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Motivational Strategy and Ethical Regime in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Public service is regarded as the working hand of government, but it has recorded downward trends in its onerous responsibility of delivering services to the people in recent times. The performance crisis of public service perhaps explains the proliferation of literature on how to address the seeming impasse in the sector. However, there has to date been little systematic evaluation of the prevalence of X or Y theory as a motivational strategy, whereas X is assumed to enforce ethics while Y calls for participation. This study assessed the effect of the application of motivational strategies suggested by theory X and Y and its outcomes on employees' performance at Adekunle Ajasin University (AAUA) by using mixed-method techniques. The study found critical evidence that there was a concomitant relationship between ethics, motivation, and employees' performance and that the AAUA applied more of X than Y strategies for the motivation of its employees. Consequently, strained relationships have been witnessed between the unions and the university management, thereby impelling employees' performance. Therefore, it is recommended that the university must apply more participative Y type techniques than X type ethical codification as a strategy towards enhancing employee performance. The findings are relevant for understanding the dynamic role of ethics and motivation in the performance analysis of any public organization and for providing the necessary strategies for performance enhancement of public organizations.

Keywords: ethical codification, motivational strategies, employee performance, theory X & Y

Introduction

Every public service has set goals that it passionately pursues daily (Miller, [2009](#)). These goals are pursued through the introduction of codification with a set of rules that condition the behavior of employees in tandem with the generally established pattern of normative behavior of the service (Paul & Elder, [2006](#)). This set of rules, otherwise known as "ethics," compels acceptable behavior for goal

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accomplishment (Singhapakdi et al., [2010](#)). Public service is expected to put in place a body of individuals called management (or board as the case may be), whose primary responsibility is to coordinate, plan, direct, control, and organize the organizational activities towards the actualizations of organizational dreams (Garofalo, [2011](#)).

The need for ethics in public service has not eluded mentioning in the literature of policy sciences. Researchers are concerned because the work of public servants is a sensitive one, which requires some level of moral decency on the part of those saddled with the responsibility of entrenching societal values and resulting in the enhancement of public service efficiency (Johnson, [2019](#)). It is important that ethics are instituted in a university which is accountable to public being a government organization (Lee et al., [2018](#)). But critical is the fact how ethics are enforced, implicitly or explicitly? Holding informal expectations from all employees that they will exhibit a high level of professionalism, honesty, and integrity is called implicit enforcement of ethics; however, when ethics implementation is ensured through policy manuals, orientation programs, and ethics committees, it becomes explicit execution of formal codes of ethics, also referred to as ethical codification (Singhapakdi, et al., [2010](#); Shacklock et al., [2011a](#)).

Sharma et al. ([2012](#)) contended that values are the driving force of human behavior. They describe value as having higher interpretation beyond individual motive, want, or need, which, in most cases, is both implicit and explicit, distinguishing individuals, organizations, and societies. As a result of the conflict of values faced by public servants, ethical codification is required to demarcate personal or family values from professional or organizational values that are often competing and irreconcilable. The need to do the right thing at all times, to be honest, to be diligent, and to maintain some sense of probity and accountability has appealed to the imperativeness of ethics in public service. Corroborating this assertion, Johnson ([2019](#)), opines that honesty, accountability, and integrity in public service are compelling requirements for official conduct. While differentiating between morals and ethics, Johnson ([2019](#)) contends that morals focus on a particular way of life, beliefs, and values concerning the right and wrong. In contrast, ethics is more holistic, touching on different principles of ethical behavior, acceptable standard of behavior, and the established norm of societal conduct.

Ethical entrenchment in the organization is synonymous with values through which an organization identifies itself (Shacklock et al., [2011b](#)). This overtime becomes organizational culture and its way of life to which every organizational

member must subject to instead of objecting. Garofalo (2011) refers to this phenomenon as organizational culture, necessary for its sustenance. Organizations are known and distinguished by the value they earnestly pursue and uphold, which later becomes part of the organizational life, referred to here as entrenched organizational culture. Ethical codification, a process of laws or code enactment, is one of the strategies adopted by the organization to ensure compliance and conciliation of personal interests and organizational interests. Scholars have argued that organizational culture is a function of entrenched values through adherence to ethical codification generally agreed to by organizational members (Malloy & Agarwal, 2003; Jensen et al., 2010).

