inputs and outputs of the production process.
3. Quality: It relates to the extent of responsiveness to customer requirements and aspirations.
4. Productivity: Productivity at work is the amount of work an employee can complete within a specific period of time.

2.2 Work Ethics Concept and Dimensions:

An important consideration and growing concern in the workplace is ethics. Many researchers believe that ethics involves a set of concepts and principles aimed at guiding members of society in specific social and environmental attitudes (Hermann, 2022). According to (Huberts, 2007), ethics are a set of values and rules that serve as criteria or measures for evaluating the integrity of individual conduct and determine what constitutes right or wrong behavior (Fajana, Human resource management:

An introduction, 2006). In his earlier publications, (Pojman, 2000) presents four domains in which ethics are typically conceptualized: actions (right, wrong, permissible), consequences (good, bad, indifferent), character (virtuous, evil), motivation (good intentions, and evil).

For the term « work », It was seen that people held multiple meanings of work at the same time. Work is a global phenomenon with diverse uses, from formal to informal activities, both in the primitive and contemporary sense. The simplest definition of work is that it is an activity that produces something of value to people and to society, and these activities can be paid or unpaid.

Despite the various definitions given to the term work, it remains difficult to provide a unified definition that encompasses the various dimensions of this concept. This difficulty stems from the fact that work is simultaneously an economic, philosophical, and sociological concept that encompasses two interconnected dimensions: On the one hand, it is essential to humans because it is the source of their identity, dignity, and means of existence (Dereymez, 1995). On the other hand, it is part of the income distribution system, as it is an element of economic production. In other words, it is a means of social integration (Friedman & Naville, *Traité de Sociologie du travail*, 1964).

Work ethic is a concept that arises when individuals rely on their personal values, beliefs, and standards to determine appropriate conducts, seeking to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and sin, justice and breach, etc (Blay, Gooden, Mellon, & Stevens, 2019). Work ethics has been defined differently by different researchers. Bazzzy considers work ethic as "the attitude an individual displays toward work and stressful tasks"(Bazzzy, 2018). Boyer defines Work ethics as “a set of specific principles or rules that must be respected and can be described as an analysis of the means of applying the ethical standards of individuals in their concrete decisions taken within the organization that affect the decisions of actors or the organization as a whole”(BOYER, 2002) .

Work ethics are standards of behavior that guide individual workers in their work and in their relationships with their coworkers, customers, and

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other economic agents (competitors, shareholders, suppliers, merchants, etc.). Traditional Work ethics emphasize that work is inherently good and that through hard work one can overcome obstacles and succeed in life (Yoder & Staudohar, 1982). Thus, Work ethics represent what should and should not be done at workplace.

There has been conflict among researchers regarding the measurement of work ethics. Some researchers believe that work ethics are multidimensional. For example, Van Ness et al (Van Ness, Melinsky, Buff, & Seifert, 2010) asserted that work ethic is a multidimensional construct comprising seven dimensions: self-reliance, morality/ethics, leisure, hard work, work centrality, time wasting, and delayed gratification. Miller et al (Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth, 2002) argue that the construct of work ethic is multidimensional. Conversely, (Sharma & Rai, 2015) rejected this notion. Multidimensional measures of work ethics were based on the fact that these aspects have not been subjected to rigorous validity evaluation. The researchers succeeded in finding that work ethics is a one-dimensional construct. It consists of three components: work centrality, an ethical approach to work, and inherent incentive to work.

2. 3 Literature Review: Research Model and Hypotheses Development

The need to determine the effects and causes of workplace ethics has become increasingly important in recent times (Mohamat Nor, Ma'rof & Sulaiman, 2023) due to the changes occurring in the concept and importance of work as a result of the development of activity sectors, especially in the field of services. Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the role of work ethics in achieving organizational prosperity by examining its impact on various aspects that influence organizational performance. Most results have shown that Work ethics have a positive impact. These results are primarily due to the fact that Work Ethics are values-based motivation for work (Byrne, 2017), and that powerful work ethics within an organization are key to employee ethical conduct.

Regarding its impact on employee performance, most studies have proven that good work ethics can improve employee performance. Research evidence has shown that strong work ethics contribute to good work

performance, while poor or low performance results from weak or neglected work ethics (Qamar & Tanwar, 2021), Debebe, 2022, Ntayi, 2006, Ghorpade, 2005, Rokhman, 2010, Meriak, 2012, Linz & Chu, 2012, etc. While some studies have shown that a good work ethic has failed to improve employee performance (Shafissalam & Misbahuddin Azzuhri, 2014). Workers known for unethical practices reap the rewards without deterrent.

