Perception of Work Ethics and Professionalism on Work Output of Hall Assistants at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored the perspectives of hall assistants at the four halls of residence of the University of Education, Winneba regarding work ethics and professionalism, and how their knowledge of these concepts affects their work output. Work ethics and professionalism cannot be fully dealt with without giving due diligence to public protection and the provision of public services. The paper employed social constructivism as a theory to understand how hall assistants construct their own meaning of professionalism and work ethics and how their knowledge of these translates into influencing their work output. The qualitative exploratory case study design, with the use of a semi-structured interview guide to obtain data, was adopted. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to collect data from twelve (12) respondents at the University of Education, Winneba. The key findings of the study revealed that when employees show traits such as good attitude, team spirit, and credibility in the way they carry themselves, it influences the work they do and eventually yields high productivity. The study concluded with implications of the findings for policy on the relevance of professionalism and work ethics on increased output of work.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Work ethics and professionalism are key ingredients that are essential in ensuring that individuals in any organisation keep to the tenets of the job for effectiveness and efficiency so far as exhibiting the appropriate attitudes and behaviours are concerned. These appropriate attitudes and behaviours translate into the positive work culture of the organization and eventually result in productivity. It is important to note that the main goal of any organisation is to increase the productivity of its employees. This is because employee productivity improves the overall performance of the organisation [1,2].

Various authors have defined the concepts of work ethics and professionalism. For instance, Miñon [3], as well as Robbins and Coulter [4], have looked at ethics as what is right and wrong or good and bad. Other authors such as DeCenzo et al. [5]; and Walker [6], have defined ethics as right and wrong decisions and behaviours. Ethics has also been considered as taking the most appropriate ethical course of action [7]. Professionalism, which appears to have a bearing on ethics, has been defined by Worthington et al. [8] as a concept that involves attitudes and behaviours which apply to a group of people in and out of the workplace. It is critical to acknowledge that professionalism is not the job itself or the task that the professional experiences. Rather, it is the way of executing the task [9]. This implies that within the context of professionalism, the concept is more important than the professional since the former is the exhibit of the latter. The concept helps to attract customers, increases morale, and improves the job satisfaction of employees when it is adhered to effectively in an organisation. Usually, the core components of professionalism are in reference to ethical norms which include respect for confidentiality of clients as well as behaving appropriately towards one's colleagues. Vivanco [10] pointed to the essential components of professionalism to include technical expertise, skills, ethics and communication. He further identified such values as autonomy, service, maintenance of competence and accountability as common to all professions. He further argued that how professionals interact with their clients as well as how they address their roles in their respective professions are all vital aspects of their professional practice.

There is the need to consider the environment in which professionalism is practiced due to the peculiarity of every institution in terms of structures and systems. Worthington [11], in that regard, pointed out the need for professionalism to be sensitive to the environment in which it is applied since social and cultural differences influence how things are done in practice. This calls for depending less on historical notions of ethics and professionalism, especially in areas where they are no longer relevant. Vivanco [10] also recognizes the need for the establishment of criteria for assessment if a clear and comprehensive definition of professionalism is to be achieved.

Professionalism has been found to be influenced by several factors. In their study, Idid and Arandas [12] noted education and length of service of professionals as elements that have effect on their professionalism and code of ethics. In this regard, professionals with higher level of education and who have served longer in their professions tend to abide by the code of ethics governing their profession more than their fellows in the reverse situation. Adeyeye et al. [13] concluded in their study that workers' observation of ethical conduct such as positive attitudes, committed teamwork, high integrity, and self-discipline result in high productivity. It is therefore important for employees to experience such observable traits from co-workers and superiors as they execute their respective schedules. The performance of any organisation is thus, affected by the application of professionalism and work ethics that exist within its employees. Having good work ethic causes employees to make physical, mental, and emotional efforts in their work to eventually impact the output of the organisation. Ethics was derived from the Greek word ethos, which implies a peculiar manner of acting [14,3]. It deals with what "ought" to be [15], and a person's beliefs concerning work.

For the discourse so far, it is critical for the staff of every institution to be exposed to the concepts of professionalism and work ethics, as well as their relevance to the staff's schedule of work and their obligation towards ensuring that those concepts are applied. By doing so they (staff) would be able to act in accordance and conformity, as they contribute to the development of the institution. In this regard, it behoves on every organisation to own a document that

outlines the code of ethics and professionalism for its staff. It is worth mentioning that some of these relevant issues that help to straighten staff as it were, are often not documented. It is relevant for such documents to be exposed to every staff to help them discharge their duties with full cognisance of the stipulated codes.