Ethics is a standard for acceptable human behavior, imposing certain obligations and places general constraints on, and prevent a case of behavioral excesses that could impinge on the organization's effort for excellence (Ibietan & Joshua, 2013), whereas the primary concern of ethics is to differentiate between good and evil, right and wrong, and emphasize the reason for good over evil, right over wrong (Miller, 2009). BBC (2014) views ethics as a commitment to and behavior that is guided by specific values and attributes, generally accepted as the moral code of conduct (Malloy & Agarwal, 2003)

Ethical codification is not perhaps the only strategy through which public service enhances increased productivity and achieves other stated goals. As performance is determined through the contribution of individual staff to accomplishing the overall goals, public service should be concerned with ensuring the subsistence of high performance. Scholars have argued that performance satisfaction is more of incentivized approaches (Carson, 2018; Fisher, 2009; Moulder, 2015); according to them, the performance of workers is judged in the context of the incentivized environment, in tandem with the view expressed by Miao et al., (2019) when they asserted that performance is tied to incentives. Their argument stems from the need for the management to come up with approaches that address the inner-state of workers for higher performance - motivation or motivational strategies. According to Steel (2012), motivation is concerned with inducing people to work to the best of their ability to elicit better performance. Besides, de Juana and Rakowska (2018) conceptualized motivation as the willingness to bring out a high level of effort aimed at attaining organizational goals through a deliberate organizational attempt at appealing to and satisfying individual and organizational needs.

Every individual who works in organization expects freedom and, when freedom is granted, there may be absolute arbitrariness in behavioral performances

of any organization that has no rules, norms, or code of conducts that curtail and regulate the behavior of individual and their professions, such organization would not be able to meet up its target. The result will be inefficiency and low productivity (Bright, [2013](#)). Organizational performance is enhanced through the contribution of individual staff to the accomplishment of the overall goals (Clerkin & Jerrell, [2012](#)). The performance of workers is determined when the job is satisfactory, and for satisfaction to be acquired by workers, the management brings forth some approaches in the form of incentives that would benefit the employer and, at the same time build up the morale of individual members of staff in the organization. The efficient performance of staff in public service is maintained when both staff and management have collective goals to accomplish through strong motivational incentives and the emplacement of ethical strategies.

Despite the role of motivation and ethics in an organization, public service generally in Nigeria, in recent times, has been experiencing performance crisis (Adamolekun, [2015](#); Ibietan & Joshua, [2013](#); Otive Igbuzor, [2015](#)), and this perhaps explains the attention it has received in the public discourse. However, there has been little or no attention to the effect of ethics and motivation on employees' performance at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko (AAUA), as a public organization. Ethics and motivation constitute essential elements in understanding and analyzing the public service performance of public organizations. In analyzing the problems of employees' performance in Adekunle Ajasin University, emphasis should be placed on ethics and motivation in the performance analysis process. The study, therefore, interrogates the relationship between ethics and motivation and how they have affected employees' performance in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine employees' performance within the sphere of existing strategies for improving the performance of the staff of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko (AAUA). However, the specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the contents of the motivational strategies adopted to enhance employees' performance in AAUA
2. Find out the better strategy between X and Y in the enhancement of employees' performance in AAUA.
3. Determine the overall effects of these strategies on the management of AAUA.

Theoretical Framework

Douglas McGregor propounded was a proponent of human relations theory instead of scientific management. Human Relations Theory is firmly grounded in the human condition during work, pointing at the strengths and weaknesses of human nature. The stress on managers' beliefs in human nature and conduct has been in complete opposition to behaviorists, who believe that installing machines and deciding for ethics was enough for developing science for the performance of every specific task (Stillman, [2010](#)).

In his book, *The Human Side of Enterprise* ([1960](#)), Douglas McGregor counted theory X and Y as means of both ethical control and reward regime in the production process of any organization to enhance efficiency and increase productivity. This way, he was able to justify the practical utility to use a combination of control strategy (ethics) and reward regime (motivation) as a suitable means of increasing employees' performance in any organization (Carson, [2018](#); Moulder, [2015](#)). McGregor's theory X and Y was considered most suitable for this study of Adekunle Ajasin University as the current study was focused upon assessment of the effect of ethics (theory X) and motivation (theory Y) on employees' performance, which the theory aptly captures. The study's primary focus is to justify which of the strategies (ethics and motivation) spurs workers to higher productivity at Adekunle Ajasin University.

Douglas ([1960](#)) promulgated that managers must choose their strategies carefully. In the case of employees' negligence and avoidance of work, managers have to be strict (ethics) with subordinates to elicit high performance (Moulder, [2015](#); Johnson, [2019](#)). When employees exercise a high degree of imagination, creativity, and innovation in finding solutions to organization problems, if given the opportunity (Heil et al., [2000](#); Steel, [2012](#)), they must be recognized for their positive commitment by giving them recognition and empowering them for further improvement. While implementing Y theory, the task of a manager must not control employees; instead, he/she must help them exercise their capabilities to realize their maximum potential to achieve organizational goals (Sapru, [2013](#)).

