WORK ETHICS FOR LECTURERS:
AN EXAMPLE OF NAIROBI AND KENYATTA UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Universities as institutions of higher learning have organizational vision based on and consistent with their core values. Values are what people judge to be right and acceptable. They are moral, ethical and professional attributes of character. For the University Lecturers, they are central ingredient guidelines to teaching profession or social work place ethics. This is because academic profession unlike other public professions carries special responsibilities that are subject to public supervision and critique. The primary duty of University Lecturers is to seek and state the truth and exhibit self discipline while transmitting knowledge. At the University, Lecturers do not only encourage their students to pursue education, but also uphold before them the best academic and ethical standards of their disciplines. They are expected to demonstrate respect for students, conduct and ensure that the evaluation of students is genuine without discriminatory treatment, exploitation and sexual harassment often reported in the media. It is ethically important to distinguish between ideologies and personalization whether among staff or between students and lecturers. The latter need to uphold free academic inquiry and tolerate differences of opinions without personalization. This paper therefore posed four questions: What qualities and habits are necessary for a University Lecturer? What are the causes of unethical behaviour? Which attributes facilitate ethical decisions? What ethical responses are essential for a University Lecturer? To contextualize the discussion, we employed a systematic stratified technique. Questionnaires were designed and administered to two hundred (200) respondents from the selected universities respectively.

Key words: Ethics, values, lecturers, honesty, loyalty, trustworthiness, management, codes.

Introduction

Universities are academic institutions whose functions include; the discovery, propagation and perpetuation of ideas, knowledge and dissemination of truth. Truth however, can be elusive and subjective depending on other intervening factors like culture, gender and ethical commitments of the person disseminating it. This is

why Universities have organizational vision statements based on and consistent with the institution's core values. Such vision statements are clearly stated in the University's calendar, strategic plan, if not they are displayed in administrative offices.

The vision statement of University of Nairobi framed is accordingly, and hanged in Heads of Departments' offices reads: "A world-class University committed to scholarly excellence". That of Kenyatta University displayed along the roads within the compound reads:" A dynamic, inclusive and competitive centre of excellence in teaching, learning, research and service to humanity". These vision statements, even without reading the mission statements of the said Universities already summarize the purpose for which each institution was founded and established. This is why even though both Nairobi and Kenyatta Universities were established at different periods in time and now have individual charters, they both concur that their purpose is to manage and perpetuate a scholarly or academic tradition. But, despite the clarity of the purpose for which a University is established, lecturers often tend to face some ethical dilemmas such as: commitment to teaching, evaluation of students' work on time, prejudice in supervision of students work, discrimination and allegiance to the truth against loyalties to students.

Without proper perception of values and social workplace ethics, mere promulgation of statements of core vision and mission can hardly be adequate. In this paper, however, we use the term social workplace ethics in singular to refer to particular area of professional ethics, comprising the norms of right action, good character and values essential for university lecturers to effectively perform their duties. This is because universities are no longer mere ivory towers that negate public scrutiny and criticism; rather, they have become and are run like any other business institutions. They are subject to competition for clients and financial success just like other business enterprises. Not only the University managers have the final word but students (clients), parents (stake holders) and tax payers also have something to say about what is right or wrong with a university. Such remarks and observations fall within the domain of business or social workplace ethics.

Ethics is a branch philosophy because it is concerned with the critical examination of all that may be involved in moral behavior and moral experience. Some of its central questions include: Does the end justify the means? Is it the intention that matters most, or the consequences of the action? How do we know what is good or bad, right or wrong? We cannot therefore adequately underscore the need for workplace ethics at the institutions of higher learning like the universities.

It is such workplace ethics which define how university staff have to behave in the course of performing their day-to-day duties and in relating to students and other people who have interest in the running of a university as public institution. There can hardly be mutual understanding and adequate cooperation without individual and collective application of the codes of workplace ethics. It is, in fact, difficult to accuse the management of an institution against misconduct or manipulation of resources where there are no clear workplace ethics in place to underpin such real or managerial misconduct. The consequences of unethical behavior and the need for social workplace ethics for a university as pointed out above are therefore too essential to be ignored. This is especially so, since the introduction of self supporting programmes in public universities to enhance their financial base. The management now realizes and acknowledges the significance of ethical issues and decisions in the daily operations of their institutions. They now know how unethical behavior can create legal risks for their entrepreneurial enterprises leading to questionable financial problems which may eventually lead to imprisonment.

Today in Kenya, it is difficult therefore, for an institution business or otherwise, public or private to survive without social workplace ethics. This is why, as will soon be discussed, the new Kenyan constitution includes a code of conduct and ethics for public universities. But, without ethical standards of their organizations, university leaderships can hardly manage and appropriately handle their critiques and

evaluators. That is, ethical behavior and reputation among university staff can provide a competitive advantage or disadvantage among potential students and employees. In fact here in Kenya, we are not oblivious of how university students have often boycotted lectures on allegations of unethical conduct targeting both management and lecturers. It is of essence therefore that universities be ethically managed to attract loyalty, trust and commitment for the benefit of the institutions. This will require honest and ethical conduct of handling actual or apparent conflicts of interest between personal and professional relationships (Desjardins, 2006:4).

