

Workplace Ethical Communication and Quality Service Delivery of State-owned Tertiary Institutions, Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Internal communications may be as ancient as the practice of communicating organizational values in the workplace. Maintaining a strong culture of compliance at work requires ethical communication. When executed properly, ethical communications may reduce total risk and improve the delivery of high-quality services. But organizations' risk serious financial, legal, and reputational consequences when they disregard ethics. A service is efficient when the same objectives are accomplished with the help of available resources and successful when the results or accomplishments are valuable to the consumers. Quality has always been the cornerstone of any developed and successful institution around the world. However, preliminary investigations revealed that quality service delivery in State-owned tertiary institutions is on the decline. As a result, this study examined how workplace ethical communication affect the provision of high-quality services in state-owned tertiary institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria. 2,273 management employees at the top and intermediate levels from the six institutions under investigation make up the study's population. The sample size was 329 gotten from Raosoft sample size determinant. Cross sectional survey was adopted for this study. Findings revealed that work ethics significantly influence quality service delivery of State-owned tertiary institutions, Oyo State, Nigeria (Adj $R^2=0.628$; $p=0.000$, $Q^2=0.472$). This study concluded that workplace ethical communication and its quality service delivery are inextricably linked. The study recommended that management of the selected State-owned tertiary institutions should ensure that strategies are put in place for strict compliance to ethics and positive attitude being a pre-requisite in delivering quality service

Keywords: Ethical compliance; Fairness; Positive attitude; Work ethics; Quality service delivery

INTRODUCTION

Post-secondary education is provided by tertiary institutions; they are necessary for knowledge discovery, diffusion, and application. Educated folks are better prepared to deal with new challenges and technological advancements to ensure that they can compete with other nations. Tertiary education serves as a steppingstone to higher-paying positions with more opportunities for raises and bonuses. These monetary rewards improve people's living conditions and affords them better financial and health care; which will enable them to invest and save for the future. As a result, tertiary educations satisfy the universal drive for self-actualization as well as

provide a broader range of employment options to pick from. Whether prestige and position are regarded as positive or negative, tertiary education provides them. Educated people are generally well-liked in most cultures, appointment to positions of authority such as directorships, are more likely for the educated and it is easier for those with tertiary education to relocate from one country to another. In developed countries, there is always a high demand for highly skilled workers. The value of tertiary education cannot be overemphasized; it is the foundation of society as well as a key driver of economic progress and personal financial security (Samuel, M. O., & Chipunza, C., 2013).

Without doubt, many developed countries around the globe have made an institutional impression through their quality service delivery. High-quality educational systems have produced more benefits for nations like China, Japan, the United States, and Russia. They have had sustained socioeconomic progress and advancement in many spheres, including business, technology, science, the arts, and culture, as well as history and heritage. They are ahead of developing countries, and this is primarily due to the fact that they have prioritized these necessary tools over all others. The neglect of the educational system, particularly tertiary institutions, is one of the reasons why third world developing countries such as Nigeria are falling far behind. The depressing reality is that Nigeria's public education system is largely unsatisfactory (Ararat, O. L., 2017).

An Australian academic, Tracey Bretag, succinctly summarized the issue by stating that academic fraud "is endemic at all levels of the education system in Nigeria, ranging from misconduct, falsification of academic records, "paying" for grades with gifts, money, or sexual favors, a lax attitude toward work, a lack of proper statistics on their activities, unqualified staff (recruitment and promotion of unqualified staff, particularly in academics, is in clear violation of international standards (Tracey, B., 2017). However, with work ethics in place, there is a good chance that all anomalies will be curtailed, and anyone who violates ethical rules and practices will be punished. Based on this premise, this study investigated the influence of Workplace ethical communication on Quality service delivery of State-owned tertiary institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY

A service is efficient when the same objectives are accomplished with the help of existing resources. A service is effective once the results or accomplishments are valuable to its clients. Public access to high-quality services demonstrates a society's ability to exercise sound governance and helps the political leadership to maintain support for its agenda. Different social groupings will have varying perspectives on what constitutes "excellent" service delivery. Customers (parents, students, alumni, and staff members) in the education sector, for example, desire low-cost, easily accessible, safe, high-quality education that increases their children's or their own opportunities in life. Politicians and policymakers aim to provide societal advantages with little expenditures, high propaganda value, and favorable political outcomes. The providers (lecturers/teachers/administrative and other personnel) are concerned with curriculum that is technically solid, has enough incentives, is paid well, is respected, and is safe. As a result, meeting conflicting objectives and expectations in a manner that pleases all parties involved is essential to good service delivery.

