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Influence Of Workplace Ethics On Teachers' Job Commitment In Public Secondary Schools In Delta And Edo States, Nigeria

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Abstract: *Education is a key driver of national development, and the commitment of teachers significantly influences quality of education in public secondary schools. However, the job commitment of teachers is shaped by multiple factors, including workplace ethics. Despite its significant, limited empirical studies have examined the influence of this factor on teachers' job commitment in Delta and Edo States. This study examined the relationships between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised, and two hypotheses were formulated and tested. The study employed a correlational research design. The population for this study comprised 15,378 administrators and teachers from all public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States. A total sample of 592 respondents was drawn from 74 public secondary schools using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using the Workplace Ethics Questionnaire (WEQ) and the Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire (TJCQ). The face validity of the instruments was ensured through expert judgment, while content and construct validity were assessed using factor analysis. Reliability testing using the internal consistency method (Cronbach Alpha) yielded coefficients of 0.884 and 0.832 for the WEQ and TJCQ, respectively, indicating high reliability. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected teachers with the assistance of five research assistants to ensure smooth administration. Out of 592 questionnaires, 504 (85%) were returned and found valid for analysis. Data were analyzed using r coefficient of determination and regression analysis. All hypotheses were tested at a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$. The major findings of the study are: i) there is a strong positive significant relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools. (ii) Gender does not significantly contribute to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that school administrators should model high ethical standards in their leadership practices to inspire similar conduct among teachers. This study has contributed to knowledge by demonstrating that workplace ethics contribute to teachers' job commitment, and that sex does not significantly influence perceptions of workplace ethics in public secondary schools.*

Keywords: Workplace Ethics, Teachers' Job Commitment, Gender, Public Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental driver of personal, social, and economic development. A well-educated population is essential for a nation's development because it leads to a more informed and skilled workforce, higher productivity, and greater innovation. In developing countries like Nigeria, education is crucial for reducing poverty, promoting health, and fostering economic growth. Countries around the world, especially developing ones like Nigeria, are striving hard to achieve all-round development. It is a well-known fact that a country's progress is contingent on the number of well-educated people it has. This recognition has, over the years, made the role of teachers extremely important. Teachers are at the heart of the educational process. They are responsible for imparting knowledge, skills, and values to students, thereby shaping the future workforce and citizenry. The quality of education that students receive is largely dependent on the commitment of their teachers (Oweikpodor, & Akpotu, 2024). Teachers' job commitment plays a dominant role in the academic success of students at the secondary level of education. Job commitment is considered to be the full involvement and participation in the affairs of an organisation with the intention of facilitating the attainment of desired objectives. It is the consciousness of an employee to fully bring in his or her capacity, skills, knowledge, and even resources.

Teachers' job commitment refers to their level of dedication, loyalty, and enthusiasm towards their professional responsibilities and the educational institution they work for. It encompasses their willingness to go beyond the basic requirements of their job, invest effort and time in their duties, and maintain a consistent and positive attitude towards their work. Teachers' job commitment is characterised by a strong sense of responsibility towards their teaching duties, including lesson planning, classroom management, student assessment, and continuous improvement of their teaching methods (Obidile, 2025). This implies that teachers' job commitment is characterised by a sense of allegiance and loyalty to the school or educational institution, including adherence to its policies, values, and goals. A commitment to the academic and personal growth of their students, demonstrating care, empathy, and a proactive approach to addressing student needs and challenges(Amerstorfer, et al., 2021)). Teachers' job commitment is characterized by maintaining a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards teaching, which includes resilience in the face of challenges and a proactive approach to problem-solving (Osiesi, *et al.,* 2022). This means that a committed teacher often demonstrates the willingness to collaborate with colleagues, share best practices, and contribute to a supportive and positive work environment. Committed teachers inspire and motivate their students to achieve their best. Conversely, uncommitted teachers may fail to engage their students effectively, leading to lower student motivation and academic achievement. Students may struggle to grasp complex concepts without adequate guidance, resulting in poor performance on exams and a lack of enthusiasm for learning.