A university community comprises the management, lecturers; students stake holders and tax payers who are in one way or another affected by decisions made within the institution. This is why everyone has good reason for being concerned with ethical meaning of those decisions. In post modern turn in sociological and philosophical thinking, the questioning of universal values, especially those based on the roles of professional practitioners in relation to the service users, is now a common concern in all business oriented institutions. Individual professionals irrespective of their institutions and positions are today influenced by ethical discourses of the organizations where they work and the policy framework within which they practice (cf Banks Sarah 2008:14). Social workplace ethics is in fact,continuing to broaden its scope beyond traditional professional ethics which tended to focus on codes and difficult cases. Professional work ethics includes values, relationships of care and the critical moral competence for everyday and transformatory practice. Social workplace ethics as pointed out already falls within a wider domain of moral discussion. And, to facilitate such impact, our discussion must be based on particular ethical theoretical framework.

2.1. Theoretical Framework of Social Workplace Ethics

Theoretically, professions have two obligations, corporate and individual. The later is commonly governed by both formal and informal rules (Andrew Abbot 1983:2). This discussion however is mainly concerned with the professionals, namely lecturers themselves and how they perceive and interpret these obligations according to professional or workplace ethics. For example, when we ask: what do students deserve? Are lecturers justified to withhold students' grades? What practice is of overall beneficial consequences between students and lecturers? What is unfair, just or unjust treatment of students or lecturers? What is the rationale for the disparity of pay and allowances between the management and lecturers? These are questions whose answers and explanations are based on ethical theoretical framework. This is because ethical codes are the most concrete cultural forms in which formally trained workers acknowledge and realize their social obligations. The significance of such social workplace ethical code, explains why the new Kenyan constitutional dispensation, includes Codes of Conduct and Ethics for Public Universities, as discussed in parts of this paper.

Since our discussion is intended for individual lecturers and their behavior, utilitarianism and deontological theories seem to be more appropriate for such examination. Owing to some challenges in the explanation of these two common theories, there have emerged relativism and psychological egoism. The discussion on utilitarianism and deontological theories will enable the pointing out of specific parts of the theories that determine right and wrong in terms of the consequences of one's actions or decisions.

Historically, Utilitarianism has been associated with the shaping of politics, economic and public policy. It is a modern form of Hedonism found among ancient Greeks and most common in the works of Thomas Hobbes, David Hume and Adam Smith. But, it was Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill who expounded it in its modern form. Both Bentham and Stuart Mill are basically consequentialists because utilitarianism which they advocated is a form of consequentialism. As an ethical theory, consequentialism determines good and bad, and therefore right and wrong based on consequences, or the outcome of an act or a decision. Whereas for utilitarianism, the decision which yields the greatest good or benefit to the most people is

ethically correct. In other words, under the utilitarian theory one can compare predicted solutions and fairly determine which choice is ethically suitable and beneficial for the most people. There are however, two types of utilitarianism; act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism. In act utilitarianism, a person performs the acts that benefit the most people, regardless of the personal feelings or the societal constraints such as law. But, rule utilitarianism seeks to benefit the most people but through the fairest and most just means available (Catherine Rainbow, 2002). For our discussion therefore, we shall base our argument under rule utilitarianism. This is because, in any moral act or decision, we should not only seek pleasure, or benefit for ourselves but for others as well. For example, a lecturer may find pleasure and satisfaction in teaching but if in the process he or she makes a decision that hurts some students in his or her class then such an act or a decision is unethical. The proponents of utilitarianism theory were influenced by the great democrat revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which underscored the need for greatest good for the greatest number (cf Desjardins, 2006:30). Our argument here is that, our decision should not be limited to mere greatest good for greater number, but rather the quality of the act or decision is important. Institutions, be they universities or political may find utilitarianism popular because of proneness to place the good ahead of the individual's needs, that is the good of the company or institution comes first.

The theory however raises moral concern. For example, if every act is judged simply from its consequences, who then determines the greater consequence except the one making the decision? What criteria does he or she see apart from a personal conviction? Isn't this a form of subjectivity, in that what gives one the greater happiness is good irrespective of any other intervening situations? We may take another example of a business individual placed in a situation where scarcity and competition prevent him or her from getting what they want, won't the person then make his/her own personal decision and establish their own preferences to get what they want? This said differently by utilitarianism, means that the end justifies the means! The point we are making here is that we should not only consider the consequences that our acts might have for ourselves, but also for all other parties affected by them (cf Desjardins, 2006:45). This is akin to Socratic dictum that no craft or profession should seek its own advantage but should benefit those who are subject to it (Vide Elias Baumgarten 1982:283).

