



# Workplace Ethics and Job Commitment Among Secretarial Staff in the Public Sector, Delta State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of workplace ethics on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector of Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, it assessed the effects of integrity, respect for organizational policies, and accountability on job commitment. A descriptive research design was used, with a target population of 10,943 secretarial staff across 25 local government areas. A sample of 368 respondents was selected using Krejcie and Morgan's formula. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 86.14% (317 out of 368). The reliability of the instrument was confirmed with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.81. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including Pearson correlation analysis, were used to analyze the data. Findings indicated that integrity, respect for organizational policies, and accountability all had significant positive effects on job commitment. The study recommends regular ethics training, transparent policy enforcement mechanisms, and participatory approaches to policy development to enhance job commitment.

Keywords: Workplace Ethics, Organizational Policies, Accountability, Job Commitment, Secretarial Staff

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Workplace ethics have emerged as a vital element in the operational success of organizations across the world. Ethics in the workplace refer to the set of moral principles, standards, and norms that guide behavior and decision-making within an organization (Al-Aidaroos et al., 2013). Ethical practices such as honesty, accountability, fairness, and respect are fundamental in establishing trust between employees and management, which in turn fosters a harmonious and productive work environment. In public sector organizations, where transparency and public trust are paramount, adherence to ethical standards is not just desirable but essential. Particularly among secretarial staff who are responsible for sensitive information, maintaining workplace ethics ensures operational efficiency, protects organizational integrity, and promotes employee satisfaction.

In the Nigerian public sector, ethical challenges such as favoritism, negligence, corruption, and lack of accountability have frequently been reported (Fatile, 2013). These challenges have a direct bearing on employees' commitment to their organizations. Job commitment, defined as the emotional attachment, loyalty, and willingness of an employee to contribute to organizational goals, is crucial for ensuring high productivity and reducing turnover (Adeyeye et al., 2015). For secretarial staff, whose roles are often administrative and confidential, commitment is essential for maintaining workflow continuity and upholding organizational reputation. When ethical principles are compromised, employees may feel disengaged, unappreciated, or distrustful of management, ultimately affecting their commitment levels.

Several studies have indicated that there is a significant link between the ethical climate of an organization and the level of employee commitment (Mitonga-Monga, 2020). A workplace that upholds integrity, enforces policies consistently, and encourages accountability creates a sense of belonging among

employees, thereby strengthening their commitment. Conversely, the absence of a strong ethical foundation can result in demotivation, dissatisfaction, and increased absenteeism. In the context of the Nigerian public sector, where systemic challenges often affect operational efficiency, examining the relationship between workplace ethics and job commitment among secretarial staff is both timely and necessary.

Given the vital administrative support role played by secretarial staff in public institutions, understanding how ethical practices affect their commitment is critical for human resource management and organizational development. It is within this context that the present study seeks to investigate the effect of workplace ethics focusing on integrity, respect for organizational policies, and accountability—on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State, Nigeria. By doing so, it aims to provide empirical insights that could assist policymakers and managers in strengthening ethical practices and fostering a more committed workforce.

Secretarial staff in Delta State's public sector have a crucial function in maintaining administrative efficiency and protecting confidential data. Limited research and personal accounts indicate that organisational misconduct – including breaches of integrity, a disregard for established rules and policies, and weak oversight – have undermined employee commitment and loyalty, resulting in absenteeism, decreased motivation, and increased desire to leave the company. Notwithstanding the acknowledged significance of workplace ethics in moulding employee attitudes and behaviours, there is a considerable scarcity of empirical research investigating how distinct ethical dimensions specifically impact job commitment among administrative staff in this area. A knowledge gap hinders policymakers and managers from developing targeted interventions grounded in evidence, which aim to strengthen ethical standards and boost employee engagement, ultimately risking a decline in the quality of public services provided. This research aims to address a disparity by examining the influence of honesty, adherence to organisational procedures, and responsibility on job dedication among public sector administrative staff in Delta State, Nigeria.

The main goal of this research is to investigate workplace ethics and job dedication among secretarial employees in the public sector in Delta State, Nigeria. The research aims to investigate the impact of integrity in the workplace on job commitment among public sector secretarial staff in Delta State, evaluate the influence of respect for organisational policies and procedures on job commitment among public sector secretarial staff in Delta State, and identify the effect of accountability and responsibility on job commitment among public sector secretarial staff in Delta State.

