

## The influence of ethical leadership on teaching performance in public higher learning institutions

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### Abstract

Employee performance is often problematic in the competition of organizations in a globalization and industrialization era. The purpose of this research is to investigate how ethical leadership influences teaching effectiveness in Tanzania's Public Higher Learning Institutions. The study focuses on how academic staff teaching performance is affected by role clarification and integrity. The study's target population includes 4,863 academic staff members at public HLIs in Tanzania, and 350 respondents were chosen from this group using a stratified simple random selection technique. Employees at public HLIs are bound to an ethical code of conduct and ethical values, and they are required to perform better so that the entire community can obtain high-quality educational services. Employee performance, on the other hand, is mediocre. A lack of required resources, inadequate leadership, low employee motivation, role ambiguity, and a lack of ethical guidance cause unsatisfactory performance; nevertheless, it is uncertain how much ethical leadership influences employee performance in teaching. The information was acquired by a self-administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions, and it was statistically examined through regression analysis. The findings show that role clarification and integrity have a positive impact on employees' performance in teaching in HLIs. HLI's leadership should take the lead in fostering ethical leadership among its employees by complying with laws and regulations (ethics codes).

**Keywords:** higher learning institutions; ethical leadership; integrity; role clarification

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## Introduction

Globalization and industrialization-related organizational competition have forced organizations to raise performance levels in order to maintain their competitive edge. Organizations have no choice but to enhance employee performance in order to boost organizational performance. When attempting to increase organizational performance, one of the most crucial factors that must be taken into account is employee performance (Siddiqui, 2014). Any organization's performance of its employees is crucial to its success. According to the literature currently in publication, ethical leadership is one of the most important elements that influence how well employees perform (Athota, Budhwar, & Malik, 2019; Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2016; Bouckennooghe, Zafar, & Raja, 2015; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Kanungo, 2001). According to Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), ethical leadership is defined as a process through which leaders affect the performance of their workforce by modeling new behaviors, values, and attitudes. This process is based on the Social Learning Theory (SLT). Employees can now observe their leaders' behavior to gain additional insight into what to do and what to avoid. Because of their position and performance within the business, as well as their ability to influence the behavior and results of employees, leaders thus constitute a significant and likely source of such modeling (Brown et al., 2005).

The cornerstone of effective governance in the public sector is ethical leadership (Mbandlwa, Dorasamy, & Fagbadebo, 2020). According to research, unethical behavior in government leadership has a significant impact on employee performance and subpar service delivery



## **Mseti: The influence of ethical leadership on teaching performance in universities**

(Wijesekera & Fernando, 2018). To improve employee performance, ethical leaders must direct the choices and deeds of their subordinates (Bhana & Bayat, 2020; Butt, Butt, & Ayaz, 2016). The impact of ethical leadership on worker performance in the public sector has been documented in earlier studies. For instance, Bouckennooghe et al. (2015) study discovered a beneficial effect of ethical leadership on workers' performance. Similarly, Bedi et al. (2016) demonstrated that people working under ethical leadership demonstrate good behavior, improve performance, and reach high levels of job satisfaction. They did this by utilizing middle managers as a unit of analysis. Barare and Wambua (2018) also discovered that moral leadership affected worker performance in Kenyan state business.

Concerns concerning employee performance have been raised by Tanzanian government officials. Since gaining independence in 1961, Tanzania's public sector firms have had a difficult time enhancing staff performance and offering their citizens high-quality services (Mwita & Andrea, 2019). Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) are government institutions; hence, they are neither exclusive nor exempt from underwhelming performance, despite what several authors have stated. The implementation of the fundamental activities of HLIs, which include teaching, research, and community services, by workers is one of the most crucial parts of HLIs in Tanzania (Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016). The improved achievement of HLI goals and the provision of better educational services for social, economic, and political development in Tanzania necessitate staff performance improvement (Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2019).

With a focus on assuring staff performance and delivering quality, access, and equitable HLIs, important HLI reforms were launched in Tanzania in the 1990s (URT, 2010). To improve staff performance and deliver high-quality educational services, the majority of these reforms have involved alterations to the institutional structure (Mkude, Cooksey, & Levey, 2003). The establishment of the Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC) and the Education and Training Policy (ETP) in 1995, the National Higher Education Policy (NHEP) in 1999, the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) in 2005, and the Higher Education Development Program (HEDP) in 2010 are just a few of the notable changes.