Another common social workplace ethical theory is Deontological which states that people should adhere to their obligations and duties when confronted with an ethical dilemma. That is, an individual will follow his or her obligations to another person or society because upholding one's duty is what is considered ethically correct (Catherine Rainbow, 2002). Within this tradition we may refer to Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative theory which says that our primary duty is to act only in those ways in which the maxim of our acts could be made universal law (Desjardins, 2006:39). What Kant meant is that an ethical decision one makes, should not depend on their subjective whims. This theory therefore, does not support utilitarianism which makes judgements in terms of consequences; instead, it insists that some things should not be done, regardless of the consequences. Because, some acts are right or wrong as a matter of principles,it is our duty to act accordingly even if beneficial consequences would suggest otherwise (Desjardins, 2006:45). We should not fall victims of ethical egoism which states that one should always act so that his/ her own actions produce what is in his/her own best long term interests. The problem with such an ethical conclusion is that it does not say how others should act. Yet, in a human society, certain actions almost always have a greater utilitarian value and as such it is ethically important that general rules are formulated to help people follow the ethical guidelines of their actions. The said regulations can be our yardstick so that we do not only fulfill our ethical obligations but that in so doing, we respect others' rights. This then may limit decisions aimed at mere production of good consequences but the application of such ethical decisions requires an appreciation of the importance of values as discussed in the following section.

2.2. Values and Social Workplace Ethics

Business oriented institutions *qua* institutions can hardly survive without placing great emphasis on some particular core values which distinguish them from their competitors. Values are basic and fundamental beliefs in human society. They guide management and workers in making personal or financial decisions and in judging what is right and acceptable. For example, one may choose to buy food instead of expensive clothes. That is, he or she chooses to spend his or her money on food rather than on clothes because they value food more than being smartly dressed. Values are moral, ethical and professional attributes of character which are concerned with how a person behaves in any given situation. They motivate a sense of moral duty or virtue.

In an institutional level, ethical values serve the ends of human well-being. Hence, acts and choices that aim to promote human well being are acts and choices based on ethical values (Desjardins 2006:6). But as indicated above, the well being promoted by ethical values is not only a personal and selfish well- being but, it puts into consideration others' well-being. Such values include: integrity, honesty, professionalism, caring, truthfulness and justice to mention but a few. These values are important for every lecturer if they have to be ethically counted for teaching. It is a question of individual character. And, character is not something we simply turn on and off whenever we want to by choice. No. It is much of who we are, our own personal identity that we cannot act outside of its perimeters. This is because everyone is formed by years of role modeling and training. It should not be something we deliberately choose to have and then methodically practice, rather our character formation begins early in life under the tutelage of our parents, peers and teachers (vide David B. Ingram and Jennifer Parks, 2002). Lecturers are therefore more than mere teachers, they can help to inculcate good character in their students; such as integrity which will help them act to ethical principles and place those principles above expedience of self –interest even when such action imposes bad reputation (Maisarah Mohamed Saat et. al. 2004).

2.2.1. Honesty

Honesty is an important value especially for University Lecturers who as academic leaders are believed to be role models to both students and the wider community. As such, they are expected to adhere to the highest standard of honesty, not only in their professional practice, but also in scholarship. For example, a supervisor of a postgraduate student who notices through research of unearthed information hitherto not common knowledge to academic world and instead of encouraging such a young academician to develop the area, the lecturer decides to take the given information for their own publication or coerces the student that they both be co-authors of the same publication. This is an unethical academic procedure to be avoided.

2.2.2. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, on the other hand inspires confidence for those who rely on the good intentions of others to perform services competently and in their best interest. This is underscored by the Public Officer Ethics Act of the Laws of Kenya 2003, Cap. 183part III, 8, 9 (I) which says: A public officer shall, to the best of his/her ability carry out his/her duties and ensures that the services that s/he provides are catered for efficiently and honestly. And part 9(I) adds: A public officer shall carry out his/her duties in a way that maintains public confidence in the integrity of his office; treat the public and his/her fellow public officers with respect..." Academicians are therefore expected to act according to the moral point of view in order to fulfill their expected responsibilities to society. They cannot afford to be unreliable, selfish and inward looking!

Some of our respondents complained and pointed out that more often; some University lecturers do not seem to adhere to this value of trustworthiness. They (lecturers) may not be in their offices even after promising the students to be there. Some even misplace students' marks from assignments and after promising that

they would be obtained, the complainants rarely obtain positive results. It must be pointed out that a lecturer associated with such unfulfilled promises does not seem to exhibit a trait of loyalty. Because, his action goes contrary to utilitarian theory which as we have pointed out encourages people to create as much happiness as possible. A student whose marks are missing cannot be happy with the said lecturer.

2.2.3. Loyalty

Loyalty as a moral responsibility expected of lecturers is necessary in social workplace ethics because it promotes and protects the interest of others, vis a vis students. This is because even though every lecturer is expected to be loyal to the institutions in which they are engaged ultimately, they should owe their allegiance to students. Trustworthiness and loyalty indeed underscore the fulfillment of the Kenyan Code of Conduct and Ethics for Public Universities 2003, Cap 193, Part II, 6:1-2 which states: "An officer who is a member of the academic staff of a University shall organize his/ her instruction, assessment and examination in a manner that complies with all institutional requirements and expectation. And, an officer who is a member of the academic staff of a university shall ensure that the examinations are delivered to the students as scheduled and that the result thereof is processed without undue delay". It is our belief that not all public university lecturers are familiar with this code of conduct.

