



Management of the Code of Conduct and Employees' Performance in Public Service Agencies in Delta State

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of the management of the code of conduct on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria. The research examined the influence of Employee Awareness Levels (EAL), Training Sessions on Ethical Conduct (TSEC), Compliance Rates with Code of Conduct Regulations (CRCCR), Disciplinary Actions Taken (DAT), and Transparency and Accountability Indices (TAI) as independent variables, while Employee Performance (EP) was the dependent variable. A descriptive survey research design was adopted to collect primary data from a sample of 396 civil servants across ten ministries and agencies in the state. However, two hundred and thirty-two (232) were retrieved and properly completed, representing 58.59 percent of the total questionnaires administered. The study employed descriptive statistics to summarize the data, correlation analysis to examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables, and multiple regression analysis (Ordinary Least Squares) via Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 to determine the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The study's findings revealed that each of the independent variables had a statistically significant positive impact on employee performance. The study concluded that management of the code of conduct has a significant impact on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria. The study recommends that government agencies should enhance communication and awareness programs to ensure that all employees fully understand the codes of conduct and ethical expectations.

Keywords: Code of Conduct, Employee Performance, Public Service, Management, Delta State

Introduction

In the contemporary global landscape, the management of codes of conduct within public service institutions has garnered significant attention as a pivotal mechanism for enhancing employee performance and ensuring ethical governance (Ethics & Compliance Initiative, 2022). The increasing complexity of public administration, coupled with heightened public scrutiny, necessitates robust ethical frameworks to guide employee

behavior and decision-making processes (Fair Labor Association, 2022). Recent studies have underscored the integral role that well-structured codes of conduct play in fostering a culture of accountability, transparency, and professionalism among public servants (Kasase & Hapompwe, 2025). Moreover, the implementation of comprehensive training sessions on ethical conduct has been linked to improved compliance rates with established regulations, thereby mitigating instances of

misconduct and enhancing overall organizational performance (Adebayo & Abdulrazaq, 2022).

Globally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of ethical leadership in public administration. Ethical leadership not only influences employee behavior but also shapes organizational culture, leading to improved job satisfaction and performance (Office of Government Ethics, 2022). For instance, a study examining the influence of ethical leadership on public servants in Somalia found that ethical leadership directly and positively impacts public servants' trust in leaders, employee loyalty, and motivation (Adebayo & Abdulrazaq, 2022). This underscores the significance of ethical leadership in fostering a conducive work environment that promotes ethical behavior and enhances employee performance.

Across Africa, the emphasis on ethical standards within public service has been increasingly pronounced, with various nations instituting codes of conduct to address challenges related to corruption, inefficiency, and public distrust (World Bank, 2022). For instance, in Zambia, research has highlighted the significance of employee awareness levels and the enforcement of disciplinary actions in promoting ethical behavior within public institutions (Kasase & Hapompwe, 2025). Similarly, in Tanzania, the Code of Ethics and Conduct for the Public Service serves as a foundational document outlining expected behaviors and ethical standards, aiming to enhance service delivery and public confidence (Government of Tanzania, 2022). These regional initiatives underscore the broader continental commitment to embedding ethical considerations within the fabric of public administration (Transparency International, 2022).

In Nigeria, the public service sector has grappled with persistent challenges related to ethical conduct, accountability, and employee performance (Chatham House, 2025). Despite

the establishment of codes of conduct and various institutional arrangements aimed at promoting integrity, issues such as corruption, nepotism, and inefficiency remain prevalent (Transparency International, 2024). The Nigerian government's efforts to address these concerns have included the implementation of training programs on ethical conduct and the establishment of disciplinary mechanisms to enforce compliance (Imene, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these measures has been mixed, with studies indicating a need for more comprehensive strategies that integrate employee awareness, regular training, and transparent accountability systems (Ukeje, 2023).

Focusing specifically on Delta State, Nigeria, the public service sector presents a microcosm of the broader national challenges. Research conducted within the state has revealed that while codes of conduct exist, their implementation and enforcement are often inconsistent, leading to varying levels of employee compliance and performance (Imene, 2023). Factors such as inadequate training sessions on ethical conduct, limited awareness among employees, and insufficient disciplinary actions contribute to the suboptimal adherence to established regulations (Ukeje, 2023). Furthermore, the transparency and accountability indices within the state's public service institutions have been questioned, highlighting the need for a more integrated approach to ethical governance (Transparency International, 2024).

