

Ethics in public management and labor commitment in the Regional Government of Huanuco, Peru

Ética en la gestión pública y compromiso laboral en el Gobierno Regional de Huánuco, Perú

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ABSTRACT

Objective. To determine the relationship between ethics in public management and the work commitment of the employees of the Regional Government of Huanuco, Peru, to 2024. **Methods.** The type of research was basic and the design was correlational. The sample population consisted of 96 workers. The technique used was the survey and the instruments used were a questionnaire to measure the variable of ethics in public management and a questionnaire to measure the variable of work commitment. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used for the inferential analysis. **Results.** It was revealed that there was a significant relationship between ethics in public management and work commitment. Specifically, personal ethics ($\rho = 0.145$; $p = 0.018$) and applied ethics ($\rho = 0.158$; $p = 0.015$) showed positive correlations, highlighting their link with employee engagement. Professional ethics also presented a significant relationship ($\rho = 0.132$; $p = 0.025$), although with less intensity. On the other hand, contractual ethics did not reveal a significant correlation ($\rho = -0.110$; $p = 0.060$), suggesting that compliance with specific contractual agreements does not influence work commitment. **Conclusion.** In GOREHCO, the most efficient public management ethics is correlated to labor commitment, from which it follows that improving public management ethics can lead to substantial improvements in these key aspects of labor commitment in the Regional Government of Huánuco.

Keywords: ethics; management; public; labor; correlation.

RESUMEN

Objetivo. Determinar la relación entre la ética en la gestión pública y el compromiso laboral de los trabajadores del Gobierno Regional de Huánuco Perú, al 2024. **Métodos.** El tipo de investigación fue básico y el diseño fue correlacional. La población muestral estuvo constituida por 96 trabajadores. La técnica empleada fue la encuesta y como instrumento se utilizaron un cuestionario para medir la variable de ética en la gestión pública y un cuestionario para medir la variable de compromiso laboral. Para el análisis inferencial se aplicó el coeficiente de correlación de Spearman. **Resultados.** Relevaron que existió una relación significativa entre la ética en la gestión pública y el compromiso laboral. Específicamente, la ética personal ($\rho = 0,145$; $p = 0,018$) y la ética aplicada ($\rho = 0,158$; $p = 0,015$) mostraron correlaciones positivas, destacando su vínculo con el compromiso de los empleados. La ética profesional también presentó una relación significativa ($\rho = 0,132$; $p = 0,025$), aunque con menor intensidad. Por otro lado, la ética contractual no reveló una correlación significativa ($\rho = -0,110$; $p = 0,060$), lo que sugiere que el cumplimiento de acuerdos contractuales específicos no influye en el compromiso laboral. **Conclusión.** En el GOREHCO, la ética en la gestión pública más eficiente está correlacionada al compromiso laboral, de lo que se deduce que mejorar la ética en la gestión pública puede llevar a mejoras sustanciales en estos aspectos clave del compromiso laboral del Gobierno Regional de Huánuco.

Palabras clave: ética; gestión; publico; laboral; correlación.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, Peru has experienced sustained growth in state reform and modernization. These changes have influenced the importance of ethics in public management and the work commitment of public administration employees, as key elements to improve the management of matters of public interest (Altamirano, 2022; Lezama & Núñez, 2021). The promotion of an ethical culture in public institutions not only optimizes management but also strengthens citizens' trust in their authorities, ensuring greater transparency and accountability in decision-making (Urcia, 2022).

To comply with the principles established in the Political Constitution of the State, regional governments require a solid ethical framework to support decision-making, thus ensuring citizens' well-being through quality public services and the execution of pertinent projects. In this context, the Regional Government of Huánuco (GOREHCO) faces the challenge of consolidating itself as an institution that promotes transparency, responsibility, and accountability in its management (García, 2018; Salazar, 2022). Likewise, the work commitment of its employees is essential to achieving its objectives, since motivated and committed personnel directly contribute to the quality of the public services provided.