2.2.4. Code of conduct for members of staff

It is not very clear as we have hinted above whether all the University lecturers are aware of this Code of Conduct and Ethics for Public Universities. This is because; it is rarely referred to by lecturers. And, even when recruitment for the staff is being conducted, the panel in question hardly makes reference to this code's requirements. Such background therefore, makes it necessary that this paper discusses the issue of social workplace ethics at the institutions of higher learning. Once more, professional or social workplace ethics is primarily concerned with the goals of educators to provide knowledge, develop skills and nurture many aspects of students' personality in order to facilitate their development, help them fulfill their potential, and assist them in becoming both involved citizens and contributors to society. And as humans, through such exercises expand and form their personality (vide Maisarah Mohamed Saat, et. al. 2004).

To contextualize our discussion and underscore such responsibility of educators or lecturers, we need to ask and attempt to answer the following questions: What qualifications and habits are necessary for University lecturers? What motivates or causes unethical behavior among lecturers? What attributes and ethical responses are essential for a University lecturer?

2.2.5. Qualifications and Habits Necessary for a Lecturer

In Kenya, the term teacher is generally used to refer to all those who impart knowledge to learners, right from the nursery schools to the Universities. The term lecturer on the other hand, is specifically used in reference to all educators at the Kenya's Universities, apart from those who impart knowledge in tertiary institutions. Lecturers at the Universities are however, knowledge workers who have fulfilled two basic requirements. First, one must have excelled in his or her formal education to enable them to be recruited at the institutions of higher learning. And, the process of this recruitment may take two forms: some can be hired to the Universities soon after acquiring their academic Doctorate (PhD), while others may be recruited as Tutorial Fellows after completing the second degree (Masters). A Tutorial Fellowship position is a training level entry point which enables an individual to teach some unit(s) in the respective Department under the supervision of a full lecturer or professor who has obtained his/her academic degree (PhD), even as the said Tutorial Fellow is working on his/her PhD.

The second level of requirement for lecturers as knowledge workers is the readiness to believe in continuing education throughout their working lives and to keep their knowledge up to date (Drucker, 2002). Hence, lecturers must constantly read, study, upgrade and renew their notes to prevent the use of what is commonly known as yellow notes! However, not all potential academic staff are hired because of their pedagogical qualifications. Some may be recruited because of their expertise in a needed area of research or merely on the basis of course content knowledge. The majority are expected to learn on the job. At the moment of recruitment, emphasis is laid on teaching, student consultation, research, supervision of postgraduate students, attendance of conferences and publications. Rarely does the management of Universities seriously remind potential academic staff about the need for job improvement especially the significance of social workplace ethics and virtues associated with good relationships between students and educators at the Universities.

In fact, most lecturers in Kenyan Universities have not been adequately prepared for the upsurge of contemporary massification of university education alongside its challenges of various digital information systems and the multiplicity of programmes intended to accommodate continuing education students. It is amidst such plurality of programmes and challenges that emphasize the significance of social workplace ethics. The need for particular qualifications and habits for lecturers rests on the assumption that their primary concern as pointed out above is to encourage students to pursue education and to uphold ethical standards of their disciplines.

Lecturers are professionals with social standing. Their responsibility can be traced back in history to the Hippocratic Oath of the Greek physician: "*Primum non nocere*-above all not knowing to do harm" (Drucker, 2001:65). This implies that University lecturers as professionals should not deliberately intend to or do harm to their students. The students too, as clients of their lecturers must trust their teachers and not knowingly harm them. This mutual understanding is important because ethical acts and choices are expected to be acceptable and reasonable from all relevant points of view (cf Desjardins 2006:6). Without such reciprocal understanding, students may not trust their lecturers at all. It is further necessary that a lecturer has autonomy so as not to be controlled, supervised or directed by students. Lack of autonomy could create a disconnect between students and their teachers in that there would be no recognition or appreciation of authority and decisions made by the lecturers.

The recognition and reciprocal understanding between students and lecturers however, does not minimize the importance of professional or social workplace ethics as a necessary quality for lecturers. Both lecturers and students should know their limits and desist from unethical disruptive and intimidating behaviours which eventually may interfere with academic work or performance. This is because; a University is a public institution which houses not only students and lecturers, but also the support and administrative staff. A peaceful co-existence and achievement of University's objectives would require that both students and staff should uphold respect and fair treatment from one another. Such is expected outcome of social workplace ethics because codes deal with individuals and individual behavior. Since ethical behavior is a particular type of compliance with social rules, it should be a compliance based not on coercion, regulation, or calculation, but on free adherence to certain general principles that presumably are socially generated and sustained as we hinted in the description of values above (vide Andrew Abbot 1983:865).

All concerned people must play their part in avoiding behaviour which may be perceived as harassing, overbearing, bullying or emotionally threatening. Lecturers, because of their publicity and recognized social status must be trustworthy, honest as we have pointed out. In their evaluation of students' work they should avoid suspicious situations which may give rise to conflict of interest. Lecturers are indeed, called upon to be examples of courtesy, fairness and equity in handling students in order to exhibit and underscore their professionalism.

