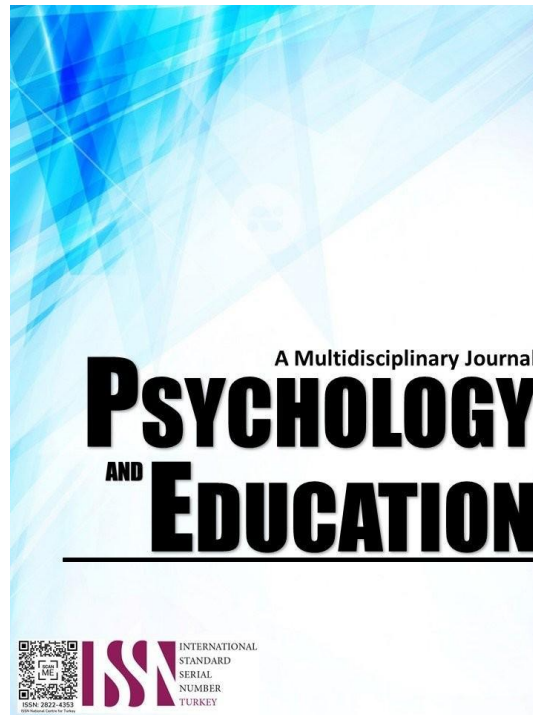


ETHICAL BEHAVIOR, PRODUCTIVITY, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GOAL-SETTING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF NON-ACADEMIC SCHOLARS



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Ethical Behavior, Productivity, and Effectiveness of Goal-Setting on the Performance of Non-Academic Scholars

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between ethical behavior, productivity, and effectiveness of goal-setting on the performance of non-academic scholars within a university setting. By assessing these key factors, the research aimed to provide meaningful insights into how ethical conduct influences work efficiency, how productivity contributes to task completion and achievement of departmental goals, and how structured goal-setting strategies enhance scholars' performance. The study employed a combination of descriptive correlational, and causal research designs. A sample of 139 selected faculty members and administrative staff who directly engaged with non-academic scholars participated by responding to a survey questionnaire used for data collection. The findings revealed that ethical behavior significantly influenced scholars' sense of accountability, work commitment, and adherence to institutional policies. Productivity was found to be strongly associated with task efficiency, quality of output, and effective time management. Furthermore, goal-setting strategies were shown to improve task clarity, motivation, and performance outcomes. The study also underscored the importance of implementing structured evaluation systems. These include policies such as grant readjustment for scholars with attendance issues, performance-based allowances for those who consistently demonstrate excellence and establishment of mentorship programs was recommended to further support and guide scholars in their roles. Overall, the findings offer valuable recommendations for institutions, policymakers, supervisors, faculty, staff, and non-academic scholars aimed at enhancing ethical behavior, increasing productivity, and improving the effectiveness of goal-setting within the university environment.

Keywords: *ethical behavior, productivity, effectiveness of goal-setting, performance, non-academic scholars*

Introduction

The researcher conducted this study based on observations and feedback from fellow staff regarding the persistent challenges in promoting ethical behavior, productivity, and performance among non-academic scholars. Issues such as unreliable attendance, poor time management that hinders task completion, and a lack of initiative underscored the urgent need for structured support systems, effective mentorship programs, and the establishment of clear policies to hold individuals accountable for failing to adhere to institutional expectations, thereby encouraging a greater sense of responsibility in fulfilling their roles.

Unethical behavior has been shown to significantly hinder work performance in academic institutions by eroding trust, damaging institutional reputation, and reducing overall productivity (Resnik, 2023). In the Philippine context, adherence to ethical norms is essential for ensuring institutional transparency and accountability (Villanueva & Santos, 2021). Likewise, productivity plays a vital role in maintaining the efficiency of student services and academic support systems (Garcia & Ramos, 2024). Furthermore, goal-setting has been positively associated with increased motivation and job satisfaction, as it aligns individual efforts with institutional objectives (Tan & Chong, 2022).

