

-RESEARCH ARTICLE-

WORKING ETHICS AND THEIR ROLE IN IMPROVING JOB PERFORMANCES OF HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Haider Mohammed Haider

Department of Diwan Affairs·Mustansiriyah University·Iraq

Email: haidermohammed@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq (Corresponding Author)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6294-8866>

—Abstract—

The study aimed to identify the role of work ethics in improving employees' job performance in non-governmental healthcare institutions in Iraq. It also aimed to provide recommendations for these institutions to enhance their understanding of the relationship between work ethics and job performance. The data was collected from a random sample of 411 employees in Iraqi non-governmental healthcare institutions to achieve the study's objectives. The survey was used as a tool for data collection, processing, and analysis using the statistical program smart-PLS. The study yielded several significant results, including a high commitment to work ethics among employees in non-governmental institutions. High level of job performance among employees in non-governmental institutions. A statistically significant relationship between work ethics and improved job performance in non-governmental institutions. Work ethics are significantly influenced by the following variables: obeying laws and regulations, fairness and responsibility, and teamwork. The study helps the regulators make regulations for attaining high job performance using practical work ethics.

Keywords: Work ethics, job performance, efficiency, non-governmental healthcare institutions

INTRODUCTION

In the context of international healthcare, healthcare workers' ethical behaviour is essential to guaranteeing the provision of excellent patient care and upholding public confidence. This study explores the complex dynamics of work ethics in Iraqi non-governmental healthcare organizations, particularly following rules, and laws,

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promoting fairness and responsibility, and encouraging effective teamwork. It is critical to comprehend and improve the ethical aspects of healthcare professions as Iraq works to reconstruct its healthcare system following decades of violence. The foundation of ethical behaviour in any healthcare system is following the rules and regulations (Sambala, Cooper, & Manderson, 2020). Considering the historical and geopolitical backdrop of the country, it is crucial to look at how healthcare professionals handle the complex legal environment in the setting of Iraqi non-governmental healthcare organizations, which often face specific issues. This study attempts to identify the primary legal frameworks governing healthcare practices in Iraq and assess how strictly non-governmental organizations' health service providers adhere to these regulations. By elucidating the relationship between job performance and legal compliance, the research aims to shed light on how rigorous legal compliance may impact the overall level of healthcare in the region.

Healthcare ethics need responsibility and fairness like any other profession. Non-governmental healthcare organizations in Iraq must address social responsibility, equity, and justice (Matlin, Depoux, Schütte, Flahault, & Saso, 2018). This study examines healthcare workers' justice views, behaviors, and duties. It explains how to provide fair healthcare, address socioeconomic variables affecting health, and meet patient and community duties. Understanding accountability and justice in the Iraqi healthcare system helps identify ways to enhance job performance and results. Collaboration is key to providing complete and coordinated healthcare. Effective collaboration is crucial for Iraqi non-governmental healthcare facilities, where demand is strong, and resources are tight. This study explores the elements that encourage or hinder healthcare practitioner cooperation. It examines how collaboration affects patient outcomes, job outcomes, and non-governmental healthcare effectiveness. The research examines the obstacles and benefits of supporting good cooperation to give practical advice for Iraqi healthcare workers to improve collaboration.

This research seeks to examine how ethics affects healthcare workers in Iraqi non-governmental organizations. First, the research evaluates these organizations' compliance with rules and regulations to illuminate healthcare legislation and their implications on job performance. Second, the study will examine health service providers' views on justice and duties and how these impact social responsibility and equitable healthcare. Thirdly, the study examines workgroup dynamics, identifying elements that improve or impede medical professional collaboration and assessing job performance. The initiative aims to fill knowledge gaps on working ethics in Iraqi non-governmental healthcare organizations. First, particularly in a nation emerging from protracted war, comprehensive research doesn't seem to exist on whether medical professionals follow local laws and regulations. This study attempts to overcome this gap by reviewing the rules governing healthcare processes and their direct connection to work performance. Second, the literature does not detail accountability and justice in

the specific context of Iraqi healthcare institutions. This paper tries to fill this vacuum by examining the difficult ethical problems healthcare professionals face. It focuses especially on equality and social responsibility. In the end, the research offers viewpoints on aspects that either support or impede efficient teamwork among healthcare professionals, therefore addressing the lack of understanding of teamwork dynamics in healthcare organizations.