Quality, on the other hand, has always been the cornerstone of any developed and successful institution around the world. Service industries are no different; great service

delivery is even more important in the service industry because most products are only sensed or experienced rather than being physically there. Educational institutions, regardless of size, strive for excellence. Small institutions aspire to become larger, while larger institutions aspire to become greater. Institutions must, in fact, expand at least a little each year to meet the rising educational needs that arise throughout time (James & Nyongesa, 2012). A service is an intangible good that can neither be held nor kept but instead materializes at the moment it is given for consumption (Green & Ramroop, 2014). In order to satisfy the consumer, services must be delivered as effectively and efficiently as feasible. Service delivery, according to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985), is a gauge of how effectively the service level has been attained or comports with client expectations. Zeithaml (1988) reinforced this notion, stating that service delivery reflects the customer's perception of the excellence of a good or service. Pupo (2010) emphasizes the importance of the customer element in his study on service delivery by asserting that "the strength of the customer satisfaction ratings is the best proxy for the long-term economic potential of a corporation."

According to a research by Tait and De Jager (2009), students are seen as the main clients in the higher education environment. They are treated as internal consumers, and their experiences as customers are based on evaluations of all the important inputs and outputs of the educational system. Nowadays, outcome assessment, which calls for gauging the desired outcomes of a certain educational or instructional endeavor that is more heavily focused on the learning process, is what drives service delivery efficiency. Assessments of the quality of instruction and learning as well as evaluations of the overall quality of the student experience are additional service delivery outcomes (van der Westhuizen, 2014).

Service delivery is the capacity and possession of the necessary infrastructure to provide services accurately, in accordance with a certain standard, and consistently. It encompasses the support, assistance, and services that academic staff must provide to students, parents, university users, and the general public. The interaction between policymakers, service providers, and service users may also be thought of as service delivery, which includes both services and the mechanisms that support them (Slaymaker, Christiansen & Hemming, 2005). If the purpose of higher education is to be attained, providing quality services must be given top importance in public universities. The long-term process might also be aided by improving the delivery of key services.

WORKPLACE ETHICAL COMMUNICATION

Work ethics is unquestionably an essential component of effective institutional performance. The ethics of an institution and its performance are inextricably linked. The success and efficiency of any institution's use of the available resources is the only factor that determines its continued existence. Any institution trying to remain in the twenty-first century's education sector must demonstrate its worthiness by its performance in the face of challenging economic conditions and fierce competition. However, only a relatively small number of institutional administrators are aware of this. There are several aspects that affect an institution's overall success, one of which is the prevalent ethics of the organization (Wesarat, et al., 2017). Over the years, the term ethics has become synonymous with management scholars and business leaders all over the world. There is widespread consensus that every institution should seek to be committed in an ethically transparent manner as a matter of policy. Ethics is essentially concerned with how one's actions affect other people and institutions.

Ethics is a collection of moral principles or ideals that institutions use to guide the behavior of their employees and the institution itself in all of their activities both internal and in relation to the outside world (Powell, 2011). The term "ethics" refers to "common decency,"

which includes qualities like integrity, honesty, and fairness. Behaving ethically is considered as part of an institution's social duty, which is based on the notion that institutions should have an impact on society that goes beyond the conventional profit maximization goal (Ugoani, 2019).

In essence, ethics is concerned with the description of how things should be rather than how they are. The goal of ethics is to provide a template on how humans should behave rather than describe humans' behavior in real life. It is the set of rules to which human behavior should adhere. Essentially, the main purpose of ethics is to govern public officials' behavior so that they follow the dictates and norms of their profession in order to promote efficiency and performance (Ugoani, 2013). Work ethics refers to a set of positive behaviors that are based on a basic belief in the holistic work paradigm and a whole dedication to it. If a person, community, or an institution adopts the work paradigm, trust it, and are devoted to it, they will exhibit all of the attitudes and behaviors that are typical of their work (Komari, & Fariastuti, 2013). Workplace ethical communication is essential for building and maintaining positive relationships. By adhering to best practices for ethical communication, organizations can promote respect, honesty, and transparency, creating a healthy work environment that fosters productivity, innovation and quality service delivery.

