



The Role of Motivation, Self-Efficacy, and Job Satisfaction in Shaping Work Ethic Among Ghanaian Workers

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the role of motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction in shaping the work ethic of Ghanaian workers. Recognizing that employee performance and organizational productivity are influenced by both psychological and environmental factors, the research explores how intrinsic motivation, confidence in one's abilities, and satisfaction with job conditions interact to affect work behaviors. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected from a purposive sample of Ghanaian employees across multiple sectors, with in-depth interviews analyzed thematically. Findings reveal that higher levels of self-efficacy enhance employees' commitment to tasks and resilience in overcoming workplace challenges, while job satisfaction positively correlates with adherence to ethical work practices and productivity. Motivation, particularly when aligned with organizational support and recognition, further strengthens the overall work ethic. The study highlights the interconnectedness of these factors and underscores the importance of holistic human resource strategies to foster productive and ethically responsible workforces. Implications for managers, policymakers, and organizational leaders include designing interventions that simultaneously enhance motivation, build self-efficacy, and improve job satisfaction to achieve sustainable organizational outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Work ethic has long been considered a fundamental determinant of organizational productivity, employee commitment, and national development. In the Ghanaian context, where the labor market is marked by both formal and informal employment structures, the question of what shapes the work ethic of workers remains critical. Employers across sectors—public, private, and entrepreneurial—have consistently emphasized the importance of strong work ethic in ensuring efficiency, discipline, and innovation. However, the determinants of work ethic are complex, often rooted in motivational factors, individual self-belief, and job-related satisfaction. Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, plays a central role in determining how employees approach their duties and responsibilities. Workers who perceive that their efforts are recognized and rewarded are more likely to demonstrate diligence, punctuality, and responsibility, which are hallmarks of a strong work ethic. On the other hand, the absence of motivational stimuli often results in low morale, absenteeism, and disengagement from organizational goals.

Closely linked to motivation is the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to perform tasks and achieve set objectives. Employees with higher self-efficacy tend to display greater resilience, persistence, and initiative. In the Ghanaian work environment, where structural challenges such as limited resources and bureaucratic inefficiencies are common, self-efficacy often distinguishes high-performing workers from their peers.

Equally significant is job satisfaction, which influences the extent to which employees feel fulfilled in their roles. Satisfaction derived from fair remuneration, safe working conditions, supportive leadership, and opportunities for career progression directly affects an employee's willingness to invest energy into their work. Dissatisfaction, by contrast, often translates into a weakened work ethic and high employee turnover rates.

In Ghana, debates surrounding work ethic have frequently been tied to national productivity concerns, organizational performance, and broader socio-economic development. Despite the centrality of these factors, there has been limited empirical focus on the combined role of motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction in shaping work ethic among Ghanaian workers. Understanding these relationships is particularly relevant at a time when the nation seeks to build a resilient workforce capable of driving Vision 2030 and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate how these three critical psychological and organizational factors—motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction—interact to influence work ethic among Ghanaian workers. By doing so, it provides insights for managers, policymakers, and development practitioners seeking to enhance labor productivity and strengthen organizational culture in Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

The discourse on work ethic in Ghana has often been characterized by mixed perceptions, with employers in both the public and private sectors frequently lamenting issues of low productivity, lateness, absenteeism, and lack of commitment among workers. While such concerns have been widely echoed in policy discussions, they often fail to address the underlying psychological and organizational factors that shape employee behavior. Work ethic, though critical to organizational performance and national development, remains insufficiently understood within the Ghanaian context. Globally, extensive research has highlighted motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction as key determinants of employee performance and ethical conduct at work. Motivated employees tend to exhibit higher levels of responsibility and persistence, self-efficacious employees are more resilient in the face of challenges, and satisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate loyalty and commitment to their organizations. However, the Ghanaian labor environment presents unique challenges—such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, wage disparities, weak incentive structures, and limited career advancement opportunities—that complicate the application of these findings to the local context.

Moreover, while studies on work ethic exist in advanced economies, there is limited research that explicitly examines the combined effect of motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction on Ghanaian workers. Most available literature tends to analyze these constructs in isolation, often focusing on either motivation and performance, or job satisfaction and employee turnover, without integrating them into a broader understanding of how they collectively shape work ethic. This fragmented approach restricts a comprehensive appreciation of the dynamics at play in Ghana's diverse labor market. There is also a pressing need for context-specific evidence that reflects Ghana's socio-cultural realities. For instance, collectivist values, traditional authority structures, and socio-economic constraints can influence how motivation is perceived, how self-efficacy is developed, and how job satisfaction is experienced. Without such localized insights, policies and managerial interventions aimed at improving productivity may remain ineffective or only partially successful.

Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is the limited empirical understanding of how motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction interact to shape the work ethic of Ghanaian workers. By bridging this gap, the research will provide evidence-based insights to inform organizational strategies, human resource policies, and national development frameworks such as Ghana's Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction in shaping the work ethic of Ghanaian workers. The study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these psychological and organizational factors interact to influence employees' attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. By situating the analysis within Ghana's socio-cultural and economic context, the study aims to generate evidence-based insights that can inform organizational practices, human resource management strategies, and national development policies.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of motivation on the work ethic of Ghanaian workers.
2. To assess the relationship between self-efficacy and work ethic among Ghanaian workers.
3. To explore the extent to which job satisfaction shapes work ethic in the Ghanaian labor environment.
4. To analyze the combined effect of motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction on work ethic within different sectors of employment in Ghana.
5. To provide policy and managerial recommendations for enhancing work ethic through improved motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction.

Research Questions

1. How does motivation influence the work ethic of Ghanaian workers?
2. What is the relationship between self-efficacy and work ethic among Ghanaian workers?
3. To what extent does job satisfaction shape the work ethic of workers in Ghana?
4. How do motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction collectively influence work ethic across different employment sectors in Ghana?
5. What strategies can organizations and policymakers adopt to strengthen work ethic through motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in key psychological and organizational behavior theories that explain how motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction interact to shape work ethic. Work ethic, broadly understood as a set of values centered on discipline, responsibility, diligence, and commitment to work, is influenced by both individual psychological factors and organizational contexts. By drawing on motivation theories, self-efficacy theory, and job satisfaction frameworks, this study situates Ghanaian workers within a wider theoretical lens to analyze the drivers of work ethic.

Motivation is central to understanding why individuals engage in work and sustain effort. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) provides a useful framework, distinguishing between intrinsic motivators (achievement, recognition, growth) and extrinsic hygiene factors (salary, work conditions, job security). For Ghanaian workers, extrinsic factors such as financial security may strongly influence work commitment due to prevailing economic realities, while intrinsic factors may foster long-term dedication and ethical conduct at work. Similarly, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985) emphasizes the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in shaping intrinsic motivation, which can strengthen positive work values such as diligence and responsibility.

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) and the concept of self-efficacy (one's belief in their ability to perform tasks successfully) provide another key foundation. Self-efficacy influences effort, persistence, and resilience, which are crucial dimensions of work ethic. Workers with high self-efficacy are more likely to approach tasks with confidence, take initiative, and persist in the face of challenges. In the Ghanaian context, where resource constraints and structural limitations can impede work performance, strong self-efficacy can enable workers to overcome obstacles and maintain high ethical standards of diligence, responsibility, and accountability.

Job satisfaction theories explain how employees' positive or negative evaluations of their work environment shape their attitudes and behaviors. Locke's Range of Affect Theory (1976) posits that satisfaction depends on the discrepancy between what individuals expect from their jobs and what they actually receive. The Job Characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham (1976) further suggests that task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback, and skill variety enhance job satisfaction, which in turn strengthens commitment and work ethic. In Ghana, where many workers face challenges such as low pay, limited career progression, and weak organizational support, job satisfaction can be a crucial determinant of whether workers demonstrate high levels of diligence, responsibility, and loyalty.

The interaction between motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction provides a holistic understanding of work ethic. Motivation drives individuals to engage with their work, self-efficacy determines how confidently and persistently they approach tasks, and job satisfaction sustains commitment over time. Together, these factors contribute to the cultivation of a strong work ethic, which is not only vital for organizational success but also for national development. Within Ghana's labor environment, understanding this interplay is especially relevant for addressing productivity concerns and fostering a workforce aligned with the values of Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Empirical Review

The empirical literature on work ethic consistently shows that motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction are powerful, interrelated predictors of employees' attitudes and performance across contexts, with growing evidence from Africa and Ghana refining these relationships. Early meta-analyses demonstrated that intrinsic motivation correlates strongly with persistence and discretionary effort, while extrinsic rewards relate more to compliance and short-run output (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014). In parallel, research on self-efficacy has shown medium-to-large effects on task performance and resilience under challenge, suggesting that confident employees are more likely to enact the behaviors typically labeled as "strong work ethic," including diligence, reliability, and proactive problem solving (Bandura, 1997; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Job satisfaction, long linked to performance and withdrawal behaviors, has been shown to predict lower absenteeism, greater organizational citizenship, and lower turnover intentions, thereby supporting a sustained ethic of work over time (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006).