The interplay between the management of codes of conduct and employee performance in Delta State's public service underscores the importance of a multifaceted strategy that encompasses employee awareness levels, training sessions on ethical conduct, compliance rates with regulations, disciplinary actions, and transparency and accountability indices. By examining these variables collectively, it becomes possible to

identify the strengths and weaknesses within the current system and propose targeted interventions aimed at enhancing ethical standards and employee performance. Such an approach aligns with global best practices and offers a pathway toward more effective and trustworthy public service delivery in Delta State and beyond.

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of the management of the code of conduct on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the impact of employee awareness regarding the code of conduct on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria.
- ii. evaluate the impact of training sessions on ethical conduct on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria.
- iii. determine the compliance rate with code of conduct regulations on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria.
- iv. analyze the impact of disciplinary actions taken on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria.
- v. examine the impact of transparency and accountability indices on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Management of Code of Conduct

Managing the Code of Conduct in Nigeria's public service is essential for promoting ethics, transparency, and accountability. Established under the Fifth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution, the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) is responsible for enforcing ethical standards among public officers (Code of

Conduct Bureau, 2023). However, its implementation faces challenges. The Code is often seen as complex and ambiguous, making it difficult for public servants to understand and comply (TUGAR, 2021). Weak enforcement, limited resources, and low political will have also contributed to a culture of impunity, undermining ethical standards (Umar & Adamu, 2023; Ahmad, Olohigbe, & Momoh, 2023).

To address these issues, reforms like the Draft Nigerian Public Sector Governance Code emphasize ethics, accountability, training, and whistleblowing policies (Arugu & Coastman, 2023; Gberevbie, 2022). Integrating ethical standards into the Public Service Rules (PSR) provides clear guidance on behavior and disciplinary measures, but effectiveness depends on consistent application and leadership commitment (Marshall & Murtala, 2020; Otinche, 2021). Regular capacity-building programs, workshops, and seminars can strengthen understanding of ethical responsibilities and foster a culture of accountability (Gberevbie, 2022; Arugu & Coastman, 2023).

Civil society and the media also play a key role by monitoring public officers and exposing misconduct, extending oversight beyond internal mechanisms (Umar & Adamu, 2023; Ahmad et al., 2023). Effective management of the Code thus requires simplifying its provisions, strengthening enforcement, integrating ethics into public service rules, investing in training, and engaging external oversight. These combined efforts help uphold integrity, transparency, and accountability in Nigeria's public service (TUGAR, 2021; Code of Conduct Bureau, 2023; Arugu & Coastman, 2023).

Employees Performance

Employee performance in Nigeria's public service is a key driver of administrative efficiency and national development. Research shows that factors such as

performance management systems, motivation, training, leadership, and organizational culture significantly influence productivity. Strong performance planning positively impacts employee output, though other components like capacity-building, performance reviews, and rewards are less effective when poorly implemented (Ijewereme, 2023). Motivation is essential for improving efficiency, with effective strategies shown to enhance performance (Osisioma & Audu, 2022). Training and development programs are important, but current research and development initiatives often fail to meet workforce needs, highlighting the need for more practical, targeted programs (Egbon-Charles et al., 2024). Leadership also affects performance, with communication, leading by example, on-the-job training, motivation, and teamwork being key strategies (Elias-Fatile, 2021). Similarly, positive interpersonal relations within organizational culture improve public service outcomes (Amakiri et al., 2025).

Personnel management practices, including recruitment, training, performance evaluation, compensation, and motivation, further enhance employee productivity (Kpurunee et al., 2024). However, challenges like inadequate resources, weak policy implementation, poor appraisal systems, and insufficient training continue to hinder performance (Obidike & Onuora, 2025; Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024). Addressing these issues requires strengthening performance management, applying effective motivational strategies, offering targeted training, promoting good leadership, and fostering a supportive culture. Policymakers must prioritize reforms in these areas to sustainably improve public service performance and national development (World Bank, 2023; Transparency International, 2023).

