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THE EFFECT OF EMPLOYEES' WORK ETHICS OF ON THEIR WORK PERFORMANCE: A SURVEY-BASED STUDY

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Abstract:

Work ethic is a set of principles, values, and beliefs that affect behaviour, and decisions in personal and professional life. Talking about it in professional life, ideally, most employees consider work ethics as an essential trait to be a successful team member in any organization. The quantity and quality (understanding, accuracy, timely completion) of work performed by employees are directly related to Work Ethics at all levels in the organization's hierarchy.

This study determines the effect of employees' work ethics on their work performance. It consists of a survey which helped us better understand and analyse the views of employees from the educational sector on this topic and their opinion on various ways to teach the Work Ethics amongst employees. The survey uses a research questionnaire to gather data from respondents.

In terms of the correlation between work ethics & individual work performance, the results show that there is a significant connection between these two.

Keywords: Work Ethics, Work performance, behavioural pattern, organizational growth

I. Introduction

Work Ethic:

In simple terms, Work ethic is nothing but attitude towards work, which might affect work satisfaction. When every stakeholder in an organization worships and is committed to his work, the growth of the organization is guaranteed.

The growth of any organization is a stage where day-to-day operations are channelized or streamlined and when it can think of expansion and look for additional options to generate more revenue. This organizational growth depends on the quality contribution of every employee at all levels in the hierarchy of the organization.



In the educational sector, irrespective of whether the organization provides primary, secondary, or higher education, “what” is to be provided is uniform across boards and universities, but “how” it is provided, solely depends on individual ability, the working environment and work ethics of peers, co-workers, reporting authorities and higher level management.

The 4 main pillars contributing to organizational growth are people, processes, alignment, and focus. Addressing them in the right order, with the proper amount of attention to each, guarantees success. This research study considers the first and foremost pillar of “people” and their working style. Any organization needs to find the right people at the

right time, provide them with a healthy work culture, and ensure they are properly guided and empowered by taking into consideration their strengths & redirecting their weaknesses into opportunities in the right direction so that they become an asset to the organization.

If an employee is satisfied with the workplace/work environment; every difficult task can be turned into an opportunity instead of a burden that turns out to be high-quality results ensuring the growth of the employee as well as the organization.

Work Performance:

In simple terms, employee performance is how a member of staff fulfils the duties of their role, completes required tasks, and behaves in the workplace. Performance always comes from passion, not from pressure. Measurements of performance include the quality, quantity, and efficiency of work. It is an important building block in management. It is a tool or metric that not only measures the degree of work accomplished by an individual, but one's ability to support his peers, teams, and co-workers to do the same. It describes the contribution of individuals to organizational success and growth.

According to Borman & Motowidlo (1993), job performance consists of two main factors:

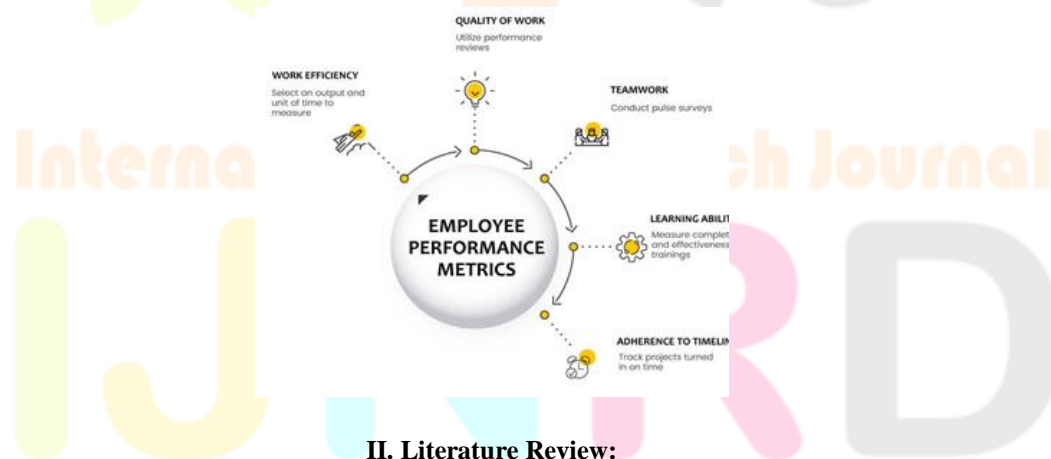
- **Task performance** describes the core job responsibilities of an employee. It is also called "in-role prescribed behaviour" (Koopmans et al. 2011) and is reflected in specific work outcomes and deliverables as well as their quality and quantity.
- **Contextual performance** goes beyond formal job responsibilities. Also referred to as "discretionary extra-role behaviour" (Koopmans et al. 2011) contextual performance is reflected in activities such as coaching co-workers, strengthening social networks within an organization, and going the extra mile for the organization.