Methodology

The researcher used a case study method for an in-depth exploration of the case to answer the research questions. A case study method involves a detailed study of a specific subject, such as a person, group, organization, or phenomenon (Baskarada, [2014](#); Baxter & Jack, [2008](#)). The case study method is suitable for observing a social unit, in our case the unit under study was AAUA; the researcher used the

method for in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of the motivation of the faculty and staff for better performance in AAUA, Nigeria following guidelines given by Barlett and Vavrus ([2017](#)).

The approach of the case study was qualitative; questionnaire and interviews were used as data gathering tools. Both tools were self-constructed, suiting the needs of the study. Formal consent was obtained from the management of AAUA for the conduction of the study. All respondents of the research were ensured of the privacy and anonymity of their data. The respondents were informed that the data collected shall only be used for academic and research purposes and will not be given to commercial agencies or authorities for misuse and defamation. The participants were duly informed of the purpose and objectives of the interviews in advance. All interviews were conducted personally in the office of the participant. Each interview lasted from 45-60 minutes. Interviews were recorded, and notes were also taken during interviews, especially noting the body language, the expressions, and the interviewees.

Description of the Case

AAUA is a state government-owned and operated Nigerian university. The university, which was initially sited in Ado Ekiti, the capital city of Ekiti State, which used to be part of Ondo State previously, was later moved to Akungba Akoko, the home town of former governor of Ondo State, Adebayo Adefarati, who facilitated the establishment and siting of the university in its present location in Ondo State. It was first established as Obafemi Awolowo University in March 1982 by the government of the old Ondo State. Its name was later changed to Ondo State University in 1985. Its relocation to Akungba Akoko in Ondo State became imperative in 1999, following the creation of Ekiti State out of the old Ondo State three years earlier in October 1996. There was yet a change in nomenclature in 2004 to Adekunle Ajasin University to immortalize the late Governor of the state, Michael Adekunle Ajasin. AAUA was therefore selected because it was the oldest and the first state-owned university in the state with a long history of industrial unrest.

Population and Sampling

All faculty and staff serving in AAUA comprised the population, and the sampling was purposive. Keeping in context the interpretive paradigm, the target sample comprised faculty and staff, representing all employment categories within AAUA proportionately. For the survey, 200 employees (100 members of academic

staff and 100 non-teaching staff) were randomly selected, ensuring equal representation of the job's gender and nature.

Instrumentation

The study used questionnaires to get a large body of data from the respondents; this way, the researcher was able to get consistent responses (Robinson, [2018](#)). The questionnaire comprised two sections; section A asked for the demographic characteristics of respondents, while section B consisted of twenty-one items seeking information on ethics-motivation debate. The researcher used a dichotomous scale of agree and disagree with collecting the responses. The aim was to collect standardized responses in little time; moreover, the research approach was interpretive, and only content analysis was applied for the data analysis of the survey.

The primary tool of the research was in-depth interviews to get their detailed and individual opinions about the motivational strategies used for employees in AAUA (Boyce & Neale, [2006](#); Gillham, [2008](#)). In-depth interviews were conducted with selected management members, including the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, and Bursar of AAUA. These participants were purposively selected because they constitute major stakeholders and key informants who could provide reliable and relevant information. In total, 20 interviews were conducted, 10% of the target sample of the survey because it was impossible to interview all the staff members of both unions, constituting the workforce of the university. The study used stakeholder sampling to select its respondents.

The Context of the Study

This study was carried out between March 2016 and August 2018 at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, (AAUA) Ondo State, Nigeria. This period is justified because it was a period marked by irregular payment of staff salaries (secondary reinforcer and a significant source of extrinsic motivation) in AAUA; this was the period within which the University was unable to pay staff salaries due to the non-payment or stoppage of capital votes to the University. It was also the period when subvention (monthly allocation for staff salaries and other recurrent costs) was slashed by over 40% by the state; the period was also germane because it was the period when the application of ethical guidelines and obedience of same became problematic. Motivation and ethics are intertwined; where there is no motivation (especially for the salaried staff) enforcing ethical rules does not only become difficult, but tendencies of an ethical breach become high, and so, the period between March 2016 and August 2018, was the period when motivation was

in abeyance and a period characterized by high tendencies of ethical breach. Expectedly, as a result of high tendencies for ethical breach, the strenuous application of ethics with its attendant acrimony defined the relationship between the unions of workers and the University Management in AAUA. This period also heralded the economic meltdown experienced by Nigeria.