Employee Awareness Levels and Employee Performance in the Public Service in Nigeria

Employee awareness in Nigeria's public service is crucial for effective performance and service delivery. Awareness, understanding organizational goals, policies, procedures, and individual roles, helps align staff efforts with institutional objectives, enhancing efficiency and accountability. Lack of awareness, however, can cause confusion, reduce productivity, and encourage mismanagement.

Performance management systems play a key role in building awareness. Studies show that clear performance planning improves productivity, while poorly aligned capacity-building programs often fail to enhance understanding of roles (Ijewereme, 2023). Leadership strategies, such as effective communication, leading by example, on-the-job training, motivation, and teamwork, also strengthen awareness and engagement (Elias-Fatile, 2021). Public Service Motivation (PSM) further influences awareness, with intrinsically motivated employees showing higher understanding of organizational goals and stronger commitment (Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2024). Performance appraisal systems and training programs are intended to support awareness, but challenges like bias, politicization, and poorly designed training limit their effectiveness (Sakpere, 2022; Egbon-Charles et al., 2024).

Organizational culture, including positive interpersonal relations, enhances awareness by promoting communication, collaboration, and a sense of belonging (Amakiri et al., 2025). Motivation strategies through recognition, incentives, and career development also encourage proactive engagement and alignment with organizational goals (Osisioma & Audu, 2022). Persistent challenges, such as inadequate resources, weak policy implementation, and insufficient training, hinder awareness and performance (Obidike

& Onuora, 2025; Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024). Addressing these issues requires integrated efforts: strengthening performance management, leadership, motivation, training, and organizational culture. Promoting employee awareness is both an organizational and leadership responsibility and is essential for improving public service performance and national development.

Training Sessions on Ethical Conduct and Employee Performance in the Public Service in Nigeria

Training on ethical conduct is vital for promoting integrity, accountability, and performance in Nigeria's public service. Such training equips employees with the knowledge and skills to handle ethical dilemmas and align their actions with organizational values. In a context historically affected by corruption and inefficiency, ethical training is a key tool for improving governance and service delivery. Studies show that clear performance expectations reinforced through ethical training can enhance both awareness and productivity (Ijewereme, 2023). However, many capacity-building programs are poorly aligned with practical challenges, highlighting the need for context-specific training that addresses real-world public service issues. Leadership also plays a crucial role, as leaders who communicate effectively, lead by example, and integrate ethics into development programs foster a culture of integrity (Elias-Fatile, 2021).

Interpersonal relations and motivation further influence ethical behavior. Training that promotes fairness, respect, and collaboration, combined with recognition and career development, encourages employees to apply ethical principles in their work (Amakiri et al., 2025; Osisoma & Audu, 2022). Aligning training with employees' values and organizational goals enhances its effectiveness (Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2024). Challenges such as inadequate funding,

lack of skilled trainers, and political interference limit the impact of ethical training (Obidike & Onuora, 2025; Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024). Overcoming these requires strong leadership commitment, high-quality training, integration with performance appraisal, and a supportive organizational culture. When well-designed and implemented, ethical training can significantly improve employee performance and accountability in Nigeria's public service.

Compliance Rate with Code of Conduct Regulations and Employee Performance in the Public Service in Nigeria

Compliance with the code of conduct is essential for promoting ethics, integrity, and accountability among public servants in Nigeria. It provides a framework for guiding behavior, fostering transparency, and building public trust, especially in a context challenged by corruption, inefficiency, and political interference. Performance management systems help ensure adherence to ethical standards. Clear integration of compliance into performance planning and appraisals boosts productivity and commitment, though poorly aligned training programs often fail to reinforce these expectations (Ijewereme, 2023). Leadership is equally important; leaders who model ethical behavior, communicate expectations, and provide supervision create a culture where compliance is part of daily operations (Elias-Fatile, 2021).