Moreover, how an employee spends each work hour shapes his career, self-worth, and eventually his life. Many times, people confuse performance with productivity, productivity is the amount of work an employee does irrespective of quality, but performance is work done to get the best results and make room for improvement.

The metrics used in the education sector to measure performance may include:

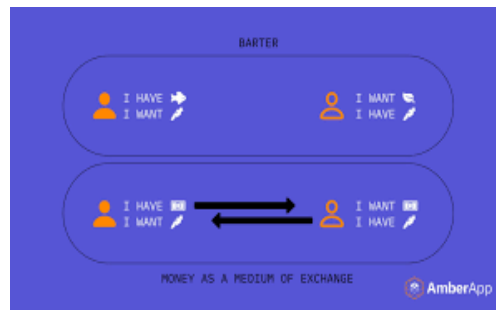
- 1) Timely syllabus completion, students' satisfaction scores, etc.
- 2) Quality and accuracy which may include solving students' doubts, adopting different pedagogies to better understand the concept
- 3) Engagement of teachers in students' welfare apart from curricular activities
- 4) Punctuality and responsible behaviour
- 5) Regular and goal-oriented feedback
- 6) Networking and collaboration

To summarise, work performance is a multidimensional aspect and if addressed properly, can help improve the growth of employees as well as of the organization.



II. Literature Review:

This study talks about how inculcating work ethics in day-to-day work can improve the work performance of individuals at the workplace and subsequently affect organizational growth. This study analyses various dimensions of work ethics, such as transparency, accountability, mutual respect, and integrity. This research briefly explains how this primitive habit of including ethical practices in every operation can leverage work performance at every level of the management hierarchy. This study enumerates many aspects of promoting the use of ethical practices which seem to be lacking in today's modern era where people are becoming more and more self-centred. [1] The notion of ethics can be traced back to the earliest form of barter system where "coincidence of wants" was in practice, i.e. when two parties each hold goods that another party wishes to have. This is the condition for a barter transaction to be agreed upon.



Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (V, 5), wrote of justice being the exchange of equals for equals, and in *Politics* (I, 8–10) he discusses “the art of acquisition,” trade, and usury as part of the ethics of the household.

However, this barter system lasted for a short time and was eventually replaced by a metastatic/chartalistic approach for the medium of exchange, to eliminate the obvious limitations of the barter system. Ethics has played a crucial role in shaping the way people interact with each other and the world around them. The ethics of a society can be seen in the ideas and beliefs about what is right or wrong, what is good or bad; as well as in the conceptions of satisfactory social relations and attitudes held by the members of the society. [2] The evolution of the term “ethics” has been since life evolved on Earth, from unicellular organisms till today. Ethics is an essential aspect of the possibility of relationships with Others. And all life is basically about relationships—about Otherness. Without the ability to form mutually beneficial relationships—between lipids, protocells, prokaryotes, eukaryotes, and beyond, including the human-microbiome hologenome—there would be no life, certainly not in the way we know it or experience it. The term used at that time was - Symbiosis, which means, the close relationship between two different organisms or living things belonging to different species. The term ethics used in a broader sense is as follows: the activity of navigating interactions between autonomous entities so that the tendency toward mutual aid can exist and life’s essential processes are allowed to continue and flourish on Earth. It requires no proof to mention that this journey of living organisms has witnessed “ethical practices”, otherwise we would not experience today’s world full of new inventions to deliver better lifestyles than before. [3] Many philosophers have contributed to explaining and leveraging the concept of “ethics” or morals in their teachings, ranging from Mahabharata in Hinduism (Dharma) and Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Greek culture. Socrates’ motto “A sound mind in a sound body” suggests a medical image of ethics as mental hygiene. [4] Most adults are expected to work and most do to make a living, the work ethic in this popular use of the term is, on average, positive for most people. Nevertheless, there are bound to be variations in this average and the distribution around the average for different groups of people. Employment and working are perceived as characterized by one of the four values: a burden, a constraint, a responsibility (give and take), or a social contribution.