The relevant literature study will be reviewed, the research technique will be outlined, and a thorough empirical analysis will be conducted to verify the suggested theories in the following part of this paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Following the rules and regulations in any professional context is strongly related to the concept of work ethics in general. Following legal frameworks gives professionals a foundation on which to operate and make judgments in general [Sambala et al. \(2020\)](#). Following the laws becomes essential in the healthcare sector because the impact on people's health makes the stakes especially high. Adhering to the law ensures the legitimacy of medical operations and demonstrates a commitment to the safety and welfare of patients ([Awotunde et al., 2021](#)). One approach health service providers contribute to maintaining an open, accountable, and trustworthy healthcare system is following the law ([Naher et al., 2020](#)). In healthcare, ethical work practices transcend legal compliance, even though rules and regulations provide a foundation for acceptable behaviour and outline the bounds within which professionals must operate. They provide a structure that specifies the rights and duties of medical practitioners and guides their actions to meet expectations and cultural standards.

Moreover, [Sittig et al. \(2020\)](#) find that patient safety and the standard of care are frequently closely associated with legal compliance in the healthcare industry. Adhering to rules can help healthcare practitioners avoid malpractice, mistakes, and ethical transgressions that could endanger patient safety. Following the law creates a professional and responsible atmosphere, crucial elements of a strong ethical base in healthcare ([Jarva et al., 2022](#)).

Furthermore, the integrity of healthcare organizations is impacted by the interaction between following the law and work ethics, not just individual acts ([Mishra & Tikoria, 2021](#)). Establishments prioritizing legal compliance develop an environment that emphasizes moral conduct, which benefits the healthcare system's credibility and reputation ([Lee, 2020](#)). Effective healthcare delivery is built on trust, and patients, regulatory agencies, and the general public find providers who follow the law and rules as trustworthy ([Gerke, Minssen, & Cohen, 2020](#)). In addition to being necessary for healthcare facilities to run smoothly, this trust is also critical for building strong bonds

with patients, promoting honest conversation, and guaranteeing that the moral principles of freedom for patients and informed consent are upheld. Therefore, we say that,

H1: *Obeying laws and regulations have a direct relation with work ethics.*

Fairness and responsibility are essential to work ethics, especially in complicated and ethically complex healthcare. These components' interdependence creates a strong and direct link with work ethics, influencing healthcare professionals' attitudes, choices, and general conduct (Ambrose, Rice, & Mayer, 2021). In order to uphold ethical norms, Giovanola and Tiribelli (2023) find that healthcare fairness entails reasonable resource allocation, impartial decision-making, and equal treatment. Healthcare practitioners are tasked with the responsibility of prioritizing patient welfare, adhering to ethical norms, and making a positive impact on the community at large. The combined emphasis on responsibility and fairness produces a synergy affecting more than individual behaviours (Nasr, El Akremi, & Coyle-Shapiro, 2019). It also affects the general ethical atmosphere of healthcare facilities. In healthcare, fairness includes problems with access, resource allocation, and care delivery. Healthcare practitioners must negotiate the complexity of varied patient groups, socioeconomic inequities, and cultural variances in pursuing ethical work practices (Henderson, Horne, Hills, & Kendall, 2018). Healthcare workers must overcome their prejudices in order to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and justly, regardless of background (De Castro, Lopez, Hamoy, Alba, & Gundayao, 2021). In addition to being morally right, this dedication to justice also helps patients and healthcare professionals build trust. Patients have an inherent faith that their medical providers will treat them fairly and impartially, which promotes an atmosphere that encourages truthful discussion, teamwork, and, eventually, improved health (Gerke et al., 2020).