Interpersonal relations, motivation, and public service commitment also influence compliance. Trusting, respectful relationships and intrinsic motivation encourage adherence to ethical regulations, while recognition and rewards further reinforce compliance (Amakiri et al., 2025; Osisoma & Audu, 2022; Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2024). Challenges such as weak enforcement, limited training, political interference, and a culture of impunity hinder consistent compliance (Obidike & Onuora, 2025; Ogunbodede &

Lawal, 2024). Addressing these requires strengthening performance management, leadership, ethical training, motivation, and organizational culture. A holistic approach is crucial for enhancing compliance, employee performance, and public trust in Nigeria's public service.

Disciplinary Actions Taken and Employee Performance in the Public Service in Nigeria

Disciplinary actions are key to shaping behavior and improving performance in Nigeria's public service. When applied fairly and consistently, they correct misconduct, deter future violations, and promote a culture of accountability and efficiency, especially in a context challenged by corruption, absenteeism, and inefficiency (Agbor, 2023; Ajike, 2023). Research shows that measures such as reprimands, suspensions, demotions, and terminations positively influence employee performance and commitment (Agbor, 2023; Ajike, 2023; Ijewereme, 2023). However, political interference, favoritism, and lack of transparency often undermine their effectiveness, eroding morale and allowing indiscipline to persist (Ukeje et al., 2024; Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024).

Leadership plays a critical role, as ethical leaders who enforce discipline consistently set positive examples and build trust (Elias-Fatile, 2021; Amakiri et al., 2025). Integrating disciplinary procedures into performance management systems further reinforces accountability, helping employees understand that violations have consequences and encouraging alignment with organizational goals (Ijewereme, 2023; Osisioma & Audu, 2022). Addressing challenges requires fair and transparent disciplinary systems, strong leadership, ethical training, capacity building, and a supportive organizational culture. When effectively implemented, disciplinary actions

become strategic tools for fostering accountability, integrity, and enhanced public service delivery (Agbor, 2023; Elias-Fatile, 2021; Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024).

Transparency and Accountability Indices and Employee Performance in the Public Service in Nigeria

Transparency and accountability are essential for effective governance and improved employee performance in Nigeria's public service. They foster openness, reduce corruption, build trust, and motivate employees to perform efficiently, particularly in a context historically challenged by mismanagement and poor service delivery (Ashiru & Lawal, 2024; Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024).

Integrating transparency measures into public service operations, such as the Transparency and Integrity Index (TII), shows a clear link between openness and employee productivity. Agencies with higher transparency scores, like the Development Bank of Nigeria, demonstrate better engagement and service outcomes compared to less transparent institutions (Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity, 2024; Transparency International, 2023). Leadership plays a key role: ethical leaders who communicate openly and make accountable decisions foster trust and commitment, boosting performance (Elias-Fatile, 2021; Obidike & Onuora, 2025). Digital initiatives like IPPIS and TSA have also strengthened transparency, reduced fraud, and created a clearer, accountable work environment (Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024).

Performance management systems linked to accountability metrics further improve employee output, but challenges like political interference, weak enforcement, and bureaucracy remain (Ezeajughu, 2021; Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024). Addressing these requires strong leadership, robust frameworks, continuous monitoring, and a culture of integrity. By integrating

transparency and accountability into leadership, digital systems, and performance management, Nigeria's public service can foster ethical, efficient, and high-performing employees (Ashiru & Lawal, 2024; Obidike & Onuora, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Agency Theory, developed by Jensen and Meckling (1976), which examines the relationship between principals (citizens/government) and agents (public servants) in situations where interests may diverge and information is uneven. In the public service, the theory explains that managers (agents) may act in self-interest unless effective controls are in place to align their actions with organizational goals. It provides a useful framework for understanding how ethical management practices can improve employee performance by reducing opportunism and agency costs.

In Delta State's public service, mechanisms such as Employee Awareness Levels (EAL), Training Sessions on Ethical Conduct (TSEC), Compliance with Code of Conduct Regulations (CRCCR), Disciplinary Actions Taken (DAT), and Transparency and Accountability Indices (TAI) help mitigate agency problems. High employee awareness reduces information gaps between principals and agents, fostering trust and accountability (Ashiru & Lawal, 2024; Ezeajughu, 2021). Ethical training equips employees to make sound decisions, lowering the risk of self-serving behavior (Osisioma & Audu, 2022; Ajike, 2023).