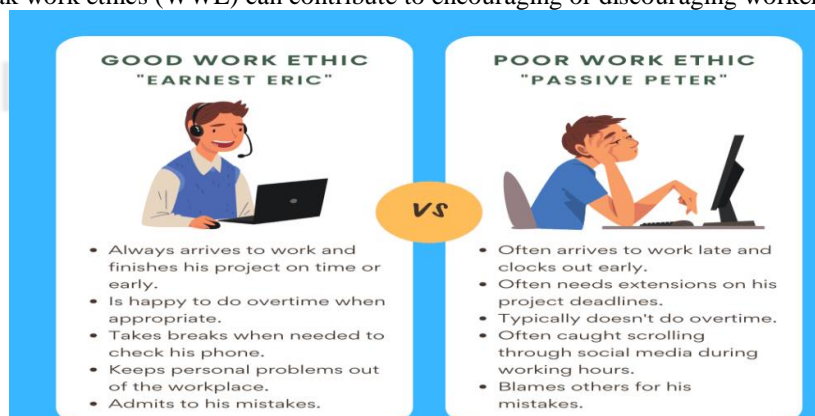
PERSPECTIVES OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR



Source: Adapted from Anstett & Guest, (2007)

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[5] The attitude of an individual towards “ethics” determines his work performance. Factors that may affect performance are skills, knowledge, satisfaction, motivation, work environment, working relationships, etc. Improvement in individual work performance ensures contributions to organizational performance. [6] To attain a desired level of job performance in any work setting, several factors are often considered. This paper discussed how work ethic affects workers' job performance by evaluating how either strong work ethics (SWE) or weak work ethics (WWE) can contribute to encouraging or discouraging workers' job performance.



[7] Quality is very crucial to understand how well an employee is doing. Quality of work shows how much an employee values them. Thus, this study examines the impact of strong quality work ethics on job satisfaction. There have been many studies investigating the relationship between ethics and job satisfaction, however, the studies investigating the impact of work ethics on job satisfaction are limited. Research relating to ethics and organizational performance (Miller et al., 2002); (Furnham, 1982); (Petty & Hill, 2017); (Abdi et al., 2014) productivity (Hamilton-Attwell, 1998; Turnipseed, 2002); (Koonmee et al., 2010), job satisfaction (Vitell & Davis, 1990); (Kowal & Roztocki, 2015); (Mahembe & Chipunza, 2014), behaviour (Thau et al., 2015); (Fu, 2014), organizational commitment (Murtaza et al., 2016a); (Abdi et al., 2014) were found to have significant positive relationships. A critical review of these studies finds that while the relationship between ethics and productivity, organizational performance, and job satisfaction behaviour has been investigated in individual settings, the relationship between work ethics and job satisfaction together has not been discussed critically. Thus the present study examines the relationship between work ethics and job satisfaction among employees working in the educational sector. [8] If everyone in a team tries to bring quality work ethics, the overall performance of the team is bound to increase. The importance of teamwork as an essential tool in the work environment seems to be neglected by both employers and employees which has led them to deficient performance and poor productivity in their jobs. [9] This habit of practicing strong ethical practices in one's own life helps an individual to be a good human being, a responsible citizen, and a member of society. He gets to know how he could help others-respecting the dignity and worth of individual-confronting meaning of integrity-journey towards being competent. [10] But the tragic part today is the decline of moral values in today's society. The perception of ethics or "moral values"-the set of standards by which we recognize between right or wrong, the accepted code of human conduct in society, its importance, and factors responsible for declining moral values in today's society, are studied. Our paper has taken into consideration all the above-mentioned aspects and we studied the perception of the terminologies "work ethics" and "work performance" from different age groups of employees working mainly in educational and allied sectors.

III. Research Methodology

The research design is descriptive. The data is collected by random sampling using a survey method. The sample size is 100 respondents. The data is collected using Google Forms and analysis is done using Excel. This research paper combines the analysis of several research papers, articles, white papers, and case studies on work ethics and work performance from which we find out the present scenario and suggest some ways for improvement.

This research aims to show a direct correlation between work ethics and work performance. How work performance can be leveraged by providing a better work environment where employees can willingly work with the help of cultivating ethical practices.

Data collection:

Primary data:

A soft copy (Google form) as well as hard copy of Questionnaire was floated to the people from urban areas, which consisted of teachers from various schools and colleges.