In addition, the idea of responsibilities in healthcare emphasizes the moral duties that healthcare workers have to their patients, colleagues, and the general public. According to Sundqvist, Nilsson, Holmefur, and Anderzén-Carlsson (2018), maintaining confidentiality, promoting patients' well-being, and preserving the highest standards of care are all part of the responsibilities. These ethical compass guides professionals to carry out their responsibilities with honesty and diligence, understanding the potential effects of their activities on the community and individuals' lives. Beyond the current therapeutic context, ethical obligations include a dedication to ongoing professional growth, teamwork among colleagues, and contributions to the enhancement of healthcare systems (King et al., 2021). It is especially clear how justice, accountability, and work ethics are directly related to the ethical challenges that healthcare practitioners frequently face. A dedication to fairness guarantees that decisions are made objectively and take into account the various requirements of patients while addressing concerns like resource distribution, treatment choices, or end-of-life care (Maeckelberghe,

Zdunek, Marceglia, Farsides, & Rigby, 2023). Healthcare workers are driven by a feeling of duty to tackle moral challenges with a commitment to provide optimal care while honouring the independence and values of every patient. Therefore, we propose that,

H2: *Fairness and responsibilities have a direct relation with work ethics.*

Effective teamwork is one of the most important aspects of work ethics, especially in the fast-paced, highly collaborative healthcare field. Effective teamwork and work ethics are closely related, and this significantly impacts organizational effectiveness, the ethical culture of healthcare organizations, and the general quality of patient care. To accomplish shared objectives, Elwyn, Greenhalgh, and Macfarlane (2018) say that healthcare teamwork involves the smooth cooperation of various specialists, each of whom brings a special set of skills to the table. The teamwork synergy creates an atmosphere where ethical concerns are ingrained in routine procedures and enhances the healthcare team's collective intellect (Szalados, 2021). Effective teamwork in healthcare is fundamentally based on values like shared responsibility, respect for one another, and communication. These values, which highlight the value of honest and open communication, tolerance for other viewpoints, and a shared dedication to patients' well-being, are very compatible with the ethical aspects of the workplace. Effective communication becomes a channel through which ethical values are actualized in practice in the complex and high-stakes world of healthcare (Hofmann, Lämmermann, & Urbach, 2024). For instance, multidisciplinary teamwork and communication support comprehensive patient care by guaranteeing that the team considers every aspect of a patient's health.

Furthermore, there is a shared responsibility for patient outcomes in the link between effective teamwork and work ethics. In the medical field, practitioners are all responsible for focusing on patients, safe, and effective treatment (Jørgensen & Rendtorff, 2018). When team members recognize their contributions to attaining positive patient outcomes, effective collaboration fosters a feeling of shared responsibility, according to Wei (2022). The ethical foundation of this shared responsibility is the need to prioritize the needs of patients and collaborate to enhance the provision of healthcare. In healthcare settings, the ethical underpinnings of good cooperation are particularly evident in challenging situations and situations requiring significant judgments (Zajac, Woods, Tannenbaum, Salas, & Holladay, 2021). A healthcare team must be able to work together cohesively throughout difficult circumstances or emergencies. Working well in a team helps make moral decisions guided by justice, compassion, and autonomy (Jørgensen & Rendtorff, 2018). As to Wei (2022), the cooperative character of different points of view reduces the likelihood of mistakes or omissions by guaranteeing that moral issues are carefully considered and decisions are made collectively. Proactive collaboration also contributes to the

development of a supportive and ethical culture in healthcare institutions (Elwyn et al., 2018). Professionals who collaborate successfully create a sense of purpose and trust. This cooperative work culture creates an atmosphere where moral behaviour is highly appreciated and ingrained in the corporate culture. A culture of constant ethical progress is fostered when team members negotiate ethical difficulties together, learn from one another, and exchange experiences (Hofmann et al., 2024). Therefore, we make a hypothesis that,