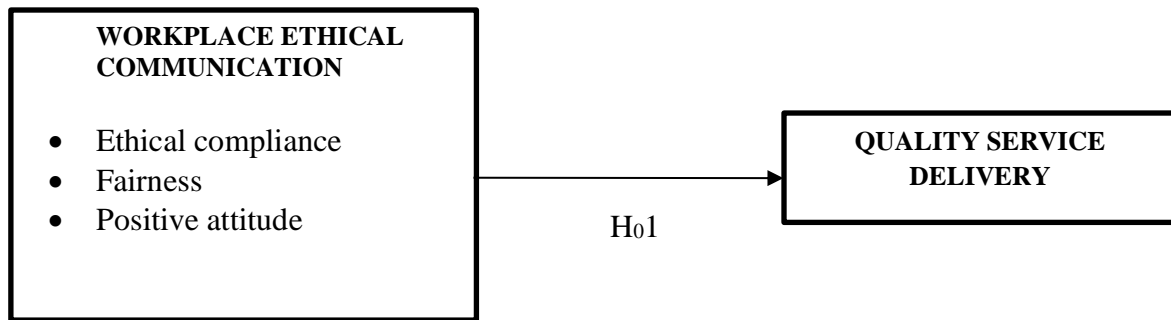
THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING FOR THIS STUDY

The word "deontology" comes from the Greek word "deontos," which means "what must be done" and is also rendered as "obligation" or "duty." (Duska, et al., 2011). "Always behave in such a manner that the maxim of your conduct should become a universal law," according to the categorical imperative theory (Sullivan, R. J., 1989; Bowen, 2014; Ongong'a & Akaranga, 2013). This theory encourages people to do things out of a sense of obligation. This theory examines the impact of employees' actions motivated by a sense of duty on the institution's performance. The worth of an activity, according to this theory, is independent of its consequences and outputs. This view considers keeping one's promises, paying an obligation, and keeping a commitment to be characteristics of a right conduct, regardless of the outcome. It was thought that acts that are carried out without regard for personal interests or natural temperaments are deserving of praise. When an activity is done out of a sense of obligation, even if it isn't exactly based on a duty framework, but for the sake of completing an onus, it is seen as commendable. It would not be respectable if a proper ethical action was initiated just for personal gain. In most situations, motive and personal interest are mutually exclusive; nevertheless, a spiritual deed is simply the result of a responsibility, even if it contradicts a personal interest. Human beings, it was believed, should not be exploited in order to achieve a final goal; rather, they should be considered as people with self-defined goals. The difficulties that arise from deontological theory place responsibility on the shoulders of the people.

The opinion that obeying ethical norms is of fundamental importance in management has an influence on the assumption that employees are obligated to carry out dictums issued by political leaders. Growing recognition of the notion that government directors have a specific area of action authority, and that this freedom in management has been transformed into a rule that can guide a manager's actions. This theory holds that individual should behave in a generally acceptable manner. People cannot survive in isolation; as a result, every institution needs to ride on employee's competence to survive. Committed employee with a high sense of duty assist in achieving quality service delivery.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Source: Researchers' work, 2021

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

H01 - There will be no significant influence of Workplace Ethical Communication sub-variables on quality service delivery of State-owned Tertiary Institutions, Oyo State, Nigeria

METHOD

This study empirically examined the influence of workplace ethical communication on quality service delivery of State-owned Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria, using a cross-sectional survey research approach. This study approach guarantees the collection of data from several subjects all at once. Because respondents fill out similarly worded self-reported questionnaires, the researcher's bias is lessened and the amount of high-quality information obtained is genuine and dependable, making this design acceptable for this study. The population of this study covers Two thousand, two-hundred and seventy-three (2,273) management staff which comprise both academic and non-academic staff at the top and middle level from the State-owned Tertiary Institutions, which are spread out to all geographical location in Oyo State. The institutions are Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, The Technical University, Ibadan, The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Adeseun Ogundoyin Polytechnic, Eruwa, The Oke-Ogun Polytechnic, Saki and Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo.

This study has a total of three hundred and twenty-nine (329) sample size which are made up of academic and non-academic staff of the six (6) selected State-owned tertiary institutions in Oyo State which represent the total population. This sample size was gotten from Raosoft (2004) sample size.

DATA ESTIMATION TECHNIQUE

A structured questionnaire was utilized to collect information from the respondents since it made it simple to assess the questions and answers for the study's goal. The Likert scale design was used in this study, allowing the researcher to present choices from which respondents might select. The data collected for the study was analyzed using Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling via SmartPLS statistical platform version 3.3.3.

