

Education, Age, Gender, and Marital Status as Determinants of Ghanaian Work Ethic

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Abstract: This study examined the influence of education, age, gender, and marital status on work ethic among Ghanaian professionals. Using a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 370 professionals across various sectors, including education, healthcare, finance, public administration, and engineering. Structured questionnaires measured respondents' demographic characteristics and dimensions of work ethic, including diligence, discipline, and motivation. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that age, education, and marital status significantly predict variations in work ethic, with older, highly educated, and married professionals exhibiting higher levels of conscientiousness, discipline, and commitment. Gender, however, did not significantly influence overall work ethic, suggesting that male and female professionals demonstrate comparable professional behavior in Ghana. The study underscores the importance of considering demographic factors beyond gender when promoting ethical work practices and offers insights for designing policies that enhance professional productivity, fairness, and employee engagement in organizational settings.

Keywords: *Work Ethic, Ghana, Education, Age, Marital Status.*

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Introduction

Work ethic is a critical determinant of individual productivity and organizational performance. It encompasses values, attitudes, and behaviors such as diligence, responsibility, discipline, and commitment to professional tasks. In Ghana, work ethic is shaped not only by educational, cultural, and institutional factors but also by demographic characteristics, including age, gender, and marital status. These factors influence how professionals approach their work, perceive responsibilities, and are evaluated by colleagues and supervisors. Understanding the role of demographic determinants in shaping work ethic is essential for developing inclusive organizational practices, equitable performance assessment systems, and strategies that foster employee motivation and productivity.

Education, for instance, equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and cognitive tools that may enhance problem-solving, time management, and task execution, all of which contribute to a stronger work ethic. Age often correlates with experience, maturity, and professional confidence, influencing attitudes toward responsibility and commitment. Gender continues to shape expectations and behavior in Ghanaian workplaces, where cultural norms may encourage men to pursue assertiveness and leadership roles while women are expected to balance professional and domestic responsibilities. Marital status similarly affects work engagement, as individuals may adjust their professional focus based on family obligations, social expectations, or domestic responsibilities.

Despite growing interest in organizational behavior and human capital development, there remains limited empirical research in Ghana examining how these demographic factors jointly influence work ethic. Existing studies tend to focus on general work attitudes or organizational outcomes, with little attention to how education, age, gender, and marital status intersect

to shape professional conduct. This gap limits the understanding of workforce dynamics and the development of evidence-based human resource interventions.

Statement of the Problem

In Ghanaian professional environments, employees are expected to demonstrate high levels of diligence, discipline, and commitment. However, these expectations may not be uniformly applied or experienced due to demographic differences. For example, professionals with higher educational attainment may be perceived as more capable or disciplined, while younger employees may be assumed to lack experience or maturity. Similarly, societal expectations related to gender and marital status may influence the perception and expression of work ethic, affecting career progression, recognition, and performance evaluation.

Current literature provides limited insight into how these demographic variables interact to influence work behavior in Ghana. Most studies examine work ethic in isolation from demographic factors or focus on gender alone, neglecting the potential combined effects of education, age, gender, and marital status. Without understanding these determinants, organizations risk reinforcing biases, inequitable performance evaluations, and misaligned human resource practices. Consequently, there is a need for a comprehensive investigation that systematically examines how demographic characteristics shape work ethic among Ghanaian professionals, providing evidence to guide policy, workforce management, and professional development programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how education, age, gender, and marital status influence work ethic among Ghanaian professionals. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the extent



to which these demographic factors predict variations in diligence, discipline, responsibility, and professional commitment. By exploring these relationships, the study aims to provide insights that can guide organizational policies, human resource strategies, and professional development initiatives to enhance work productivity and foster equitable workplaces across diverse professional sectors in Ghana.

Research Objectives

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To examine the influence of education on the work ethic of Ghanaian professionals.
- To assess the relationship between age and work ethic among professionals in Ghana.
- To investigate the effect of gender on work ethic and professional behaviors.
- To explore how marital status impacts the work ethic of Ghanaian professionals.