H3: *Effective teamwork has a direct relation with work ethics.*

Work ethics and job performance are symbiotic to professional success in various industries. In the healthcare industry, this link is especially evident. Work ethics, which include values like honesty, responsibility, and hard work, are guiding principles that directly affect how someone approaches their jobs and obligations (Mohammad et al., 2018). There is a stronger correlation between work ethics and job performance in the healthcare industry because of the high stakes and big influence on people's well-being. Fundamentally, a person's work ethics affect the standard and reliability of their performance. According to Brown, Troy, Jobson, and Link (2018), professionals who strive for correctness and precision in their jobs exhibit a strong work ethic, demonstrating a dedication to excellence. This commitment to excellent work reflects a larger moral duty to offer the greatest treatment or assistance for the best patient results in the healthcare industry; where poor performance can have severe consequences, work ethics and job performance must be in sync (Al-Taweel, 2021).

Additionally, work ethics support the development of a supportive and cooperative work environment. According to Lumpkin and Achen (2018), strong work ethics make professionals more inclined to collaborate with colleagues, communicate clearly, and foster an environment of respect for one another. This collaborative culture fosters an environment where ideas are shared, support is given, and constructive criticism is valued, all of which directly impact job performance. An ethically-driven, happy work atmosphere improves the overall efficacy of the healthcare team and, as a result, individual job performance in healthcare, where multidisciplinary collaboration is essential (Akudugu & Abagale, 2024). Strong work ethicists also feel more responsible for their choices and behaviours. This responsibility goes beyond finishing duties. It also includes a dedication to ethical issues, including patient privacy, informed consent, and compliance with professional standards. This ethical accountability ensures that professionals work within the parameters of set rules and regulations, which intrinsically impacts job performance (Al-Taweel, 2021). A strong work ethic is linked with a dedication to ethical behaviour in the healthcare industry, where ethical concerns infuse every part of practice, thereby improving the overall quality of job performance (Lumpkin & Achen, 2018). Therefore, we propose that,

H4: *Work ethics have a direct relation with job performance.*

RESEARCH METHODS

The study aimed to identify the role of work ethics in improving employees' job performance in non-governmental healthcare institutions in Iraq. Work ethics are significantly influenced by the following variables: obeying laws and regulations, fairness and responsibility, and teamwork. The variables are measured with questions taken from past studies such as obeying laws and regulations has six questions (Kooistra et al., 2020), fairness and responsibility have four questions (Severt, Shin, Chen, & DiPietro, 2022), effective teamwork has six questions (Kakemam et al., 2021), work ethics has five questions (Raja, Haq, De Clercq, & Azeem, 2020) and job performance has four questions (Alonazi, 2020).