African studies extend these patterns while stressing contextual moderators such as resource constraints, leadership credibility, and collectivist norms. Evidence from Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa indicates that both financial and non-financial incentives improve work effort, but their impact is magnified when employees perceive procedural fairness and supportive supervision (Choudhury, 2010; Nzuve & Nyaega, 2013; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008). Perceived organizational support and justice strengthen the motivational pathway to work ethic by signaling respect and reciprocity, which, in high power-distance settings, can counteract learned helplessness and fatalism. Likewise, studies of public service delivery find that efficacy beliefs—shaped through mastery experiences, peer modeling, and constructive feedback—predict frontline persistence under workload and infrastructure deficits, outcomes that resemble the grit and conscientiousness facets of work ethic (Lopes, 2017; Wambugu, 2014).

Ghana-specific research mirrors these findings while highlighting sectoral nuances. Quantitative studies among teachers, nurses, and local government staff report that intrinsic motivation (purpose, recognition, task significance) predicts conscientious attendance and extra-role helping, whereas purely transactional incentives correlate more with short-term compliance than deep engagement

(Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014; Kwarteng, 2018). Self-efficacy repeatedly emerges as a robust predictor of persistence—teachers with higher instructional efficacy demonstrate stronger classroom preparation and fewer withdrawal behaviors; nurses with higher clinical efficacy sustain performance under resource scarcity; and municipal staff with administrative efficacy are more proactive in problem solving (Ansah & Osei, 2019; Antwi & Ofori, 2020). Job satisfaction findings in Ghana also align with global evidence: satisfaction with supervision, growth opportunities, and work conditions is linked to lower lateness and turnover intentions and higher organizational citizenship, which map onto the value-laden aspects of work ethic (Mensah, 2014; Baah & Amoako, 2011). Cross-sector comparisons in Ghana suggest that the mechanisms connecting the three predictors to work ethic depend on the opportunity structure of work. In formal private firms, performance management and feedback loops appear to convert motivation into sustained ethical conduct by clarifying goals and reinforcing competence; in public sector units, fair procedures and supportive leadership moderate the effect of motivation on effort, especially where bureaucratic hurdles impede agency (Adu & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2016). In the informal economy, where employment contracts are looser, self-efficacy and intrinsic motives often compensate for weak external controls, predicting reliability and customer-oriented behaviors among traders and artisans (Akorsu & Osei-Boateng, 2012). This heterogeneity underscores that work ethic is not merely a trait but a context-sensitive pattern of behavior contingent on motivational affordances, efficacy feedback, and satisfaction with the social exchange at work.

Intervention studies in Ghana provide additional causal hints. Training programs that blend skills practice with mastery experiences and coaching tend to lift self-efficacy and, through it, punctuality, task persistence, and adherence to quality procedures—behaviors constituting work ethic on the shop floor (Boateng & Odoom, 2019). Recognition systems and participatory goal setting have improved intrinsic motivation and perceived meaning, which in turn reduce counterproductive work behaviors and enhance discretionary effort (Sarfo, Agyapong, & Acheampong, 2020). Improvements in work conditions—tools, safety, workload balance—predict gains in job satisfaction and corresponding reductions in absenteeism across hospitals and manufacturing SMEs (Badu & Osei, 2018). Where such programs falter, qualitative follow-ups often cite weak supervisory credibility or inconsistent rewards, indicating that the social context can either unlock or mute the motivational and efficacy pathways to work ethic.

Several Ghanaian studies test integrated models and generally support additive and interactive effects. Motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction each explain unique variance in conscientiousness and organizational citizenship, but the combinations matter: motivated employees with high efficacy translate intentions into behavior more reliably, and satisfied employees sustain those behaviors over time (Osei, Adjei, & Nunoo, 2021). Mediation patterns also emerge. Self-efficacy partially mediates the link between mastery-oriented motivation and work ethic, consistent with Social Cognitive Theory's emphasis on competence beliefs; job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between fair rewards and ethical conduct, consistent with social exchange logic. Moderation effects indicate that supportive leadership and justice perceptions strengthen the motivation→work ethic and efficacy→work ethic links, while role overload weakens them (Asamani & Mensah, 2017).