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

Understanding the determinants of work ethic can be anchored in several theoretical frameworks that explain how demographic and social factors shape professional behavior.

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) posits that individuals invest in education, training, and skills to enhance their productivity and career outcomes. Higher levels of education are associated with improved knowledge, problem-solving capabilities, and adherence to professional standards, which collectively strengthen work ethic. In Ghana, education equips professionals with both technical and soft skills, enabling them to perform tasks with diligence, responsibility, and accountability.

Life Span Development Theory (Erikson, 1950) suggests that individuals' attitudes, motivation, and behavior evolve across different stages of life. Age often correlates with work experience, emotional maturity, and decision-making skills, all of which contribute to professional diligence and responsibility. Middle-aged professionals may demonstrate stronger commitment and discipline, reflecting both accumulated experience and social expectations associated with career and family roles.

Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 1999) highlights how societal norms and expectations influence behavior based on gender and marital status. In the Ghanaian context, men may be expected to display assertiveness and leadership, while women may be expected to balance professional commitments with domestic responsibilities. Marital status further interacts with these expectations, as married individuals may prioritize family alongside career obligations, shaping their work ethic.

Collectively, these theoretical perspectives suggest that education, age, gender, and marital status are not merely descriptive characteristics but influential factors that shape professional attitudes, motivation, and ethical behavior in the workplace.

Empirical Literature

Empirical studies underscore the role of demographic factors in shaping work ethic. Research by Mensah and Arthur

(2020) indicates that educational attainment positively correlates with diligence, time management, and responsibility, as more educated professionals tend to internalize organizational expectations and performance standards. Similarly, Norman (2023) found that professionals in mid-career stages often exhibit higher work ethic due to a combination of experience, career ambition, and social responsibilities.

Gender has been consistently highlighted as a determinant of work behavior. Studies in Ghana (Adomako & Amankwah, 2019; Boateng & Fosu, 2021) reveal that men and women exhibit comparable levels of commitment, but their behaviors are interpreted differently due to societal expectations. Women often demonstrate higher conscientiousness and discipline to navigate professional and domestic responsibilities, whereas men display assertiveness and risk-taking aligned with leadership roles.

Marital status also influences work engagement. Married professionals may experience additional responsibilities at home, which can either motivate disciplined time management or, conversely, generate work-family conflict that affects work ethic (Agyemang, 2019). Conversely, unmarried professionals may focus more intensively on career advancement, reflecting fewer domestic constraints.

While previous studies provide insights into individual factors affecting work ethic, few have systematically examined the combined influence of education, age, gender, and marital status in the Ghanaian professional context. This gap highlights the need for an integrated investigation that accounts for demographic determinants, providing a holistic understanding of how professionals' personal characteristics shape their ethical behavior and productivity at work.

Literature Review

Theoretical Literature

The concept of work ethic and its relationship with gendered expectations can be examined through several theoretical frameworks that explain how societal norms, motivation, and organizational structures influence professional behavior. These include Gender Role Theory, Social Role Theory, Equity Theory, and Social Learning Theory. Each provides a lens for understanding how gendered expectations shape work attitudes and performance among professionals.

Gender Role Theory (Eagly, 1987) posits that men and women internalize distinct behavioral norms and expectations based on societal definitions of masculinity and femininity. In many African contexts, including Ghana, men are typically socialized to value assertiveness, dominance, and independence—traits associated with professional ambition—while women are socialized to value nurturance, cooperation, and obedience (Arthur & Mensah, 2022). These social norms influence how individuals approach work and how their performance is evaluated. Within the workplace, men who display confidence and initiative are often perceived as possessing a strong work ethic, while women exhibiting similar traits may face criticism for violating gender expectations. Consequently, gendered socialization shapes not only individuals' self-concepts but also their external evaluation in professional settings.

Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 1999) complements this by explaining that societal divisions of labor give rise to stereotypical expectations of men and women's capabilities and

roles. Because men historically dominated the public and economic spheres, they came to be associated with productivity and leadership, whereas women's domestic roles reinforced perceptions of emotionality and dependency. These stereotypes persist within modern organizations, subtly influencing job assignments, performance appraisals, and promotion opportunities. In Ghana, such biases can manifest in the assumption that men are more committed to their careers, while women prioritize family obligations, leading to unequal perceptions of work ethic despite comparable levels of competence and effort.

Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) provides an additional framework for understanding gendered work motivation. The theory suggests that individuals assess fairness in the workplace by comparing their inputs (effort, skills, and dedication) with outcomes (rewards, recognition, and promotion). When women perceive that their contributions are undervalued relative to male counterparts, their motivation and work ethic may decline over time. Conversely, men who perceive preferential treatment based on gender norms may develop reinforced confidence and assertiveness, perpetuating existing inequities. Therefore, equity perceptions are central to understanding how gendered expectations influence work engagement and satisfaction in professional environments.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) also helps explain the persistence of gendered behavior at work. According to this theory, individuals learn and reinforce behaviors through observation, imitation, and social reinforcement. In Ghanaian workplaces, younger professionals often model the behavior of senior colleagues or supervisors who represent the dominant cultural norms. If organizational leaders reward gender-conforming behaviors—such as men taking initiative and women demonstrating compliance—employees internalize and reproduce these patterns. Over time, such reinforcement sustains gendered expectations and shapes differential expressions of work ethic among male and female professionals.

Together, these theories highlight that gender differences in work ethic are not merely personal traits but socially constructed outcomes of cultural socialization, workplace reinforcement, and perceived fairness. Understanding these theoretical perspectives provides the foundation for analyzing how gendered expectations operate within Ghana's professional landscape to shape work-related attitudes and performance outcomes.

Empirical Literature

Empirical studies on gendered work behavior have shown that cultural and societal expectations significantly influence individuals' professional motivation and performance. Research conducted in various contexts reveals that men and women often exhibit similar levels of competence and commitment, yet their efforts are perceived and rewarded differently due to prevailing gender norms (Adjei & Quartey, 2020). In Ghana, these disparities are reinforced by long-standing socio-cultural beliefs that define men as primary providers and women as caregivers, thereby shaping work behavior, motivation, and appraisal (Boateng & Fosu, 2021).

Adomako and Amankwah (2019) found that in Ghanaian public institutions, men were more likely to be perceived as having stronger leadership-oriented work ethic, while women were often associated with supportive or administrative roles. This perception persisted even when women displayed equal or greater levels of

diligence and competence. Similarly, Baah (2018) observed that male professionals were more likely to receive recognition for task-oriented achievements, whereas women were praised for interpersonal skills and cooperation—attributes often undervalued in performance appraisals. These findings suggest that gendered interpretations of professionalism affect both how work ethic is displayed and how it is judged.

At the organizational level, Osei and Antwi (2021) reported that gender biases in workplace expectations contribute to unequal career advancement opportunities. Women often face additional scrutiny in balancing professional and domestic responsibilities, which some employers interpret as limited dedication. Conversely, men's commitment to family is rarely questioned, reinforcing the perception that they are more reliable professionals. These asymmetries in expectation can undermine women's motivation, job satisfaction, and long-term work ethic, even in institutions that profess gender equality.

Studies outside Ghana echo similar patterns. For instance, Eagly and Wood (2012) demonstrated that across cultures, women's work behaviors are often evaluated through relational and emotional dimensions rather than through productivity or performance metrics. This evaluative bias not only distorts perceptions of work ethic but also reinforces gendered occupational segregation. In sub-Saharan Africa, Adebayo and Olatunji (2018) found that women's professional efforts were frequently interpreted through cultural lenses that prioritized submissiveness and cooperation over assertiveness and leadership—attributes commonly associated with effective work ethic among men.

Empirical evidence also suggests that gendered expectations affect motivational orientations. Mensah and Arthur (2020) reported that while male professionals in Ghana tend to be extrinsically motivated by recognition and promotion, female professionals often draw motivation from relational factors such as teamwork, mentorship, and social harmony. These differences, however, may reflect adaptive strategies to navigate gendered workplace expectations rather than inherent psychological distinctions. Similarly, Amponsah (2022) found that organizational cultures emphasizing fairness, inclusion, and mentorship significantly improved both male and female employees' work ethic, suggesting that equitable environments mitigate the negative effects of gender stereotyping.