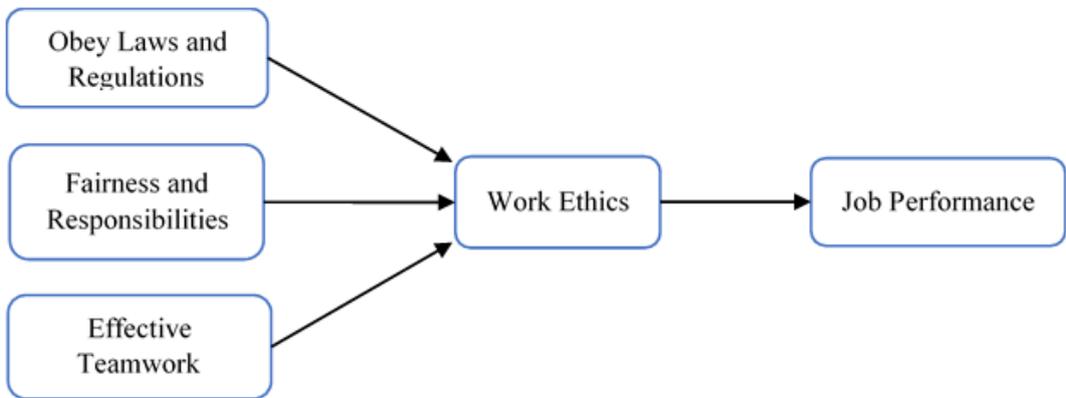


Figure 1: Research model

The data was collected from a random sample of 411 employees in Iraqi non-governmental healthcare institutions to achieve the study's objectives. Hence, the employees of Iraqi non-governmental healthcare institutions are the respondents. Data was collected, processed, and analyzed using smart-PLS from the survey. It works well with huge data sets and complicated models (Hair Jr, Howard, & Nitzl, 2020). This research employed one independent variable, work ethics (WE), which has three dimensions: observing laws and regulations (OLR), fairness and responsibility (FR), and successful cooperation. It also used one predictive variable named job performance (JP). These are shown in Figure 1.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The outcomes checked the convergent validity, exposing the correlation between items. The outcomes revealed that the loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) crossed the limits of larger than 0.50, and composite reliability (CR) and Alpha crossed the

limits of larger than 0.70. These outcomes exposed the items to be highly correlated. [Table 1](#) exposed these outcomes.

Table 1: Convergent validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Effective Teamwork	ETW1	0.670	0.857	0.887	0.569
	ETW2	0.704			
	ETW3	0.758			
	ETW4	0.731			
	ETW5	0.820			
	ETW6	0.831			
Fairness and Responsibilities	FR1	0.925	0.935	0.952	0.833
	FR2	0.924			
	FR3	0.903			
	FR4	0.899			
Job Performance	JP1	0.736	0.797	0.801	0.503
	JP2	0.667			
	JP3	0.668			
	JP4	0.760			
Obey Laws and Regulations	OLR1	0.889	0.898	0.923	0.667
	OLR2	0.688			
	OLR3	0.739			
	OLR4	0.926			
	OLR5	0.757			
	OLR6	0.875			
Work Ethics	WE1	0.880	0.806	0.862	0.558
	WE2	0.780			
	WE3	0.709			
	WE4	0.669			
	WE5	0.675			

The outcomes check the discriminant validity and expose the correlation between variables. The outcomes expose that the Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratios are cross the limit of lower than 0.90. These outcomes expose that the variables are not highly correlated. [Table 2](#) exposes these outcomes.