Results

Demography

Regarding the respondents' ages, 50% of the respondents were from the age bracket 18-30 years, 20% were from 31-40 years, 30% were 41 years and above. By interpretation, 50% of the respondents were less than or up to 30 years, and another 50% were over 30 years of age. As regards the sex distribution of the respondents, 50% were for both females and males. About the percentage distribution of marital status of respondents, 39.2% of the respondents were single, 55.8% were married, 1.7% of the respondents were divorced, 2.3% of the respondents were widowed, and 1% belonged to others.

Regarding the respondents' educational qualification, 17.5% of the respondents were educated up to secondary school, 15.8% had a bachelors' degree, and 56.7% had postgraduate degrees, while 10% had other categories of educational qualification.

Regarding years of service, 24(12.0%) respondents had spent below five years in the services of AAUA, 176 (88.0%) respondents had spent five years and above in the system, making them relevant to and conversant with the issues raised in this study. Concerning the faculty of respondents, the following percentage distribution of respondents were the members of the following faculties: Agricultural Sciences (4.2%), Arts (15%), Education (16.7%), Law (10%), Science (13.3%), Social and Management Sciences (25%) and others have 19%. What is noticeable in the table is that all faculties were represented.

This way, the researcher was able to get responses of major stakeholders deemed to have essential information on the topic and were also affected by the issues raised in this study, that is, using motivational strategies effectively.

Analysis of the Survey

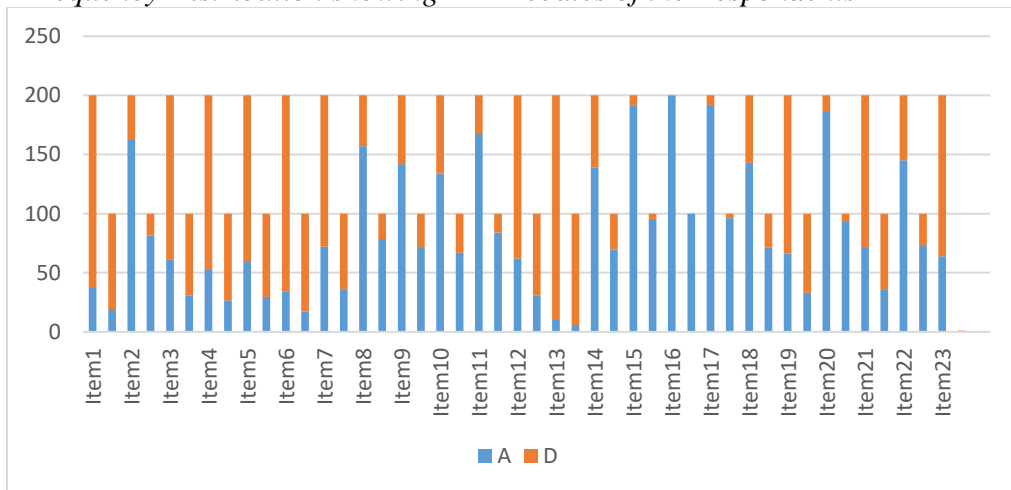
The data obtained from the survey was recorded in excel. Frequencies and percentage analysis were used to describe the data. The figure 1 elaborates further details.

About the availability of staff welfare packages, 37(18.5%) agreed, while 163(81.5%) disagreed with the statement that UAAU offered welfare packages. 163 (81.5%) respondents affirmed that they were aware of motivational packages, while (18.5%) said that they are not informed of any such package. 61(30.5%) of the respondents agreed that they had benefited from motivational packages, while 139(69.5%) declined to benefit.

On the nature of the work environment, 53 (26.5%) agreed, while 147(73.5%) disagreed with the statement that the work environment in AAUA was conducive to workers. On conference sponsorship, 59 (29.5%) agreed, while 141(70.5%) disagreed with the statement that the University-sponsored, its staff for local and international conferences, aside from the normal TETFUND. Furthermore, 34(17.0%) agreed, while 166(83.0%) disagreed with the statement that the University had sponsored them for conferences in the last five years.

Figure 1

Frequency Distribution showing X-Y Debates of the Respondents



On the regularity of staff salaries payment, 72(36.0%) strongly agreed, while 128(64.0%) disagreed with the statement that salaries were paid as at when due. Also, 157(78.5%) strongly agreed, while 43(21.5%) disagreed with the statement that regular payment of salaries could motivate workers for higher productivity. On the promotion of staff, 142(71.0%) responded that they had been promoted in the last five years while 58(29.0%) disagreed. On the relationship between promotion and employees' performance, 168(84.0%) agreed, while 32(16.0%) disagreed with the statement that promotion could increase employees' performance in AAUA.