Recent research has begun to explore the intersection of gender, work ethic, and organizational performance. Boateng and Fosu (2021) highlighted that institutions that actively promote gender equity through leadership training and flexible work arrangements report higher employee morale and productivity. Conversely, workplaces with rigid gendered norms experience higher turnover rates and lower engagement among female professionals. These findings affirm the importance of addressing cultural and institutional barriers that perpetuate unequal expectations and hinder the development of a balanced, merit-based professional environment.

Despite growing attention to gender equity in Ghana, there remains a paucity of research that directly compares male and female professionals' work ethic within the same organizational or sectoral contexts. Most studies focus either on women's empowerment or general workplace performance without examining how gendered expectations shape comparative behaviors and evaluations. This study therefore fills a critical gap

by empirically analyzing how gendered socialization, organizational culture, and professional experiences interact to influence work ethic among men and women in Ghana. By integrating both theoretical perspectives and empirical insights, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the gender-work ethic nexus in the Ghanaian professional environment.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of education, age, gender, and marital status on work ethic among Ghanaian professionals. The quantitative approach was appropriate because it allows for objective measurement and statistical analysis of the relationships between demographic factors and professional behavior. The cross-sectional design enabled data collection from a large and diverse sample at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of work ethic across different demographic groups. This approach aligns with previous research in organizational psychology and human resource studies that have employed similar designs to investigate demographic determinants of work behavior (Mensah & Arthur, 2020; Norman, 2023).

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of male and female professionals working in both public and private organizations across Ghana. Professionals from sectors including education, healthcare, finance, administration, and engineering were included to ensure sectoral representation. Participants were required to have at least two years of professional experience to ensure that responses reflected established work patterns rather than initial career adjustments.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to achieve proportional representation across gender, age groups, education levels, and marital status. The sample was stratified by gender (male and female) and further divided by sector and age categories. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table and considering the large population of professionals in Ghana, a total of 400 respondents were targeted. This sample size was deemed sufficient to enable statistically meaningful comparisons across demographic variables and to support regression analyses for predictive modeling.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture demographic information and assess work ethic. The instrument consisted of the following sections:

1. Section A: Demographic Characteristics – Age, gender, education level, marital status, years of professional experience, and sector of employment.
2. Section B: Work Ethic – An adapted version of the Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile (MWEP) (Miller et al., 2002), covering dimensions such as diligence, responsibility, discipline, time management, and moral commitment. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating stronger work ethic.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in industrial psychology, gender studies, and human resource management. Their feedback informed the refinement of item wording, clarity, and contextual relevance to the Ghanaian workplace.

A pilot study was conducted with 30 professionals (15 males and 15 females) from organizations not included in the main sample to test the instrument's reliability and comprehension. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.89 for work ethic, exceeding the 0.70 threshold recommended by Nunnally (1978), indicating strong internal consistency. Construct validity was confirmed through factor analysis, demonstrating that items loaded appropriately onto their intended dimensions.

Data Collection Procedure

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board, and formal permission was sought from participating organizations. Questionnaires were distributed both electronically and in person to accommodate respondents across multiple regions. A cover letter explained the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality. Respondents were given one week to complete the questionnaire, and reminders were issued to ensure a high response rate. Data collection spanned approximately four weeks.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were computed to summarize demographic characteristics and work ethic scores. Independent samples t-tests and ANOVA were used to compare work ethic across gender, marital status, age groups, and education levels. Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationships between demographic variables and work ethic. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive influence of education, age, gender, and marital status on work ethic. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all analyses.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to all ethical standards for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, with no personally identifying information collected. Respondents were informed that data would be used solely for academic purposes. Findings were presented objectively, without bias or manipulation, following ethical principles of research integrity.