This study on the effect of workplace ethics on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State, Nigeria, is significant in several ways. For policymakers and government agencies, the findings will provide empirical evidence on which dimensions of ethics most strongly affect commitment, informing the development and refinement of codes of conduct, anti-corruption measures, and enforcement mechanisms tailored to the needs of secretarial personnel in public institutions. For human resource practitioners and managers, insights into how integrity, adherence to organizational policies, and accountability drive staff loyalty and performance will enable HR managers to design targeted training programs, performance appraisal systems, and reward structures that reinforce ethical behavior and enhance retention. For secretarial staff and employee groups, understanding the link between ethical practices and their own levels of commitment will heighten awareness of the benefits of upholding ethical standards, potentially fostering a stronger sense of ownership, job satisfaction, and professional identity.

For organizational development and service delivery, the study will guide institutional reforms aimed at improving administrative efficiency, reducing absenteeism and turnover, and ultimately elevating the quality and consistency of public service delivery in Delta State. From an academic and theoretical perspective, the research will bridge a notable gap in the literature on workplace ethics in Nigerian public organizations, offering a conceptual framework and validated measures that future scholars can apply or extend in comparative studies across other regions or occupational groups. Lastly, the study will open directions for future research by identifying which ethical dimensions exert the greatest impact on commitment, pointing to areas ripe for deeper qualitative inquiry, such as the role of leadership modeling, peer influence, or cultural norms, thus enriching the broader discourse on organizational ethics and behavior.

The scope of this study is focused on assessing the effect of workplace ethics on job commitment among secretarial staff within public sector organizations in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examines three key dimensions of workplace ethics: integrity, respect for organizational policies and procedures, and

accountability. The research is limited to secretarial staff working in government offices and agencies within Delta State, and it does not extend to private sector organizations or other regions of Nigeria. The study will only consider factors directly related to workplace ethics and their impact on the job commitment of employees in these public sector institutions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Conceptualization of the Study

This study explores workplace ethics and job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State, Nigeria. Workplace ethics encompasses moral principles and standards that guide behavior within an organization, including integrity, respect for organizational policies, and accountability. These ethical dimensions are hypothesized to influence job commitment, defined as the psychological attachment and loyalty of employees to their organization. Previous research has established that a strong ethical climate can enhance employee commitment by fostering trust, fairness, and a sense of responsibility (Faisal et al., 2021; Inyang, 2022). Additionally, studies have shown that ethical leadership and adherence to professional standards positively impact job satisfaction and performance (Dewua et al., 2021). By examining these relationships, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of how ethical practices affect job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector.

### 2.2. Integrity in the Workplace

Integrity in the workplace is a cornerstone of ethical behavior that fosters trust, accountability, and professionalism. It involves adhering to moral principles such as honesty, fairness, and consistency, even when it is not under direct supervision. Integrity ensures that decisions and actions align with the organization's values, which in turn supports a positive work environment. A study by (Hadi & Saerang, 2020) suggests that integrity positively influences employees' trust in management, which boosts organizational citizenship behavior. Moreover, integrity promotes transparent communication, which reduces workplace conflicts and increases job satisfaction (Burhan et al., 2023). As integrity is essential for building effective teamwork, employees who exhibit high levels of integrity are more likely to be trusted by their colleagues and, as a result, experience better work relationships and job performance (Zhang, 2020). Therefore, organizations that emphasize integrity are likely to see improved overall productivity and a more engaged workforce.

Moreover, integrity also plays a crucial role in shaping leadership within organizations. Leaders who demonstrate integrity by aligning their words with actions create a work environment built on trust and respect (Al Halbusi et al., 2021). Such leadership fosters a culture where employees feel motivated and inspired to follow ethical standards. According to Al Halbusi et al. (2021), leader integrity is strongly correlated with employee commitment, as employees are more likely to identify with leaders who exhibit moral clarity and consistency in their decisions. Furthermore, integrating integrity into leadership practices has been linked to improved employee morale and retention. In this regard, organizations should prioritize integrity as a fundamental trait in leadership development programs to enhance organizational performance and ethical behavior across all levels of operation.

