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Improving work ethics and organizational citizenship behavior through positive cognitive and affective attitude toward work

Marlene T. Nicolas, PhD: Dean, School of Arts, Sciences and Education, Divine Word College of Laoag.

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ABSTRACT

The research delved into the impact of attitudes toward work on both work ethics and organizational citizenship behavior. To enrich the understanding of this relationship, existing literature was thoroughly examined. Employing a descriptive assessment coupled with a correlational research design, the study focused on employees within the Divine Word College of Laoag.

Data collection was facilitated through the administration of questionnaires, while inferential statistical tools such as mean and ANOVA were employed for data analysis. The findings indicated a notably high level of both cognitive and affective attitudes toward work among employees, paralleled by elevated levels of work ethics and organizational citizenship behavior.

Furthermore, correlational analysis unveiled significant relationships between attitudes toward work and organizational citizenship behavior, encompassing its OCBO dimension. Similarly, a correlation was identified between attitudes toward work and work ethics.

Despite its insightful findings, it's worth noting that the study's scope was confined to a specific population. Consequently, there arises a necessity for further research encompassing a broader demographic to ensure the generalizability of the findings.

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Introduction

Contemporary business organizations face intense competition, necessitating continual employee development (Adaobi & Owusuaa-Konadu, 2022; Yimam, 2022; Giday & Elantheraiyan, 2023). While training often emphasizes upskilling, neglecting employees' attitudes and behaviors can hinder performance (Ramlall, 2008). Even with adequate knowledge and skills, lacking the right attitude can lead to failure. Effective management requires understanding employee attitudes, work ethics, and behaviors (Khan & Ghauri, 2014).

* Corresponding author. ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6884-3504

This study addresses gaps in understanding workplace dynamics within educational institutions, where performance is not solely determined by educational background (Ramlall, 2008). Investigating the impact of employee attitudes on organizational citizenship behavior (OCBO) and work ethics, it fills a research void. Divided into five sections, the study examines this relationship and its implications for organizational performance.

Literature Review

The literature review serves to deepen understanding of the subject by examining past research and theories. It not only generates insights but also forms the theoretical foundation for the study. A thorough review of relevant literature is essential for building a robust understanding of the topic and developing guiding theories. Thus, the literature review will be organized thematically to explore the study's focus comprehensively.

The concept of attitude and attitude toward work and its effect on work performance.

Attitude, as defined by various sources, encompasses mental and emotional positions towards objects, persons, or events, shaping behaviors. Initially conceptualized in the early 19th century within social psychology, attitude is regarded as a fundamental aspect of human behavior. Allport (1935) emphasized its centrality, defining it as a cognitive and affective state of readiness shaped by experience, guiding responses to stimuli. Titchener (1910), cited by Ortmeyer (1949), suggested attitudes may manifest consciously or subconsciously, influencing behavior through sensations, images, and feelings. Koffka (1935) positioned attitude as a force toward objects, rooted in the individual's ego. Dewey (1922), also cited by Ortmeyer (1949), underscored its acquired and self-active nature, driving action.

Thurstone (1929) described attitude as inclinations, feelings, biases, and convictions toward specific topics, asserting its influence on behavior. Scholars like Ajzen (1993), Myers (2013), Perloff (2013), and Liska (1974) expanded this, defining attitudes as cognitive, affective, and conative responses to stimuli.

Translating these definitions to the workplace context, attitude toward work encompasses employees' feelings, beliefs, and judgments toward their work environment, affecting their behavior and performance. Aries and Rizqi (2013) described it as workers' sentiments toward various work aspects, emphasizing its inseparability from the work environment. Önal (2015), as cited by Akcay et al. (2016), defined it as tendencies based on individual work evaluations, aligning with cognitive, affective, and conative responses posited by Ajzen (1993) and others.

Research indicates a correlation between attitude toward work and performance (Abun et al., 2021), with attitude affecting job satisfaction (Abdalkrim & Elhalim, 2016) and employee commitment (Borst et al., 2020). Management interventions to improve employee attitudes toward work can enhance performance, job satisfaction, and reduce turnover intention (Menon & Priyadarshini, 2018). Almeida et al. (2012) further emphasize the positive impact of a favorable attitude toward work on employee performance. Thus, addressing negative attitudes toward work becomes imperative for organizational success.