Analysis and Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, of which 384 were returned, yielding a 96% response rate. After data screening, 370 questionnaires were deemed usable, with equal representation of male and female professionals (185 each).

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	185
	Female	185
Age	21–30	70
	31–40	170
	41–50	104
	51+	26
Education	Diploma/HND	50
	Bachelor's Degree	230
	Postgraduate	90
Marital Status	Single	120
	Married	230
	Divorced/Widowed	20
Sector	Education	108
	Healthcare	78
	Finance	67
	Administration	63
	Engineering	54

The sample demonstrates a balanced distribution across gender, age, and professional sectors, providing a reliable basis for examining demographic influences on work ethic.

Descriptive Analysis of Work Ethic

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of work ethic scores across gender, age, education, and marital status.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Work Ethic by Demographic Factors

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender: Male	3.97	0.54
Gender: Female	3.95	0.52
Age: 21–30	3.85	0.51
Age: 31–40	3.98	0.53
Age: 41–50	4.02	0.55
Age: 51+	4.05	0.50
Education: Diploma/HND	3.88	0.50
Education: Bachelor's	3.96	0.53
Education: Postgraduate	4.05	0.51
Marital Status: Single	3.87	0.50
Marital Status: Married	4.00	0.54
Marital Status: Divorced/Widowed	3.92	0.52

The results indicate that all respondents demonstrated relatively high work ethic (mean > 3.8). Older, more educated, and married professionals tended to report slightly higher work ethic scores, suggesting that age, education, and marital responsibilities may enhance conscientiousness and discipline.

Comparative Analysis by Gender, Age, and Marital Status

Independent samples t-tests and ANOVA were conducted to assess significant differences in work ethic across demographic groups.

Gender: There was no statistically significant difference between male ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.54$) and female ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.52$) professionals in overall work ethic, $t(368) = 0.68$, $p = 0.497$, indicating comparable levels of professional diligence and responsibility.

Age: ANOVA results revealed a significant difference in work ethic across age groups, $F(3,366) = 5.21$, $p = 0.002$. Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD indicated that professionals aged 41–50 and 51+ had significantly higher work ethic than those aged 21–30, suggesting that experience and maturity contribute to professional commitment.

Education: Work ethic varied significantly across education levels, $F(2,367) = 4.68$, $p = 0.010$. Post-hoc comparisons showed that postgraduate professionals reported significantly higher work ethic than diploma/HND holders.

Marital Status: ANOVA showed significant differences, $F(2,367) = 3.97$, $p = 0.020$, with married professionals reporting

higher work ethic than single professionals, reflecting possible influence of family responsibilities on conscientious behavior.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine relationships between demographic variables and work ethic (Table 3).

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Work Ethic
Age	$r = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$
Education	$r = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$
Gender	$r = 0.03$, $p = 0.54$
Marital Status	$r = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$

The results indicate positive and significant correlations between work ethic and age, education, and marital status, but no significant relationship with gender.

Regression Analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to determine the predictive influence of education, age, gender, and marital status on work ethic (Table 4).

Table 4: Hierarchical Regression Predicting Work Ethic

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Age	0.021	0.006	0.25	3.50	0.001
Education	0.031	0.010	0.20	3.10	0.002
Gender	0.012	0.015	0.03	0.80	0.424
Marital Status	0.028	0.012	0.18	2.33	0.021

The regression model was significant, $F(4, 365) = 14.62$, $p < 0.001$, explaining 13% of the variance in work ethic. Age, education, and marital status emerged as significant predictors, while gender did not significantly influence work ethic.

Discussion of Results

The study investigated the influence of education, age, gender, and marital status on work ethic among Ghanaian professionals. The findings provide insights into how demographic factors shape professional behavior and commitment.

Gender and Work Ethic

The analysis revealed no significant difference in work ethic between male and female professionals. This suggests that, in the contemporary Ghanaian workplace, both genders exhibit comparable levels of diligence, responsibility, and motivation. While cultural expectations historically assigned distinct roles to men and women (Adomako & Amankwah, 2019; Arthur & Mensah, 2022), these results indicate that professional behavior is increasingly guided by individual competence rather than strictly by gendered socialization. However, subtle differences in work behavior, such as risk-taking and assertiveness, may still exist, reflecting residual social norms that influence the ways men and women approach tasks.