### 2.3. Respect for Organizational Policies and Procedures

Respect for organizational policies and procedures is a critical element of maintaining order, consistency, and efficiency within any organization. Organizational policies are the set of formal guidelines that dictate how various tasks and processes should be carried out, and they serve as a framework for decision-making and behavior. Employees who respect and adhere to these policies ensure smooth operations, reduce the likelihood of conflicts, and promote fairness across the organization (Ali et al., 2020). According to Hadi & Saerang (2020), employees' commitment to following organizational policies leads to higher levels of productivity and organizational trust. In turn, this respect for established protocols fosters a sense of accountability and responsibility, ensuring that employees align with the organization's goals and values (Amegayibor, 2021). Studies have shown that when employees respect and follow organizational policies, it leads to greater organizational stability and improved internal communication (Amegayibor, 2021).

Moreover, organizational policies provide clear guidance on ethical and legal standards, helping to prevent misconduct and promote ethical decision-making. When employees exhibit respect for these policies,

it contributes to a culture of compliance and transparency within the organization (Aebissa et al., 2023). Research by Baharuddin & Ismail (2018) shows that employees who understand and respect organizational policies are more likely to trust the leadership and demonstrate commitment to the organization's objectives. Furthermore, the consistency in the enforcement of policies enhances employees' perceptions of fairness, which is a key driver of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Thus, respect for policies and procedures is not only essential for regulatory compliance but also for promoting an ethical and high-performance organizational culture.

#### **2.4. Accountability and Responsibility in the Workplace**

Accountability and responsibility are integral components of effective organizational behavior, particularly when fostering a culture of transparency and high performance. Accountability refers to the expectation that employees will take ownership of their actions, decisions, and outcomes, ensuring that they are answerable for their work and results. Responsibility, on the other hand, emphasizes the obligation of employees to fulfill their assigned duties and meet performance expectations. The combination of these two traits is essential for maintaining organizational integrity and fostering trust among employees, as well as with leadership. According to Wuarlela et al. (2023), when employees feel accountable for their actions, they are more likely to perform at a higher level and exhibit greater dedication to their work. This sense of ownership drives them to ensure that their tasks align with organizational goals and ethical standards, which ultimately improves overall efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, accountability has been found to be positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Sengupta, 2011), as employees who feel responsible for their contributions are more likely to remain engaged and motivated.

Moreover, fostering a culture of accountability and responsibility at all levels of an organization significantly contributes to organizational success. Studies indicate that leaders who model accountability by holding themselves and their teams responsible for outcomes create an environment where employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. This leadership style not only improves organizational performance but also enhances employee trust and morale (Turnawan et al., 2024). According to a study by Erichsen & Reynolds (2020), organizations that effectively communicate and enforce accountability policies experience lower turnover rates and higher employee satisfaction. Furthermore, accountability ensures that employees adhere to ethical guidelines, reducing the risk of misconduct and promoting a more ethical workplace (Rondeau & Wagar, 2001). By embedding accountability into organizational culture, companies can mitigate performance gaps, improve teamwork, and enhance overall productivity.

#### **2.5. Job Commitment**

Job commitment refers to the psychological attachment, dedication, and loyalty an employee feels toward their organization, which influences their motivation, behavior, and overall work performance. It is a multi-dimensional construct encompassing emotional commitment, where employees feel a strong connection to their organization, and normative commitment, where employees believe it is their duty to remain with their organization (Adeyeye et al., 2015). Job commitment plays a critical role in enhancing organizational effectiveness by promoting employee retention, job satisfaction, and performance. According to a study by Prasetyo et al. (2017), employees who exhibit high levels of job commitment tend to contribute more to organizational success through increased productivity and active engagement in their work tasks. This psychological attachment helps reduce turnover intentions and fosters long-term organizational loyalty (Yue et al., 2023). As organizations face challenges related to workforce retention, understanding the factors that enhance job commitment becomes increasingly important in sustaining organizational stability.

Various factors contribute to job commitment, including organizational culture, leadership styles, and work environment. Leadership, in particular, has a significant influence on employees' commitment levels. When leaders demonstrate supportive behaviors, clear communication, and ethical leadership, employees are more likely to develop strong bonds with their organizations (Zhang, 2020). Additionally, organizational culture plays a pivotal role in fostering job commitment. A culture that values employee contributions, provides opportunities for growth, and supports work-life balance tends to enhance employees' emotional attachment to the organization (Mitonga-Monga, 2020). Furthermore, intrinsic job factors, such as task significance and the alignment of personal values with organizational goals, have been shown to positively impact job commitment (Al Halbusi et al., 2021). Research suggests that when employees find their work

meaningful and feel that their roles align with the organization's objectives, their level of job commitment increases.