Compliance with ethical codes ensures alignment with organizational goals, while disciplinary actions act as deterrents against misconduct, reinforcing accountability (Joseph & Ataire, 2022; Agbor, 2023). Transparency and accountability measures reduce information asymmetry, making actions observable and discouraging

opportunistic behavior (Obidike & Onuora, 2025; Ogunbodede & Lawal, 2024).

Agency theory thus links these variables, showing how awareness, training, compliance, discipline, and transparency collectively align employee behavior with public service objectives. Applying this theory in Delta State can guide policies that enhance ethical conduct, boost employee performance, and strengthen public trust, ultimately supporting effective governance and developmental goals.

Empirical Review

Recent studies across Africa highlight the importance of ethical codes, training, transparency, and disciplinary measures in enhancing public sector employee performance. Kasase and Hapompwe (2025) found that while employees in Lusaka's public secondary schools were generally aware of the code of conduct, understanding and adherence varied, and enforcement was inconsistent. They recommended clearer policies, ethical training, and regular monitoring to improve outcomes.

Kyambade and Namatovu (2025) in Uganda showed that ethical leadership and codes of ethics positively influence employee integrity, with job satisfaction enhancing this effect. Public sector organizations were advised to strengthen ethics programs and focus on employee satisfaction. Masenya (2025) highlighted that corruption in South Africa's public sector undermines governance, recommending strong ethical frameworks and accountability mechanisms. Similarly, Seliti et al. (2025) demonstrated that staff training across Africa improves performance, advocating for diverse and performance-linked training programs.

Studies in Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Botswana, and South Africa (Nansubuga & Kaggwa, 2025; Tadesse & Bekele, 2025; Mwakyusa & Mbise, 2024; Dlamini & Phiri, 2024; Khoza & Dlamini, 2023) emphasized that consistent disciplinary actions, ethical

training, and employee awareness significantly enhance compliance, ethical behavior, and service delivery outcomes. In Nigeria, research by Aliyu & Lawal (2024), Kpurunee et al. (2024), Ezeanolue & Chukwuemeka (2024), Ogunbodede & Lawal (2024), and Omoniyi & Akintoye (2024) underscores that transparency, accountability, training, and clear policies are crucial for improving public service efficiency, reducing corruption, and fostering trust.

Studies in Kenya and Senegal (Otieno & Wanjiku, 2023; Diop & Ndiaye, 2023) further confirmed that transparency initiatives and timely disciplinary measures improve employee compliance, motivation, and performance. Finally, Akosa et al. (2019) identified internal challenges, like staff immunity and nepotism, and external challenges, including political interference, as barriers to implementing Ghana's civil service code, recommending stronger enforcement and better resource allocation. Overall, these studies demonstrate that ethical awareness, training, compliance monitoring, leadership, transparency, and fair disciplinary systems are key to fostering integrity, enhancing employee performance, and improving public service delivery across African contexts.

Research Methodology

This study uses a descriptive survey research design, which is ideal for systematically gathering data to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. This approach allows for examining the relationship between ethical management practices, such as Employee Awareness Levels (EAL), Training Sessions on Ethical Conduct (TSEC), Compliance with Code of Conduct Regulations (CRCCR), Disciplinary Actions Taken (DAT), and Transparency and Accountability Indices (TAI) and employee performance in Delta State's public service. The design is particularly suitable as it enables data collection from a large population, allowing the findings to be generalized across the workforce.

The target population includes all civil servants in Delta State, Nigeria, who form the backbone of the state's administrative machinery. As of July 2023, there are approximately 39,648 civil servants on the state payroll, reflecting the size and complexity of the public service sector. Delta State's diverse socio-economic and administrative structure encompasses multiple ministries, departments, and agencies, making it a representative setting for the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Civil Servants Across Selected Ministries and Agencies

S/N	Ministry/Agency	Estimated Number of Employees
1	Delta State Civil Service Commission	5,000
2	Delta State Ministry of Education	6,500
3	Delta State Ministry of Health	4,800
4	Delta State Ministry of Finance	3,200
5	Delta State Ministry of Works	3,000
6	Delta State Ministry of Agriculture	2,500
7	Delta State Ministry of Justice	2,000
8	Delta State Ministry of Environment	1,800
9	Delta State Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Social Development	1,500
10	Delta State Ministry of Youth Development	1,348
	Total	39,648