These changes gave HLIs more authority and opportunities for staff development, but they also resulted in underwhelming employee performance (Atieno, Onyancha, & Kwanya, 2022; Istoroyekti, 2016; Kazoka & Wema, 2020; Kessy, 2018; Sangeda & Lwoga, 2017; World Bank, 2021). Poor leadership, insufficient resources, low employee engagement, ambiguous job descriptions, and a lack of ethical advice are all factors that contribute to subpar performance in HLIs in Tanzania (Iqbal, Ijaz, Latif, & Mushtaq, 2015; Istoroyekti, 2016; Muya & Tundui, 2020; Sangeda & Lwoga, 2017; World Bank, 2021).

According to studies by Katuramu, Byarugaba, and Wilson (2016), Saputra, Akram, and Perkasa (2015), Harper and Harrison (2020), Muya and Tundui (2020), enhancing the performance of employees in HLIs entails improving accountability, creating favorable conditions for their participation in decision-making, and clarifying their roles and responsibilities. HLI leaders are essential for facilitating employee participation in decision-making, establishing appropriate behavior, outlining roles and duties, making morally sound judgments, and encouraging staff to perform to the best of their abilities in order to achieve both personal and HLI success (Muriisa, 2015).

Given the difficulties in enhancing employees' performance in HLIs in Tanzania, ethical leadership is viewed as essential (Katundano, 2019). The improvement of employee performance in HLIs is suggested to be possible through ethical leadership (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012; Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, & Zivnuska, 2011; Katundano, 2019). Based on ethical leadership, HLI leaders can enhance employee performance and deliver better services if they treat everyone fairly, allow participants to make decisions, clearly communicate roles, performance objectives, and expectations, act with integrity and fairness, and encourage appropriate behavior (Katundano, 2019). The HLI employees must adhere to their code of ethics in order to give their entire attention to their duties in HLIs, according to Muya and Tundui (2020). This study determined the influence of ethical leadership on the performance of employees in teaching in public HLIs in Tanzania.

## Methods

The study examined the causal links between ethical leadership and worker performance using a survey (Yin, 2009). For the study, there were eleven (11) fully operational, accredited public HLIs were used. The institutions were the University of Dodoma (UDOM), Mzumbe University (MU), University of Dar-es-Salaam (UDSM), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), The Open University of Tanzania (OUT), State University of Zanzibar (SUZA), Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Ardhi University (ARU), Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST), Moshi Cooperative University (MoCU). This research used the population of academic employees. The researcher requested a list of every member of the academic staff at each HLI in order to obtain a representative sample of the population.

A total of 350 respondents were chosen for the sample using a stratified simple random sampling procedure. The closed-ended questionnaire with an attitude scale and a 5-point Likert scale was utilized since the study looks at the causal link between variables. Because responders find it difficult to distinguish between options when there are more than five, the 5-point Likert scale was used rather than the 7-point Likert scale (Dawes, 2008). The researcher used the Ethical Leadership Work (ELW) Questionnaire by Kalshoven, Den Hartog, and De Hoogh (2011) to measure ethical leadership. However, in order to measure employee performance in teaching, the researcher adopted a measure that was previously used by Moreno-Murcia, Torregrosa, and Pedreño (2015).

Cronbach's alpha was tested to ensure the reliability of data, and the study relied on the George and Mallery (2003) benchmark, which suggests that Cronbach's alpha criteria for determining the internal consistency reliability are Excellent ( $>0.9$ ), Good (0.7 - 0.9), Acceptable (0.6 - 0.7), Poor (0.5 - 0.6), and Unacceptable (0.5). The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, and the results of the pilot study show that the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by the values of role clarification (0.934), integrity (0.937), and employee performance in teaching (0.921). The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis to ascertain the impact of role clarification and integrity (independent factors) on employee performance in teaching (dependent variable). The following hypothesis served as the guide for the multiple regression. Hypothesis 1: Integrity has a positive relationship with employee teaching performance in public HLIs in Tanzania. Hypothesis 2: Role clarification has a positive relationship with employee teaching performance in public HLIs in Tanzania.