High levels of job commitment not only benefit individual employees but also contribute to organizational success. Committed employees exhibit greater organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which includes actions such as helping colleagues, showing initiative, and demonstrating a positive attitude toward organizational changes (Dewua et al., 2021). This, in turn, leads to higher performance standards and a collaborative work environment. Furthermore, committed employees are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors, such as absenteeism or turnover (Choi et al., 2020). Studies have shown that job commitment is strongly linked to both job satisfaction and organizational performance (Adeyeye et al., 2015). As organizations strive for enhanced productivity and reduced turnover, fostering job commitment through various strategies such as employee development, recognition, and job enrichment becomes increasingly essential. The ability to cultivate and maintain a committed workforce can significantly impact an organization's competitive advantage.

## 2.6. Organizational Justice Theory

Organizational Justice Theory focuses on the perceptions of fairness within an organization and how these perceptions influence employee attitudes, behaviors, and organizational outcomes. The theory, developed in the 1980s by researchers such as Greenberg (1987) and later expanded, categorizes justice into four primary types: distributive justice (fairness of outcomes), procedural justice (fairness of processes), interactional justice (fairness in interpersonal interactions), and informational justice (fairness in communication). These dimensions of organizational justice are crucial for understanding how workplace ethics and fairness influence employees' job commitment.

The implications for the study include the influence of ethical practices on employee commitment, where the framework can help examine how employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace such as being treated fairly by supervisors and colleagues affect their commitment to public sector organizations. Additionally, by measuring organizational fairness through dimensions such as distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational justice, the study can explore specific ways in which ethical conduct and adherence to policies contribute to job commitment. Furthermore, organizational justice theory can be applied to evaluate how adherence to ethical policies and transparent procedures, such as promotion policies and performance appraisals, impacts the job commitment of secretarial staff in the public sector.

## 2.7. Empirical Review

Empirical studies have demonstrated a strong link between ethical leadership, workplace ethics, and employee commitment. A study conducted in Iraq explored how ethical leadership, mediated by ethical climate and moderated by person–organization (P–O) fit, significantly influences employee ethical conduct (Al Halbusi et al., 2021). The findings emphasized that employees with high P–O fit were more likely to align with the ethical climate of their organization, leading to stronger ethical behavior. In another study conducted in the Democratic Republic of Congo, social exchange theory was used to examine the moderating role of mutual trust in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational commitment. The results revealed that fairness, integrity, and altruistic behavior from leaders significantly enhanced affective, continuance, and normative commitment among employees (Mitonga-Monga, 2020). Similarly, research in Nigeria focused on professional ethics in secretarial practice and its impact on job performance. It found that ethical practices positively influenced the performance of secretaries, reinforcing the need for a strong ethical framework within the profession (Inyang, 2022). These studies collectively suggest that workplace ethics, when fostered by ethical leadership and organizational support, play a vital role in enhancing employees' job commitment. However, limited attention has been given specifically to secretarial staff in the Nigerian public sector. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by examining the relationship between workplace ethics and job commitment among secretarial staff in Delta State, Nigeria.

## 2.8. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated for the study:

### 2.8.1. Hypothesis 1

**Null Hypothesis (Ho<sub>1</sub>)**: Integrity in the workplace has no significant effect on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha<sub>1</sub>)**: Integrity in the workplace has a significant effect on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

### 2.8.2. Hypothesis 2

**Null Hypothesis (Ho<sub>2</sub>)**: Respect for organizational policies and procedures has no significant effect on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha<sub>2</sub>)**: Respect for organizational policies and procedures has a significant effect on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

### 2.8.3. Hypothesis 3

**Null Hypothesis (Ho<sub>3</sub>)**: Accountability and responsibility have no significant effect on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha<sub>3</sub>)**: Accountability and responsibility have a significant effect on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

### 3.1. Research Design

The research adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between workplace ethics and job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector of Delta State, Nigeria. This design was chosen because it allowed for the collection of data from a large number of respondents to describe and analyze their perceptions of workplace ethics and job commitment. The descriptive survey facilitated the measurement of variables such as ethical behavior, job commitment, and their interrelationships, providing valuable insights into the subject matter.