Not all results are uniformly positive, and counter-evidence deepens interpretation. Some studies find that heavy emphasis on extrinsic rewards can crowd out intrinsic motivation, dampening pro-social dimensions of work ethic such as initiative and helping, particularly in mission-driven sectors like education and health (Adusei, 2016). Others note ceiling effects: in high-strain roles, self-efficacy without adequate resources can lead to overcommitment and burnout, subsequently eroding satisfaction and ethical consistency. Additionally, macroeconomic shocks—currency volatility and inflation—can weaken the satisfaction pathway by deteriorating real wages, requiring organizations to lean more on recognition, autonomy, and development opportunities to stabilize work ethic (Tawiah & Baah-Boateng, 2020). These nuances suggest that strengthening work ethic in Ghana requires balancing motivational architectures, building efficacy through design and coaching, and sustaining fair, supportive climates that maintain satisfaction.

In sum, the empirical record across global, African, and Ghanaian contexts converges on a coherent pattern: motivation energizes effort, self-efficacy channels that energy into persistent, competent action, and job satisfaction maintains those behaviors over time, together constituting a strong work ethic. Contextual contingencies—leadership quality, justice perceptions, resources, and sectoral demands—condition these effects. For Ghanaian organizations and policymakers, the literature implies that integrated people-management strategies—combining meaningful work and fair rewards, efficacy-building development, and supportive climates—are most likely to yield the reliable, disciplined, and proactive work behaviors associated with a robust national work ethic.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods design, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of how motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction interact to shape work ethic among Ghanaian workers. A mixed design was considered most appropriate because work ethic embodies both measurable behavioral tendencies and subjective perceptions that are best captured through complementary methodologies. The quantitative strand focused on identifying statistical relationships among the three predictors and work ethic, while the qualitative strand explored contextual nuances, personal experiences, and sector-specific dynamics that enrich the interpretation of numerical trends.

The population of interest consisted of Ghanaian workers drawn from both the public and private sectors, including education, health, ICT, manufacturing, and civil service institutions. A stratified sampling approach was adopted to ensure representation across

these key sectors, reflecting the diversity of Ghana's labor force. Within each sector, simple random sampling was used to select participants for the survey, while purposive sampling guided the selection of interviewees who could provide deeper insights into motivational practices, self-efficacy development, and job satisfaction mechanisms. In total, 300 workers participated in the survey, and 30 individuals were interviewed across managerial, supervisory, and frontline roles.

Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from established scales in organizational psychology. Motivation was measured using the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS), self-efficacy was assessed using the General Self-Efficacy Scale, job satisfaction was captured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), and work ethic was measured through the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP). All instruments were slightly modified to reflect Ghanaian workplace contexts. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The instrument was pre-tested with 30 workers outside the main sample to ensure reliability and clarity. Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.70 confirmed internal consistency of the scales.

Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with key informants, including human resource managers, team leaders, and experienced employees. Interview guides focused on how organizational practices influence motivation, how workers develop confidence in performing their tasks, how satisfaction with work conditions influences effort, and how these factors manifest in ethical work behaviors such as punctuality, diligence, and responsibility. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis was carried out in two phases. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and STATA. Descriptive statistics were first used to summarize demographic characteristics and mean scores for motivation, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and work ethic. Correlation analysis established initial associations among the variables, and multiple regression analysis tested the extent to which motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction predicted variations in work ethic across the sample. Additional sectoral regression models were estimated to identify whether these relationships varied significantly across public and private institutions.

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using NVivo software. Transcripts were coded inductively and deductively, drawing on both the research questions and emergent patterns in the narratives. Codes were grouped into themes such as "intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivators," "building self-confidence in the workplace," "satisfaction through fair treatment," and "manifestations of strong work ethic." Narratives from different sectors were compared to highlight commonalities and contextual differences in how work ethic is shaped.

To enhance validity and reliability, methodological triangulation was applied by cross-verifying quantitative findings with qualitative insights. For example, regression results that showed job satisfaction as a significant predictor of work ethic were compared with narratives from health workers and teachers explaining how conducive environments and supportive leadership sustained their commitment. Member checking was also conducted by sharing interview summaries with participants for confirmation of accuracy. Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection, and participants provided informed consent with assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Motivation as a Catalyst for Work Commitment

The data revealed that motivation played a catalytic role in strengthening the work ethic of Ghanaian workers. Both extrinsic and intrinsic forms of motivation were shown to influence punctuality, diligence, and discipline. Public sector workers often emphasized the importance of timely remuneration and job security. As one teacher explained, *"When salaries come on time and teaching resources are available, I am more willing to go the extra mile for my students."* Similarly, civil servants underscored the relevance of promotion opportunities in enhancing their dedication to work.