This paragraph contains two items, regular payment of staff salaries and promotion of staff. While it is said that salaries are not paid regularly, workers are being promoted regularly.

On the issue of housing loans as one of the motivational strategies for higher productivity, 62(31.0%) strongly agreed, while 138(69.0%) disagreed with the statement that AAUA had housing loans, car loans and furniture loans for workers. On whether workers had benefited from the loan before, 10(5.0%) agreed, while 190(95.0%) disagreed that the above loans were made available to AAUA staff.

On the relationship between ethics and performance, 139(69.5%) agreed, while 61(30.5%) disagreed with the statement that there was a relationship between ethics and employees' performance in AAUA. On the relationship between ethics and higher productivity, 191(95.5%) agreed, while 9(4.5%) disagreed with the statement that ethics could lead to more productivity in AAUA.

On the relationship between motivation and employees' performance, 200 respondents, representing 100.0% agreed that there was a relationship between motivation and employees' performance in AAUA. This showed that all the respondents agreed with this view. On the relationship between motivation and higher productivity, 192(96.0%) strongly agreed, while 8(4.0%) disagreed with the statement that motivation could lead to more productivity in AAUA. On the better strategy between motivation and ethics in enhancing employees' performance, 143(71.5%) agreed, while 57(28.5%) disagreed with the statement that motivation rather than ethics was the better strategy towards boosting employees' performance in AAUA. On whether ethics, as a strategy, should be more deplored than motivation, 66(33.0%) agreed, while 134(67.0%) disagreed with the statement that ethics was a better strategy for performance enhancement.

On the nature of work ethics in AAUA, 186(93.0%) agreed, while 14(7.0%) disagreed with the statement that work ethics was too stringent. On the relationship between the unions and management, 71(35.5%) agreed, while 129(64.5%) disagreed with the statement that there was a cordial relationship between the unions and management. Interrogating the causes of an adversarial relationship between the unions and management, 145(72.5%) agreed, while 55(27.5%) disagreed with the statement that stringent ethics put in place by the management and poor staff welfare packages were the chief precipitation of crisis between the two critical partners (unions and management) in AAUA. However, 64(32.0%) agreed, while 136(68.0%) disagreed with the statement that the union-management disharmony was caused by employees' unwillingness to embrace positive changes.

Interpretive Analysis

In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 management employees of AAUA belonging to the following categories:

Table 2

Interview Participants

VC	Registrar	Bursar	Librarian	Deans	HODs	Union leaders
1	1	1	1	6	6	4

The following themes have been generated after an in-depth analysis of the data.

Theme No. 1: Motivational Strategies in AAUA

Loans

On the question of availability of motivational strategies in AAUA, participants from the management, in their separate interviews, said there were motivational strategies in varying categories, ranging from loans, leaves of different categories to develop staff's career, staff training and development and career advancement in general. According to participants, the university had a salary advance system given to members for urgent needs, but with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor and should not be more than once a year. They also explained various categories of loans as a motivational strategy of the university, including the Staff Housing Loan Scheme. The loan was three hundred thousand nairas (N300, 000.00). The third strategy was Motor Vehicle Refurbishing Loan Scheme. The furniture loan scheme, according to the participants, was the fourth strategy. The university employed a revolving Furniture Loan Scheme of N100, 000.00.

Research Grants

On research, management participants claimed that in 2013 alone, the university allocated ₦2.5million for Research. In the year 2014, the university budgeted ₦5.0million for research, out of which ₦2,245,840 was assessed by academic staff. According to them, about 25 junior academics were in Europe, Asia, and America pursuing one post-graduate program or the other. On development, management participants claimed that in the 2013/2014 academic session, the university substantially improved its fund allocation to staff development from N14.3 million in the year 2012 Budget to N75.5million in the year 2014 Budget.

Theme No. 2: Satisfaction with the Motivational Strategies in AAUA

On the question bordering on the adequacy of the strategies, they explained that the strategies were enough to ensure commitment to duties. According to participants, the motivational strategies were unique and were targeted directly at employees' needs to elicit higher productivity. According to them, the loan schemes of the university had made workers committed to their duties. They said AAUA's motivational strategies bordered on employees' welfare.

Theme No. 3: Outcomes of the Motivational Strategies in AAUA

On the question, in what ways had these strategies led to higher productivity, the management participants said that there was no industrial unrest because of the workers. AAUA now had a stable academic calendar. They spoke on the timely processing of results by lecturers. According to them, results were being processed promptly within three weeks after the examination. They also spoke about e-clearance for final year students ready for NYSC mobilization. According to them, students could stay anywhere in the world and are cleared online and that workers come to work punctually, and there was peace on campus.