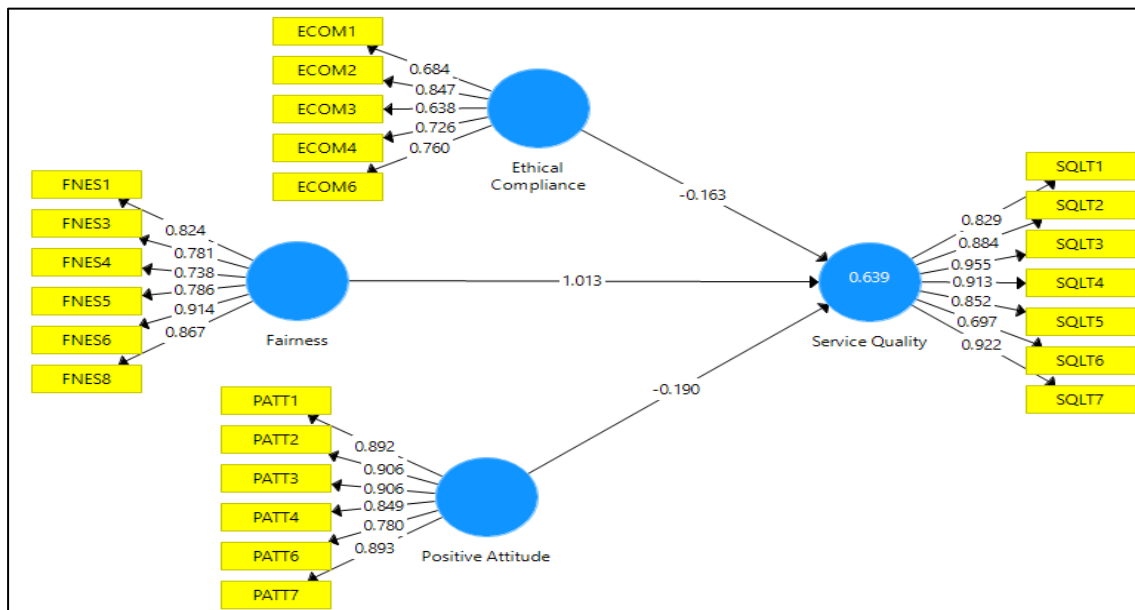
RESULT

There will be no significant influence of workplace ethical communication sub-variables on quality service delivery of State-owned tertiary institutions, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used with the SmartPLS statistical platform version 3.3.3 to test the null hypothesis one. The study employed the PLS method, which is suitable for impact prediction; it also performed bootstrapping to determine the significance level of the prediction; and blindfolding to verify the predictive relevance of the model.

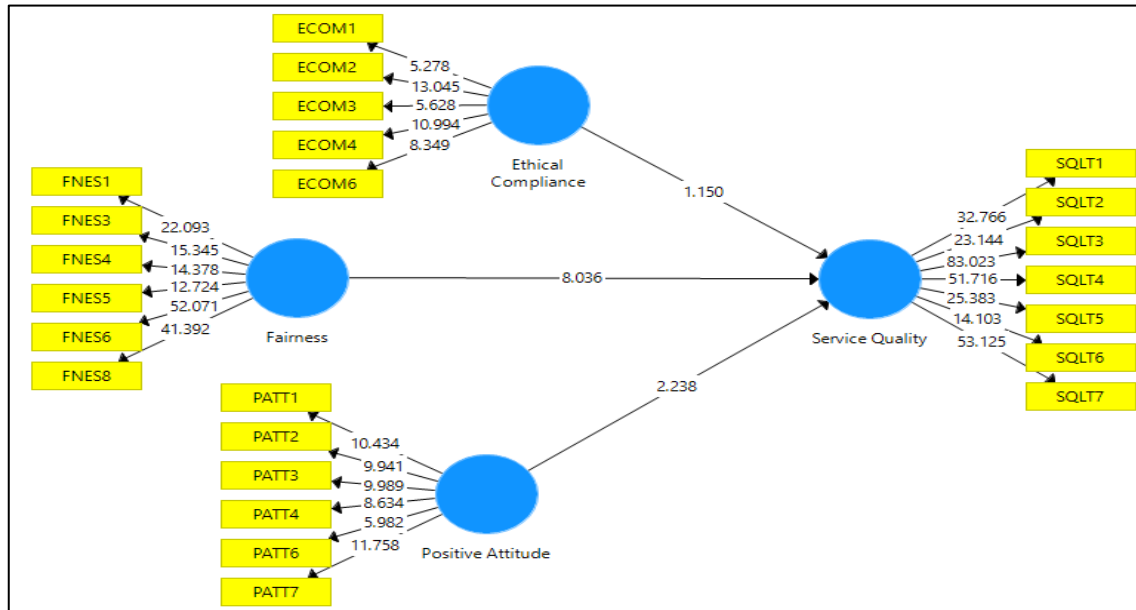
The dependent variable is the quality of the services provided, and the independent variable is work ethics, which includes sub-measures such ethical compliance, fairness, and good attitude. For the analysis, information from 279 respondents—a total of 279—was gathered. Three models are provided with the PLS-SEM results (see figure 1, 2, & 3). Figures 1 and 2 depict the route analysis, the t value in Figure 2 confirms the significance of the path analysis, and Figure 3 depicts the Q², which proved the structural model's predictive applicability. The data in figures 1, 2, and 3 are summarized tabularly in Table 1.