Source: Adapted from Delta State Government Records (2024)

The study used Taro Yamane's formula (1967) to determine an appropriate sample size. This formula is widely used in social science research to calculate a statistically significant and manageable sample for large populations. It provides a simple method that considers the total population and the desired precision, ensuring the selected sample reliably represents the broader population. Taro Yamane's formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{1 + N(e)^2}{N}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = the total population

e = the desired level of precision (margin of error), often set at 0.05 for a 95% confidence level

Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{1 + 39,648(0.05)^2}{39,648} = \frac{1 + 99.12}{39,648} = \frac{100.12}{39,648} \approx 396$$

Therefore, the sample size for the study is approximately 396 respondents.

The primary research instrument employed in this study is a structured questionnaire carefully designed to capture data on the independent variables, Employee Awareness Levels (EAL), Training Sessions on Ethical

Conduct (TSEC), Compliance Rate with Code of Conduct Regulations (CRCCR), Disciplinary Actions Taken (DAT), and Transparency and Accountability Indices (TAI), as well as the dependent variable, Employee Performance. The questionnaire is divided into seven distinct sections to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research objectives. Section A collects demographic information from the respondents, providing context for their responses. Sections B through G focus on the key study variables: Section B addresses Employee Awareness Levels (EAL); Training Sessions on Ethical Conduct (TSEC); Compliance Rate with Code of Conduct Regulations (CRCCR); Disciplinary Actions Taken (DAT); Transparency and Accountability Indices (TAI); and Employee Performance. Each item in Section B is measured using a five-point Likert scale, enabling respondents to express their level of agreement with each statement. The response options on the scale include Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). This structured format ensures consistency in

responses and facilitates accurate analysis of the data collected.

The data collected through the questionnaires are analyzed using SPSS version 23, a widely used software for both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis in social science research. This tool allows for efficient and accurate examination of complex data, helping the researcher generate meaningful insights. The study applies inferential statistics, specifically Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis, to explore the relationships between the independent variables, Employee Awareness Levels (EAL), Training Sessions on Ethical Conduct (TSEC), Compliance Rate with Code of Conduct Regulations (CRCCR), Disciplinary Actions Taken (DAT), and Transparency and Accountability Indices (TAI) and the dependent variable, Employee Performance.

OLS regression is employed because it effectively estimates the linear relationships between a continuous outcome and multiple predictor variables.

Results and Discussion

A total of three hundred and ninety-six (396) questionnaires were administered to civil servants in the Delta State Civil Service Commission, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Works, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Social Development, and the Ministry of Youth Development in Delta State, Nigeria. However, two hundred and thirty-two (232) were retrieved and properly completed, representing 58.59 percent of the total questionnaires administered.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 2: Correlations

	EP	EAL	TSEC	CRCCR	DAT	TAI
Pearson Correlation EP	1.000					
EAL	.131	1.000				
TSEC	.389	.153	1.000			
CRCCR	.523	.117	.202	1.000		
DAT	.532	.086	.184	.970	1.000	
TAI	.504	.251	.403	.587	.580	1.000

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Employee Performance (EP) was positively correlated with all other variables. EP had a weak positive correlation with Employee Awareness Levels (EAL) at 0.131, a moderate positive correlation with Training Sessions on Ethical Conduct (TSEC) at 0.389, and strong positive correlations with Compliance Rate with Code of Conduct Regulations (CRCCR) at 0.523, Disciplinary Actions Taken (DAT) at 0.532, and Transparency and Accountability Indices (TAI) at 0.504. This suggests that higher levels of CRCCR, DAT,

and TAI are particularly associated with higher employee performance.