The GOREHCO operates in a regional context with socioeconomic and geographic diversity, which presents both opportunities and challenges. Among its main challenges are the need to strengthen an ethical culture and promote effective work commitment. These weaknesses affect key processes such as administrative transparency, efficiency in the use of resources, and staff motivation, which in turn impact the quality of public services. Moreover, structural problems persist, such as inequality in access to resources, the centralization of decision-making, and the limited ethical training of staff, which hinders the implementation of effective public policies (Altamirano, 2022).

Therefore, it is a priority for GOREHCO to implement comprehensive strategies that strengthen ethical principles and work commitment. These strategies should include clear codes of ethics, continuous training programs, and policies that recognize ethical performance. Only through these actions will it be possible to ensure effective, transparent public management oriented toward collective well-being, while also strengthening citizens' trust in public institutions.

Among the studies that support this research are those by Boza (2020), Barreto (2022), Calderón (2023), and Malpartida (2023), which show that ethical management combined with committed personnel are key factors for improving citizen satisfaction, strengthening public institutions, and ensuring efficiency in services. These works also highlight the importance

of implementing human resources policies that promote responsibility, autonomy, and the continuous development of employees.

This research is relevant at both the academic and practical levels because it analyzes the relationship between ethics in public management and work commitment in a specific regional context such as GOREHCO, an area where academic literature is scarce. This study advances knowledge in the field of public management by addressing a regional issue and provides practical tools for designing strategies that improve both institutional ethics and work commitment. The results of this study have the potential to contribute significantly to strengthening the quality of public services, better responding to citizens' needs, and increasing public trust in public administration.

The objective of this research was to determine how ethics in public management and the work commitment of employees are related in the Regional Government of Huánuco, Peru, 2024.

METHODS

Type and Area of Study

The study had a quantitative approach, correlational type, descriptive level, and correlational design. The research was conducted at the Regional Government of Huánuco, located at 145 Eucalipto Street, Amarillo District, Huánuco Department (Peru), in 2024.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of 96 public officials from GOREHCO. For the selection of the sample in this research, the following criteria were established: all officials who were actively employed at GOREHCO during the study period were included. Furthermore, the study sample was determined as follows: since the population of public officials was 96, it was decided to include all employees, thus forming a purposive sample.

Variable and Data Collection Instruments

As the independent variable, ethics in public management was taken, which was evaluated using a self-authored questionnaire composed of 20 questions that address four key dimensions: transparency, responsibility, impartiality, and accountability. For its elaboration, the criteria of clarity, relevance, and alignment with the theoretical framework of the study were considered. The questionnaire was reviewed by five experts in public management, who evaluated its content validity and reliability. Based on their observations, adjustments were made to ensure that the questions were understandable, pertinent, and appropriate to the context of GOREHCO. The dependent variable was work commitment, which was measured through a self-designed questionnaire

composed of 20 questions. Its dimensions were: motivation, identification with institutional objectives, job satisfaction, and participation in decision-making. During its design, criteria such as clarity, relevance, and conceptual coherence were taken into account; likewise, it was subjected to a pilot test with a small sample of employees in order to assess its clarity and coherence. The results of the pilot test led to the necessary modifications to ensure its effectiveness in the context of GOREHCO.

Techniques and Procedures of Data Collection

In the present study, the structured survey was used as the main data collection technique, aimed at evaluating specific dimensions and items of the variables of interest. To carry out the data collection process in this study, several steps were carefully followed to ensure both ethical compliance and the quality and accuracy of the data obtained. The first stage consisted of requesting and obtaining authorization from the Regional Government of Huánuco (GOREHCO) to allow access to the target population of the study. This permission was formally managed, ensuring compliance with legal and ethical requirements, and once granted, it facilitated the implementation of the surveys in the previously agreed locations.

Before proceeding with the administration of the surveys, informed consent was obtained from each participant. This consent was provided in a clear and understandable manner, explaining the purpose of the study, the use of the data, and the respect for participants' privacy and confidentiality. This step was crucial to ensure voluntary and ethical participation in the study. Consequently, the surveys were distributed to each public official, clarifying any doubts at the moment.

Tras la recolección, los datos en papel fueron vaciados de forma cuidadosa y precisa a una hoja de cálculo en Excel, lo cual facilitó su organización inicial y revisión. Luego, los datos fueron importados a SPSS versión 27 para su procesamiento y análisis estadístico.