### 3.2. Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all secretarial staff employed in public sector organizations across Delta State, Nigeria. According to the most recent records, the total number of secretarial staff in these organizations was 10,943. Delta State is divided into 25 Local Government Areas (LGAs), with public sector organizations spread across these areas. The population was representative of the public sector workforce, including government ministries, parastatals, and other public offices, making it suitable for investigating the ethical practices and job commitment of secretarial staff.

### 3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Given the population size of 10,943, the sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, which is widely used in survey research. A probability sample of approximately 368 secretarial staff was drawn from the population based on a calculated confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that secretarial staff from various public sector organizations across the 25 LGAs were proportionately represented. Each Local Government Area (LGA) served as a stratum, and secretarial staff were selected randomly from each LGA to ensure the sample reflected the diversity of the population.

### 3.4. Research Instrument

The research instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale items designed to measure the respondents' perceptions of workplace ethics (e.g., integrity, respect for organizational policies, and accountability) and job commitment. The Likert-scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to assess the extent to which respondents agreed with various

statements related to the study variables. The items in the questionnaire were adapted from validated instruments used in previous studies on workplace ethics and job commitment.

### 3.5. Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, content validity was used. The initial draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts in the fields of organizational behavior, human resource management, and public administration. These experts assessed the relevance and clarity of the items in relation to the research objectives. Their feedback was used to revise and improve the instrument to ensure that it accurately measured the variables under study. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of secretarial staff (not part of the main study) to check for any ambiguous items and to make further adjustments to the instrument.

### 3.6. Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which measured the internal consistency of the questionnaire. A pilot test was conducted among a sample of secretarial staff in a public sector organization outside of Delta State. The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.81 obtained from the pilot study was above the accepted threshold, indicating that the instrument was reliable.

### 3.7. Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were collected using self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected secretarial staff across the 25 Local Government Areas in Delta State. A team of trained research assistants was employed to facilitate the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. To ensure a high response rate, the questionnaires were collected directly from the respondents after they had been filled out, and follow-up reminders were sent to non-respondents. The survey was conducted over a period of four weeks to ensure that all responses were gathered within the specified timeframe.

### 3.8. Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, such as means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the respondents and to describe their perceptions of workplace ethics and job commitment. To test the hypotheses, Pearson Product moment correlation analysis was employed to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between workplace ethics (integrity, respect for organizational policies, and accountability) and job commitment. The results of these analyses were used to determine whether there were significant relationships between the variables and to draw conclusions about the effect of workplace ethics on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Research Results

**Table 1. Analysis of Questionnaire distributed**

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	317	86.14%
Unreturned	51	13.86%
Total distributed	368	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The analysis of the questionnaire distribution, as shown in Table 1, indicates that out of a total of 368 questionnaires distributed to respondents, 317 were successfully retrieved, representing a high response rate of 86.14%. Conversely, 51 questionnaires were not returned, accounting for 13.86% of the total. The high retrieval rate suggests that the participants were largely cooperative and that the data collected are representative of the target population, enhancing the reliability and validity of the study's findings (Saunders et al., 2009).