The philosophy of work

Understanding work ethics is contingent upon grasping the philosophy of work, as it pertains to one's attitude towards work. Dictionaries provide a basic definition of work as "activity involving mental or physical effort done to achieve a purpose or result" (Dictionary.com; The Free Dictionary). This definition underscores that work encompasses both physical and mental exertion directed toward achieving goals (Britannica, 2023). Philosophers like Plato offer insights into the purpose of work, viewing it as integral to societal and personal improvement (Cholbi, 2022; Ward

& King, 2017). However, contrasting perspectives, such as totalitarianism and capitalism, present work either as a duty to the community or a means for individual gain (Little, 1948).

Challenges arise when work is solely equated with monetary compensation, fostering job dissatisfaction and a misguided perception of motivation (Schwartz, 2022; Nesterak, 2022). Little's nuanced perspective distinguishes work as both manual labor and deliberate production aimed at changing matter for human benefit (Cholbi, 2022). He argues that work serves not only societal or financial ends but also contributes to self-perfection, aligning with human nature (Little, 1948; Sharma & Rai, 2015). This holistic view contrasts with contemporary notions that tether work exclusively to employment and monetary gain (Cholbi, 2022).

Aristotle further accentuates the intrinsic value of work, asserting its connection to human rationality and self-development (Clark, 2017). Thus, work transcends mere economic transactions, serving as a means for individuals to realize their inherent rationality and self-fulfillment (Elster, 1989; Sayers, 2005).

The concept of work ethics

Understanding work philosophy aids in grasping work ethics. Work, as per philosophy, is both physical and mental exertion, integral to self-perfection and inherent to human nature (Little, 1948). Work ethics, defined variably, encompass attitudes towards work and its value (Bazzy, 2018; Bouma, 1973; Nelson, 1973; Lessnoff, 1994). The "homo economicus" theory aligns work with rational pursuit of self-interest (Petrovic, 2008). This rationality manifests in creativity and productivity, reflecting human nature (Cholbi, 2022). Empirical studies link strong work ethics to job commitment, satisfaction, and performance (Bazzy, 2016; Mudrack, 1997; Marri et al., 2012; Ud Din et al., 2019; Athar et al., 2016; Udin et al., 2022; Aflah et al., 2021; Salahuddin, 2011; Salahudin et al., 2016). Discrepancies in defining work ethics prompt debate over its dimensions, whether multidimensional or single-dimensional (Miller, 2002; Bazzy, 2018; Van Ness et al., 2010; Sharma & Rai, 2015). Sharma and Rai (2015) advocate for a single-dimensional construct, aligned with the philosophy of work, supported by rigorous validity testing. Hence, we adopt their 10-item Work Ethics Scale for our study.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Overview of OCB

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) originates from political philosophy, where citizenship entails obedience, loyalty, and participation (Graham, 1991). Early definitions of OCB by Bateman & Organ (1983) and Smith et al. (1983) align with these principles. Katz (1964) identifies essential behaviors for organizational functioning, including cooperation and altruism. Later, Organ and Ryan (1995) emphasize positive work behaviors beyond prescribed rules. Efforts to identify OCB dimensions converge on loyalty, participation, and altruism (Graham, 1991; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Altruistic behavior encompasses various dimensions recognized by researchers (Spector & Fox, 2002), summarizing OCB into a single dimension aligned with citizenship principles which include attitude toward the person and organization (OCBP and OCBO).

Research Questions:

The study examined the effect of the attitude toward work-on-work ethics and organizational citizenship behavior. It specifically answered the following questions:

1. What is the attitude of the employees toward their work in terms of:

- 1.1. cognitive attitude

- 1.2. affective attitude
2. What is the work ethics of the employees?
3. What is the organizational citizenship behavior of the employees in terms of:
 - 3.1. OCBP
 - 3.2. OCBO
4. Is there a relationship between attitude toward work and organizational citizenship behavior?
5. Is there a relationship between attitude toward work and work ethics?

Assumptions

The study assumes that employees' attitude toward work has something to do with the behavior of employees in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

Hypothesis

The attitude of employees toward their work will influence their behavior on how they perform their tasks. Thus, the current study hypothesizes that there is a relationship between the attitude toward work and organizational citizenship behavior and work ethics.

The scope and delimitation of the study

The study limits its investigation to work ethics, and organizational citizenship behavior and work ethics and its population is limited to the Divine Word College of Laoag.