The following questions were asked to gain insights into the concept of work ethic, work performance, and the correlation between them from employees' points of view.

- a) The understanding of the terms "work ethic" & "work performance"
- b) What do they think about the correlation between these two terms?
- c) The current work environment at their workplace
- d) Ideal work environment according to them
- e) Current performance appraisal system at their workplace
- f) What are their expectations?

Secondary source: It comprises websites, journals, research papers, white papers, case studies, and online data. According to respondents, the comprehensive work culture helps promote ethical practices, thereby improving the work performance of employees at the workplace. The survey results are depicted below in the form of pie charts and graphs.

IV. Result and Analysis

The survey was floated amongst working professionals mostly in the educational sector to understand their views and opinions on "the effect of employees' work ethics on their work performance". The following insights were gathered.

Almost 67% of the respondents insist that inculcating ethical practices should be made an organizational policy and then it is automatically implemented by employees at middle and lower levels in the management hierarchy. The respondents also said that having a set of certain principles or values in personal and professional life can give oneself a state of satisfaction & inner peace, however, if you are not surrounded by people having equivalent standards or principles, may push you into a state of depression and frustration. Transparency, honesty, inclusiveness, and accountability are the most common concerns among respondents, along with strong support from higher-level management. It helped us gain the overall perspective and understand their opinions on the efforts being made on this issue. It also helped us understand the need for some regulatory measures from the controlling body. The role of teachers is not just to provide syllabus-driven education, but to inculcate moral values in learners to make them good human beings. So, if parents at home and teachers at schools and colleges teach the young generation the distinction between "right" and "wrong", "good" and "bad", the practice of acting ethically will become habitual. The survey gave us an idea of user acceptance in a sample size of about 50 respondents working in different organizations and having varied years of experience.

97% of respondents are from the educational sector



Fig.1: indicates types of organisation where the respondents are working.

Demographics of survey participants

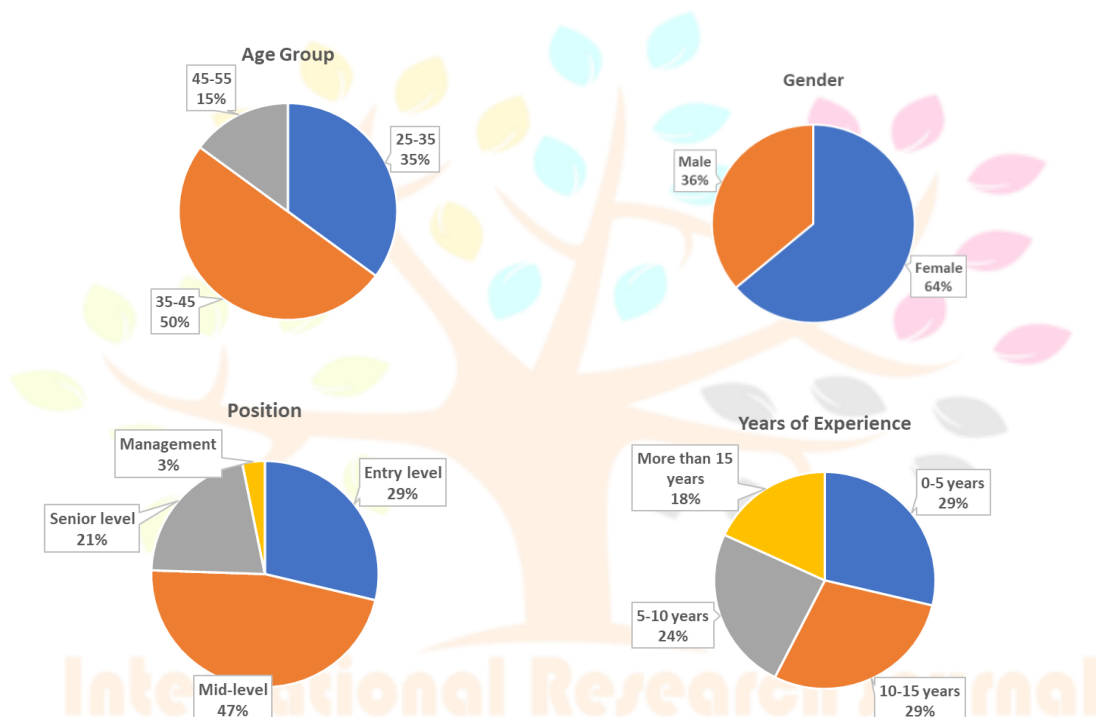


Fig.2: indicates respondents' demographics, such as age, gender, years of experience, and position.