**Table 2. Respondents Response Rate**

N = 317

S/N	Question Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std
1	Honesty is considered a key value in the organization's operations.	120	140	30	15	12	4.08	1.00
2	Employees in the workplace are expected to uphold high ethical standards in all work-related activities.	110	150	35	10	12	4.06	0.96
3	The organization ensures that its actions align with its declared ethical standards.	100	130	50	20	17	3.87	1.09
4	The workplace fosters an environment where integrity is prioritized in all business dealings.	125	135	40	10	7	4.14	0.91
5	Unethical behavior is actively discouraged in the organization.	130	140	30	12	5	4.19	0.87
6	The policies in the organization are clear and consistently followed by all employees.	115	145	35	15	7	4.09	0.92
7	The organizational policies are perceived as fair and just.	120	140	30	15	12	4.08	1.00
8	The workplace supports the enforcement of organizational policies equally across all levels of staff.	110	150	40	10	7	4.09	0.89
9	Employees are well informed about the relevant policies and procedures.	125	135	40	10	7	4.14	0.91
10	The organization's policies are designed to promote the welfare of all employees.	130	140	30	12	5	4.19	0.87
11	Employees in the workplace are held accountable for their actions, regardless of their position.	110	150	35	10	12	4.06	0.96
12	Employees are expected to take responsibility for their mistakes and learn from them.	115	145	35	10	12	4.08	0.97
13	There are clear consequences for unethical or irresponsible behavior within the organization.	120	140	30	15	12	4.08	1.00
14	The organization ensures transparency in decision-making processes, promoting accountability.	125	135	40	10	7	4.14	0.91
15	Maintaining ethical standards and accountability is considered a responsibility for all employees in the workplace.	130	140	30	12	5	4.19	0.87
16	Employees are highly dedicated to their work and strive to perform duties to the best of their ability.	125	145	35	10	2	4.20	0.81
17	There is a strong sense of loyalty to the organization and its goals.	120	140	35	15	7	4.11	0.93
18	Employees are willing to go above and beyond normal duties to contribute to the success of the organization.	115	150	30	10	12	4.09	0.96
19	There is an intention to remain with the current employer for the foreseeable future due to commitment to the job.	110	150	40	10	7	4.09	0.89
20	Emotional investment in the role leads to a strong commitment to performing high-quality work.	120	140	35	12	10	4.10	0.96

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The respondents' responses as shown in Table 2 reveal consistently high mean scores across all items, indicating a generally strong positive perception toward workplace ethics and job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State, Nigeria. The mean scores ranged from  $3.87 \pm 1.09$  to  $4.20 \pm 0.81$ . The highest mean score was recorded for the item "Employees are highly dedicated to their work and strive to perform duties to the best of their ability" ( $4.20 \pm 0.81$ ), suggesting a very high level of job dedication. Similarly, items relating to discouragement of unethical behavior ( $4.19 \pm 0.87$ ), promotion of employee welfare through organizational policies ( $4.19 \pm 0.87$ ), and the maintenance of ethical standards and accountability ( $4.19 \pm 0.87$ ) also had high mean values, reflecting strong ethical enforcement and employee responsibility in the workplace. On the other hand, the item "The organization ensures that its actions align

with its declared ethical standards" had the lowest mean of  $3.87 \pm 1.09$ , though still positive, indicating a slightly lower but acceptable perception regarding the organization's practice of its stated ethics. The relatively small standard deviations, ranging between 0.81 and 1.09, suggest that responses were tightly clustered around the means, reinforcing the consistency of views among respondents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables Used**

Date: 04/28/25 Time: 22:37

Sample: 317

	IN	ROPP	AR	JC
Mean	4.067508	4.161981	4.108517	4.117981
Std. Dev.	0.946070	0.906844	0.929725	0.896455
Median	4.000000	4.000000	4.000000	4.000000
Maximum	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000
Minimum	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Skewness	-1.259930	-1.267060	-1.326569	-1.238628
Kurtosis	4.553483	4.743373	4.856975	4.684310
Jarque-Bera	115.7446	124.9655	138.5224	118.5276
Probability	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000
Sum	1289.400	1305.400	1302.400	1305.400
Sum Sq. Dev.	282.8353	259.8675	273.1470	253.9475
Observations	317	317	317	317

Source: Eviews 9.0 output, 2025

The Table 3 descriptive statistics for the variables — Integrity (IN), Respect for Organizational Policies and Procedures (ROPP), Accountability and Responsibility (AR), and Job Commitment (JC) — among the sampled 317 respondents show generally high mean values. Specifically, the mean scores are  $4.07 \pm 0.95$  for Integrity,  $4.16 \pm 0.91$  for Respect for Organizational Policies and Procedures,  $4.11 \pm 0.93$  for Accountability and Responsibility, and  $4.12 \pm 0.90$  for Job Commitment. This indicates that, overall, respondents exhibited positive perceptions across all the measured variables. The medians for all variables are exactly 4.00, affirming that the distribution of responses is centered around a strong agreement.

The skewness values are all negative (ranging from -1.238 to -1.327), suggesting that the distributions are slightly left-skewed, meaning that a larger portion of respondents selected higher agreement levels (positive responses). Furthermore, the kurtosis values, which are all greater than 3 (ranging from 4.55 to 4.86), indicate that the distributions are leptokurtic, implying that the responses are more peaked than a normal distribution and that extreme values are slightly more common. The Jarque-Bera test statistics for all variables are statistically significant ( $p$ -values = 0.000), indicating that the distributions deviate from normality. However, given the large sample size ( $N = 317$ ), the Central Limit Theorem justifies the use of parametric tests despite this deviation (Field, 2018). Overall, the results demonstrate that the perceptions of ethics and job commitment among secretarial staff are generally high and consistent across the surveyed population.