Figure 1. Path Analysis for Hypothesis One



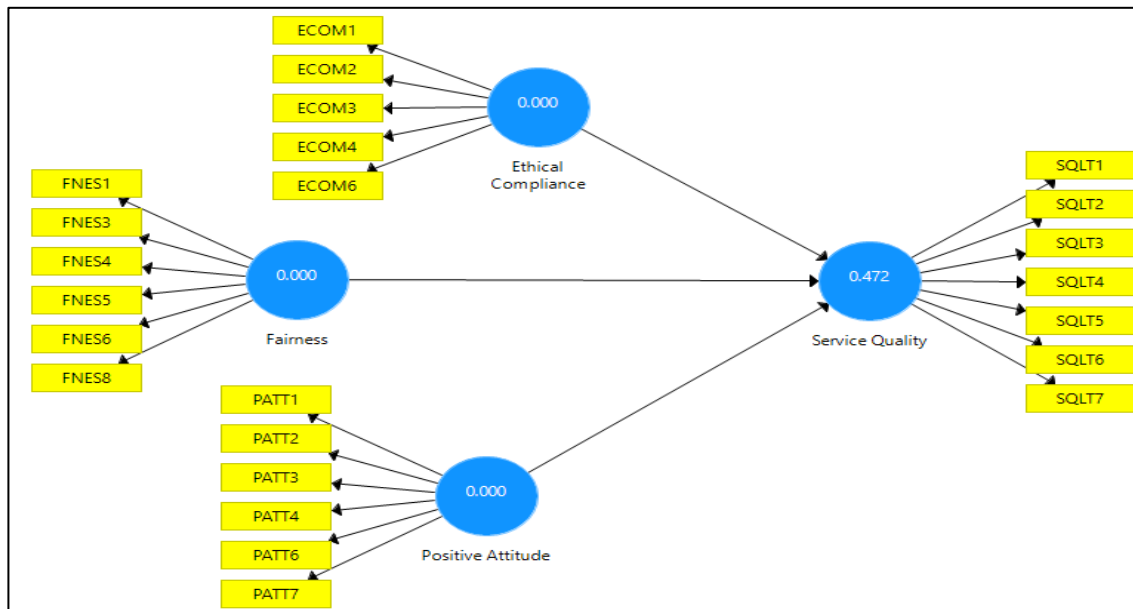
Source: Researcher's Computation via SmartPLS V3.3.3

Figure 2. T-Statistics for Hypothesis One



Source: Researcher's Computation via SmartPLS V3.3.3

Figure 3. Q² Statistics for Hypothesis Three



Source: Researcher's Computation via SmartPLS V3.3.3

The findings of the PLS-SEM analysis for the influence of Workplace ethical communication sub-variables on the quality of service delivery at State-owned Tertiary Institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria, are shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3. The study's model's capacity for prediction was determined using the Adjusted R². According to the findings, work ethics measures explained 62.8% of the variation in service quality of the State-owned tertiary institutions under study, with another exogenous variable other than the work ethics measures taken into consideration in this study accounting for the remaining 37.2% of the variation in service quality. This influence was statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval.