Regarding the availability of ethics in AAUA, management participants answered in the affirmative and spoke extensively on the different content of ethics in AAUA. According to them, one of the ethical contents prohibits workers from being absent from duty without authorization. Absence from duty carried disciplinary sanctions of forfeiture of salary for the period and determination of appointment of the affected staff. Lateness and tardiness were other ethics guiding the behavior of staff.

Theme No. 4: Outcomes of the Ethical Control in AAUA

Preventing Plagiarism

Still on ethics, one of the management participants spoke about plagiarism. According to him, it was against the ethical conduct of the University Staff, especially academic staff, to indulge in plagiarism. He said the university expected a very high level of integrity and ethical behavior from its staff, especially the academic staff, in the course of their academic pursuit. According to him, any proven case of plagiarism attracted severe penalty, which might involve outright dismissal depending on the gravity. One of them also spoke about the relationship ethics designed to guide the relationship between staff and staff, between staff and students, and among students.

Ethical Codification as the Managerial Control Strategy

According to the participants, there was ethics on a higher degree program. It became ethical for all academics to finish their PhDs within the stipulated time. For instance, a lecturer must not stay on the Ph.D. program for more than fifteen years. Those who had stayed longer had their appointments terminated, and those who had spent ten years were given a final ultimatum and were mandated to submit yearly progress reports. Another germane ethical revolution, according to them, was the introduction of international exposure for lecturers moving to the professoriate. Academic staff needed to travel abroad for research and academic purposes before promotion to a reader and a professor. They spoke about ethics guiding promotion examination for non-teaching staff. According to them, non-teaching staff members were hitherto get promoted without going through formal examination. They said the Computer Based Test (CBT) was introduced to test their competence.

The respondents identified many lacunas in policymaking as well. They objected that faculty could not get enrolled in a postdoctoral program without signing a bond with the university. Getting a scholarship for post-doctorate carried no additional benefit; whether faculty gets admission in a local or foreign university, his/her salary gets suspended. Besides, the faculty would have to spend double the time in parent university on return, no matter he/she gets much better offers elsewhere.

The Relationship between Ethical Codification and Employees' Performance

On the question bordering on the relationship between ethics and employees' performance, the management participants affirmed that there was a relationship between ethics and employees' performance. According to them, the introduction of the deadline on Ph.D. programs of young academic staff without a Ph.D., as an ethical guide, had compelled academic staff on the Ph.D. program to sit up and be serious with their works. They said over 20 members of academic staff had got a Ph.D. between 2014 and now. Regarding the choice of better strategy between motivation and ethics, the participants insisted that both strategies were right and that both were required to enhance employee performance. On the effects of the two strategies, the management participants said that performance had increased. They gave instances of the surge in the number of academic staff with Ph.D., which had also contributed to the seamless accreditation of programs in the university, and the improved performance of non-teaching staff as a result of their exposure to on-the-job training (motivation). They gave an example of the computerization of

bursary and e-payment systems of salary, which had enhanced the performance of workers.

Discussion

The study found out that there were many issues concerning the loans; first, the loans were grossly inadequate and, therefore, too small to fulfill the need; for instance, the housing loan was pegged at three hundred thousand nairas, total mismatch with the economic reality in Nigeria. Wasiu and Adebajo (2014) recommend that handsome salary and benefits, such as accommodation allowance or house loans, health insurance, faculty involvement in decision making, and establishment of clear career path, with set standards of performance of teachers salary scale in line with other professions, thus promoting job security promotes job security and commitment. The timely dispersion of salaries and fair distribution of rewards leads to the retention of quality staff.

Secondly, the conditions attached to the loans were too stringent, automatically disqualifying the majority of staff from benefiting. Staff was worried that access to loans was becoming harder day by day. According to some other participants, loans were no longer sanctioned and were put to abeyance; however, no consensus could be developed, as the participants' opinions varied. Regarding staff development and training, the participants acknowledged that the initiative was commendable, but recently, such a program may not prove as effective as earlier. Funds were inadequate, and the progress remained slow as the majority of applicants were denied the opportunity.

To retain the best performers, to achieve high-levels of performance, and to increase organizational commitment, managers must develop reward systems considering individual differences, integrating individual and organizational goals, and designing challenging jobs (Abrokwah & Ge, 2017; Falola et al., 2014).