#### 4.1.1. Hypothesis Test Results

**Table 4. Summary of Correlation analysis for Hypothesis 1**

Parameters	Mean	Std	Observation	r	P-Value	Decision
In	4.06	0.94	317	0.937	0.00	Reject $H_0$
JC	4.11	0.89				

The result presented in Table 4 tested the first hypothesis, examining whether Integrity in the workplace significantly affects Job Commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State. The mean values for Integrity ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ) and Job Commitment ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) were both high, indicating strong agreement among respondents. The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was 0.937, showing a very strong positive relationship between Integrity and Job Commitment. Additionally, the  $p$ -value was 0.00, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. Based on this, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected, leading to the conclusion that Integrity in the workplace has a significant and positive effect on Job Commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

**Table 5. Summary of Correlation analysis for Hypothesis 2**

Parameters	Mean	Std	Observation	r	P-Value	Decision
ROPP	4.16	0.91	317	0.7264	0.001	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
JC	4.11	0.89				

The analysis in Table 5 tested the second hypothesis, assessing whether Respect for Organizational Policies and Procedures significantly affects Job Commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State. The mean score for Respect for Organizational Policies and Procedures ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) and Job Commitment ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) were both relatively high, suggesting favorable perceptions among respondents. The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was 0.7264, indicating a strong positive relationship between Respect for Organizational Policies and Procedures and Job Commitment. The p-value of 0.001, being less than the 0.05 threshold, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). This result implies that Respect for Organizational Policies and Procedures significantly and positively affects Job Commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

**Table 6. summary of Correlation analysis for Hypothesis 3**

Parameters	Mean	Std	Observation	r	P-Value	Decision
AR	4.18	0.92	317	0.756	0.017	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
JC	4.11	0.89				

Table 6 presents the analysis of the third hypothesis, which examined the effect of Accountability and Responsibility on Job Commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State. The mean value for Accountability and Responsibility ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ) and for Job Commitment ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) were both high, reflecting strong agreement among respondents regarding the importance of these ethical dimensions. The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was 0.756, indicating a strong positive relationship between Accountability and Responsibility and Job Commitment. With a p-value of 0.017, which is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. This result confirms that Accountability and Responsibility have a significant and positive effect on Job Commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State.

## 4.2. Discussion

### 4.2.1. Integrity and Job Commitment

The finding revealed that integrity in the workplace has a significant and positive effect on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State. This outcome aligns with the work of Petrova & Mushynskyi (2024), who posited that organizational integrity fosters trust and enhances employees' psychological attachment, leading to higher commitment levels. Similarly, Eneh (2019) emphasized that when employees perceive a strong ethical environment emphasizing honesty and fairness, their emotional attachment to the organization increases. Adeoye & Elegunde (2012) further confirmed that workplace integrity creates an environment of mutual respect, ultimately strengthening organizational loyalty and commitment. These findings validate that an ethical culture rooted in integrity motivates staff to remain dedicated and loyal.

Conversely, the study contrasts with the findings of Paine (2024), who argued that organizational integrity, while important, may not significantly affect employee commitment in highly bureaucratic public institutions where systemic inefficiencies overshadow ethical practices. Additionally, Ojo and Akinlabi (2019) found that in some Nigerian public organizations, even when ethical codes exist, poor enforcement can weaken the expected positive relationship between integrity and commitment. These discrepancies suggest that contextual factors, such as organizational enforcement of ethical practices, could moderate the impact of integrity on job commitment.

### 4.2.2. Respect for Organizational Policies and Procedures and Job Commitment

The result indicated that respect for organizational policies and procedures significantly influences job commitment among secretarial staff. This agrees with the findings of Mustafida (2020), who highlighted that adherence to organizational rules promotes a sense of order and fairness, thereby increasing employees'

willingness to stay committed. Furthermore, Jabagi et al. (2020) emphasized that clarity and fairness in organizational procedures promote employee satisfaction and commitment, especially when workers perceive the rules as equitable and consistently applied. Relatedly, Adeoye et al. (2023) found that respect for structured policies creates a secure work environment, which directly impacts employee dedication. These studies support the assertion that organizational justice, rooted in respect for policies, is a fundamental driver of commitment.