At the University of Education, Winneba, for instance, like every educational institution, orientation programmes and workshops are occasionally organised for staff of all the various categories from time to time to expose them to issues of relevance that they need to be abreast with as they discharge their duties. In view of this, a section of staff who fall within the category of senior and junior staff at the four halls of residence namely: Simpa, Ghartey, Aggrey, and University halls were brought together in a workshop and exposed to issues of professionalism and work ethics through presentations and breakout sections where participants were tasked to discuss issues that bordered on the concepts. These issues became critical due to the premium that is placed on these concepts as they are inextricably linked to high productivity when they are applied by employees. Thus, the essence of exhibiting certain acceptable skills, attitudes and behaviours that help in the day-to-day lives of the individual staff is concerned is very critical. This paper explores the perspectives of hall assistants at the four halls of residence of the University of Education, Winneba with regards to work ethics and how their knowledge of these concepts impacts on their work output.

1.1 Aim of the Research and Research Questions

The aim of this study was to explore the perspectives of employees about the work ethics and professionalism of hall assistants at the University of Education, Winneba, and how these concepts impact their work output. The overarching question that guided the study was: What are the perspectives of UEW Hall Assistants about professionalism and work ethics and their impact on work output?

The following four (4) supporting questions addressed the overarching research question:

1. How are Hall Assistants of UEW aware of the concepts of professionalism and work ethics?

2. What is the relevance of professionalism and work ethics?
3. What role(s) do Hall Assistants play in professionalism and work ethics in UEW?
4. What is the impact of work ethics and professionalism on the work output of Hall Assistants in UEW?

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Social Constructivist Theory, which explains how people construct knowledge in a social world, placing emphasis on the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and how knowledge is constructed based on this understanding [16,17], was considered for this study. Social constructivists assume that reality is constructed through human activity and so members of the community invent the properties of the world [18]. To social constructivists, knowledge which is a human product is socially and culturally constructed and for that matter, individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and the environment they live in [19,20,21]. They view learning as a social process that does not only take place within an individual but also meaningful learning happens when individuals engage in social activities [17].

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Ethics was derived from the Greek word ethos, which implies a peculiar manner of acting [14,3]. It deals with what "ought" to be [15], and a person's beliefs concerning work. Sunanda (2018) notes that ethics refers to the principles that define behaviour as true and proper. Values include ethics when they depend on the believing about what is right and wrong. Ethics is taking the most appropriate ethical act at a given time [7]. Work ethics can be referred to as the cultural norm that encourages people to take full responsibility for the work; they do which is based on the belief that work has intrinsic value for individuals [22]. In a similar sense, the concept of work ethics can be referred to as the ability to work in a way that shows ethical commitment to your work and supervisor. Work ethics is a foundation on which a person's attitude is built. Ethics is related to how a person must behave, while values are mental judgments that determine how a person behaves [22]. Increasing the work ethic of the employees leads to an increase in productivity. Ethics involves what is right and wrong or good and bad [3,4]. It defines right and wrong decisions and behaviors

[5,6]. According to Sapada et al., [23], work ethic involves employees who have a high commitment to the organization and then are more likely to make changes where the changes do not have the potential to change the basic values and goals of the organization and are considered beneficial to the organization. This is compared with work ethic of employees who are less supportive and less committed to their organizations who are more likely to make changes.

In a similar vein, the concept of professionalism has been explained by various authors. Vivanco [10] for instance, viewed the concept as an articulated body that is made up of professional traits and skills that constitute one's professional work, irrespective of the geographical, social or cultural settings where it is carried out. Thus, appropriate attitudes and behaviours allow individuals in an organisation to carry out their duties as expected of them and deliver quality work because such individuals are driven to do so. The concept goes further to entail the way an employee interacts with other people including co-workers, customers and supervisors. It equally encompasses speaking with your colleagues in a respective manner, conducting yourself with integrity and being courteous. This put prominence on good relationships among workers in the organisation since it depicts that people do not only care about their career but also that they respect their fellow peers. Professionalism is a concept that is used to measure how the professionals look at their professions reflected by their attitudes and behaviour. Hall [24] considers that there is a reciprocal relationship between attitudes and behaviour.