The role of work ethics in improving employee performance in organizations can be summarized in the following points: Increased productivity: Employees with high work ethics are often more productive and efficient in their jobs than others, leading to improved performance. Improved work quality: Employees with strong work ethics love their work and strive to consistently deliver high-quality work. Enhanced job satisfaction: Employees with high work ethics are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs, as they feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in their work. Improved organizational outcomes: Organizations that encourage and promote good work ethics often achieve higher levels of productivity, better customer service, increased employee retention, and overall achievement of organizational goals.

(Qamar & Tanwar, 2021).

Based on the conceptual framework and a review of existing literature, this conceptual model (Figure 1) was developed, defining the independent and dependent variables:

The independent variable addressed in this study is work ethics. We selected a set of commonly accepted ethics: respect for laws and regulations, fairness, proficiency, respect for time, confidentiality, honesty, responsibility, teamwork, respect and good treatment, integrity, and transparency.

The dependent variable is employee job performance. Four indicators were selected from the indicators identified in the theoretical framework: effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and quality.

Figure 1: Study model

Independent variable

Dependant Variable

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The model proceeds from the premise that employees with a high work ethic perform better at work than employees with weak work ethics. It also indicates that employee performance is affected by work ethics through a number of variables, such as integrity, sense of responsibility, discipline, quality, and sense of teamwork. Therefore, we propose the following main hypothesis:

Main Research Hypothesis: H0: Work ethics do not contribute to improving employee performance at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. **H1:** Work ethics contribute to improving employee performance at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

In accordance with the main hypothesis, we suggest the following sub-hypotheses:

Sub-Hypothesis 1: H0: Work ethics do not contribute to improving employee effectiveness at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. **H1:** Work ethics contribute to improving employee effectiveness at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

Sub-Hypothesis 2: H0: Work ethics do not contribute to improving employee efficiency at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. **H1:** Work ethics

contribute to improving employee efficiency at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

Sub-Hypothesis 3: H0: Work ethics do not contribute to improving employee productivity at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

H1: Work ethics contribute to improving employee productivity at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

Sub-Hypothesis 4: H0: Work ethics do not contribute to improving work quality at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. **H1:** Work ethics contribute to improving work quality at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

3. STUDY METHODOLOGY:

3.1 Population and Sampling :

Given the small size of the study population, which consisted of all employees of Algeria Telecom in Setif, we adopted the total sample method. The total sample method takes the entire population as the study sample (Suprianto, Febriansyah, Rahman, & Niswaty, 2024). Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed to all employees of Algeria Telecom in Setif, who constitute the study population, numbering 80 individuals. However, only 55 questionnaires were returned. We received completed and valid questionnaires from 53 employees. Males constituted 73.6% of the sample, while females constituted 26.4%. Most of them held university degrees (49.1%). Most of them had more than six years of experience (81.1%). The average experience was 10 years.

3.2 Data Collection Tools :

Data were collected through research questionnaires. Its items were developed based on several studies, such as (Abun, Julian, and Ballesteros, 2022) and (Sharma and Rai, 2015). The reliability of these items was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which proved to have good reliability, as shown in the table.

Table (1): Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability for the axes of the questionnaire

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
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	(questions)	Coefficient value
Effectiveness	10	0,762
Productivity	10	0,673
Efficiency	10	0,772
Quality	10	0,839
Total	40	0,925

3.3 Statistical Data Processing:

To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The weighted mean was used to determine the level of work ethics and employee performance, while the one-sample t-test was used to test the validity of the hypotheses.

The following statistical ranges will be used, along with their descriptive interpretation:

Table (2): Statistical ranges

Statistical range	Descriptive interpretation
1-1.66	Disagree
1.67-2.33	Neutral
2.34-3	Agree

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS:

4.1 Descriptive statistics of the study results:

In this section, we present descriptive statistics of the study results in the form of frequencies, percentages, arithmetic means, and standard deviations. We also present the results of the skewness and kurtosis coefficients to determine whether the data follow a normal distribution. Relying on the Kolmogorov- Smirnov and Shapiro statistical tests can produce misleading results because they depend on statistical significance, which is related to the study sample size.