50% are between the age of 35-45 years working at mid-level positions, approximately 30% in the age group 25-35 working at entry level positions and around 25% of the respondents are working at senior level positions. 18% of the respondents have 15+ years of work experience, 53% have 5-15 years of work experience & 29% have 0-5 years of work experience.

What do you understand by the term "Work Ethics"?

71.4% of the respondents believe that the definition of work ethics varies from one organization to another, and ensures to meet the minimum standards of ethical practices after discussing with top-level management. 23.8% of respondents say it varies from time to time, with the change in top-level management, and the need to compromise their principles/ values for organizational growth. 4.8% find it difficult to get employment and survive in this ever-increasing competitive world and hence are compelled to do whatever is being asked without questioning.

How should your performance at the workplace be measured according to you?

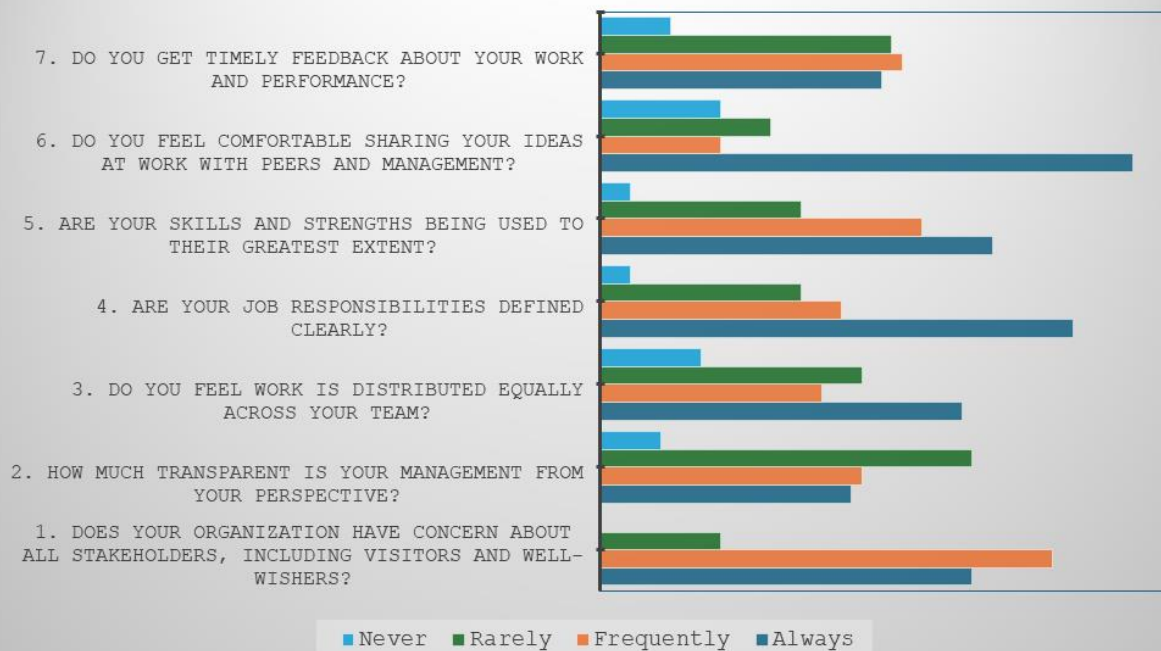
85.7% of respondents think that work performance must be measured not only on the quality of work performed but also on how proactively employees work and include innovative ideas in their assigned work, 9.5% find "quality" alone should be considered, while 4.8% think the time spent at the workplace should be the only criterion for assessing the performance.