Table 2: Discriminant validity

	ETW	FR	JP	OLR	WE
ETW					
FR	0.344				
JP	0.786	0.440			
OLR	0.740	0.265	0.712		
WE	0.706	0.370	0.700	0.509	

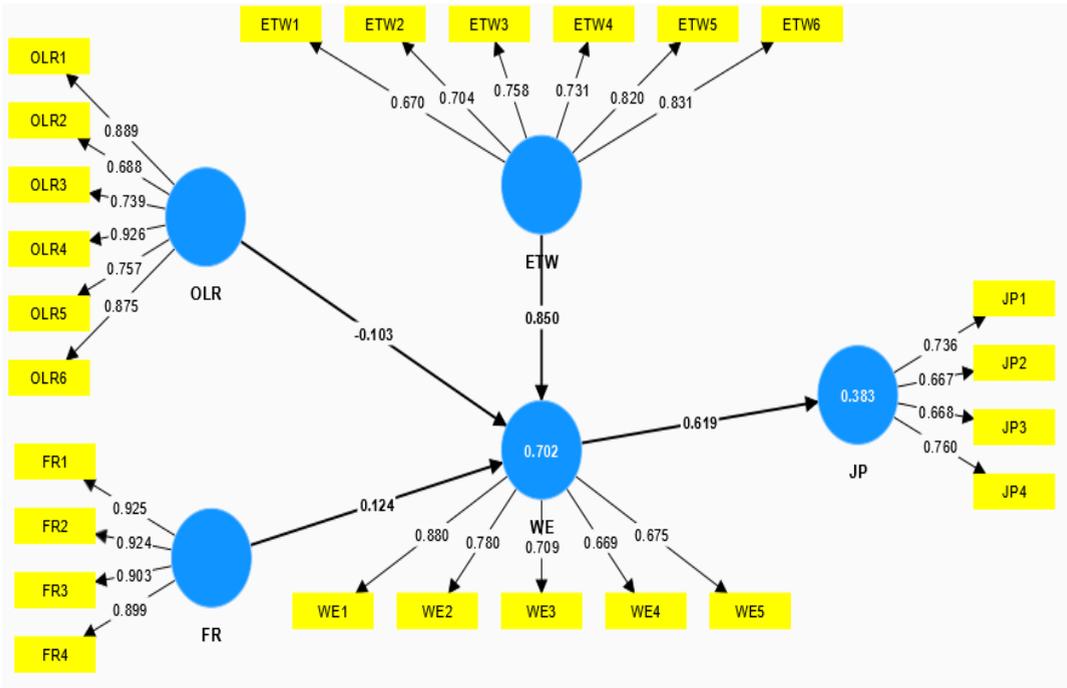


Figure 2: Measurement model assessment

The study exposed that obeying laws and regulations (OLR), fairness and responsibility (FR), and effective teamwork (ETW) influenced the work ethics and accepted H1, H2 and H3. The study yielded several important results, including a high commitment to work ethics among employees in non-governmental institutions. High level of job performance among employees in non-governmental institutions. A statistically significant relationship between work ethics and improved job performance in non-governmental institutions and accept H4. Table 3 shows these relationships.

Table 3: Path analysis

Relationships	Beta	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
ETW -> WE	0.850	0.037	23.120	0.000
FR -> WE	0.124	0.035	3.572	0.000
OLR -> WE	-0.103	0.043	2.418	0.016
WE -> JP	0.619	0.031	19.911	0.000