Table (3): Descriptive statistics results

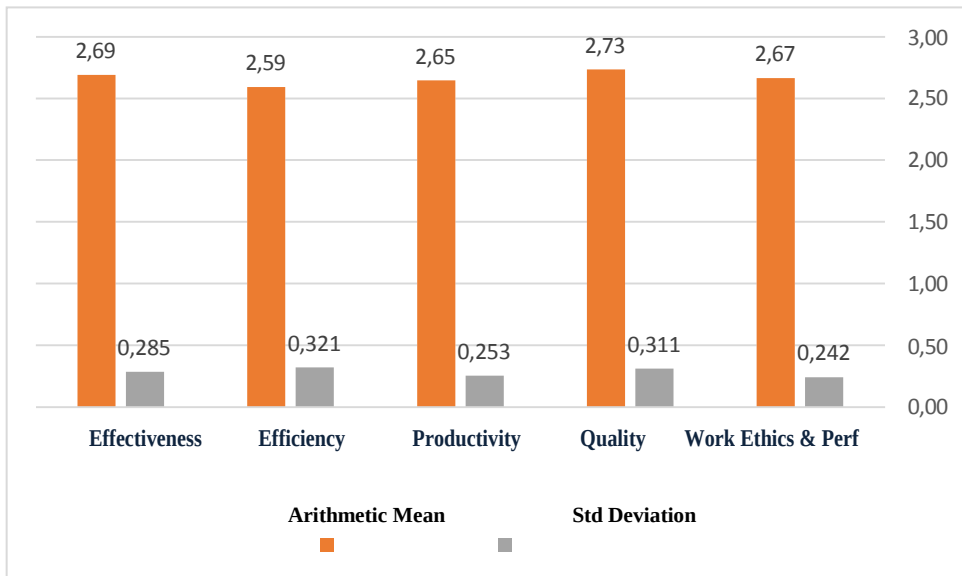
Variables	Sample	Arithmetic	Standard	Skewness	Kurtosis
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	Size	Mean	Deviation	Coefficient	Coefficient t
Effectiveness	53	2.69	0.285	-0,693	-0,682
Productivity	53	2.59	0.321	-0,752	-0,129
Efficiency	53	2.65	0.253	-0,734	1,067
Quality	53	2.73	0.311	-0,890	-0,483
Work ethics and employee performance	53	2.67	0.242	-0,684	-0,224

The results of the table show that the arithmetic mean of the effectiveness index is 2.69 with a standard deviation of 0.285, the arithmetic mean of the productivity index is 2.593 with a standard deviation of 0.321, the arithmetic mean of the efficiency index is 2.65 with a standard deviation of 0.253, and the arithmetic mean of the quality index is 2.73 with a standard deviation of 0.311. The skewness coefficients of the variables range between [+1.1-] and the kurtosis coefficients range between [+3.3-], which indicates that the data of the variables follow a normal distribution.

To further clarify the table data, we show the following figure:

Figure (2): Descriptive statistics results



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4.2. Hypothesis testing results:

To test the hypotheses and reach conclusions and recommendations that achieve the study's objectives, we used appropriate statistical methods for hypothesis testing, namely the One-sample t-test, to test the main hypothesis and sub-hypotheses using SPSS.

The following table show the results of the One-sample t-test on the contribution of work ethics to improving employee performance in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and quality.

Table (4): Results of the differences in the role of job ethics in improving the effectiveness of employees

Variables	Sample Size	Arithmetic Mean	hypothetical mean	t Value	significance value	significance Level
Work Ethics & Employees performance	53	2.67	2,00	20.014	0.00	0.05
Effectiveness Indicator	53	2.69	2,00	17.637	0.00	0.05
Efficiency Indicator	53	2.65	2,00	18.560	0.00	0.05
Productivity Indicator	53	2.59	2,00	13.438	0.00	0.05
Quality Indicator	53	2.73	2,00	17.199	0.00	0.05

The results shown in the table indicate that the arithmetic mean value of the role of work ethics in improving employee performance is equal to 2.67. As for the indicators of effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and quality, they are as follows: 2.69, 2.65, 2.59, 2.73. These values are greater than the hypothetical mean value of 2. The values of the statistical test t, which are 20.014 for the relation work ethics and employee performance, and 17.637, 18.560, 13.438, 17.199 for the indicators: effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and quality. These values are statistically significant values with a significance of 0.00 because it are smaller than the

significance level $\alpha = 0.05$. Accordingly, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Therefore, we accept the following hypotheses:

- * **General Hypothesis:** H1: Work ethics contribute to improving employee performance at a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$.
- * **Sub-Hypothesis 1:** H1: Work ethics contribute to improving employee effectiveness at a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$.
- * **Sub-Hypothesis 2:** H1: Work ethics contribute to improving employee efficiency at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.
- * **Sub-hypothesis 3:** H1: Work ethics contribute to improving employee productivity at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.
- * **Sub-Hypothesis 4 :** H1: Work ethics contribute to improving work quality at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

4.3 Results Summary and discussion:

The study results confirmed the validity of the hypotheses, namely that work ethics contribute significantly and positively to improving employee performance by enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and quality of their work, with an overall mean of 2.67. This result was consistent with the results of previous studies that demonstrated the positive role and impact of work ethics on employee performance (Qamar & Tanwar, 2021; Debebe, 2022; Ntayi, 2006; Ghorpade, 2005; Rokhman, 2010; Meriak, 2012; Linz & Chu, 2012). Below, we will attempt to interpret and discuss the results for each indicator separately:

Work Ethics and Employee Effectiveness : The results showed that work ethics contribute significantly to employee effectiveness at Algeria Telecom, with an overall mean of 2.69. This means that most Algeria Telecom employees agree that their commitment to the aforementioned work ethics elements leads to effectiveness through the achievement of the organization's goals. For example, they agree that employees' respect for rules and regulations, commitment to work, and a sense of fairness and equality in the performance evaluation process motivate them to consistently do their best to complete the work in the best possible manner and in the manner planned to achieve the organization's goals.

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Work Ethics and Employee Efficiency: The study results showed a positive relationship between work ethics and employee performance in terms of efficiency. The overall mean was 2.59, meaning that employee ethics is a statistically significant factor in improving employee efficiency. For example, respondents agreed that an employee's commitment to completing work and making up for absenteeism to ensure timely completion increases their efficiency and commitment.

Work Ethics and Employee Productivity: The study results revealed that, according to Algeria Telecom employees, work ethics play a direct and indirect role in improving employee performance by increasing productivity. The arithmetic mean for this indicator was 2.65. Most of the respondents believe that their commitment to the laws and regulations governing working time leads to reduced absences and the timely completion of tasks, which positively impacts employee productivity. At the same time, they emphasize that they have every right to object to decisions made against them if their productivity is consistent with the organization's goals. In conclusion, Algeria Telecom employees believe that when the work ethics elements are present, employees feel connected to their organization, feel integrated into it, and understand its goals. As a result, they demonstrate relatively high productivity.

Work Ethics and Work Quality: The results of our study revealed that work ethics positively contribute to improving work quality. The overall Mean for this indicator was 2.73. The results showed that most of the employees surveyed agreed that their respect for laws and regulations contributes to customer satisfaction. They also agreed that employees' proficiency in their work leads to prompt service delivery and a satisfactory quality. They also agreed that employees' honest and trustworthy treatment of customers and coworkers leads to high-quality service. Employees' responsibility for the quantity and quality of services leads to their commitment to provide the quality that customers desire

5. CONCLUSION

The study addressed the role that work ethics can play in improving employee performance. The study results demonstrated a positive

contribution of work ethics to improving employee performance. Most respondents agreed that the set of work ethics the study focused on—respect for laws and regulations, justice, mastery, respect for time, confidentiality, honesty, responsibility, teamwork, respect and good treatment, integrity, and transparency—all contribute to improving employee performance by enhancing effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, and quality. We demonstrated that these results were largely consistent with the results of previous studies presented in the theoretical framework.

The objective of studying this topic is to highlight the importance of work ethics for service organizations and, consequently, to increase awareness among these types of organizations of the ethical considerations that impact their performance. In light of these objectives and in light of the findings, we propose the following recommendations for Algerian institutions as a whole:

- Priority should be given to hiring individuals with strong work ethics and maintaining a culture that promotes ethical behavior.
- It is important to regularly evaluate employee performance using a combination of evaluations and feedback from managers and colleagues.
- Promote a culture of ethical behavior and business ethics by providing training and development opportunities for employees, encouraging open communication, and establishing clear guidelines for ethical behavior.
- Ensure that ethical behavior is reflected in the organization's policies, procedures, and business practices.
- Evaluating employee performance in terms of ethical behavior and work ethics is critical to maintaining a strong ethical culture within the organization.
- Use various tests and assessments to evaluate employee behavior, identify areas for improvement, reward ethical behavior, and address any unethical behavior immediately.
- Provide an appropriate code of ethics for employees as a guide to encourage them to improve their performance.

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