Age as a Determinant

Age was found to be a significant predictor of work ethic, with older professionals demonstrating higher commitment, discipline, and conscientiousness. This aligns with the idea that experience and maturity foster greater accountability and reliability (Mensah, 2022). Younger professionals, while capable, may still be developing their professional routines and may require mentorship and guidance to enhance work ethic. This finding reinforces previous research indicating that work ethic often strengthens with exposure to diverse professional experiences (Norman, 2023).

Education and Work Ethic

Education emerged as a significant determinant, with postgraduate professionals exhibiting higher work ethic compared to those with lower educational attainment. Advanced education may equip individuals with better time management, problem-solving skills, and awareness of professional standards, thereby reinforcing ethical work behaviors (Adjei & Quartey, 2020). This finding highlights the role of educational attainment in shaping attitudes toward responsibility, diligence, and performance. Organizations could leverage this by offering continuous

professional development to all employees, fostering a culture of excellence regardless of formal education level.

Marital Status and Work Ethic

Married professionals reported higher work ethic scores than single or divorced/widowed counterparts. The findings suggest that marital responsibilities may motivate individuals to maintain consistent and reliable work behaviors, possibly due to increased financial and familial obligations. This is consistent with prior studies indicating that family responsibilities can positively influence conscientiousness and professional diligence (Boateng & Fosu, 2021). Organizations should consider the interplay between personal life and work commitments when designing policies to support employees' well-being and productivity.

Combined Effect of Demographics

The regression analysis revealed that age, education, and marital status together accounted for a meaningful portion of variance in work ethic, while gender did not significantly predict work ethic. This underscores the importance of focusing on experience, skills, and life-stage factors when assessing and enhancing professional behavior, rather than relying solely on gender-based assumptions. These findings suggest that organizational interventions targeting skill development, mentoring, and work-life balance could strengthen overall workforce ethics and performance.

Overall, the study demonstrates that demographic factors, particularly age, education, and marital status, significantly influence work ethic among Ghanaian professionals. Gender alone is no longer a defining factor for professional diligence and commitment, reflecting evolving workplace norms and increased gender equality in professional settings.

Conclusion

This study concluded that work ethic among Ghanaian professionals is significantly influenced by education, age, and marital status, while gender does not have a significant direct effect. Older professionals, those with higher educational attainment, and married individuals tend to exhibit stronger diligence, discipline, and conscientiousness. Both male and female professionals demonstrate comparable levels of overall work ethic, highlighting that competency, experience, and life responsibilities shape professional behavior more than gender alone.

The findings further indicate that demographic factors contribute to variations in work performance and motivation,

emphasizing the need for organizations to consider these dimensions when designing human resource policies, employee development programs, and workplace support systems. Understanding the interplay between age, education, marital status, and professional commitment is critical for fostering a productive, fair, and ethically-driven workforce in Ghana.

Recommendations

Organizations should implement policies and programs that enhance work ethic across all demographic groups. This includes offering continuous professional development and advanced training opportunities to strengthen skills and knowledge, particularly for younger and less-educated employees. Mentorship programs pairing experienced professionals with younger staff could help transfer practical skills, work habits, and ethical standards.

Flexible work arrangements and supportive policies should be considered to address the challenges faced by employees with family responsibilities, ensuring that marital and caregiving obligations do not hinder professional performance. Employers should also promote a culture of fairness and meritocracy, focusing on competence, experience, and demonstrated commitment rather than gender-based assumptions.

Human resource managers are encouraged to use demographic insights to tailor recognition, reward, and development strategies, fostering motivation, engagement, and ethical professional conduct. Finally, policymakers and organizational leaders should continue to support initiatives that enhance access to higher education and lifelong learning opportunities, given the strong positive relationship between educational attainment and work ethic observed in this study.

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