## Results and Discussion

### Diagnostic tests of variables

Diagnostic checks for normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity were performed on the study's data. Any study that uses a multiple regression equation, according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012), must presuppose that the independent and dependent variables have a linear relationship, the independent and dependent variable data values have equal variance, there is no correlation between two or more independent variables, there is no multicollinearity, and the data are normally distributed. The tests used in this study are listed below. This study adhered to these regression assumptions.

### Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients test

All predictor variables (role clarification and integrity) and outcome variables (performance in teaching) were evaluated for Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients. All variables have an internal consistency of at least 0.7, as shown in Table 1. That demonstrates that the data have strong internal consistency reliability and that all variables were fitted for analysis without any being omitted. Since the variable must be more significant than 0.7 in order to be considered acceptable according to Cronbach's alpha, = 0.7 and above is reliable in this situation (George & Mallery, 2003). The internal consistency reliability is determined by Cronbach's alpha, which uses the

## Mseti: The influence of ethical leadership on teaching performance in universities

following criteria: Excellent (>0.9), Good (0.7 - 0.9), Acceptable (0.6 - 0.7), Poor (0.5 - 0.6), and Unacceptable (0.5).

**Table 1.**  
Cronbach's alpha reliability

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Role Clarification	7	0.934
Integrity	4	0.937
Teaching	8	0.921

### Correlation analysis between predictor variables and performance in teaching

According to Table 2's correlation results, role clarification and teaching performance are positively and statistically correlated ( $r = 0.664$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ), as are integrity and teaching performance ( $r = 0.552$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ). That demonstrates that greater employee performance in teaching would result from an improvement in integrity and role clarification. Since all variables had correlation matrix coefficients of 0.5 or higher, the correlation results in Table 2 indicate a good relationship between the independent factors (integrity, role clarification) and the dependent variable (performance in teaching). That suggests that altering a leader's behavior will enhance employee performance.

**Table 2.**  
Correlation analysis between predictor variables and performance in teaching

		Role Clarification	Integrity	Teaching Performance
Role Clarification	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Integrity	N	350		
	Pearson Correlation	0.587**	1	
Teaching Performance	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	350	350	
Teaching Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.664**	0.552**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	350	350	350

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Multicollinearity

The multicollinearity test was run to determine whether there was a chance that the predictors would correlate. When a predictor variable has a high correlation with one or more outcome variables, multicollinearity is present (Vatcheva, Lee, McCormick, & Rahbar, 2016). The amount of influence that predictor factors have on outcome variables diminishes when there is multicollinearity (Kothari & Garg, 2014). The multicollinearity issue makes the estimations more sensitive to even small changes in the model and increases the variance of the coefficient estimates. According to the literature, including Yoo et al. (2014), there are many methods a researcher can use to analyze multicollinearity conditions, including looking at the correlation matrix of the predictor variables and computing the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

In order to identify a multicollinearity issue, this study computed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which was used to assess if one independent variable has a strong linear relationship with other independent variables (Akinwande, Dikko, & Samson, 2015; Vatcheva et al., 2016). The VIF is shown in Table 3. Akinwande et al. (2015) stated that when VIF is equal to 1, multicollinearity is not present because the predictor variable is not connected with the other variables. However, when VIF is greater than ten or tolerance is lower than 0.1, considerable multicollinearity is present, indicating that the study has a multicollinearity issue. According to Table 3, the VIF for role

clarification is 1.853, and the VIF for integrity is 2.282. Every VIF value is under 10. Additionally, every tolerance value is greater than 0.1.

**Table 3.**  
Collinearity statistics

Collinearity Statistics	Tolerance	VIF
Role Clarification	0.540	1.853
Integrity	0.438	2.282

**Normality test**

The term "normality" describes how data distribution looks. In order to assess if a collection of data is distributed in a fashion that is compatible with a normal distribution, normality tests are utilized, according to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012). The optimum approach for a normality test, as suggested by Thode (2002), was used in this study to test for normalcy: the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The correlation between the data and the related normal scores is the foundation for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests (Lewsey, 2006). The researcher utilized the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests to determine normality. Thode (2002) asserts that if the values are not significant, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests will reveal a normal distribution. That suggests that the null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests is more than 0.5. However, the null hypothesis is not disproved if the p-value is less than 0.5 and the sample is assumed to be regularly distributed or with equal variance. The statistics in Table 4 demonstrate that the data are normally distributed because the results of the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests are not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 4.**  
Normality tests