Work ethics and professionalism are linked, and the two concepts together yield productivity when employees appreciate and apply them effectively in their work. An ethical worker is a professional worker. This means that for an employee to be regarded as professional, the person must exhibit certain positive behaviours and attitudes which work in consonance with the 'codes' that govern the institution. Every organisation like an academic institution has a peculiar ethical culture that employees must succumb to. Some researchers have revealed some key areas under which ethics could be conceptualized. For instance, Pojman [25], shows four areas where ethics are usually conceptualized: Actions (right, wrong, permissive), Consequences (good, bad, indifferent), Character (virtuous, malignant) and Motives (good intentions, intentions evil)". These four key areas must work in consonance to contribute to the employee's output of work.

The main goal of any organisation is to increase the productivity of the employees. This is because employee productivity improves the overall performance of the organisation [1,2]. It is worth mentioning that the performance of any organisation is affected by the application of work ethics and professionalism among the employees. Having a good work ethic causes employees to make physical, mental, and emotional efforts in a 'professional manner' in their work to eventually impact the output of the organisation. A good ethical culture in any organization provides guidance in various areas to build employees who are united, harmonious, and ethical [22]. Such employees work as a team to achieve a common goal. Some researchers have revealed some key areas under which ethics could be conceptualized. The employee's choice of the components of these four areas depends on the kind of output (positive or negative). The ability to work in a way that shows ethical commitment to your work and boss is very critical when considering work ethics. Work ethics is a foundation on which a person's attitude is built.

Work ethics and professionalism cannot be fully dealt with without giving due diligence to public protection and the provision of public services. This is because of the relevance these factors come to play before one is acknowledged and justified as being a professional. A professional is characterized by working to serve the interests of clients and the public at large, and not his self-serving interests [26]. In most instances, a professional is recognized as such when he is found to be bound by a set of standards that relate to the conduct and technical expertise of the profession [11]. As Worthington [11] further explained, possessing technical skill is not sufficient of its own in the same manner that putting up behavioural attributes is. The ability and readiness to translate those technical skills in a positive manner, depicting positive behavioural attributes is very relevant and critical. These two factors (technical skills and behavioural attribute) cannot work in isolation but rather be combined to make a professional. One key relevance of professionalism is the outward display of an individual's attitude towards work, particularly which mostly depicts a sign of loyalty, dependability, and responsibility [11]. Thus, a lack of professionalism suggests a lack of

respect towards an employer, which has a consequence on their ability to even secure a job.

Work ethics and professionalism have been shown to be effective predictors of performance outcomes. Miller et al. [27] demonstrate that work ethic is distinct from intelligence and is associated with job satisfaction, willingness to commit to an organization, and employee performance. Raja et al. [28] discovered that work ethic predicts respondents' task persistence and work completion. Additionally, scholars have demonstrated that work ethic predicts the degree to which individuals will choose to work on more difficult tasks over easier ones when given the choice [29]. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that work ethic affects performance [30], and the co-existence of effort equal performance relation, exists in the context of work and academic/educational pursuits [31].

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach, Design, and Context

The study employed the qualitative research approach with the purpose of ascertaining in-depth understanding of the perspectives of hall assistants of the four halls of residence at the University of Education, Winneba so far as work ethics and professionalism are concerned and how they impact their work. A qualitative exploratory case study design was adopted for this study. It is a strategy that helps the researcher to understand a phenomenon in real life situation. It requires a detailed description of an experience and does not offer statistical representation.

A case study is a research strategy and inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within a real-life context. Yin [32] defines the case study research method "as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." It is based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group, or event to explore the causes of underlying principles. This design was appropriate for this study because it helped to provide valid information and a better understanding of hall assistants' views on the concepts of professionalism and work ethics and how the two concepts translate into impacting their work schedules towards productivity. In this study, the target population comprised all halls of residents of UEW (Ghartey, Aggrey, Simpa, and University Hall) who work at the traditional halls of residence at UEW. They run the shift system (Morning, Afternoon, and Night shifts) to ensure that the needs of the students in residence are met.

3.2 Sampling Technique(s)

Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were employed to select twelve (12) respondents from the four halls of residence for the study. Three (3) hall assistants were selected from each of the four halls. Therefore, each hall had a quota of three (3) representatives as key informants for the study. This number was arrived at with the rule of saturation as the key criteria in qualitative sampling. The participants of this study were selected purposively using the convenience sampling technique because the study involved identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that were especially involved in the workshop or experienced the workshop and who were readily available to provide the information required for the study. The semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from the twelve (12) participants for the study. One-on-one interview sessions which were conducted for the participants were audio-recorded.