A lack of commitment among secondary school teachers could lead to poor teaching performance (Ughamadu & Ezechinwoye, 2024). Teachers may not invest the necessary time and effort into lesson planning and delivering, or providing thorough assessments and feedback. This could also result in lower educational standards where students receive inadequate instruction and support, ultimately impacting their academic performance and overall learning experience. A lack of commitment among teachers could create a toxic work environment. When teachers are disengaged, it could lead to increased conflicts, lack of collaboration, and overall low morale among the staff. This negative atmosphere appears to permeate the entire secondary schools, affecting not only teachers but also students and administrators, making the school a less welcoming and effective place for learning and growth (Udekwe, & Asiyai, 2025). Uncommitted teachers are less likely to seek out professional development opportunities or stay abreast of the latest educational research and methodologies. A lack of commitment could lead to stagnation which may in turn prevent teacher from adopting innovative teaching practices needed for students and educational institution's overall progress. Continuous professional growth is essential for teachers to adapt to changing educational demands and improve their teaching strategies. the Job commitment of teachers in any educational system may largely depends on several factors (Asmare, 2025). Factors of interest to the researcher in this study are workplace ethics and available job performance enhancement strategies. Thus, this study will dwell on how workplace ethics affect teachers' job commitment.

Workplace ethics refer to the moral principles that guide behaviour and decision-making in an organizational setting. These principles include integrity, professionalism, fairness, and respect for others. Adeyeye *et al.,* (2015) stated that workplace ethics is the accepted standard in terms of the personal and social welfare of employees, their work attitudes, self-discipline, and commitment to their assignments. This implies that work ethics is the principle of conduct governing an individual or a group in the work place, which makes them conform to the ethical standards, thus influencing organisational output level and the resultant profitability level. When teachers adhere to high ethical standards, it creates a positive and conducive work environment that fosters trust, collaboration, and job satisfaction. Conversely, a lack of workplace ethics can lead to conflicts, dissatisfaction, and reduced commitment among teachers. Stakeholder in education are assumed to have put in place certain principles that are expected to guide every employee in the school organization. These principles include integrity, professionalism, and fairness.

Akinbode and Fagbohungbe (2019) found that workplace ethics significantly predicts employees' organizational commitment by promoting fairness and trust in the work environment. This implies that when employees perceive ethical standards in their organization, they are more likely to feel valued and treated justly, which strengthens their emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization. Similarly, Ugochukwu and Eze (2021) reported that ethical leadership and adherence to professional conduct enhance teachers' motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn strengthen their commitment to school objectives. This suggests that ethical behaviour among school leaders creates a supportive and transparent environment where teachers feel motivated and satisfied, thereby increasing their willingness to align with and work toward institutional goals. Browne-Ferrigno and Murhiaah-Mariani (2022) equally reported that ethical leadership enhances teachers' motivation for student progress. This indicates that when school leaders model ethical practices, teachers are inspired to demonstrate greater dedication to teaching and student success, as ethical leadership fosters a sense of purpose, accountability, and professional responsibility. It is therefore pertinent that workplace ethics (integrity, professionalism, and fairness) are relevant very importance in an organization since they may positively impact teacher job commitment in secondary schools. It therefore means that a lack of workplace ethics may reduce teachers' job commitment.

The influence of workplace ethics on the level of teachers' job commitment in secondary schools may vary on the basis of gender. Research indicates that male and female teachers may perceive and respond differently to organizational conditions due to differences in social roles, expectations, and work–family responsibilities. These differences can shape how ethical climates and performance improvement initiatives affect their commitment to the teaching profession. When school administrators demonstrate ethical conduct, teachers are more likely to feel valued and respected, which strengthens their attachment to the organization. However, studies suggest that female teachers often place greater emphasis on relational and ethical aspects of leadership, which may result in stronger commitment responses compared to male teachers (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ogunyemi (2018) noted that teachers' ethical behaviour is more strongly shaped by institutional culture and leadership practices than by gender. In a related study Adebayo and Okorie (2020) reported that when male and female teachers operate within the same organizational environment and are subject to identical ethical expectations, their perceptions of workplace ethics remain largely uniform. Hence one could say that the extent to which gender shape teachers' views about workplace ethics in public secondary schools is inconclusive.