Research Methodology

The study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a descriptive and correlational research design. It focuses on employees at Divine Word College of Laoag. Data collection is conducted through questionnaires, with statistical analysis employing descriptive and inferential methods, such as weighted mean and ANOVA. Permission for questionnaire distribution was obtained from the President, facilitated by employee representatives. Ethical review was waived due to the absence of sensitive human issues in the research.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation will be used:

<i>Statistical Range</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree/Very High
3.41-4.20	Agree/High
2.61-3.40	Somewhat Agree/Moderate
1.81-2.60	Disagree/Low
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree/Very Low

Data Presentation and Analysis

This part presents the data and the presentation follows the statement of the problems.

Problem 1: What is the attitude of the employees toward their work in terms of:

1.1. Cognitive attitude

1.2. Affective attitude

Table 1. The attitude of the employees towards their work (n=159)

ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK		WEIGHTED MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
A. Cognitive Attitude			
1.	I know my work	4.06	A/H
2.	I believe that I can perform my work easily	3.92	A/H
3.	I have been in the work for quite some time	3.87	A/H
4.	I am familiar with all the details of my work	3.88	A/H
5.	I have the skills to carry out my work	3.91	A/H
6.	I can carry out my work without the help of others	3.72	A/H
Composite Mean		3.90	A/H
B. Affective Attitude			
1.	I am happy with my work	3.86	A/H
2.	I am always eager to show up for work	3.80	A/H
3.	My work gives me satisfaction	3.84	A/H
4.	I feel good because I can perform my work	3.88	A/H
5.	My work is important to me	3.93	A/H
6.	My work gives me a sense of meaning	3.97	A/H
Composite Mean		3.88	A/H
OVERALL MEAN		3.89	

Source: Liska (1974, Abun, et al., 2021).

Legend:

Range of Mean Values	Descriptive Interpretation
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly agree/very high
3.41 - 4.20	Agree/high
2.61 - 3.40	Somewhat agree /moderate
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree/low
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly disagree/very low

Based on the data, employees' overall attitude toward work, including cognitive and affective dimensions, yields an average rating of 3.89, indicating an "agree/high" interpretation. This suggests a positive stance towards work, falling neither very high nor low but firmly in the high range. Examining each dimension individually, both cognitive and affective aspects receive similar mean ratings of 3.90 and 3.88, respectively. Cognitively, employees express confidence in their skills and work capabilities. Emotionally, they report satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment in their work, finding it meaningful. This aligns with research by Abun et al. (2021) and Tenney et al. (2016), which suggests that a positive attitude towards work correlates with improved work performance levels.

Problem 2: What is the work ethics of the employees?

Table 2. Work ethics of the employees (n=159)

	WORK ETHICS	WEIGHTED MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
A.	The ATW		
1.	I consider my occupational career to be one of the most important activities in my life	4.09	A/H
2.	I believe that a person is known in society by the work he does	3.86	A/H
3.	I believe that one’s work provides the best source of achieving perfection in life.	4.00	A/H
4.	Even if I don’t have to work to earn a living, I would still prefer to continue working.	4.20	A/H
5.	I believe that work provides a powerful channel to express one’s knowledge, ability and creativity.	4.26	A/H
	Composite Mean	4.10	A/H
B.	The MAW		
1.	Even in this fast-changing world, sincerity, hard work and integrity continue to be the golden keys to success in one’s work life.	3.80	A/H
2.	I feel a moral obligation to give a full day’s work for a full day’s pay.	4.11	A/H
3.	I believe that one should never be last for work unless there is some real emergency	4.18	A/H
	Composite Mean	4.03	A/H
C.	The WM		
1.	I believe that a job well done is a reward in itself	4.32	A/H
2.	I welcome jobs that involve greater responsibility and challenge as they contribute to my learning and growth.	4.31	A/H
	Composite Mean	4.32	A/H
	OVERALL MEAN	4.15	A/H

Source: Sharma and Rai (2015)

The data reveals that overall, employees' work ethics, including attitude, moral stance, and motivation, score an average rating of 4.15, indicating an "agree/high" level. This suggests a positive outlook towards work, neither very high nor low but firmly in the high range. Examining each dimension separately, all aspects receive similar mean ratings with the same interpretation. Regarding attitude towards work, employees value their work as crucial for personal development and societal recognition (Little, 1948). They also prioritize sincerity and commitment to their work (Bataineh, 2020). Additionally, they feel motivated by job satisfaction and increased responsibility (Abun et al., 2022; Ani et al., 2021). These findings underscore the significance of work ethics in driving employee performance.