Given that the performance of non-academic scholars directly influences institutional success, it is imperative to examine the interrelationship among ethical behavior, productivity, and the effectiveness of goal-setting. Previous research (Robbins & Judge, 2018) has emphasized the combined impact of these elements in fostering accountability, operational efficiency, and institutional excellence.

This study contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education by promoting ethical conduct, structured goal-setting, and enhanced productivity among non-academic scholars. Its findings aim to inform and strengthen institutional policies, reinforce accountability mechanisms, and support the development of a more effective performance evaluation system—ultimately advancing overall institutional performance.

This study aimed to examine the relationship between ethical behavior, productivity, and the effectiveness of goal-setting in influencing the performance of non-academic scholars. Specifically, it sought to assess how ethical conduct contributes to workplace integrity, how productivity impacts institutional efficiency, and how goal-setting aligns individual responsibilities with organizational objectives. By analyzing these factors, the study provided data-driven insights to strengthen institutional policies, enhance accountability, and establish a structured performance evaluation system. The findings support the development of clearer guidelines, reinforced accountability measures, and a transparent framework for monitoring and evaluating non-academic scholars, ultimately contributing to improved institutional performance.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to examine the relationship between ethical behavior, productivity, and the effectiveness of goal-setting in influencing the performance of non-academic scholars. Specifically, it sought to assess how ethical conduct contributes to workplace integrity,

how productivity impacts institutional efficiency, and how goal-setting aligns individual responsibilities with organizational objectives. By analyzing these factors, the study provided data-driven insights to strengthen institutional policies, enhance accountability, and establish a structured performance evaluation system. The findings support the development of clearer guidelines, reinforced accountability measures, and a transparent framework for monitoring and evaluating non-academic scholars, ultimately contributing to improved institutional performance.

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher employed a combination of descriptive correlational and causal research designs to thoroughly investigate the influence of ethical behavior, productivity, and the effectiveness of goal-setting on the performance of non-academic scholars. The descriptive correlational design was first used to explore and quantify the relationships between these key variables.

This approach allowed the researcher to identify the strength and direction of associations, such as how ethical behavior correlated with overall performance or the relationship between productivity and goal-setting effectiveness, without manipulating any variables (Smith & Jones, 2021). Building on these findings, the study employed a causal research design to examine whether these identified relationships were indeed causal.

Multiple regression analysis was also utilized to analyze how changes in ethical behavior, productivity, and goal-setting effectiveness predicted changes in performance while controlling for potential confounding variables (Doe, 2022). This approach was crucial for establishing cause-and-effect relationships, providing a more in-depth understanding of how these factors collectively influenced the performance of non-academic scholars (Brown et al., 2023).

By integrating both descriptive correlational and causal designs, the study aimed to offer descriptive insights into the relationships between variables and evidence of causality, leading to more informed conclusions and recommendations (Johnson and Lee, 2024).

Participants

The study included 212 employees from various departments and campuses of Liceo de Cagayan University who closely monitored non-academic scholars' performance. Using Slovin's formula (Doe & Smith, 2021), a sample size of 139 was determined, ensuring proper representation across the Main (173), RNP (24), and Paseo (15) campuses through stratified sampling. Participants were recruited with institutional approval, emphasizing voluntary participation and informed consent (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Ethical clearance was secured beforehand. Purposive sampling was employed as it effectively selects individuals with relevant expertise to provide accurate evaluations (Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Instrument

The study utilized a self-made descriptive survey questionnaire to assess participants' responses to ethical behavior, productivity, effectiveness of goal-setting, and performance of non-academic scholars. The instrument consisted of 100 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree," with a score of 1 assigned to the lowest response. Part 1 evaluated ethical behavior with 30 items, while Part 2 measured productivity with another 30 items. Part 3 assessed the effectiveness of goal-setting with 30 items, and Part 4 examined performance with 10 items. This structured approach ensured a comprehensive evaluation of the key factors influencing non-academic scholars' performance.

Procedure

The data collection began after research panel approval, with official permission secured from HR, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Research Ethics Board (REB). The process was systematic, ensuring reliability, validity, and ethical compliance.