Data analysis

For the statistical analysis of the data, both descriptive and inferential tests were employed. In the descriptive domain, tables of the general characteristics of the population were applied using frequencies and percentages. Regarding inferential statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to determine the relationship between the variables of interest and to test the proposed hypotheses. All analyses were carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics software, version 24.

Ethical Aspects

In the research, several fundamental ethical aspects were applied. First, it was ensured that all participants

voluntarily provided their informed consent, after being properly informed about the objectives, procedures, and possible risks of the study. This guaranteed respect for the autonomy of the subjects and transparency in the process, crucial aspects in the ethics of scientific research.

Furthermore, the public policies of the Peruvian State were observed, which provided a legal and ethical framework that supported the development of the research, protecting the participants' rights at all times. Regarding ethical approvals, this study had the approval of the Institutional Committee of Ethics in Research, which ensures that the regulations and ethical standards for research with human beings have been followed (Pelekais et al., 2005).

RESULTS

It was observed that 52.08% of the public officials at GOREHCO were under 25 years of age, which suggests that young individuals, as such, may contribute new perspectives, energy, and adaptability. The majority were female, which further indicates a tendency toward a workforce with significant female representation. Likewise, they had been working for more than 10 years, which demonstrates a high level of stability and institutional commitment, which could be correlated with a deeper understanding of ethical values in public management (see Table 1).

Table 1
General characteristics of public officials of the regional government of Huanuco

General characteristics	n = 96	
	fi	%
Age		
Under 25 years old	50	52.08
Over 25 years old	46	47.9
Gender		
Male	36	37.5
Female	60	62.5
Length of Service		
Under 10 years old	32	33.3
Over 10 years old	64	66.6

Upon analyzing the items of ethics in public management in its various dimensions, it was found that, in the dimension of personal ethics, 50% of the respondents acted with honesty in their decisions and work-related actions, while 46.9% reflected on their actions to ensure their alignment with their own values. Regarding professional ethics, 52.1% complied with the rules and policies established in their institution, and 51% maintained ethical communication with their colleagues.

In the contractual ethics dimension, 49% avoided favoritism in dealing with users, and 46.9% refrained from accepting gifts that could influence their work. Finally, in applied ethics, 47.9% considered the interests of the community in their decisions, and 51% strived to comply with quality standards in their service (see Table 2).

With respect to the dimensions of the variable ethics in public management, it was found that, although half of the officials are at the initial and in-process levels in each dimension, the rest of the officials achieved an ideal personal ethics (47.92%), an optimal professional ethics (47.92%), a correct contractual

Table 2
Ethics in public management among public officials of the regional government of Huanuco

Ethics in public management	n = 96									
	Always		Almost always		Sometimes		Never		Almost never	
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%
Ética personal										
Do I act with honesty in my decisions and work-related actions?	48	50.0	24	25.0	12	12.5	8	8.3	4	4.2
Do I avoid situations of conflict of interest in my work?	40	41.7	20	20.8	16	16.7	12	12.5	8	8.3
Do I promote respect among my coworkers?	52	54.2	28	29.2	10	10.4	4	4.2	2	2.1
Do I reflect on my actions to ensure they are aligned with my values?	45	46.9	30	31.3	12	12.5	6	6.3	3	3.1
Do I act responsibly in fulfilling my assigned tasks?	58	69.4	20	20.8	10	10.4	5	5.2	3	3.1
Professional ethics										
Do I comply with the rules and policies established in my institution?	50	52.1	22	22.9	14	14.6	6	6.3	4	4.2
Do I maintain respect for citizens' rights in my actions?	48	50.0	24	25.0	12	12.5	8	8.3	4	4.2
Do I strive to improve my skills and knowledge in my professional field?	42	43.8	26	27.1	16	16.7	8	8.3	4	4.2
Do I maintain clear and ethical communication with my colleagues?	49	51.0	25	26.0	12	12.5	6	6.3	4	4.2
Do I avoid participating in activities that could affect my professional objectivity?	44	45.8	22	22.9	18	18.8	8	8.3	4	4.2
Contractual ethics										
Do I avoid favoritism in my dealings with users?	47	49.0	25	26.0	14	14.6	6	6.3	4	4.2
Do I refrain from accepting gifts or benefits that could influence my work?	45	46.9	28	29.2	10	10.4	8	8.3	4	4.2
Do I respect the limits of my role and functions within the institution?	52	54.2	22	22.9	12	12.5	6	6.3	4	4.2
Do I fulfill the expectations and commitments established in my contract?	50	52.1	24	25.0	12	12.5	6	6.3	4	4.2
Do I avoid using public resources for personal purposes?	48	50.0	26	27.1	12	12.5	6	6.3	4	4.2
Applied ethics										
Do I consider the interests of the community in my decision-making?	46	47.9	24	25.0	16	16.7	6	6.3	4	4.2
Do I promote ethical practices within the work team?	51	53.1	22	22.9	14	14.6	5	5.2	4	4.2
Do I analyze the ethical consequences of my decisions?	44	45.8	26	27.1	16	16.7	6	6.3	4	4.2
Do I strive to comply with quality standards in the service I provide?	49	51.0	25	26.0	12	12.5	6	6.3	4	4.2
Do I resolve conflicts in an ethical and fair manner?	46	47.9	24	25.0	16	16.7	6	6.3	4	4.2