Problem 3: What is the organizational citizenship behavior of the employees in terms of:

3.1. OCBP

3.2. OCBO

Table 1. Organizational citizenship behavior of the employees(n=159)

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR		WEIGHTED MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
A. OCBO			
1.	Help new employees get oriented to the job	3.58	A/H
2.	Offered suggestions to improve how work is done	3.58	A/H
3.	Volunteered for extra work assignments	3.42	A/H
4.	Said good things about your employer in front of others	3.42	A/H
5.	Said good things about your school in the community outside the school	3.33	SWA/M
6.	Give up meals and other breaks to complete the work	3.42	A/H
7.	Offered suggestions for improving the work environment	3.42	A/H
8.	came in early or stayed late without pay to complete a project or task	3.42	A/H
9.	Volunteer to share new job knowledge or skills with other employees	3.33	SWA/M
	Composite Mean	3.44	A/H
B. OCBP			
1.	Lent a compassionate ear when someone has a work problem	3.72	A/H
2.	Lent a compassionate ear when someone has a personal problem	3.76	A/H
3.	Change vacation schedule, workdays, or shifts to accommodate co-workers' needs	3.66	A/H
4.	Help a less capable co-worker lift a heavy box or other objects	3.75	A/H
5.	Went out of the way to encourage co-workers or express appreciation	3.71	A/H
6.	Defended co-worker who was being 'put down' or spoken ill by other co-workers or supervisors	3.69	A/H
7.	Help co-workers with personal matters such as sharing food or drinks	3.75	A/H
8.	Lent money or personal property to a co-worker	3.65	A/H
	Composite Mean	3.71	A/H
OVERALL MEAN		3.58	

Source: Spector and Fox (2002).

Legend:

<i>Range of Mean Values</i>	<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly agree/ Very high
3.41 - 4.20	Agree/high
2.61 - 3.40	Somewhat agree/moderate
1.81 - 2.60	Disagree /low
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly disagree/very low

The table reveals an overall score of 3.58 for employees' organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), classified into OCBP and OCBO. This rating falls under "agree/high", indicating a positive trend. While the overall rating is high, it's not extremely so, but consistently so for both OCBP (3.44) and OCBO (3.71). Employees demonstrate helpful behavior towards the organization, such as assisting new hires, sharing knowledge, and volunteering for extra tasks. Additionally, they exhibit supportive behavior towards colleagues, offering emotional support and assistance when needed. Research confirms that such organizational citizenship behavior contributes to organizational success (Ravindran, 2022; Ramos & Ellitan, 2023; Rezai & Sabzikaran, 2012).

Problem 4: Is there a relationship between attitude toward work and organizational citizenship behavior

Relationships Between Attitudes Toward Work and OCBO

Both cognitive and affective work attitudes jointly predict employees' organizational citizenship behavior (OCBO), $F(2,158) = 947.105, p < .01$, with a 9.24% overlap between cognitive and affective attitudes. Specifically, affective attitude towards work ($B = .945, p < .01, .117$) quantifies the regression equation. This suggests that both cognitive and affective work attitudes collectively predict OCBO. However, individually, only affective attitude towards work predicts OCBO. Thus, differences in employees' OCBP are attributed to the combined effects of their cognitive and affective attitudes toward work.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.961 ^a	.924	.923	.22215

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	93.483	2	46.742	947.104	.000 ^b
	Residual	7.699	156	.049		
	Total	101.182	158			

a. Dependent Variable: OCBO

b. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.117	.096		1.224	.223
	COGNITIVE ATTITUDE	.008	.035	.008	.233	.816
	AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE	.954	.033	.955	28.594	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OCBO

Relationships Between Attitudes Toward Work and OCBP

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.075 ^a	.006	-.007	.63088

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.352	2	.176	.443	.643 ^b
	Residual	62.089	156	.398		
	Total	62.442	158			

a. Dependent Variable: OCBP

b. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.466	.271		12.769	.000
	COGNITIVE ATTITUDE	.026	.099	.032	.268	.789
	AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE	.037	.095	.048	.396	.693

a. Dependent Variable: OCBP

Problem 5: Is there a relationship between attitude toward work and work ethics?

Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Work and their Work Ethics in Terms of the ATW

The combined cognitive and affective attitudes toward work among employees do not significantly predict their organizational citizenship behavior in terms of OCBP, $F(2,158) = .443$, $p > .05$, with only a .06% overlap. Hence, the differences in employees' organizational citizenship behavior cannot be attributed to variations in their cognitive and affective attitudes toward work. Despite differences in attitudes, employees' organizational citizenship behavior remains consistent.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.210 ^a	.044	.032	.53405

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.058	2	1.029	3.607	.029 ^b
	Residual	44.492	156	.285		
	Total	46.549	158			

a. Dependent Variable: ATW

b. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
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	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.498	.230		15.224	.000
1 COGNITIVE ATTITUDE	.122	.084	.172	1.450	.149
AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE	.033	.080	.048	.406	.685

a. Dependent Variable: ATW

Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Work and their Work Ethics in terms of the MAW

Combining employees' cognitive and affective attitudes toward work does not significantly predict their work ethics in terms of the MAW, $F(2,158) = 1.394$, $p > .05$, with only a 1.80% overlap. Thus, variations in employees' work ethics regarding the MAW cannot be attributed to differences in their cognitive and affective attitudes toward work. Regardless of these differences, employees' work ethics along the MAW remain consistent.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.132 ^a	.018	.005	.50717

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.717	2	.358	1.394	.251 ^b
	Residual	40.126	156	.257		
	Total	40.843	158			

a. Dependent Variable: MAW

b. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.678	.218		16.858	.000
	COGNITIVE ATTITUDE	.034	.080	.051	.423	.673
	AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE	.057	.076	.090	.750	.454

a. Dependent Variable: MAW

Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Work and their Work Ethics in terms of the WM

When employees' cognitive and affective attitudes toward work are considered together, they significantly predict their work ethics in terms of the WM, $F(2, 158) = 3.421$, $p < .05$, with a 1.80% overlap. However, when assessed separately, these attitudes cannot predict employees' work ethics. This implies that differences in employees' work ethics may be explained by variations in their combined cognitive and affective attitudes toward work. Yet, when

examined independently, these attitudes fail to forecast work ethics, suggesting that employees' work ethics remain consistent regardless of their cognitive and affective attitudes toward work.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.205 ^a	.042	.030	.61560

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.593	2	1.296	3.421	.035 ^b
	Residual	59.118	156	.379		
	Total	61.711	158			

a. Dependent Variable: WM

b. Predictors: (Constant), AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE, COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.637	.265		13.731	.000
	COGNITIVE ATTITUDE	.105	.097	.129	1.085	.280
	AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE	.070	.092	.090	.759	.449

a. Dependent Variable: WM

Results and Discussion

The study reveals that high positive attitudes toward work and work ethics among employees can lead to positive outcomes, particularly in organizational citizenship behavior. Specifically, when employees' cognitive and affective attitudes are considered together, they significantly predict organizational citizenship behavior, particularly in terms of behavior toward the organization. Employees who possess knowledge and passion for their work are likely to demonstrate supportive behavior towards the organization through their work tasks. However, these attitudes do not necessarily correlate with organizational citizenship behavior towards other employees.

Regarding the impact of employees' attitude toward work and their work ethics, the findings demonstrate that both cognitive and affective attitudes significantly influence employees' work ethics. This suggests that attitude toward work and work ethics are intertwined dimensions. Improving employees' work ethics requires attention to enhancing their attitudes toward their work. Thus, special attention should be given to fostering cognitive and affective attitudes toward work to enhance employees' work ethics.

Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate how cognitive and affective attitudes toward work influence employees' organizational citizenship behavior and work ethics. Findings reveal high levels of both cognitive and affective attitudes toward work, as well as positive organizational citizenship behavior and work ethics among employees. Correlational analysis indicates a relationship between cognitive and affective attitudes toward work and organizational citizenship behavior, particularly in terms of behavior toward the organization but not towards other individuals. Similarly, there is a correlation between attitude toward work and employees' work ethics. These results suggest that improving employees' attitude toward work is essential for fostering organizational citizenship behavior and work ethics. However, the study acknowledges limitations in its scope and recommends future research to include a broader population for more generalizable findings.

Author's contribution

The whole paper is written by the author appear in this paper.

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