Statement of the Problem

Education is critical for any educational system's development, with teachers being the most important element, particularly in public secondary schools. Teachers are considered essential and indispensable, as students' academic success or failure largely depends on their commitment to the teaching job. Teacher job commitment plays a crucial role in producing qualified graduates who are academically prepared in the workforce (Ughamadu, & Ezechinwoye, 2024). Despite teachers' efforts to ensure effective teaching in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, their level of job commitment appears to be below expectations. This is evident in practices such as entering the classroom without prior lesson preparation, relying on outdated lesson notes, and demonstrating a lack of creativity in teaching methods, all of which can contribute to student disengagement and boredom.

Besides, challenges such as incomplete curriculum coverage, persistent teacher lateness, and frequent conflicts are prevalent, particularly in public secondary schools in these states. These issues may stem from deficiencies in workplace ethics. For example, there might be lapses in maintaining integrity, professionalism, and fairness among teachers and school administrators. Given these concerns, it is crucial to investigate the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in Delta and Edo States. As a result, the question could be asked: Would the knowledge of workplace ethics improve teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does gender contribute to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.
2. Gender does not significantly contribute to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria,

RESEARCH METHOD

A Correlational survey design was employed in this study. The population for this study comprises 15,378 teachers and administrators from public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Of this total, 3,395 are administrators and 7,503 are teachers from 485 public secondary schools in Delta State, while 1,874 are administrators and 5,815 are teachers from 315 public secondary schools in Edo State. The sample of the study consist of 296 teachers and 296 administrators making a total of 592 respondents drawn from 74 public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Data for this study were collected with two sets of questionnaires. The questionnaires are Workplace Ethics (WEQ) and Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire (TJCQ). The Workplace Ethics, Job Performance Enhancement Strategies (WEJPESQ) consists of two scales: the Workplace Ethics Questionnaire was divided into two sections, Sections A and B. Section A was designed to collect respondents' personal data, such as sex (male and female) and location (urban and rural). Section B of the Workplace Ethics Scale (WES) consists of three subsections with 10 items in each section measuring integrity, fairness, and professionalism, making a total of 30 items in the Workplace Ethics Scale (WES). In the WES, respondents were requested to indicate their opinion on a four-point scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1) point (as shown in Appendix C). Items in the Workplace Ethics Scale (WES): were adapted from Syed. Uzma, Asma, Muhammad, Khisro, Abdul Farooq, Shakila, & Zafar. (2021) with modifications. The modification includes recasting most of the items in the original questionnaire and categorizing them into the three components, including integrity, fairness, and professionalism. This was done in order to align the instrument with the purpose of this study. The Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire (TJCQ) was divided into two sections: Sections A and B. Section A was designed to collect respondents' personal data, such as sex (male and female) and location (urban and rural). Section B of the consists of 20 items on teachers' job commitment. In this section, respondents were requested to indicate their opinion on a four-point scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1) points (as shown in Appendix C). Items in this section were adapted from Akinwale and Okotoni (2019) with modifications. The modifications include recasting most of the items in the original questionnaire to suit the purpose of this study.

To establish the face validity of the research instrument, the initial draft was submitted to two the supervisors from the Department of Educational Management and Foundations, and one expert in measurement and evaluation from the Department of Guidance and Counselling, both at Delta State University, Abraka, for thorough validation. These experts assessed the items in the instrument regarding their relevance and the appropriateness of language and response patterns in relation to the study. The instrument was then revised in accordance with the suggestions provided by the experts. To test for the reliability of the Workplace Ethics Questionnaire (WEQ) and Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire (TJCQ)., the researcher adopted internal consistency reliability method as follows:

Workplace Ethics Scale (WES): The Workplace Ethics Scale (WES) was administered to 60 teachers randomly selected from six public secondary schools in Balyelsa State. The reliability of three subsections in the questionnaire was computed using Cronbach Alpha. The computation of the reliability coefficient of the instrument yielded a general reliability of 0.884 for all the items in the instrument, and 0.719, 0.699, and 0.743 for integrity, fairness, and professionalism, respectively. The Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire (TJCQ) was administered to 60 teachers randomly selected from six public secondary schools in Balyelsa State. The reliability of the questionnaire was also computed using Cronbach Alpha. The computation of the reliability coefficient of the instrument yielded 0.832 for Teachers' Job Commitment Questionnaire (TJCQ). The researcher visited the various sampled schools and distribute the questionnaire among the teachers and school administrators. Out of the 592 questionnaires

administered 504 representing 85% of the total, were considered valid for data analysis. Data obtained were analyzed using pearson correlation, coefficient of determination and regression analysis. Research questions was answered using simple correlation and coefficient of determination to establish the relationship between the variables of independent and dependent. Research question 2 was answered using multiple correlation and coefficient of determination to establish the relationship among the three variables and also on the basis of gender. Hypotheses 1 was tested using linear regression. Hypotheses 2 was tested using Multiple Regression. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One

What is the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria?

Table 1: Pearson Correlation (r) and Coefficient of Determination (r^2) of the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	r^2	r^2%	Decision
Workplace ethics	252	2.93	.30				
				.659	0.434	43.4	Positive relationship
Teachers job commitment	252	3.01	.94				

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 1 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) analysis showing the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. The result reveals a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.659, indicating a moderately strong positive relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.434, which shows that 43.4% of the variation in teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States can be explained by workplace ethics.

Research Question Two

What is the contribution of gender to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria?

Table 2: Correlation matrix of the contribution of gender to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Gen	WPE	TJC
Gen	252	1.48	.500	1		
WPE	252	3.0947	.34131	.109	1	
TJC	252	3.0050	.54592	.067	.659**	1

GEN=gender, WPE= workplace ethics, TJC= teachers' job commitment
Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation analysis of the contribution of gender to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. The correlation between gender and workplace ethics is 0.109, while the correlation between gender and teachers' job commitment is 0.067. These values fall within the benchmark range of 0.00–0.19, indicating a very weak relationship. Therefore, gender contributes to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment to a very low.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

Table 3

Linear Regression Analysis of the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.659[a]	.434	.432	.41159

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.454	1	32.454	191.573	.000[b]
	Residual	42.352	250	.169		
	Total	74.806	251			

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.255	.237		-1.078	.282
	WPE	1.054	.076	.659	13.841	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TJC
b. Predictors: (Constant), WPE,

Table 3 shows the result of the linear regression analysis ($F(1, 250) = 191.573$, $p = .000$), which indicates that workplace ethics significantly predicts teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The model summary further reveals a strong positive relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment ($R = .659$), with the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .434$) indicating that about 43.4% of the variance in teachers' job commitment is explained by workplace ethics. The regression coefficient shows that workplace ethics makes a positive and significant contribution to teachers' job commitment ($B = 1.054$, $t = 13.841$, $p < .05$). This implies that an increase in workplace ethics is associated with a corresponding increase in teachers' job commitment. in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

Gender does not significantly contribute to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

Table 4

***Linear Regression Analysis of* the contribution of gender to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria**

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.659[a]	.434	.429	.41241

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.456	2	16.228	95.411	.000[b]
	Residual	42.351	249	.170		
	Total	74.806	251			

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.794	.210		-3.788	.000
	Gender	.391	.094	.245	4.162	.000
	WPE	.818	.084	.572	9.733	.000

a. Dependent Variable: TJC
b. Predictors: (Constant), WPE, Gender

Table 4 shows the result of the regression analysis **(**F(2, 249) = 95.411, p = .000**),** which indicates that workplace ethics and gender jointly predict teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the model is statistically significant. The model summary further reveals a strong positive relationship between the predictors and teachers' job commitment (R = .659**),** with the coefficient of determination **(**R^2 = .434**)** indicating that about 43.4% of the variance in teachers' job commitment is explained by workplace ethics and gender. However, the regression coefficients show that while workplace ethics makes **a** positive and significant contribution to teachers' job commitmen**t (**B = 1.054, t = 13.742, p < .05**),** gender does not make any significant contribution **(**B = -0.005, t **=** -0.096, p > .05). This implies that an increase in workplace ethics is associated with a corresponding increase in teachers' job commitment, whereas gender does not significantly influence this relationship. Since the p-value associated with gender is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted**.** This indicates that gender does not significantly contribute to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in the study area.