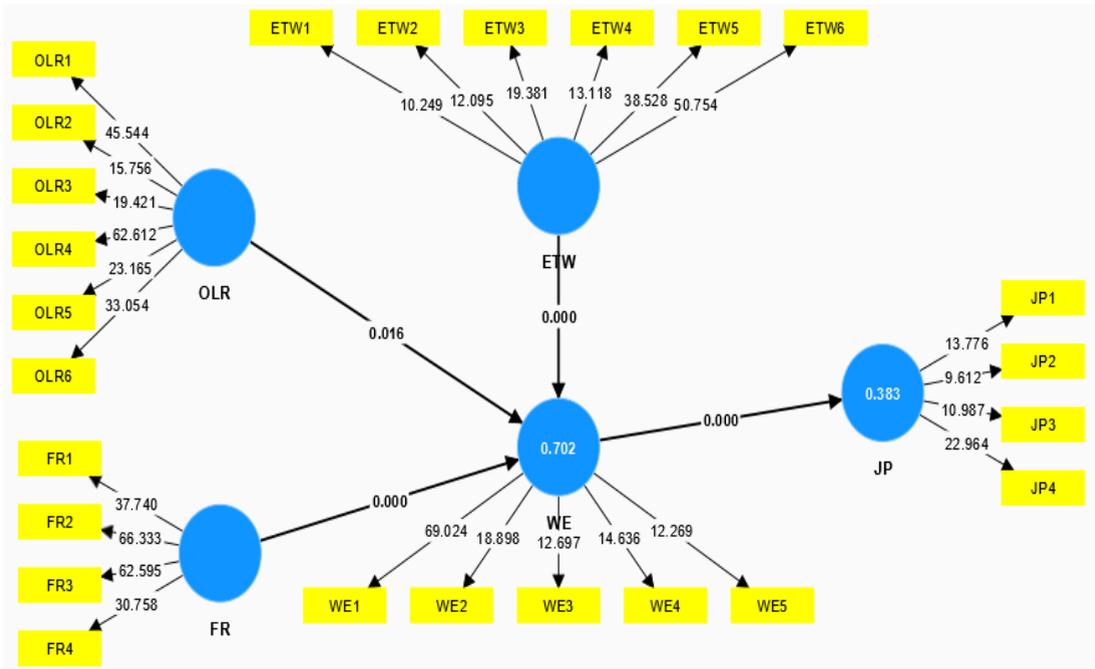


Figure 3: Structural model assessment

DISCUSSIONS

The research shows a deep understanding of the multiple elements affecting healthcare ethics in this situation. Working ethics include following the law, being fair and accountable, and working successfully in a team. These aspects shape how Iraqi non-governmental healthcare workers do their tasks. The paper examines Iraq's complicated medical legal system's basic part of obeying the law. As shown by (Gerke et al., 2020), healthcare professionals confront problems and opportunities while navigating diverse regulatory regimes. The results provide light on compliance and work performance. Iraqi non-governmental healthcare groups have historical and geopolitical hurdles, therefore knowing how professionals follow legal standards is crucial to improve healthcare services. Sittig et al. (2020) discovered that demanding conformity with rules and regulations improves job performance and is not only bureaucratic.

The research discusses the viewpoints and working methods of Iraqi non-governmental healthcare practitioners in relation to justice and accountability. The study emphasizes the need for healthcare justice in a community with longstanding issues. It studies how healthcare professionals deliver fair treatment, address socioeconomic variables affecting health, and fulfill their duties to patients and society. According to Giovanola and Tiribelli (2023), accountability and justice improve job performance proactively. Morally fulfilling obligations guarantees that doctors actively improve patient and community health, which is in accordance with Iraqi healthcare institutions' goals

(Ambrose et al., 2021). Effective cooperation is the third component that determines how well comprehensive and integrated healthcare services are provided in Iraqi non-governmental healthcare institutions. Finding the factors that support or impede effective teamwork, this study explores the dynamics of cooperation among healthcare professionals. In a setting where resources may be little and demand for healthcare services is great, it exposes the impact of cooperation on work outputs, patient outcomes, and the overall efficacy of healthcare delivery. The findings suggest that effective cooperation is a prerequisite for effective healthcare delivery and an ethical need that improves job performance (Wei, 2022). All these elements are part of work ethics and positively correlated with job performance.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Practitioners, administrators, and policymakers employed by Iraqi non-governmental healthcare organizations may benefit practically from this research. Its consequences go beyond scholarly investigation. Recognizing the intricate relationships among following the law, treating others equitably, accepting accountability for one's deeds, and working successfully in a team, the study encourages targeted solutions. Administrators may implement ethical behavior-promoting training programs, and legislators can use these results to develop ethical standards and legal frameworks. Equipped with an enhanced consciousness of these ethical aspects, healthcare professionals may foster an environment of ongoing enhancement, eventually enhancing the quality of medical attention provided to patients and the general efficacy of healthcare provisions in Iraq following the conflict.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study has limitations that should be noted despite the insightful information it offers. The results' limited generalizability to larger healthcare contexts stems from their context-specificity to non-governmental healthcare organizations in Iraq. Furthermore, the research's cross-sectional design provides an overview rather than allowing for a long-term examination of changing ethical dynamics. The use of self-reported data raises the risk of response bias, and it might take time to represent the complexity of ethical issues fully. Lastly, there is an opportunity for subjective interpretation because the study mostly focuses on impressions rather than quantitative measurements of work performance. These restrictions highlight the necessity of exercising caution when interpreting data and offer directions for further study in various healthcare settings.

The study helps the regulators make regulations for attaining high job performance using effective work ethics.

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