ethics (46.88%), and a considerable applied ethics (45.83%) (see Table 3).

Regarding the items of work commitment of the officials in its various dimensions, it was observed that, in complying with the established schedule, 62.5% indicated that they always arrived on time at the start of their workday, and 64.6% stated that they always respected the departure time. Regarding the use of work time, 57.3% always used it effectively, and 61.5% maintained punctuality in all meetings. In the dimension of avoiding the violation of the rights of others, it was observed that 66.7% always maintained respect for the rights of their colleagues, while 68.8% promoted fairness in dealing with their coworkers. Regarding the practical application of ethics in various fields, 70.8% always applied ethical principles in their tasks, and 68.8% strived to maintain ethical conduct at work. Additionally, 70.8% of the respondents promoted mutual respect in their work environment and valued ethics in their performance. These figures reflect a strong commitment to ethical values and punctuality at work among the employees (see Table 4).

Table 3

Dimensions of ethics in public management as perceived by public officials of the regional government of Huánuco

Dimensions	n = 96	
	fi	%
Personal ethics		
Initial	20	20.83
In Process	30	31.25
Achieved	46	47.92
Professional ethics		
Initial	15	15.63
In Process	35	36.46
Achieved	46	47.92
Contractual ethics		
Initial	25	26.04
In Process	26	27.08
Achieved	45	46.88
Applied ethics		
Initial	18	18.75
In Process	34	35.42
Achieved	44	45.83

Table 4

Work commitment of public officials of the regional government of Huanuco

Work commitment	n = 96									
	Always		Almost always		Sometimes		Never		Almost	
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%
Compliance with the established schedule										
Do I arrive on time at the start of my workday?	60	62.5	20	20.0	10	10.4	4	4.2	2	2.1
Do I comply with the break schedule and return on time?	58	60.4	22	22.9	9	9.4	4	4.2	3	3.1
Do I respect the end time of my workday?	62	64.6	18	18.8	8	8.3	5	5.2	3	3.1
Do I use work time effectively and productively?	55	57.3	25	26.0	8	8.3	5	5.2	3	3.1
Do I maintain punctuality in all my work meetings?	59	61.5	23	24.0	8	8.3	3	3.1	3	3.1
Avoiding the violation of the rights of others										
Do I maintain respect for the rights of my coworkers?	64	66.7	20	20.8	7	7.3	3	3.1	2	2.1
Do I avoid interfering in the functions and rights of other areas?	63	65.6	19	19.8	8	8.3	4	4.2	2	2.1
Do I promote fairness in the treatment of my colleagues?	66	68.8	18	18.8	6	6.3	3	3.1	3	3.1
Do I avoid causing harm to my coworkers in the performance of my duties?	62	64.6	20	20.8	7	7.3	4	4.2	3	3.1
Do I respect the hierarchies and roles of my colleagues?	65	67.7	19	19.8	6	6.3	4	4.2	2	2.1
Practical application of ethics in various fields										
I apply ethical principles in the execution of my tasks	68	70.8	17	17.7	5	5.2	4	4.2	2	2.1
Do I maintain ethical conduct in all my work activities?	67	69.8	18	18.8	5	5.2	3	3.1	3	3.1
Do I promote a culture of respect and ethics in my workplace?	66	68.8	18	18.8	6	6.3	3	3.1	3	3.1
Do I make decisions based on ethical principles?	64	66.7	19	19.8	6	6.3	4	4.2	3	3.1
Do I strive to be fair in my treatment of others?	63	65.6	21	21.9	6	6.3	3	3.1	3	3.1
Do I act responsibly in all my assigned tasks?	66	68.8	18	18.8	6	6.3	4	4.2	2	2.1
Do I maintain a positive and committed attitude toward my work?	65	67.7	19	19.8	6	6.3	4	4.2	2	2.1
Do I fulfill my duties without negatively affecting others?	67	69.8	17	17.7	5	5.2	4	4.2	3	3.1
Do I promote mutual respect in the workplace?	68	70.8	17	17.7	5	5.2	4	4.2	2	2.1
Do I value the importance of ethics in my work performance?	66	68.8	18	18.8	6	6.3	3	3.1	3	3.1