In contrast, private sector employees highlighted intrinsic motivators such as recognition, autonomy, and personal growth. A participant in the ICT industry noted, *"The motivation I get from solving problems and being recognized for it is more powerful than just the pay."* These perspectives suggest that while extrinsic motivation is crucial in sustaining the public workforce, intrinsic motivation drives innovation and resilience in the private sector. Together, they reinforce the ethical dimensions of work, including accountability, punctuality, and responsibility.

Self-Efficacy as the Foundation for Performance Confidence

Another prominent theme was the role of self-efficacy in shaping ethical work behaviors. Workers frequently emphasized that belief in their competence influenced their willingness to persevere and maintain standards even under pressure. Nurses in the health sector explained that their confidence came from regular training and mentorship. One nurse remarked, *"Because I know I have the skills to manage emergencies, I never think of cutting corners. My patients depend on me."*

ICT professionals echoed this sentiment, linking their self-efficacy to innovation and problem-solving. A software engineer explained, *"When I am confident in my skills, I don't give up on complex challenges. I stay committed until I find the solution."* However, some civil servants admitted that limited training and weak accountability mechanisms undermined their confidence, which in turn weakened their work ethic. A civil servant confessed, *"Sometimes we are asked to deliver tasks without the right tools*

or training. You lose confidence, and eventually, you just do the bare minimum.” These accounts highlight that self-efficacy is socially constructed, nurtured through institutional support, and directly tied to ethical workplace behavior.

Job Satisfaction as a Sustaining Force of Ethical Work Behavior

Job satisfaction was repeatedly described as the sustaining force behind ethical work behavior. Participants associated satisfaction with fairness, supportive leadership, and opportunities for professional growth. Public sector workers emphasized transparent promotion processes and recognition as key drivers of their commitment. A civil servant shared, *“When I see colleagues promoted fairly, I feel satisfied and motivated to also give my best.”*

In the private sector, job satisfaction was tied more to the work environment and opportunities for creativity. An employee in a financial firm observed, *“The fact that my ideas are welcomed and I work with modern tools makes me proud of my job. That pride translates into how responsibly I work.”* Conversely, dissatisfaction weakened work ethic. One respondent admitted, *“When promotions delay and management doesn’t recognize effort, you just lose interest. You come to work, but you don’t give your all.”* These findings reveal that satisfaction bridges organizational practices and individual commitment, serving as the backbone of ethical work behavior.

Integrating the Themes

Taken together, the findings show that work ethic among Ghanaian workers is a product of the interaction between motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. Motivation provides the initial drive, self-efficacy builds confidence and persistence, and job satisfaction sustains ethical behaviors over time. While intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy are more pronounced in the private sector, extrinsic motivation and institutional satisfaction dominate in the public sector. These differences reflect Ghana’s labor dynamics but also align with national development goals.

The implications resonate strongly with Ghana’s Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. A workforce that is motivated, confident, and satisfied is more likely to demonstrate a strong work ethic, thereby contributing to productivity, innovation, and long-term national development.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study highlight the intricate relationship between motivation, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and the work ethic of Ghanaian workers across both public and private sectors. These results are consistent with existing theoretical and empirical studies, while also bringing out important context-specific nuances.

The study confirms the centrality of **motivation** in influencing ethical work behavior. Workers in the public sector largely depended on extrinsic forms of motivation, such as timely salaries, promotions, and job security, which enhanced their discipline and accountability. This reflects Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, where hygiene factors, though not necessarily creating long-term satisfaction, are indispensable for preventing dissatisfaction. In contrast, private sector workers placed greater value on intrinsic motivators such as autonomy, recognition, and personal growth, echoing Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory. The divergence suggests that structural differences between public and private sector institutions in Ghana shape the type of motivation that most strongly reinforces work ethic.

The findings also reinforce the importance of **self-efficacy** in sustaining perseverance, responsibility, and confidence at work. Workers who believed in their competence demonstrated a stronger ability to uphold ethical practices even under challenging conditions. This aligns with Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that self-belief is crucial for goal attainment and resilience. The accounts of nurses and ICT professionals underscore that skill training and mentorship nurture self-efficacy, which in turn strengthens professional responsibility. On the other hand, civil servants who lacked adequate training or resources reported diminished confidence, which weakened their commitment. This finding is consistent with research in African governance that highlights institutional weaknesses as a barrier to efficiency and accountability.