Such special ways of operation should also be seen to include moral perspectives as emphasized above. This is necessary because during our fieldwork, some of our respondents pointed out in confidence that it is not uncommon for some lecturers to seek sexual and economic favours in the process of managing examinations or even during teaching practice. This may sound a very remote accusation, but it may not be totally unfounded. Only that it remains a pretty difficult observation to verify. But because it was included in our discussion as a way of warning against those who may be culpable, we felt obliged to include it here! It also undermines the role of a lecturer as a leader and mentor of those s/he teaches. As mentioned already, ethical compliance and social status do coincide because it is social group which generates both rules to be followed and the admiration conferred. It is therefore necessary to base any account of social workplace ethics on the relation between ethics and status. This explains why each institution of higher learning should prepare and distribute a code of conduct to both its staff and students to clarify challenges in their relationships. This background leads to the question- What motivates or causes unethical behaviour among university lecturers?

2.2.6. Common Motivation for Unethical Practices among Lecturers

The Kenyan Public Officers Ethics Cap 183(2003) is a professional etiquette meant to spell out the ethical behaviours necessary for the running of various Corporations and Public Institutions in Kenya. It points out to professionals who are involved in these corporations and institutions on what to do and what not to do if they have to achieve their goals. Public Universities are part and parcel of these institutions, where ethical behaviours are essential for the realization of the Universities' goals or objectives. This is because; universities are mainly founded for teaching purposes and any element or organizations within the university revolve around this primary purpose. Such reasons for the establishment of a university is not merely for the benefit of the learner, but also includes the society and humanity in general (vide Sadiq Isah Rada, 2009).

The significance of ethical behavior at the university cannot be adequately stated. A university as a communal institution is the cornerstone in building ethical organizations and accordingly has a vital role in laying the foundation on how to make tough and necessary choices to live and behave ethically (cf. Maisarah Mohd Saat et al, 2004). In this regard, the objectives for which a university is established should include not only to teach ethics but also to be an ethical institution. "An unethical university or a university without ethics in the way it operates as a moral community or business would be a contradiction of terms" (Maisarah Mohd Saat et al, 2004:15). We cannot emphasize more enough that ethical behavior should play a central role in any university worth the description. After all, the universities are founded to pay respect to human values and to be run on those beliefs and traditions that the society holds most sacred; "the founders of universities believed that it should be a symbol of the spirit of its community, the guardian of its morals and formulator of its hope" (Sadiq Isah Radda 2009:4).

Unfortunately, from the malpractices that are frequently reported about Kenyan Public Universities, it seems challenging to generalize that our institutions of higher learning are bedrocks of ethical behavior. The motivations for immoral behavior may be several, but here we shall confine ourselves to those that explain the problem from the university lecturers' perspectives. These can be categorized into two main parts: *conflict of interest* and *influence of parochial variables or obligations*. Conflict of interest is a conflict between advancing the public interest which an individual is charged to do and advancing one's self interest. The expectation is that the public interest should supersede personal interest. In fact, such is the ultimate moral principle of utilitarian ethics known as principle of utility! That is, in a situation where one is to make a choice between alternative actions, he or she should do what results in the best overall consequences for everyone concerned (vide David Ingram et. al, p. 10). Unfortunately, this is not the case. The challenge may come in many forms such as sexual relationship between a lecturer or an official of the university with a student or students.

Our investigation established that some lecturers solicit sexual favours from some female students to gain diverse favours. These may include; leaking examination questions to potential female students, giving them higher grades to improve their degree classifications or even allocating marks to female students who have not actually sat for the said paper. Sadiq Isah Radda (2009) adds that, "these kinds of female students and lecturers could be considered willing parties and partners in progress". But we were also informed that sexualization of examinations can take a different dimension when an intellectually able female student turns down the advances of a lecturer for sexual favours. The lecturer could frustrate such an intelligent student by failing her in the unit(s) unless the student gives in and offers herself for sex. The frustration explains what the Kenyan media has in the past called "sex grades!" The interpretation is that a student who is promoted to the next level of study through sexual favours may obtain a certificate whose contents they cannot measure up to; if not the practice qualifies to be regarded as the highest level of sexual harassment in the institutions of higher learning! Whatever interpretation we give to this sort of arrangement, it certainly goes contrary to consequentialism ethical theory upon which utilitarianism is grounded. Namely that an act that results in the greatest amount of good or the least amount of harm for the greatest number of people is a moral act (David Ingram et. al, p. 10). Our preceding example can hardly qualify to reconcile with this theory.

Conflict of interest however, can also be a challenging factor where a lecturer is dealing with students who are either related to him or are children of friends. Here too, a lecturer may award marks which are not merited and thereby give advantage to undeserving candidates. If not, unethical behavior among lecturers can be realized due to the desire for economic gains. This is where a lecturer may leak examination questions to a student(s) who are willing to respond to his/ her economic needs. This form of conflict of interest is more common among those university officials who are in charge of printing examination papers. It is nevertheless unfair and immoral to sell examination questions to any potential candidate. This is why it is important that all university staff be inducted into the social workplace ethical code of conduct that governs a University.

The second category of factors responsible for unethical behavior at the university is commonly referred to as *primordial influence* or *parochial variables* (vide Sadiq Isah Radda, 2009). This is a very challenging work phenomenon among Africans. It is in fact, an extension of conflict where a lecturer is called upon by the prevailing circumstances to give undue advantage to some students simply because of who they are, where they come from and to whom they are associated with. Here, is one of those moments when the Kenyan ethnic obligation manifests itself. Just because this student is from my clan, village or location s/he must be promoted by being awarded marks which they do not deserve. This may also be extended to include students who belong to the same church, worshipping with the lecturer or whose parents are in particular government position and who can influence some promotions or potential appointments. They too may prompt a lecturer to give them undue advantage so that in the end, the lecturer too can receive a favour in turn. A lecturer in this kind or situation is actually finding an easier option to compete for the scarce resources or opportunity.