Reward and performance are symbiotic, and basic pay holds a primary relationship with performance (Abosede & Adekunle, 2012; Ejumudo, 2014; Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018), and salary has a positive relationship with employee performance (Anumudu et al., 2016). Unfortunately, employee performance and motivation are not given proper consideration in policymaking; hence Nigerian universities employees are facing challenges like non-availability of bonuses, overtime, and necessary allowances on the one hand and inadequate training, poor working conditions on the other (Bello, 2014). It is vital for public administration in universities that they take active measures for improvement in remuneration

packages of employees and stress upon implementing the compensation policies, which protect employee interest and enhance productivity.

According to the findings, the stringent ethical regime in AAUA had led to disruptions of the academic calendar and an acrimonious administration-union relationship. According to them, the tenure of immediate-past Vice-Chancellor witnessed an unprecedented crisis and industrial disharmony ever witnessed in the history of AAUA as a result of either application or misapplication of either or both of these strategies. Some of the reasons for industrial disharmony in AAUA were the issue of promotion criteria that were unilaterally increased without prior consultations with the unions. For instance, to become a senior lecturer, in addition to having a Ph.D., it is required to have ten publications, 40% of which must be published in reputable international journals. Before this period, it used to be eight publications. Another stringent ethical codification was discouraging joint authorship. Earlier, for joint publications, each of the authors received maximum equal points; this rule changed; now, the points get divided among the contributors.

However, it was learned that ethics had the more substantial potential for benefitting the employees and the university; the effect of motivation was more durable upon employee performance. Previous research demonstrates that a well-implemented code of ethics impacts how management perceives the ethical problems and envisions its solutions, and predicts the seriousness of employees' moral engagement. Actions taken in this respect are reflective of management's passion for creating an ethical climate. However, it remains controversial for many employees in public organizations that this explicit codification is for employees only or these would be applicable on management as well (Singhapakdi et al., [2010](#); Lee et al., [2018](#))

Findings from the field indicated that the management frequently deployed more ethics (strict rules) and less motivation to secure better performance; it used more of punishment for infraction than rewards for ingenuity and exceptional performance. The case was exemplified in the serial suspensions of union leaders by the current and the immediate-past Vice-Chancellors, including sacking some non-teaching staff on demonstration rampage in 2012. As a result, employees believed that the management was politically motivated, developing a frosty relationship between the unions and management. Such actions ascertained that the management hinged on the adoption of theory X for performance improvement.

Psychological contract breach is not limited to basic pay but involves several other categories, such as merit pay, yearly bonus, annual leave quota, mortgage loan, and profit-sharing (Chiu et al., [2002](#); Asamany & Shaorong, [2018](#)). Effective

management of rewards and offering 'Y' type motivation, training, participation, and empowerment permits organizations to achieve competitive advantage (Tessema et al., [2015](#)). Shamsudin et al. ([2012](#)) revealed that a lack of formal control strategies might increase the chance of deviant behaviors. Therefore, organizational management has to institute disciplinary measures to reduce time spent on non-productive activities, creating an alignment between formal control and workplace deviance, and in this case, managing manipulating unions.

The results further revealed that the abundant use of X type strategies for better performance became a valid reason for non-commitment to work and prevailing unhappiness on campus. Workers complained of poor welfare and the introduction of new rules to subject them for more work. At the same time, there was no substantial improvement in the reward system. The knowledge workers of the 21st century believe that the X type strategies (ethical codification) instill discipline and enhance efficiency in the system, but Y type motivation is always more desirable.

The public organization remains at a loss who failed to develop a proper mechanism of reward allocations and focuses more on punishment (Coccia & Igor, [2018](#)). Many existing models of rewards as practiced in the organization seem incomplete, as they could not encompass all possible dimensions of a job; hence Coccia ([2019](#)) recommends systematizing reward categories in a new taxonomy, considering legality essential factor to identify good and bad practices. The existing criteria sometimes fail to distinguish between good and bad performance; this failure would lead to serious implications to management, perceived as breaching of psychological contract may lead to workplace deviation (Jensen et al., [2010](#)).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data, the paper found evidence that there was a significant relationship between motivation, ethics, and employees' performance regarding the use of theory X & Y. It was further observed that Y was more potent than ethical codification (X) as a strategy to enhance employees' performance, but the study observed that AAUA applied more of ethics than motivation, thereby leading to furor between the management and unions. The motivational strategies of AAUA were inadequate because staff welfare was a neglected area. Application of ethics was interpreted as means of bureaucratic control resulting in resistance and an acrimonious relationship between management and unions. Ethics are strongly related to financial management, and irregularity in payment of employees' salaries was perceived as unethical on the part of management by employees leading to a double bind of the absence of motivation and loss of performance. Due to poor financial management, loans were

no longer offered to staff; staff training had also suffered much. Neglect for staff welfare has led to the breach of discipline and stringent relationships between staff union and university management.