Participants included selected staff and faculty familiar with non-academic scholars' performance, ethical behavior, and goal-setting. Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time. Surveys took 10–15 minutes, maintaining minimal burden. Confidentiality was ensured through secured, password-protected data storage. Transparency was upheld by disclosing the study's purpose and data usage.

There were no foreseeable risks beyond the time commitment, while the primary benefit was contributing to improved performance evaluations. Recruitment followed institutional approval, emphasizing informed consent. Findings were presented in a formal thesis, with data shared only in confidential summaries to protect participant anonymity.

Data Analysis

The mean and standard deviation were utilized in research problems 1, 2, 3, and 4, to characterize the central tendencies and diversity of replies regarding non-academic scholars' ethical behavior, productivity, effectiveness of goal-setting, and overall performance. These statistical measurements shed light on the sample's average score levels and distribution, which was then contrasted with related results from another research, including Smith et al. (2023).

The Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to research problem 5, to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between ethical behavior, productivity, effectiveness of goal-setting, and overall performance of the non-academic scholars. This technique helped identify whether positive correlations exist between these factors, as suggested by Johnson (2023), who emphasized the role of ethical behavior in influencing work performance.

Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted for problem 6, to assess the combined influence of ethical behavior, productivity, and goal-setting effectiveness on the overall performance of non-academic scholars. This model aimed to predict how these variables collectively contribute to performance, aligning with the expectations set by studies like those of Carter and Davis (2022), who highlighted the importance of combining ethical practices, productivity, and effective goal-setting for enhanced individual performance. The results guided future recommendations for performance improvement initiatives.

Results and Discussion

This study examined the ethical behavior, productivity, and effectiveness of goal-setting in relation to the performance of non-academic scholars. The results revealed that scholars demonstrated a high level of ethical behavior, particularly in aspects such as honesty and integrity ($M=4.05$, $SD=.703$), confidentiality ($M=4.16$, $SD=.67$), and professionalism ($M=4.10$, $SD=.72$). The overall ethical behavior score ($M=4.10$, $SD=.704$).

In terms of productivity, the study found that non-academic scholars are generally able to manage their time well ($M=3.96$, $SD=.72$), complete their tasks efficiently ($M=3.98$, $SD=.722$), and adapt to changing circumstances ($M=4.02$, $SD=.744$). The overall productivity mean score of $M=3.99$ ($SD=.729$).

The effectiveness of goal-setting revealed that non-academic scholars generally find their goals to be clear ($M=4.04$, $SD=.709$), relevant ($M=4.08$, $SD=.715$), and appropriate to their roles ($M=4.10$, $SD=.697$). The overall effectiveness of the goal-setting score of $M=4.07$ ($SD=.707$). Lastly, the general performance of non-academic scholars was rated, with an overall mean of $M=4.10$ ($SD=.74$).

Additionally, the study examined the significant relationship between performance, ethical behavior, productivity, and the effectiveness of goal-setting among non-academic scholars using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis. The results revealed that all variables, including Honesty and Integrity ($r=.717$, $p<.05$), Confidentiality ($r=.743$, $p<.05$), Professionalism ($r=.787$, $p<.05$), Ethical Behavior ($r=.822$, $p<.05$), Time Management ($r=.847$, $p<.05$), Task Completion ($r=.832$, $p<.05$), Flexibility and Adaptability ($r=.814$, $p<.05$), Productivity ($r=.883$, $p<.05$), Clarity ($r=.755$, $p<.05$), Relevance ($r=.873$, $p<.05$), Appropriateness ($r=.777$, $p<.05$), and Effectiveness of Goal-Setting ($r=.855$, $p<.05$), demonstrated a significant correlation with the performance of non-academic scholars.

Finally, the Multiple Regression Analysis results indicated that the independent variables Effectiveness of Goal-Setting ($p<.05$), Time Management ($p<.05$), Flexibility and Adaptability ($p<.05$), and Clarity ($p<.05$), significantly influenced the performance of non-academic scholars.