Apart from conflicting loyalties, complexity of strategic issues may prevent an individual from applying ethical principles in making decisions. It is not unknown that sometimes, a political authority may be used to coerce a lecturer to behave unethically to save a situation. An ethical behaviour as a value is influenced by parental upbringing. An individual whose parents failed to instill morals upon him or her while growing may be more inclined to ignore ethical obligations. Once more, the institutions of higher learning should not assume the presence of social workplace ethics among their staff without enforcing it.

2.2.7. Ethical attributes and responses necessary for a Lecturer

Social workplace ethics is a necessary requirement set of values based on hard work and diligence. It is assumed that those who recruit and hire workers are looking for people with a strong work ethic. Even at the university, such need for people who are dependable, efficient and aware of time keeping is a normal expectation. But, social workplace ethics at the University being a moral value does not only ameliorate the relationship between the workers and management or students, it also helps an individual to get and keep a job apart from making him or her a good person. It also helps employers to determine the value of their employees to an organization or institution. At the university, the social workplace ethics of a lecturer is key in helping students on how to judge, evaluate and to relate to him or her.

Often, students are quick and sensitive to note and judge for themselves those lecturers who are keen in doing their very best as good teachers in the Department. They often get to know that such lecturers not only perform their work efficiently, but are able to give assignments, correct and return them on time. These lecturers easily make the *initiative* to get to know their students and encourage those who seem to be shy and reluctant to be courageous so as to participate in class discussions. But they are also *dependable*. This is because dependability is a virtue associated with honesty, *reliability* and therefore punctuality. A dependable lecturer can be trusted both by the students and the administration. Such lecturers tend to honour the promises made with others and so foster excellent social workplace ethics in themselves apart from setting good examples to those around them. A good work ethic facilitates and makes work to be efficiently accomplished to ensure positive results.

Reliability requires that lecturers cultivate *positive attitudes* with all the students, and prepares them to get things done. For example, when a Department in a given university requests that all lecturers hand in examination results, arrange the scripts well, irrespective of the number of the candidates, a lecturer will have to spend more hours than expected in order to keep the estimated schedule. Often, some students may miss a graduation because particular lecturer(s) did not mark their assignments or scripts on time, if not lost some of their marks. Such incidents negate *responsibility* that is part and parcel of work ethics. A good social workplace ethics demands that a lecturer fosters teamwork among students and encourages them to perform well in their studies.

Dependability however, goes along with *trustworthiness*. This is not only being ready to do what one says they will do, but also to have courage in doing the right thing. The good reputation of a lecturer among students is an added virtue for his/ her relationship with them in the campus and outside the institution. In addition, a lecturer who expects others to respect him or her must also cultivate *respec*t as a virtue. This is akin to the synoptic golden rule, "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31) and to Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative that we treat others as ends in themselves and not as means to an end. Lecturers therefore have to be ready to treat students and fellow colleagues with respect by being considerate to their feelings without undue anger or insults.

Another attribute for ethical decision is *fairness*. This is the ability to listen to others without blaming them unnecessarily and carelessly. Some of our respondents pointed out that some lecturers tend to be careless in their remarks, attitude and language before their students. For example, here in Kenya, public universities admit and register students from all ethnic affiliations. A lecturer must be courteous against remarks that may be conceived to be *ethnocentric.* An educator at the university must also exhibit some level of caring, compassion, forgiving and helping those in need. In this way, education is a method of persuasion where the learners are being dissuaded from their ignorance to see life and societal values differently from their youthful preconceived methods of evaluation. Such an exercise requires genuine interpersonal relationships, positive attitudes, patience and sensitivity. In other words, a lecturer as a university educator may not only be assessed from an academic standpoint, but also from an ethical dimension.

These ethical decisions assume that the lecturer appreciates *personal value*, to facilitate his or her choices. Values and morals are necessary attributes which determine our character and how we view and deal with others. They are also the embodiments that an institution stands for. If members of an institution do not internalize them then there would be a disconnect between them and the institution. This would create problems not only for the running of the institution but among the members themselves. Values therefore determine what is right and what is wrong. But, doing what is right or wrong is what moralists refer to as *Ethics*. That is, to behave ethically in a manner consistent with what is right or moral. But how does one know what *to be right* means?

Right or wrong are not mere individually initiated principles. They are responsible to what a society has defined and regulated to be ethical or unethical behaviour. For those who are influenced by Judeo-Christian heritage, the Ten Commandments may define what is ethically right or wrong. Every society however, be it secular or theistic often defines what is right and wrong for its members. It is important therefore for every lecturer to be aware of how to recognize such values issues. Because, lack of identification of values is an impediment to ethical operation and harmonious co-existence in any institution.