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>	Shapiro-Wilk
Role Clarification	0.100	0.943
Integrity	0.145	0.961
Teaching Performance	0.125	0.965

**The influence of role clarification on teaching performance in public HLIs in Tanzania**

The purpose of this objective was to determine the association between employee performance in teaching in Tanzanian public HLIs and role clarification. According to the study’s hypothesis, role clarification has a favorable link with employee performance in Tanzania's public HLIs, where  $\alpha = 0.05$ . By examining the number provided under the heading "adjusted R Square" in the model summary box (see Table 5), it was possible to determine how much of the variance in the dependent variable (performance in teaching) was explained by the model with the independent variables (role clarification). The model (role clarification) explained 44.1% of the variance in teaching, according to the value obtained, which was 0.441.

**Table 5.**  
Model summary for role clarification

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Role Clarification	0.664 <sup>a</sup>	0.441	0.439	0.39319

a. Dependent Variable: Teaching Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Role Clarification

## Mseti: The influence of ethical leadership on teaching performance in universities

The results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are presented in Table 6. Since  $F = 274.039$  and the p-value of 0.000 is less than the significant level of 0.05 with  $df = 348$ , the findings in Table 6 demonstrate that the model's goodness of fit is suitable for these data. Therefore, it can show that there is a significant linear link between role clarification and employee performance in teaching in Tanzania's public HLIs.

**Table 6.**  
Analysis of variance for role clarification

		ANOVA <sup>a</sup>				
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teaching Performance	Regression	42.366	1	42.366	274.039	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	53.801	348	0.155		
	Total	96.167	349			

a. Dependent Variable: Teaching Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Role Clarification

Additionally, Table 7 (coefficient table) shows the findings about the connection between role clarification and teaching performance. According to the findings, which are shown in Table 7 in this article, role clarification has good and noteworthy effects on employee performance in teaching. The model's goodness of fit score for teaching staff performance was 2.270. The model suggests that, while other factors remain constant, a unit change in role clarification behavior will increase employee performance in teaching by a rate of 0.428. However, even in the absence of role clarification, employee performance in teaching is still positive at a rate of 2.270, indicating that other factors can affect employee performance in teaching, such as integrity. Further, the results in Table 7 show that role clarification has a significant influence on employee performance where  $t = 16.554$  and p-value 0.000.

**Table 7.**  
Coefficient for role clarification

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.270	0.100		22.667	0.000
	Power Sharing	0.428	0.026	0.664	16.554	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teaching Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Role Clarification

The assertion on whether role clarification influenced employee teaching performance in public HLIs was looked into in the current study, and it was discovered that role clarification significantly affects employee performance in teaching tasks. The findings of this investigation agree with SLT. SLT places a strong emphasis on observational learning. According to SLT, people learn not just from their own direct experiences but also from seeing the acts of others and the results of those actions. This imitation tendency is referred to as learning without direct experience (Walumbwa et al., 2011). SLT contends that by modeling a type of behavior reenactment, leaders have an impact on followers' ethical behavior. According to the theory, those persons or leaders who hold high positions of authority inside the organization have the power to regulate rewards, which substantially impacts their ability to manipulate modeling effectiveness (Brown et al., 2005). According to this idea, people can pick up new skills and behaviors by observing other people; this process is known as observational learning (or modeling). As a result of this learning, workers will be more inclined to act morally and exhibit improved performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011).

According to SLT, ethical leaders who create clear performance goals and expectations (open communications between leaders and employees) and distinguish between the responsibilities of employees have an impact on positive behavior and ethics-related outcomes. An ethical leader explains roles, performance targets, and expectations so that staff members are aware of what is expected of them. Additionally, open communication between leaders and staff members enables staff to understand how they may significantly contribute to achieving goals, enhancing both individual and group performance. Ethical leaders should participate in open communication and be upfront about the performance goals, duties, and expectations in order to ensure that employees are aware of their tasks (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Yukl, Mahsud, Hassan, & Prussia, 2013). The results of this study are in line with those of the study conducted by van der Hoek, Groeneveld, and Kuipers (2018) on the topic of goal clarity and team performance in the Dutch public sector. The study discovered that employees' performance was impacted by goal clarity. Additionally, Mukherjee and Malhotra's (2006) study discovered that role clarification is essential in affecting employees' performance.