The data shown in figures 1, 2, and 3 are all summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the influence of workplace ethical communication on quality service delivery of State-owned tertiary institutions, Oyo State, Nigeria using PLS-SEM

| Path Description | Original sample (o) | t | Sig. | R ² | Adj. R ² | Sig. | Q ² |
|--|------------------------|-------|-------|----------------|------------------------|-------|----------------|
| | Unstandardized Beta | | | | | | |
| Ethical compliance → Quality Service delivery | -0.163 | 1.142 | 0.253 | | | | |
| Fairness → Quality Service delivery | 1.013 | 8.084 | 0.000 | 0.639 | 0.628 | 0.000 | 0.472 |
| Positive attitude → Quality Service delivery | -0.190 | 2.231 | 0.026 | | | | |

Dependent Variable: Quality Service delivery, Predictors: Ethical compliance, Fairness, Positive attitude.

Source: Researcher's Result via SmartPLS Version 3.33 (2021)

The coefficient of determination (β) that shows the relative influence of each Workplace ethical communication measure on the service quality of State-owned tertiary institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria, is represented by the path coefficient of each Workplace ethical communication measure (ethical compliance, fairness, and positive attitude). According to the PLS-SEM results in figs. 1, 2, and 3, Fairness ($\beta = 1.013$, $t = 8.084$) and Positive attitude ($\beta = -0.190$, $t = 2.231$) are statistically significant at 95% confidence level, however ethical compliance is not ($\beta = -0.163$, $t = 1.142$). According to this finding, Fairness and Positive Attitude have a statistically significant relative impact since their respective t-values are larger than the threshold of 1.96. However, the t-value for the relative impact of ethical compliance is below the permissible cut off point of 1.96, indicating that the relative impact is statistically negligible.

The findings also suggest that, when all other independent variables are held constant, a unit change in Fairness and Positive Attitude will, respectively, result in an increase of 1.013

and -0.190 in the service quality of State-owned tertiary institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria. This study may infer that workplace ethical communication strongly influences service quality of State-owned tertiary institutions, Oyo State, Nigeria, based on the PLS-SEM predicted findings in Table 1 (Adj R²=0.628; p=0.000, Q² =0.472). As a result, the study disproves null hypothesis one (H₀₁), which states that workplace ethical communication sub-variables have no discernible influence on quality service delivery in State-owned tertiary institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The finding of this study revealed that workplace ethical communication have significant influence on quality service delivery of State-owned tertiary institutions, Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the findings of this study found support in prior empirical studies. For instance, Nkiruka and Olarenwaju (2014) noted that service quality is increasingly acknowledged as a key performance indicator in higher educational institutions, and Anim (2015) affirmed that it is the primary strategy by which universities can increase their market share and foster a favorable impression in the minds of their customers. This is especially true given that proof of service quality determines a student's decision about a university in a challenging and unpredictable environment (Sultan & Wong, 2010). Additionally, institutions that fail to consider students' perceptions of service quality because they are unaware of their bargaining power are at a significant disadvantage (Angell, Heffernan, & Megicks, 2008). Students who are dissatisfied with higher education institutions' services have a tendency to abandon their studies early, change schools, and spread bad rumors, which discourages prospective students from applying to those institutions (Joseph & Joseph, 1997).

Anim empirically investigated the factors that influence service quality for students in Ghanaian colleges. Surprisingly, it was shown that there is a statistically significant, inverse link between the dependability component and total service quality. Naidoo also examined how academic and support workers at South African higher education institutions perceived the type of service quality that was being received in these institutions (Naidoo & Mutinta, 2014). According to their research, even though the staff acknowledged that the service quality at these institutions is below average, they also said that improvements must be done in terms of dependability, tangibility, empathy, assurance, and responsiveness to students.

According to a research, the university's responsibility framework includes a code of work ethics that offers guidance on a variety of topics (Robson, 2011). The contract of employment between the University and its workers must include the commitment to uphold the code. This promotes the reporting of illegal activity, unethical behavior, and issues that hurt the University or its reputation in an effort to foster a culture of moral behavior. Three fundamental principles—equity and justice, respect for individuals, and personal and professional accountability—are at the heart of the majority of University rules. This finding supports a different study's assertion that a company's ability to achieve its objectives depends on having a strong work ethic (Reeves, 2016). He claims that a strong work ethic is the result of several variables coming together. Integrity, accountability, quality emphasis, discipline, and a sense of collaboration are a few of these. In conclusion, work ethics are without a doubt a crucial aspect of providing high-quality services. An organization's ethics and the caliber of its services are intimately related. Any institution's ability to function totally depends on how effectively and efficiently it makes use of the resources available. Any institution trying to

thrive in the twenty-first century's tough economic climate and cutthroat competition in the education industry must demonstrate the value of what it offers.

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