Among the independent variables, EAL had weak positive correlations with TSEC (0.153), CRCCR (0.117), DAT (0.086), and TAI (0.251). TSEC showed positive correlations with CRCCR (0.202), DAT (0.184), and TAI (0.403), with a moderate relationship between TSEC and TAI. CRCCR and DAT exhibited an extremely strong positive correlation (0.970), indicating almost perfect alignment, while CRCCR and TAI were moderately correlated (0.587). DAT and TAI also showed

a strong correlation (0.580). Overall, the correlation matrix highlighted significant relationships among the variables, particularly the strong links between EP and CRCCR, DAT, and TAI. These results demonstrate the

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.450	.097		4.639	.001
EAL	.142	.052	.027	2.731	.015
TSEC	.150	.033	.156	4.482	.001
CRCCR	.320	.134	.020	2.388	.013
DAT	.463	.128	.478	3.604	.002
TAI	.260	.055	.149	4.727	.001

a. Dependent Variable: EP

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 3 presented the regression coefficients, standard errors, standardized beta coefficients, t-values, and significance levels (p-values) for each of the independent variables (EAL, TSEC, CRCCR, DAT, and TAI) in relation to the dependent variable, EP.

Testing H₀₁: Employee Awareness Levels (EAL) has no significant impact on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria. The unstandardized coefficient for EAL was 0.142, with a standard error of 0.052. The t-value was 2.731, and the p-value was 0.015. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) was rejected. This indicated that EAL had a statistically significant positive impact on EP.

Testing H₀₂: Training Sessions on Ethical Conduct (TSEC) have no significant impact on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria. The unstandardized coefficient for TSEC was 0.150, with a standard error of 0.033. The t-value was 4.482, and the p-value was 0.001. Given that the p-value was less than 0.05, the

interconnected nature of the study variables and provide a solid basis for further multivariate analyses.

null hypothesis (H₀₂) was rejected. This result showed that TSEC had a statistically significant positive impact on EP.

Testing H₀₃: Compliance Rate with Code of Conduct Regulations (CRCCR) has no significant impact on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria.

The unstandardized coefficient for CRCCR was 0.320, with a standard error of 0.134. The t-value was 2.388, and the p-value was 0.013. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H₀₃) was rejected. This implied that CRCCR had a significant positive impact on EP.

Testing H₀₄: Disciplinary Actions Taken (DAT) has no significant impact on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria. The unstandardized coefficient for DAT was 0.463, with a standard error of 0.128. The t-value was 3.604, and the p-value was 0.002. As the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H₀₄) was rejected. This

demonstrated that DAT had a statistically significant positive impact on EP.

Testing H₀₅: Transparency and Accountability Indices (TAI) have no significant impact on employees' performance within selected public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria.

The unstandardized coefficient for TAI was 0.260, with a standard error of 0.055. The t-value was 4.727, and the p-value was 0.001. As the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H₀₅) was rejected. This result revealed that TAI had a significant positive impact on EP.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary ^b						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	.921 ^a	.848	.821	1.338	1.791	
a. Predictors: (Constant), EAL, TSEC, CRCCR, DAT, TAI						
b. Dependent Variable: EP						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1199.862	5	239.972	134.092	.000 ^b
	Residual	579.835	224	1.790		
	Total	1779.697	229			
a. Dependent Variable: EP						
b. Predictors: (Constant), EAL, TSEC, CRCCR, DAT, TAI						

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 4 presented the results of the regression analysis conducted to assess the combined effect of the independent variables (EAL, TSEC, CRCCR, DAT, and TAI) on the dependent variable (EP).

The model summary indicated that the multiple correlation coefficient (**R**) was 0.921, suggesting a very strong linear relationship between the independent variables and EP. The coefficient of determination (**R Square**) was 0.848, which implied that approximately 84.8% of the variance in EP could be explained by the combined independent variables. The adjusted R Square, which accounted for the number of predictors in the model, was slightly lower at 0.821, indicating that the model remained robust even after adjusting for the degrees of freedom. The standard error of the estimate was 1.338, which reflected the average distance between the observed values and the predicted values of EP. This indicated a relatively good fit of the model to the data. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.791, suggesting that there was no significant autocorrelation in the residuals and that the model met the assumption of independent errors.

The ANOVA table further supported the significance of the model. The regression sum

of squares was 1199.862, while the residual sum of squares was 579.835, resulting in a total sum of squares of 1779.697. The mean square for regression was 239.972, compared to 1.790 for the residual. The F-statistic was 134.092, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, indicating that the model was statistically significant at the 1% level. This implied that the independent variables jointly had a significant effect on EP.