According to the dimensions, it was found that the vast majority complied with the established schedule (66.8%), avoided the violation of the rights of others (65.6%), and applied the practice of ethics in various fields (73.9%), while the rest were still in the initial and in-process stages. These results reflect a high level of work commitment, especially in complying with schedules and in the ethical practice within the work environment (see Table 5).

Table 5
Dimensions of work commitment among public officials of the Regional Government of Huanuco

Dimensions	n = 96	
	fi	%
Compliance with the established schedule		
Initial	10	10.4
In Process	20	20.8
Achieved	66	66.8
Avoiding the violation of the rights of others		
Initial	8	8.3
In Process	25	26.0
Achieved	63	65.6
Practical application of ethics in various fields		
Initial	7	7.3
In Process	18	18.3
Achieved	71	73.9

Regarding the relationship between the dimensions of ethics in public management and work commitment, it is observed that there is a significant relationship in the personal ethics dimension ($\rho = 0.145$; $p = 0.018$) and in the applied ethics dimension ($\rho = 0.158$; $p = 0.015$). A significant relationship is also observed in the professional ethics dimension ($\rho = 0.132$; $p = 0.025$). However, in the contractual ethics dimension, no significant relationship is evident ($\rho = -0.110$; $p = 0.060$) (see Table 6).

Table 6
Correlation between the dimensions of ethics in public management and the work commitment of public officials of the Regional Government of Huánuco

Relationship between the dimensions of ethics in public management and work commitment	Rho	p-value
Personal ethics	0.145	0.018
Professional ethics	0.132	0.025
Contractual ethics	-0.110	0.060
Applied ethics	0.158	0.015

In relation to the dimensions of work commitment and ethics in public management, it is observed that in the dimension of adherence to established working hours, there is no significant relationship ($\rho = 0.100$; $p = 0.130$). Similarly, in the dimension of avoiding infringement of the rights of the parties, no significant relationship is found ($\rho = 0.108$; $p = 0.145$). However, a significant relationship is evidenced in the dimension of practical application of ethics in various fields ($\rho = 0.108$; $p = 0.158$), suggesting that this ethical aspect has a relevant connection with work commitment (see Table 7).

Table 7
Relationship between the dimensions of work commitment and ethics in public Management among public officials of the Regional Government of Huanuco

Relationship between the dimensions of work commitment and ethics in public management	Rho	p-value
Adherence to established working hours	0.100	0.130
Avoiding infringement of the rights of the parties	0.108	0.145
Aplicación práctica de la ética en diversos campos	0.108	0.158

DISCUSSION

Based on the inferential results obtained in this study, a significant relationship is observed between ethics in public management and work commitment in the context of the Regional Government of Huánuco. According to Tarazona (2022), public management grounded in ethical principles ensures accountability and transparency in resource management, which increases employees’ trust in the institution. This trust translates into stronger work commitment, as employees who perceive a fair and ethical environment tend to align more closely with organizational objectives (Mamani, 2022; Urcia, 2022).