Summary of survey

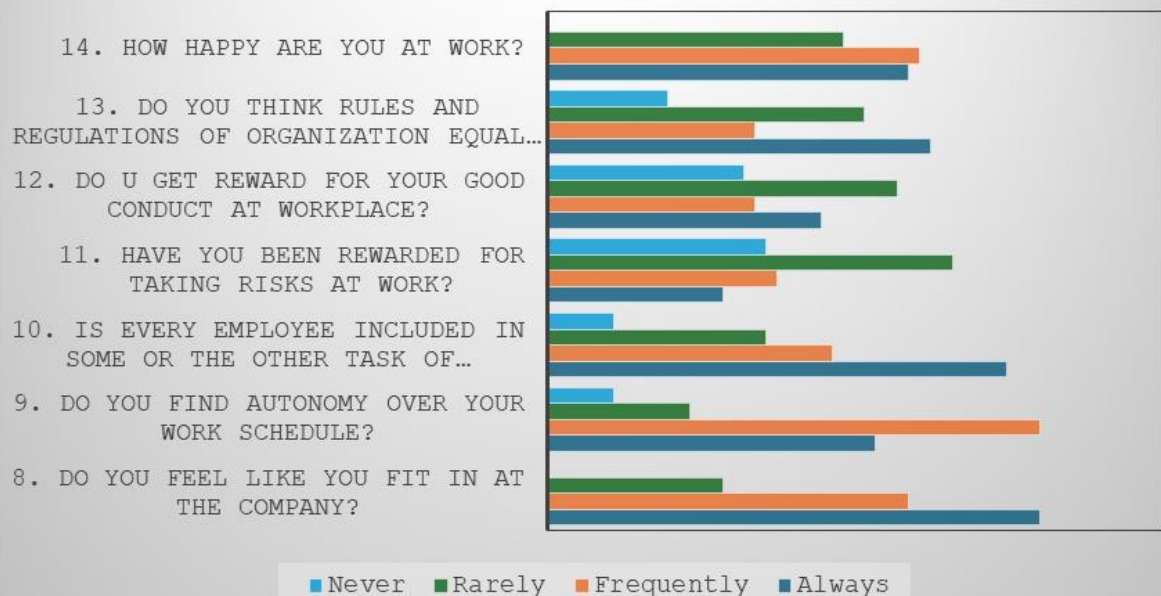
Questions	Always	Frequently	Rarely	Never
Does your organization have concern about all stakeholders, including visitors and well-wishers?	39%	48%	13%	0%
Do you get company news in a timely manner?	38%	37%	21%	3%
How much transparent is your management from your perspective?	27%	28%	39%	6%
Do you feel work is distributed equally across your team?	38%	23%	28%	11%
Are your job responsibilities defined clearly?	50%	26%	21%	3%
Are your skills and strengths being used to their greatest extent?	41%	34%	21%	3%
Do you feel comfortable sharing your ideas at work with peers and management?	56%	13%	18%	13%
Do you get timely feedback about your work and performance?	30%	32%	31%	7%
Do you feel like you fit in at the company?	48%	35%	17%	0%
Do you find autonomy over your work schedule?	32%	48%	14%	6%
Is every employee included in some or the other task of Organizational growth?	45%	28%	21%	6%
Have you been rewarded for taking risks at work?	17%	22%	39%	21%
Do u get reward for your good conduct at workplace?	27%	20%	34%	19%
Do you think rules and regulations of organization equal for all?	37%	20%	31%	12%
How happy are you at work?	35%	36%	29%	0%

The %age scores in green indicate a favourable work environment at the workplace, which mutual discussions and agreements may improve, but %age scores in red warn about the areas where the major problem exists in the organization and which need to be addressed seriously. Some preventive or corrective measures must be taken.

Employee Satisfaction Metrics



Employee Satisfaction Metrics



Research Through Innovation

V. Opportunities and Challenges

In this paper, the researchers surveyed “The effect of employees’ Work Ethics on their performance” and tried to understand the perception of the terminologies “work ethics”, and “work performance” and the correlation between these two from education facilitators from simple, easy-to-answer questions.

According to the authors, the foremost challenge here is the absence of any regulatory body defining and ensuring ethical practices and verifying their implementation at the educational institutional level. The second challenge arises from “conflicts of interests”, which may be due to factors such as gender bias, bad role models, lack of awareness, discrimination, etc. But these challenges if conquered wisely, may turn into opportunities to build a better individual, a better employee, a better team member, and a better citizen, thus contributing to personal, and organisational growth, thereby building a healthy nation.

VI. Conclusion

As rightly said, “A strong mind in a strong body”, when a person is strong-minded, he has the potential to face any challenge, without disturbing his inner strength. It is not just a quality, but a mind-set. Mental toughness gives us the courage to choose right over wrong, good over bad, and grow from the stress we experience in life.

According to the survey, a healthy work environment provides a stress-free work culture, where strong mind-set employees can work efficiently with co-workers, subordinates as well as superordinate and ensure the organisation’s exponential growth. The only small change everyone needs to adopt is to change the mind-set of individuals, neighbourhoods, and society to make a worthwhile living.

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