Ethical decisions are not made in vacuum; they have immediate consequences on other members of society and or organization. They are contagious as it were in that each moral decision has three dimensions of consequences. First, the responsibility of a decision fully lies with the one who makes it. Second, is the reaction of the recipient of the decision and or action. Third, the consequences and impact of the reaction upon the relationship between the subject and the recipient of the decision made. It is such ethical triangulation that challenges an individual in the midst of several choices. That is, every society has a major impact on the behavior of its members which can either have a positive or negative influence on the subjects.

In making an ethical decision therefore, a university lecturer must be aware of where there is no clear cut rule to choose the - *alternative* that would be approved by the university community. Morally, it is laudable to decide and choose that which seems a harder right instead of the easier wrong which is subject to criticism. This can only be possible when we internalize the value of what is right. Because, to deal with an ambiguous situation can be very challenging and indeed calls for personal conviction of what is intrinsically a moral value. Personal conviction is important because more academicians may realize that their own values may concur with the institution.

Owing to lack of universal legislation, it pays to *compromise* rather than hold firmly on one single ethical principle. Such a stand would lead to a discord and conflict and eventually to disintegration rather than integration of the institution. The inclination to compromise often leads to the expression, "each case has to be considered on its own merit".

Experience in fact tends to show that all societies have developed beliefs to help distinguish between which values are necessary for the common good. A lecturer therefore making an ethical decision where there are no clear cut rules to guide the choice should take an alternative action that has the institution's approval. For example, the idea that one good deed deserves another or the principle of reciprocity is found in all human societies. If therefore, a lecturer makes a decision in an ambiguous situation, and if that choice or decision is informed by social ethics, it will definitely serve as an appropriate moral decision. Our earlier reference to Hippocratic principle- *primum non nocere*- "above all not knowing to do harm" is applicable in *an ambiguous situation.*

After all, as we are reminded by the synoptic Gospels, moral culpability takes place in the mind, and not necessarily in the actual execution of the thought. If for example, a university lecturer unknowingly adds the marks of a student which in the end affects the total degree grade of that student, he or she can hardly be held morally responsible for the eventual outcome of the results; because s/he had not deliberately planned

to be malicious. For the greater the potential risk, the more important the ethical practice becomes. Institutions of higher learning should therefore define what is right and what is wrong for the members of the institutions. An internalization of such ethical obligation may help a lecturer to make an appropriate decision in an ambiguous situation. Since, what is considered to be right is the ability of the lecturer to look at the positive values of a given society and the institution in question.

The foregoing discussion has attempted to answer our original two central questions- What is the significance of social workplace ethics? And, what makes a good lecturer? We readily admit that we have not adequately answered these questions. Since a University lecturer is hired to manage a wide range of functions, it may be difficult to find a simple answer to the question: what makes a good lecturer? Granted however, his or her main function is teaching, developing the curriculum, assessing and supervising students apart from couselling as may be appropriate. Such a complex responsibility definitely needs a good deal of discipline. The answers to our two questions remain complex except that the lecturer should be aware of ethical decision and its impact. With such admittance, we can now turn to the last part of discussion-data presentation.

3.1. Data presentation and discussion

This paper was prompted by frequent criticism both from students and local media about the quality of performance of some lecturers and their relationship with students. To facilitate our discussion, we originally asked four questions which we finally summarized into: What is the significance of social workplace ethics? And what generally makes a good lecturer?

We distributed our questionnaires to three hundred and seventy six (376) respondents from both Nairobi and Kenyatta Universities. And, to contextualize the findings the discussion was divided into four unequal parts: Lecturers' preparedness; aspects of conflict of interest among lecturers and students; availability and consultation with lecturers and students' and staff interrelationships as presented in tables 1 to 4.

The information obtained from our questionnaires and scheduled interviews as shown in table 1 indicate that sixteen percent (16%) of our study population admitted that there was a negative relationship among lecturers. This is because some lecturers tended to make negative remarks about their colleagues in front of students. Some said they had published more or studied in very outstanding universities. While 40% of the same population acknowledged the presence of poor relationship between students and their lecturers. It was apparent that 48% of our respondents acknowledged the need for professional values although they did not know the term –*work ethics*. They simply underscored the need for good behaviour of lecturers towards students, which we termed as professional values. Some respondents even termed it commitment to duty. Strangely enough, the existence of the Kenyan Code of Conduct and Ethics guiding the public universities is not a common knowledge to the university community. At least 39.4% of our study population had no idea of the existence of this important official Kenyan document. This is why we strongly suggest in our discussion that each institution of higher learning should make reference to the document during the time of recruitment of staff, especially for younger and or junior academicians. If not, like most universities in the West, there should be a Code of Conduct signed by staff at the commencement of their contract with the University and the presence of job description should not replace such a document.

At the university, however students who were often, serious with their work tended to note and identify lecturers that were committed to their work. The information provided in table 2 presents some of the key attributes that should be adhered to by lecturers. It is further indicated in table 2 that 58.5% of the students who participated in the study said that some lecturers rarely kept time, 66.5% complained about lack of proper issuance of course outline and comprehensive reading lists either at the beginning of a semester or during the lectures. Some 40% of the students suspected that some lecturers teach the same things year in

and year out, hence the expression "yellow notes"! 53.4 % of our respondents felt that some lecturers may be conversant with course content, but the same may find problems in delivering what they claim to know to students. This may not be our own exaggeration, because 42.6% of students confided that some lecturers were prone to simply reading from their notes without adequate explanation. If not, the same may not allow questions during their lectures.