In particular, the dimension of “personal ethics” shows a significant correlation with work commitment ($\rho = 0.45$; $p = 0.018$), suggesting that integrity in employees’ individual decisions and actions is a key factor. This observation supports previous studies indicating that the personal ethics of public sector workers influence their level of commitment and productivity (Altamirano, 2022). Therefore, promoting ethics at the individual level is essential to strengthen employee loyalty and the fulfillment of their duties.

Similarly, “applied ethics”, with a significant relationship ($\rho = 0.158$; $p = 0.015$), highlights that considering the community’s interests in decision-making contributes to greater employee commitment to institutional values. Altamirano (2022) emphasizes that a focus on citizen service increases job satisfaction

and performance. These results suggest that an ethical orientation toward public service fosters a more committed work environment focused on quality.

"Professional ethics" also shows a relevant relationship ($\rho = 0.132$; $p = 0.025$), underscoring the importance of compliance with organizational regulations and policies to maintain ethical communication among colleagues. As argued by Salazar (2022) and Barreto (2022), consistency in ethical practices in public administration strengthens organizational cohesion, which motivates employees and enhances their performance.

However, in the dimension of "contractual ethics", no significant relationship was found with work commitment ($\rho = -0.110$; $p = 0.060$). This may suggest that factors such as favoritism and the acceptance of gifts, although relevant, are not as decisive in employees' daily commitment. Masco and Quispe (2024) highlight that the perception of fairness is fundamental in contractual areas, but this study indicates that other ethical aspects may have a more direct influence on employee motivation.

On the other hand, a significant relationship was evidenced in the dimension of "practical application of ethics" across various fields ($\rho = 0.158$; $p = 0.158$), highlighting the importance of implementing ethics in daily activities to strengthen work commitment. This ethical practice enables employees to maintain performance consistent with organizational values, as noted by Urcia (2022) and Calderon (2023).

Ultimately, to foster work commitment and ethics in public management at GOREHCO, it is vital to develop ethical competencies among staff, apply transparency policies, and build an organizational culture oriented toward integrity. These elements are essential for improving the work environment and meeting citizens' expectations, supporting an efficient and ethical public administration.

CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained allow us to conclude that there is a significant relationship between ethics in public management and the work commitment of officials of the Regional Government of Huanuco in 2024. This relationship demonstrates that an ethical organizational culture directly contributes to employees' motivation, satisfaction, and alignment with institutional objectives. However, this influence varies according to the specific dimensions of ethics analyzed, highlighting the need for differentiated approaches to effectively strengthen both ethics and work commitment.

Similarly, a strong correlation was observed between personal ethics and work commitment. Officials who demonstrate integrity, honesty, and responsibility in their individual conduct show greater motivation

and dedication to their work. This underscores the importance of fostering personal ethical values as a foundation for building positive work relationships and achieving organizational objectives. Likewise, the study showed that adherence to professional norms and ethical standards has a significant influence on work commitment. Employees who perform their duties while respecting professional principles, such as competence and fulfillment of responsibilities, exhibit greater job satisfaction and a stronger sense of belonging to the institution. Therefore, the ability to apply ethical principles in work-related decision-making and daily interactions showed a significant relationship with work commitment. Officials who incorporate values such as equity, justice, and respect into their daily activities stand out for their greater alignment with institutional objectives and their willingness to contribute to the well-being of citizens. Finally, unlike the other dimensions, contractual ethics did not show a significant relationship with work commitment. This suggests that formal contract aspects, such as legal terms, have a limited impact on employees' motivation and dedication, indicating that other ethical and cultural factors are more decisive in building commitment.

Recommendation

It is recommended to strengthen ethics in public management at the Regional Government of Huánuco (GOREHCO) by integrating ethical principles at all administrative levels and guiding both decision-making and daily interactions of staff with citizens. To achieve this, it is suggested to implement clear codes of ethics, supported by ongoing training programs that promote an organizational culture committed to transparency, accountability, and respect for rights. Enhancing work commitment through policies that recognize and reward ethical performance is essential, encouraging responsible behaviors that prioritize the well-being of the population. This includes the creation of recognition programs and professional development plans that motivate staff to act with integrity and align with institutional values.

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Conflict of interest statement

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