When the content of their job techniques, priorities, and tasks are clear, and when HLI personnel understand what is expected of them in teaching. Employee performance improves as a result of employees' improved ability to complete given tasks. According to the current study's findings, HLI leaders clearly communicate their roles, performance requirements, and goals to their staff members. Employees at HLI can better fulfill their responsibilities. These results are in line with McEnrue's (1984) research on perceived competence as a modulator of the relationship between role clarity and job performance, which found that when workers know what is expected of them, they will perform it successfully. Clarifying goals and expectations and employee performance was found to have a favorable link in the literature (Allemeah, Harooni, Chaleshtari, & Asadi, 2013; Samie, Riahi, & Tabibi, 2015). They added that workers who understands their role will be more poised in carrying out the designated tasks.

According to the research on ethical leadership, managers must encourage open communication among staff members and be truthful about performance duties, responsibilities, and expectations (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). The findings of the current study demonstrated that HLI leaders, who are ethical role models, outline the performance expectations of each group member and explain the duties and expectations of employees. That enables the staff at HLI to understand what is expected of them. Additionally, by keeping lines of communication open with their staff, HLI personnel learn how to make a big difference in achieving goals and thereby improve performance. These results are consistent with research by De Hoogh & Den Hartog (2008) and Yukl et al. (2013), which found that it is crucial for employee performance to communicate performance objectives and goals to staff members.

### The influence of integrity on teaching performance in public HLIs in Tanzania

This hypothesis sought to assess the impact of integrity on the performance of academic staff members who teach at Tanzanian public HLIs. The researcher employed a multiple linear regression model to examine this theory. The model summary box was used to evaluate the value provided under the title modified R Square (see Table 8) in order to determine how much of the variance in the dependent variable (performance in teaching) was explained by the model with the independent variables (integrity). The result was 0.304, which indicates that 30.4% of the variance in teaching was explained by the model (integrity).

**Table 8.**  
Model summary for integrity

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Teaching Performance	0.552 <sup>a</sup>	0.304	0.302	0.43847

a. Dependent Variable: Teaching Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Integrity

## Mseti: The influence of ethical leadership on teaching performance in universities

The Sig. F change value on this line (0.000) demonstrates the statistical significance of the integrity's noted contribution. The ANOVA Table (Table 9) demonstrates that the model, which includes both blocks of variables, is statistically significant, with an F value of 152.203 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the threshold of 0.05.

**Table 9.**  
Analysis of variance for integrity  
ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teaching Performance	Regression	29.262	1	29.262	152.203	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	66.905	348	0.192		
	Total	96.167	349			

a. Dependent Variable: Teaching Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Integrity

To determine how strongly employee performance in teaching at public HLIs in Tanzania is influenced by integrity, the coefficients Table (see Table 10) was utilized. According to the data, integrity significantly impacted teaching ( $B = 0.372$ ). It should be emphasized that Standardized Beta Coefficients/values were employed since they show the variable's distinct contribution after all other variables' overlapping effects have been statistically eliminated (Pallant, 2005). Table 10's findings, where  $t = 12.337$  and  $p = 0.000$ , demonstrate how all integrity affects employee performance.

**Table 10.**  
Coefficient for integrity  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
Teaching Performance	(Constant)	2.458	0.118		20.758	0.000
	Integrity	0.372	0.030	0.552	12.337	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Teaching Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Integrity

According to the results of the current study, employee performance in teaching is significantly impacted by integrity. The findings of this investigation agree with SET. Based on SET, it is considered that when their leaders treat them fairly and with integrity, employees are willing to respond to positive behavior (Brown et al., 2005; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Su et al., 2021). Employees who believe their managers have good moral character are more likely to be dedicated to them and their work and feel obligated to give their all, which improves performance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Ng & Feldman, 2015). The results of this study support earlier findings that there is a connection between employee performance and integrity (Jayanti & Syamsir, 2019). Upholding integrity principles such as being truthful, brave, transparent, cultivating positive relationships, wise, fearless, and accountable will improve employee performance. Employee integrity and performance are positively correlated, according to a study by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005). That is because when employees have high levels of integrity, they become more committed to their supervisors and jobs and feel obligated to reciprocate by putting in extra effort. Harmaily's (2019) research also revealed that moral character affects workers' productivity.