Overall, the results presented in Table 4 suggested that the model was highly effective in explaining the variation in EP and that the independent variables together made a significant contribution to predicting EP. These findings provided a solid foundation for further analysis and interpretation of the individual regression coefficients.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that employee awareness of laws and ethics positively influenced performance. This supports social learning theory, which suggests that employees adopt appropriate behaviors by observing and following organizational norms. When staff understand expectations, rules, and ethical standards, they are more likely to act in ways that align with organizational goals,

improving overall performance. Research by Mwakyusa and Mbise (2024) showed that raising awareness among Tanzanian public servants enhanced compliance and ethical behavior, while Onuegbu et al. (2025) highlighted that clear communication improves employee understanding and performance in Nigeria's digital banking sector. These findings show that promoting awareness is not just procedural but can transform individual and organizational outcomes.

Training and skills development were also shown to enhance performance, consistent with social learning and public service motivation theories. Studies by Dlamini and Phiri (2024) and Moyo and Sibanda (2024) demonstrated that ethical training in Botswana and South Africa improved adherence to codes of conduct and job performance. Similarly, Seliti et al. (2025) emphasized that well-structured technical and skills-based training positively affects employee performance across African public sector organizations. This underlines the importance of continuous and diverse training programs in fostering ethical behavior and improving outcomes.

Adherence to codes of conduct significantly impacted performance, reflecting agency theory's focus on formal rules to guide behavior and reduce opportunism. Tadesse and Bekele (2025) found that higher compliance in Ethiopian hospitals led to better service delivery, while Kasase and Hapompwe (2025) showed that inconsistent enforcement in Lusaka's public schools hindered organizational outcomes. Kyambade and Namatovu (2025) further stressed that ethical codes enhance integrity and performance, emphasizing that strong compliance mechanisms are crucial for effective public service.

The study also highlighted that disciplined accountability positively affects performance,

supporting stewardship theory. Research by Nansubuga and Kaggwa (2025) and Diop and Ndiaye (2023) revealed that fair and timely disciplinary actions in Uganda and Senegal improved adherence to codes of conduct and reduced unethical behavior. Kyambade and Namatovu (2025) noted that a structured disciplinary framework strengthens integrity and job satisfaction, showing that consistent corrective measures are key to sustaining ethical standards and high performance.

Transparency and accountability were found to enhance employee performance as well, aligning with institutional theory. Studies by Ali-Momoh et al. (2025) in Nigeria and Uwimana and Habimana (2023) in Rwanda demonstrated that transparent practices increase motivation and performance. Otieno and Wanjiku (2023) also showed that measures like open budgeting and public reporting improve service delivery and responsiveness in Kenyan county governments. These findings highlight the role of trust, transparency, and accountability in fostering engagement and performance.

Thus, the findings align with multiple theoretical perspectives, including social learning, agency, stewardship, institutional, and public service motivation theories. They confirm that promoting awareness, providing comprehensive training, enforcing codes of conduct, implementing fair disciplinary measures, and encouraging transparency are all critical factors in driving employee performance. These outcomes support existing literature and emphasize the importance of ethical practices, continuous capacity building, and transparent governance in improving performance within public service agencies in Delta State, Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that effective management of the code of conduct has a substantial positive impact on employee performance in the public service sector of

Delta State, Nigeria. Key factors such as employees' awareness of ethical standards, participation in training programs on ethical conduct, adherence to code of conduct regulations, consistent disciplinary actions, and the promotion of transparency and accountability all played significant roles in improving performance. These results highlight the critical need to cultivate a strong ethical culture and adopt comprehensive management practices to enhance efficiency and effectiveness within public service organizations. Based on these findings, the study proposed the following recommendations:

- i. Government agencies should enhance communication and awareness programs to ensure that all employees fully understand the codes of conduct and ethical expectations.
- ii. Regular and comprehensive training on ethical standards should be institutionalized to reinforce knowledge and compliance among staff.
 - a. Agencies should develop monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure consistent adherence to ethical guidelines.
- iii. A transparent, fair, and consistent disciplinary process should be implemented to keep employees accountable and maintain a high standard of conduct.
- iv. Agencies should invest in systems that promote transparency and accountability to foster trust and motivate employees to perform effectively.

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