Conclusions

The study concluded that non-academic scholars exhibit a high level of ethical behavior, particularly in honesty and integrity, confidentiality, and professionalism. The results suggested that these scholars consistently adhere to ethical principles, acting with transparency, trustworthiness, and responsibility in their respective roles. Their ability to maintain honesty and integrity strengthens their credibility, while their commitment to confidentiality protects sensitive information within the institution. Additionally, their professionalism reflects a strong sense of responsibility, respect, and adherence to institutional policies, reinforcing their effectiveness in upholding ethical standards in the workplace.

Non-academic scholars demonstrate high levels of efficiency, particularly in time management, task completion, and flexibility. They effectively allocate their time to meet deadlines and fulfill responsibilities, contributing to the smooth operation of the institution. Their ability to complete tasks promptly and accurately highlights their commitment to quality work and organizational efficiency. Moreover, their adaptability to changing work conditions and ability to handle unexpected challenges further enhance their productivity, making them valuable assets in a dynamic academic environment.

Non-academic scholars perform highly in terms of clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. They clearly understand their work-related objectives, enabling them to set and achieve realistic goals. Their ability to align tasks with institutional priorities ensures their work remains relevant and meaningful, contributing to the institution's success. Furthermore, their capacity to execute actions based on set goals demonstrates their ability to stay focused and aligned with expected outcomes, reinforcing the importance of goal-setting in enhancing workplace performance.

There is a significant relationship between ethical behavior, productivity, goal-setting effectiveness, and the performance of non-academic scholars. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis confirms that all three variables have a strong significant correlation with performance, with goal-setting effectiveness being the most influential factors followed by productivity. This indicates that scholars who exhibit ethical behavior, effectively manage their tasks, and seek clear goals tend to achieve higher performance level, emphasizing the need for continuous development in these areas.

Finally, goal-setting is the strongest predictor of performance, followed by time management, flexibility and adaptability, and clarity. This suggests that improving these key areas could lead to substantial improvements in scholars' performance.

Generally, the study highlights the critical role of ethical behavior, productivity, and goal-setting effectiveness in shaping the performance of non-academic scholars. The results suggest that institutions should continue fostering these competencies through targeted programs and interventions to enhance scholars' contributions and professional growth within the academic environment.

These recommendations seek to enhance the performance and commitment of non-academic scholars by strengthening ethical behavior, productivity, and goal-setting effectiveness, thereby fostering a more structured, accountable, and efficient working environment that supports institutional success and scholars' professional growth. Institutions, may revisit and implement policies to establish stronger foundation for ethical behavior, enhanced productivity, and effective goal-setting.

Policymakers may consider implementing policies that promote better attendance, accountability, and commitment among scholars. One approach is to adjust tuition grants for attendance deficiencies, encouraging students to prioritize regular attendance and take responsibility for their academic engagement. Moreover, the institution could establish a performance-based allowance to recognize scholars who consistently demonstrate dedication and perfect attendance. This incentive would motivate students to remain consistent and reliable while fostering a culture of commitment and excellence within the institution.

Scholarship coordinator may provide a manual outlining the duties and responsibilities of non-academic scholars to ensure clarity and accountability. Additionally, implementing a mentorship program could help guide scholars in developing essential work ethics, productivity, and goal-setting skills.

Immediate supervisors may provide clear and structured goal-setting guidance to non-academic scholars by outlining specific job expectations and performance benchmarks. They should communicate SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) and ensure scholars understand their responsibilities.

Faculty and staff may create a fair treatment to motivate and enhance the non-academic scholars' performance. Non-academic scholars may adopt effective time management strategies to enhance productivity and meet performance expectations. Establishing precise work schedules and setting realistic time limits for tasks could help prevent delays. Additionally, requesting flexible yet structured work arrangements could help balance academic and work responsibilities effectively.

Future researchers may use this study as reference material for their related literature and further explore the impact of ethical behavior, productivity, and goal-setting on non-academic scholars.

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