We were taken aback when 26.6% of our respondents pointed out that some lecturers just like some Kenyan politicians seem to lack good language. This is more so when a class of students from different ethnic affiliations noted that few lecturers were prejudiced by making somewhat, discriminatory and derogative remarks about Kenyan communities or personalities. In one of the two institutions under study, some students in a given Department booed a lecturer because of his negative remarks against one Kenyan ethnic community.

It is unfortunate that in the absence of social workplace ethics or appreciation of moral values, such a public figure like a university lecturer should be identified with ethnocentrism. Who then will give good examples to young adult Kenyans undergoing formation stage when they seem to be disappointed by their academic leaders?

Table 3 brings out ethical justification as to why university lecturers should take work ethics more seriously. In this table it is noted that the awarding of marks in exchange for sexual favour stands out with 21.3% to underline the nefarious inclination among some lecturers seeking sexual relationships in exchange for higher marks. Once more, ethnocentrism was cited by 13.8% of the study population who pointed out that at the university those who were lucky to have people from their communities either teaching or managing at the university were treated more favourably than those without. The favoured group got higher grades or classifications at the university not necessarily because of their hard work, but rather due to godfathers from their own regions.

It may be repeated here that the inclination to support one's own, in itself is not a bad idea. It becomes negative nevertheless, when it is tainted with some level of injustice by giving due advantage. This is parochialism which does not augur well with the meaning of the term university. A number of students from the School of Education in both universities had academically chilling stories to tell about their experience during Teaching Practice. One of the postgraduate students pointed out that more often, his supervisor asked that they meet at a Bar or Restaurant to discuss his work. A common suspicion was that the students would then pay for the drink or food. Even though such are isolated cases, they nevertheless taint the lecturer's profession and personality. 6.6% of our respondents confirmed our assumption that some lecturers may seek monetary or economic gain. This however is something that is hard to prove or verify.

The disturbing question is what good example is such a person giving to the students? Your answer is like ours! We do not want to condemn university lecturers wholesale nor do we want to give the impression of *'holier than thou'* approach in this paper. The need for consultation and proper management of assignment are reflected in table 4. It was evident that most university lecturers are overwhelmed with duties at their respective institutions and are hardly found in their offices for consultation by students. 50% of our respondents admitted that most lecturers do not adhere to the scheduled consultation hours as displayed on their office doors. 58% of the students who participated in this study affirmed that lecturers delayed in returning back the marked assignment to students which could help them in revising for their end of semester examinations.

The university is a training institution for future leaders who will be attached to various segments of the society. As such, lecturers who are involved need to give good examples. To ameliorate this concern, the administrations of institutions of higher learning need to put in place codes of conduct and underscore the importance of social workplace ethics.

Ours is to admit that lecturers are humans and as such are susceptible to mistakes. The concern however is that knowledge of ethical values and the implementation of the principle of social workplace ethics may help university staff from constant blame both by the public and students.

4.1. Conclusion

In this paper, it is noted that integrity guides everything that has to be done by both lecturers and students. This is based on stipulated Code of Conduct and ethics which enables both lecturers and students to amicably carry out their duties and obligations. But, as we indicated in the beginning: the vision, mission and core values of Kenyatta University and the University of Nairobi are displayed in visible places where they can easily be read. Unfortunately from our discussion, very few staff and students are aware of the importance of this official summary of what the institutions stand for. It is a concern that the institutions should vigorously bring these documents to the attention of both their staff and students. And, at the point of recruitment, staff should be reminded of the ethical codes that govern the institutions. This should not be assumed or replaced by a mere job description. If necessary, each university needs to provide a copy of social workplace ethics for its staff. And, apart from lecturers adhering to such document of social workplace ethics, students too should seriously take orientation programmes and familiarize themselves with the institutions regulations spelling out how to relate with their lecturers.

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Students' and staff interrelationships

Indicators	No.	Percentage
The existence of negative relationships among lecturers	60	16
Awareness of negative relationship between students and lecturers	150	40
Awareness and importance of professional values	180	48
Awareness that work ethics is observed by university lecturers	152	40.4
Awareness of existence of code of conduct and ethics for lecturers	148	39.4

Table 2: Lecturers' preparedness

Indicators	No.	Percentage
Punctuality	220	58.5
Course outline preparation and issuance	250	66.5
Availability of the reading list	250	66.5
Yellow notes	150	40
Familiarity with Pedagogical skills	212	53.4
Self presentation	160	42.6
Use of derogatory language/ blaming students	100	26.6
Encouraging and counseling students	200	51.2

Table 3: Aspects of conflict of interest among lecturers and students

Indicators	No.	Percentage
Awarding of marks in exchange of sexual favours	80	21.3
Awarding of higher marks to students from the lecturer's ethnic community	52	13.8
Giving higher marks to please relatives	26	7
Awarding of higher marks for promotion/ political appointment favours	15	4
Awarding of higher marks for monetary/ economic gain	25	6.6

Table 4: Availability and Consultation

Indicators	No.	Percentage
Maintaining / observing hours of consultation with students	188	50
Timely marking and returning assignments to students	218	58