According to the literature, employees must uphold integrity in their work by being trustworthy, honest, and accountable (Palanski & Yammarino, 2011; Salwa, Away, & Tabrani, 2018; Wetik,



2018). If employees are accountable for their work, they will perform better. The current study results show that HLI leaders can be relied upon to keep their word and promises. As a result, HLI personnel perform better since they are responsible for carrying out their tasks and obligations. It is the responsibility of HLI's leadership to direct institutions toward HLI's goals and to mentor all personnel in that direction. HLIs must be trustworthy and fair to all employees when performing these duties. HLI's management should coordinate all departments, treat every employee equally and without bias, and find fair solutions to all disputes. The findings by Su et al. (2021), who claimed that trust inside the organization can significantly increase worker productivity, confirm this notion.

According to the third edition of Tanzania's Handbook for Standards and Guidelines for University Education 2019, HLI personnel must uphold the moral values of academic integrity, which include being honest, telling the truth, and having strong moral principles. The guidelines also indicate that all HLI employees must uphold academic integrity, openness, and ethics in all of their teaching endeavors for greater employee performance. In Tanzania's public HLIs, the current study found that academic integrity was upheld. Numerous respondents concurred that HLI leaders can be trusted to maintain their word and execute what they say, as well as to uphold their commitments. It is important for HLIs to uphold these principles because doing so assures justice, fosters learning, and encourages employees to be accountable for their work. By promoting and exemplifying integrity and non-discriminatory involvement in their treatment of staff and in the management of HLI's affairs and resources, HLI's leaders are expected to encourage a high degree of integrity and responsiveness (Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2019).

On this premise, the integrity of an employee's job will have an impact on their performance in Tanzanian public HLIs. According to Fritz, Scherndl, and Kühberger (2012) study on how the integrity of behavior positively and significantly affects organizational performance. Employee integrity and work performance have a positive association, according to Purba and Supriyono's (2019) study. According to Wetik (2018), an employee must have the integrity to carry out their tasks and obligations. They must be trustworthy, brave, wise, and mature to accomplish this. Integrity in HLIs is a dedication to the fundamental principles of responsibility, respect, honesty, equity, and trust (Bretag, 2016). Integrity is crucial in HLIs since it is thought to be one of the key variables affecting employee performance. According to Cutri et al. (2021), having integrity is upholding the values of accountability, compassion, respect, consistency, and honesty.

This study makes the case that strong performance among employees in HLIs is necessary. HLI leaders need to be trustworthy, dependable, open, and responsible. They also need to keep their word and show compassion for others. According to Fulmer and Gelfand (2012), employee satisfaction with the boss is higher when they have trust. Additionally, according to Wetik (2018), for employees to efficiently carry out their job obligations and responsibilities, they must possess integrity. Furthermore, integrity was discovered to affect worker performance in earlier studies. For instance, a study by Caza, Zhang, Wang, and Bai (2015) on the impact of a leader's emotional sincerity on followers' trust found that followers who trust their leaders are more likely to adopt and commit themselves to the leader's goals and vision and as a result, can better contribute to performance.

### **Implication for research and practice**

According to the findings, it is critical for employees in public HLIs in Tanzania to adhere to ethical leadership (role clarification and integrity) in order to increase performance. Furthermore, the study indicates a direct relationship between ethical leadership and academic staff success. HLIs will lose the emphasis on objectives if this link is not considered when identifying factors impacting academic employees' performance since academic employees will not work hard to attain organizational goals. Furthermore, the study provides empirical evidence that ethical leadership increases academic staff teaching performance in HLIs, which is compatible with social learning theory.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to close the knowledge gap about how ethical leadership affects teaching effectiveness at Tanzania's public HLIs. Researchers have yet to give ethical leadership much thought in terms of how it affects academic staff members' teaching performance in HLIs. According to the study's findings, role clarification and integrity influence employee teaching performance in public HLIs.

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## Mseti: The influence of ethical leadership on teaching performance in universities

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