Job satisfaction emerged as the sustaining force that bridges organizational policies and individual work ethic. Workers linked satisfaction to fairness, transparent leadership, and growth opportunities. When these conditions were present, workers expressed pride and commitment; when absent, they reported disillusionment and minimal effort. This finding resonates with Locke’s Value-Percept Theory, which views satisfaction as the alignment between expectations and workplace realities. Importantly, in Ghana’s context, dissatisfaction in the public sector was tied to delayed promotions and weak recognition systems, while satisfaction in the private sector was driven by dynamic work environments and opportunities for creativity.

An integrative interpretation of the findings shows that motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction do not act in isolation but intersect to shape the overall work ethic of Ghanaian workers. Motivation provides the drive, self-efficacy ensures confidence to perform, and job satisfaction sustains ethical behavior over time. Weakness in any of these areas leads to compromised commitment. This holistic perspective contributes to debates on African development by emphasizing that national productivity and ethical workplace culture require balanced attention to psychological, institutional, and organizational factors.

The study further underscores the relevance of these dynamics for Ghana’s national development agenda. Ghana’s Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, depend on a workforce that is

motivated, confident, and satisfied. For instance, entrepreneurship promotion and civil service reforms aimed at accountability can only succeed if employees feel empowered and fulfilled. In sectors such as health, ICT, and agriculture, the synergy of these three factors is directly tied to innovation, service delivery, and productivity. Thus, the findings offer policy relevance: strengthening professional development programs, ensuring transparent promotion systems, and fostering supportive work environments will enhance ethical work behaviors that contribute to sustainable growth.

Overall, the results of this study deepen our understanding of how psychological constructs interact with institutional realities in shaping Ghanaian work ethic. They reaffirm global theories while providing a context-specific lens for African labor dynamics, showing that ethical work behavior is not only a moral or cultural trait but also a product of structured motivation, cultivated confidence, and sustained satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study set out to examine how motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction shape the work ethic of Ghanaian workers in both public and private sectors. The findings confirm that these three factors are interdependent and collectively influence the level of commitment, responsibility, and ethical conduct within the workplace. Motivation was found to be the initial driver of effort, self-efficacy provided the confidence and perseverance to sustain performance, while job satisfaction ensured long-term loyalty and ethical conduct. Where one of these dimensions was weak, work ethic was compromised.

The study also revealed important contextual differences between public and private sector workers. Public sector employees tended to rely more on extrinsic motivators such as job security and salaries, while private sector employees placed higher value on intrinsic motivators such as recognition and autonomy. Similarly, disparities in training and resource allocation contributed to varying levels of self-efficacy, while perceptions of fairness, transparency, and opportunities for growth shaped satisfaction across both sectors. These findings resonate with established theories of motivation and organizational behavior but also highlight uniquely Ghanaian dynamics shaped by institutional structures, governance, and socio-economic realities.

The implications of this study extend to national development. Ghana's Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those on decent work (SDG 8) and strong institutions (SDG 16), can only be realized if workers are motivated, empowered, and satisfied. The study demonstrates that work ethic is not merely a cultural disposition but an outcome of intentional organizational practices, supportive governance, and effective policies that enhance worker well-being and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthen Motivation Systems:** Public and private organizations should adopt a balanced approach to motivation, combining extrinsic rewards such as fair pay and promotions with intrinsic rewards such as recognition, autonomy, and opportunities for innovation.
2. **Enhance Training and Capacity Building:** Regular professional development, mentorship, and skill-upgrading programs should be prioritized to boost self-efficacy, particularly in the public sector where resource gaps are more pronounced.
3. **Promote Fairness and Transparency:** Leadership and management practices should emphasize fairness in promotions, recognition, and decision-making processes. Transparent systems foster trust, increase job satisfaction, and encourage employees to uphold strong work ethics.
4. **Create Supportive Work Environments:** Both sectors should invest in safe, inclusive, and empowering workspaces that encourage collaboration, innovation, and well-being. Such environments sustain motivation and satisfaction over the long term.
5. **Align Work Ethic Development with National Goals:** Policymakers should integrate strategies for enhancing motivation, self-efficacy, and satisfaction into broader labor and governance reforms. Linking workplace improvements to Ghana's Vision 2030 and the SDGs ensures that individual ethical behaviors contribute to national development outcomes.

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