However, the findings diverge from those of Wuarlela et al. (2023), who found that strict adherence to rigid policies without flexibility can sometimes reduce employee morale and commitment, especially in dynamic and innovative work settings. Also, Eze and Nwosu (2019) argued that in highly bureaucratic Nigerian public organizations, respect for procedures does not always translate to increased commitment, especially when employees perceive policies as oppressive or outdated. This suggests that while policy respect generally promotes commitment, the nature and perception of these policies also play a crucial role.

#### **4.2.3. Accountability and Responsibility and Job Commitment**

The study found a significant positive effect of accountability and responsibility on job commitment among secretarial staff. This finding aligns with the work of Osemene et al. (2018), who reported that when employees are held accountable and responsible, it leads to a sense of ownership and pride in their work, thereby enhancing commitment. In the same vein, Akpa et al. (2021) found that an organizational culture emphasizing accountability fosters employee engagement, which is closely linked to job commitment. Additionally, Sengupta (2011) posited that employees are more likely to be emotionally invested in organizations where responsibility and transparency are emphasized. Thus, fostering accountability enhances trust and attachment among staff.

In contrast, findings by Baharuddin & Ismail (2018) indicated that excessive emphasis on accountability without corresponding support mechanisms can lead to stress and employee disengagement, potentially harming commitment. Similarly, Dabor & Adeyemi (2014) noted that in some Nigerian public institutions, accountability systems are often perceived as punitive rather than developmental, which may undermine employee loyalty. These contrasting findings underscore the importance of implementing supportive, not punitive, accountability practices to sustain high job commitment levels.

#### **4.2.4. Theoretical relevance of the findings**

The findings of this study align strongly with the Social Exchange Theory, which posits that relationships in the workplace are built on reciprocal obligations where positive actions by the organization lead to positive responses from employees. The significant effects of integrity, respect for organizational policies and procedures, and accountability on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector reflect the principle that when employees perceive fairness, ethical conduct, and trustworthiness from their organization, they are more likely to reciprocate with higher levels of loyalty and commitment. Integrity and respect for rules create a perception of organizational justice, while accountability fosters trust and responsibility, all of which are key tenets of a healthy exchange relationship as proposed by Blau (1964). Thus, the study's outcomes reinforce the theoretical framework by demonstrating that ethical and supportive organizational practices strengthen employees' psychological bonds to their institutions.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

This study investigated the effect of workplace ethics specifically integrity, respect for organizational policies and procedures, and accountability and responsibility on job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector in Delta State, Nigeria. Using a sample of 317 respondents across 25 local government areas, data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed statistically. The findings revealed that all three dimensions of workplace ethics had significant positive effects on job commitment. Employees who perceived high levels of integrity, adherence to policies, and clear accountability mechanisms demonstrated stronger loyalty, emotional investment, and willingness to remain with their organizations. These results reinforce the importance of ethical environments in enhancing employee commitment and overall organizational performance.

Based on the findings, the study concludes that maintaining a strong ethical climate characterized by integrity, respect for policies, and accountability significantly boosts job commitment among secretarial staff in the public sector. Organizations that prioritize ethical behavior, fairness, and transparent practices not only enhance employee satisfaction but also foster a deeper sense of loyalty and long-term engagement. Therefore, public sector institutions must continually invest in ethical leadership and governance frameworks to sustain and improve job commitment levels among their administrative workforce.

Public sector organizations should implement continuous ethics training and workshops that emphasize the importance of integrity, respect for organizational policies, and personal accountability. This will help reinforce ethical behavior and ensure that staff at all levels understand and uphold the values expected in the workplace. Additionally, management should develop and maintain transparent systems for monitoring compliance with organizational policies and ethical standards. Regular audits, feedback mechanisms, and clear reporting channels can ensure accountability and foster a culture where employees are motivated to commit to their duties conscientiously. Furthermore, secretarial staff and other employees should be actively involved in the review and formulation of organizational policies and procedures. When employees feel their input is valued, they are more likely to respect and commit to the organizational framework, leading to improved job satisfaction and organizational loyalty.

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