3.3 Analysis of Data

The audio data of the interviews was extracted and saved on the computer and transcribed verbatim. Analysis of the transcripts was done manually using the thematic approach. Categories and themes that emerged from the interview responses were used in the analysis. To ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the field data, the study adopted Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model of trustworthiness (Confirmability, Transferability, Credibility, and Dependability).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the interview, the respondents were asked to share their views on (1) what work ethics and professionalism were; (2) the relevance of work ethics and professionalism; (3) the role of hall assistants regarding work ethics and professionalism; (4) impact of work ethics and professionalism on hall assistants' work output. It is worth mentioning that some categories were overlapping in the transcripts, as such only the major themes were discussed.

4.1 Views of Hall Assistants on Professionalism

When asked to indicate their opinions of what professionalism was, some of the respondents regarded professionalism as a term that included attitudes and behaviours that had to do with a group of people in and out of the workplace. Others saw it as a concept that required constant usage of certain rules that governed the working space used to connect people who share similar interests for communication purposes. For example, two hall assistants said that professionalism is: *...a term that applies to the attitudes and behavioural traits of people who work in an organisation ... [Amont, Uni Hall]; ...a concept that places emphasis on behaviour and character of people at a workplace… [Potmoand, Ghartey Hall].*

The example of participants' views so far as professionalism is concerned confirms the assertion of Worthington et al. [8] who defined professionalism as a concept that involves attitudes and behaviours which apply to a group of people in and out of the workplace.

4.1.1 Views of hall assistants on work ethics

Respondents were asked to share their view on the concept of work ethics as it pertains to any institution. The following are some excerpts of what they had to say: *…in my opinion, I see work ethics as a main thing before professionalism… yes as simple as that… [Cast, Simpa Hall].*

When he was probed further to explain further, he added that:

…What I mean is for a staff to be considered as professional, he has to exhibit traits of work ethics such as punctuality, integrity, courtesy, respect and what have you…yes so that is what I mean… [Cast, Simpa Hall].

The above narrative from the participants indicates the need for an individual to exhibit certain traits of ethics before the person can be considered as professional. This finding corroborates with Vivanco [10], who considers work ethics as a body of professional traits and skills that an individual must exhibit in addition to respect for colleagues, and the exhibit of integrity and courtesy. It also touches on the need to put premium on good relationships among staff of the organisation. From the responses above it could be ascertained that the participants knew

what it took for a worker to be professional and that should always be seen in the way issues of ethics had been exhibited and showcased.

4.2 The Relevance of Work Ethics and Professionalism

The study also considered the relevance of work ethics and professionalism since the two played a key role in the achievement of the overall goals of every institution. When participants were asked to indicate how relevant these two concepts were in the discharge of their duties as hall assistants of UEW, most of them indicated one key importance that had to do with the increase of output of work that is born out of loyalty, dependability, and another key component being responsibility. This can be substantiated by the responses of participants as follows:

…yes, I think that work ethics and professionalism are very crucial ingredients in the day-to-day life of every staff of this university especially hall assistants… yes because we act as frontline managers who are supposed to show signs of loyalty, and responsibility [Rosette, Aggrey Hall].

When she was further probed to throw light on her statement, she continued by saying that…:

… hmmm, as staff or let me say… hall assistants, when you show that you are professional by exhibiting signs of good behaviour such as punctuality, respect for everyone, especially, eerrr, in our case as hall assistants we need to show respect to the students we work for. … by so doing, we become responsible, committed to our duty and loyal. [Rosette, Aggrey Hall]

The above response from the participant indicates how relevant they consider work ethics and professionalism in achieving the goals of the institution they work in. The above assertion agrees with Worthington [11], who opined that one key relevance of professionalism is the outward display of an individual's attitude towards work particularly, which mostly depicts a sign of loyalty, dependability, and responsibility. This implies that when everyone shows respect, become punctual, diligent, and honest in the discharge of duties, the institution stands the chance of benefitting from the huge output of work from staff. Productivity will be increased and for that matter the clientele who are basically

students will stand the chance of benefitting. They will in turn sell the institution to prospective students who would want to access higher education at UEW.