Against this backdrop, it is recommended that the AAUA should place more emphasis on transparent financial management and pay due attention to employee welfare. Moreover, AAUA needs to create a fair balance between reward and punishment rather than solely relying on coercive measures. An increase in IGR is also desirable for the regular payment of salary and staff welfare. Downplaying ethics will also improve the unions-management relationship. Furthermore, HR management is viewed as ‘keeper of ethics’ (Macklin, [2007](#); Jack et al., [2012](#)). However, it is recommended to turn to codes of ethics as modes of response or to re-envision HRM beyond the utilitarian ethos of the service exploring the motivational processes in organizations other than those based in the Western culture.

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APPENDIX A

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY AND ETHICAL CODIFICATION IN ADEKUNLE AJASIN UNIVERSITY, AKUGBA AKOKO, ONDO STATE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH AAUA MANAGEMENT MEMBERS

1. I will like you to please introduce yourself and the responsibility of your office
2. Does the University have motivational strategies?
3. I will like you to kindly enumerate these strategies in details
4. Are the strategies adequate to enhance employees' performance?
5. Is there any relationship between motivation and employees' performance?
6. If yes, in what ways have these strategies enhanced employees' performance?
7. Does AAUA have ethics guiding the official conduct of workers?
8. If yes, what are the contents of the ethics in AAUA?
9. Is there relationship between ethics and employees' performance?
10. If yes, how has the codification of ethics enhanced employees' performance in AAUA

APPENDIX B

Sample Consent Form

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO EKITI, EKITI STATE

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to elicit information on **Motivational Strategy and Ethical Codification in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria**. The exercise is purely academic as it is one of the requirements for the award of PhD Degree in Political Science. I assure you that the information you give will be treated with utmost confidence. The thrust of the work is to examine the relationship between motivation, ethics and employees' performance in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

Please note that the principle of anonymity in research will be applied and information provided will be held in confidence. Kindly complete the questionnaire truthfully in order to enhance objectivity.

Thank you for your attention.

Initials

Accepted/ Rejected

APPENDIX C
Table 1
Frequency Distribution showing Ethics-Motivation Debates of the Respondents

S/N	ITEMS		A	D
1.	AAUA has good staff welfare packages	Frequency	37	163
		%	18.5	81.5
2.	AAUA has good motivational packages	Frequency	163	37
		%	81.5	18.5
3.	You have benefitted from the motivational packages, if any	Frequency	61	139
		%	30.5	69.5
4.	AAUA has environment conducive for workers	Frequency	53	147
		%	26.5	73.5
5.	AAUA sponsors its staff for local and international conferences aside the normal TETFUND	Frequency	59	141
		%	29.5	70.5
6.	You been sponsored for local/international conferences	Frequency	34	166
		%	17.0	83.0
7.	Staff salaries are paid as at when due	Frequency	72	128
		%	36.0	64.0
8.	Regular payment of salaries motivate workers	Frequency	157	43
		%	78.5	21.5
9.	You have been promoted in the last five years?	Frequency	142	58
		%	71.0	29.0
10.	AAUA promotes staff regularly	Frequency	134	66
		%	67.0	33.0
11.	Regular promotion enhances employees' performance	Frequency	168	32
		%	84.0	16.0
12.	AAUA has housing loan, car loan and furniture loan for workers	Frequency	62	138
		%	31.0	69.0
13.	The above loans are made available to staff	Frequency	10	190
		%	5.0	95.0
14.	There is a relationship between ethics and employees' performance	Frequency	139	61
		%	69.5	30.5
15.	Ethics leads to more productivity	Frequency	191	9
		%	95.5	4.5
16.	There is a relationship between motivation and employees' performance	Frequency	200	0
		%	100	0.0

17. Motivation leads to more productivity	Frequency	192	8
	%	96.0	4.0
18. Motivation is more needed than ethics for employees' performance	Frequency	143	57
	%	71.5	28.5
19. Ethics should be more deplored as a strategy for performance enhancement	Frequency	66	134
	%	33.0	67.0
20. Work ethics in AAUA is too stringent	Frequency	186	14
	%	93.0	7.0
21. There is a cordial relationship between unions and administration	Frequency	71	129
	%	35.5	64.5
22. The frosty relationship between the unions and management are caused by stringent ethics and poor staff welfare	Frequency	145	55
	%	72.5	27.5
23. Union-Management disharmony is caused by employees' unwillingness to embrace change	Frequency	64	136
	%	32.0	68.0
		%	%

Source: Field Work, 2018.