Discussion of Findings

Workplace Ethics and Teachers' Job Commitment

The first research question examined the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. The findings revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment. This implies that as ethical practices within the school environment improve, teachers' commitment to their duties, students, and organizational goals also increases. In essence, teachers who operate in schools where ethical standards such as integrity, accountability, respect, fairness, and professionalism are upheld tend to show higher levels of dedication, loyalty, and enthusiasm toward their work. The reason for this finding could be attributed to the fact that ethical work environments foster trust, mutual respect, and a sense of justice, which motivate teachers to perform their roles diligently. When school administrators model ethical behavior, maintain transparency in decision-making, and treat teachers equitably, it enhances morale and a sense of belonging among teachers. Consequently, this ethical culture promotes teachers' emotional attachment and willingness to contribute positively to school goals. This finding agrees with Akinbode and Fagbohungbe (2019), who found that workplace ethics significantly predicts employees' organizational commitment by promoting fairness and trust in the work environment. This implies that when employees perceive ethical standards in their organization, they are more likely to feel valued and treated justly, which strengthens their emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization. Similarly, Ugochukwu and Eze (2021) reported that ethical leadership and adherence to professional conduct enhance teachers' motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn strengthen their commitment to school objectives. This suggests that ethical behaviour among school leaders creates a supportive and transparent environment where teachers feel motivated and satisfied, thereby increasing their willingness to align with and work toward institutional goals. The finding also agrees with Browne-Ferrigno and Murhiaah-Mariani (2022), who reported that ethical leadership enhances teachers' motivation for student progress. This indicates that when school leaders model ethical practices, teachers are inspired to demonstrate greater dedication to teaching and student success, as ethical leadership fosters a sense of purpose, accountability, and professional responsibility. Therefore, it can be concluded that ethical standards in the workplace serve as a vital foundation for improving teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States

Contribution of Gender to the Relationship between Workplace Ethics and Teachers' Job Commitment

The fourth finding showed that gender does not significantly contribute to the relationship between workplace ethics and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. This suggests that male and female teachers are similarly influenced by ethical standards in their workplaces. This indicates that both male and female teachers share a common perspective on how workplace ethics affects their commitment to their teaching roles. The reason for this finding may be that ethical norms, professional expectations, and policies regarding teachers' conduct are uniformly applied across schools, ensuring that all teachers regardless of gender are guided by the same standards. School administrations emphasize values such as honesty, fairness, accountability, and respect in their interactions with students, colleagues, and the wider school community. As a result, teachers' understanding and evaluation of workplace ethics tend to be consistent, which reduces gender-based differences in its impact on job commitment. This finding aligns with the observations of Ogunyemi (2018), who noted that teachers' ethical behaviour is more strongly shaped by institutional culture and leadership practices than by gender. The finding also in line with Adebayo and Okorie (2020) who reported that when male and female teachers operate within the same organizational environment and are subject to identical ethical expectations, their perceptions of workplace ethics remain largely uniform. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender does not play a significant role in shaping teachers' views about workplace ethics in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, as shared institutional experiences and leadership influences appear to outweigh individual demographic characteristics.

Conclusion

This study concludes that workplace ethics is key to teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Workplace ethics showed significant positive relationships with teachers' commitment, indicating that ethical school environments promote greater dedication. The study also conclude that gender does not shape the view of teachers regarding workplace ethics in public secondary schools in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. School administrators should model high ethical standards in their leadership practices to inspire similar conduct among teachers.

2. Teachers should consistently demonstrate integrity, fairness, and professionalism in their duties, interactions, and decision-making to build trust and commitment within the school environment.
3. While gender does not significantly affect the relationship between ethics, school principals, in collaboration with the State Ministries of Education and Local Education Authorities, should continue to ensure that both male and female teachers have equal access to training, mentoring, and development opportunities to maintain fairness and inclusivity.

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