4.3 The role of Hall Assistants Concerning Issues of Professionalism and Work Ethics

The role of staff particularly, hall assistants in issues of professionalism and work ethics in the development of an institution such as UEW cannot be overemphasized. Participants were asked to share their perspectives and experiences on their roles as hall assistants. It is interesting to note when asked whether they knew about a document of the code of ethics and professionalism, all the participants indicated that they never saw any document or code of ethics in the university that spells out exactly what it takes for someone to be declared as professional as they exhibited tenets of work ethics. This reflected in the responses they gave regarding the key roles they needed to play as front liners (hall assistants). For instance, one male hall assistant from the University Hall said that:

> *…hmmm, Madam, it's not easy ooo, hahaha. I know we have a key role to play in ensuring that issues of professionalism and work ethics are brought to bear… some of these have to do with making sure that we are always polite to these students no matter how stubborn they may appear to us… we also errmm have to be diligent about our work and show enthusiasm whenever we are asked by our superiors to any work…but you see, as it stands now I don't know whether there is any document in the university that specifies how we should behave and the things are specifically related to work ethics and professionalism as we have been exposed at this workshop.[Akast, Uni hall].*

I see… hmmm, so what do you suggest we should do as an institution?

> *I think the university can put together a document that spells out exactly what goes on when we talk about professionalism and errrmmm work ethics, and how we should adhere to these with reference to each staff or group of staff. This will help everyone to work harder … so that when you do not do as expected, your boss can bring you to book [Akast, Uni Hall].*

From the example of the response above, it is critical for the university to come up with an official document that spells out what professionalism and work ethics are, with reference to how these concepts must be viewed in the eye or perspective of the UEW context.

4.4 The Impact of Work Ethics and Professionalism on Hall Assistants' Work at UEW

It is worth mentioning that hall assistants' knowledge about work ethics and professionalism can be better appreciated when the knowledge is clearly translated into reality in terms of their work output as they work to contribute to the development of the University. To this end, participants were asked to indicate practical ways that the knowledge they possessed so far as professionalism and work ethics are concerned, had impacted their work output. Most of the respondents indicated that they had exhibited professionalism and work ethics by their willingness to constantly share relevant information with their colleagues. They also mentioned that they often challenged themselves to do the right thing even when no one was watching them. Again, they mentioned attributes such as acceptance of the views of people (colleagues and students as well as people they come across in the line of their duties), regardless, teamwork, confidentiality, and following rules and procedures, among others. The following are some of the excerpts from respondents regarding how knowledge about professionalism and work ethics had impacted their work:

> *I think that my knowledge of work ethics and professionalism has helped me to improve upon my work as a hall assistant, especially the way I dress and talk to my fellow colleagues and students. Knowing that I am a frontline manager means that I always must be decent in my dressing. At first, I could wear slippers and appear too casual, but now I do things differently. [Akast, Uni Hall].*

Another person said that:

> *At first, I used to give excuses for unaccomplished tasks, but now I make sure I take full responsibility for my decisions and actions. I perform all my duties without complain and I particularly give a listening ear to people. [Akums, Simpa Hall].*

The effect of knowledge of work ethics and professionalism on the work output has been phenomenal as indicated in the findings of the study. Participants have identified that their knowledge of the concepts have enabled them to improve on their work output. This hleps in translating into the organisational goals as it helps to increase productivity and overall performance of the organisation as corroborated by Aldrin and Yunanto, [1]; Omisore and Adeleke, [2], who intimated that employee productivity improves the overall performance of the organisation.

An experienced hall assistant particularly mentioned how relevant his knowledge of professionalism and work ethics had enabled him to keep information of students confidential. According to him:

> Over a long period of service, I have come to realise that it is necessary to safeguard information that students share with us. For instance, as I work at the lodge there are times that students confide in me with some issues concerning their roommates and I must admit that preserving that information and treating them as confidential helps a lot. I have gained a lot of respect from those students, and I feel happy about that. [Akast, Uni Hall].

The narrative above shows that long service on the job from experiences, has an impact on staff's response to the application of work ethics and professionalism. This confirms Idid and Arandas' [12] study that noted that education and length of service of professionals as elements that influence their professionalism and code of ethics. This implies that the more years an individual has served on a particular job as well as the level of education has a direct link to the impact of work ethics and professionalism on their work output.

Going beyond mere knowledge of work ethics and professionalism to translating the knowledge gained into practical exhibits of improved work output was very critical for this study. The key question to ask was: How do Hall Assistants apply work ethics and professionalism in the line of duty to enable them to contribute to the development of the various halls of residence they worked and the University as a whole? To ascertain this, some critical questions that centered on how they had exhibited those in a practical manner were asked. Some of the

respondents shared some practical experiences to that effect. An excerpt is as follows:

> …yes, erm even though it is true that block supervisors are regarded as the ones to inspect the work of the cleaners, I personally ensure that as a hall assistant on duty when I am on morning duty, I insist that cleaners finish their work before I allow them to sign in the attendance book as has been directed by the hall manageress. This in my opinion has helped to bring some order in the way some of them work… otherwise when they sign the attendance before working some of them go away without working. This makes me a good team player and a professional, I think…[Potmoand, Ghartey Hall].

It can be ascertained from the above that hall assistants have applied the knowledge gained from work ethics and professionalism to impact their work for the productivity of the various halls and the University. This was shown in the way they handled issues in terms of handling affiliates' information, working as team members, taking up roles, and working on other schedules other than what has been assigned to them.

From the study, it can be argued that when employees are able to show traits such as good attitude, team spirit, and credibility in the way they carry themselves, it impacts the work they do and eventually yield high productivity. This corroborates what Adeyeye et al. [13] concluded in their study that workers' observation of ethical conduct such as positive attitudes, committed teamwork, high integrity, and self-discipline result in high productivity.

5. CONCLUSION

The study focused on hall assistants' perspectives on the concepts of work ethics and professionalism, the relevance of professionalism and work ethics, the role of hall assistants regarding issues of work ethics and professionalism, and the impact of work ethics and professionalism on the work output of hall assistants at UEW.

Knowing about the ethics of the work of hall assistants and how professional they are expected to act, has a link to the overall achievement of the goal of increasing productivity of UEW eventually. Thus, the urge to attain and maintain a high level of productivity at the various halls of residence is very important in

the overall achievement of the University's goal as the University seeks to provide a congenial atmosphere for its clientele who are the students.

Ethical and professional consideration in hall assistants' work is therefore connected to the development of UEW as has been evidenced in this study. For high productivity to be achieved, it is critical that all stakeholders (hall assistants) observe ethical conduct in their dealings with one another. It is worth indicating about the implication of the theory of constructivism on the current study in terms of hall assistant ability to construct their own meaning from the concepts of work ethics and professionalism and how their understanding of the concepts has enabled them to improve upon their work output as employees of the University. From the above, the study concluded that Hall assistants at UEW were knowledgeable about professionalism and work ethics so far as institutions of work are concerned. The relevance of professionalism and work ethics included increased output of work since staff will exhibit behaviours and attitudes that will encourage the clientele who are basically students to feel very satisfied and in effect refer prospective students to the university.

There was no document that detailed professionalism and work ethics from the university that staff needed to be exposed to. Even though hall assistants had not sighted any documentation on work ethics and professionalism, their knowledge about the two concepts enabled them to practise ethical and professional attributes during their schedules. This made significant impacts into their work.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the role that work ethics and professionalism play in helping organisations and institutions to achieve their maximum best, the study recommended the following:

- There should be regular workshops to expose staff of UEW to issues of professionalism and work ethics as well as other relevant issues needed to help staff realise their full potential and contribute to the overall development of the university.
- There is the need for staff to be monitored strictly from time to time to ensure that issues of professionalism and work ethics of the university are adhered to.
- Sensitisation programmes about the key role that professional and work ethics play in achieving the goals of the university

should be deliberately organised for all stakeholders in the university so they can in turn be able to monitor to ensure that such issues are adhered to by all staff. This should be in the form of seminars and workshops.
- Individuals in the university should be identified to develop a binding document on professionalism and work ethics specifically related to the uniqueness of UEW.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher had a challenge with getting the respondents that were sampled initially for the study due to their unavailability. In dealing with this limitation, the researcher persuaded other colleagues who had the same characteristics and had time to respond to the study. This affected the anticipated time and was managed.

CONSENT

A rapport was established with participants before the instruments were administered to gain their confidence. The purpose of the exercise was then introduced. The qualitative elements of the study were therefore conducted with the application of principles that would ensure the trustworthiness of the data which is critical in ascertaining the value of qualitative research and the validity and reliability of research instruments (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Trochim, 2007). It is worth mentioning that participants gave their consent before the exercise was carried out and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The purpose of the exercise was then introduced. The study was conducted with the application of principles that would ensure the trustworthiness of the data which is critical in ascertaining the value of qualitative research and the validity and reliability of research instruments (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Trochim, 2007). Thus, to ensure the reliability of the field data, the qualitative component of this study adopted Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model of trustworthiness as follows: Confirmability, Transferability, Credibility, and Dependability. For purposes of anonymity, pseudonyms were used for all the respondents and participants were assured of confidentiality.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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