



Research Article

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Exploring the Determinants of Workplace Ethics and Organizational Performance in the Health Sector: A Case Study of Vednan Medical Center in Kumasi, Ghana

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Abstract

The complex nature of contemporary world leaves several challenges which includes ethical conduct at the workplace that needs to be resolved. The health institution which is one of the focal points in every society more often than not is confronted with ethical challenges. Vednan Medical Center, just as any health institution, is expected to increase output and at the same time perform the highest level of ethical conduct. In this regard, this study attempts to explore the determinants of workplace ethics and organizational performance at Vednan Medical Center. Specifically, the study examined the main determinants of workplace ethics at Vednan Medical centre in Kumasi, explored procedures put in place to address unethical behaviours among employees at Vednan Medical centre in Kumasi and exactly how work ethics influencing organizational performance. A qualitative study was conducted. The purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 8 respondents from the center and analysed using inductive content analysis. The outcome of the study even though there may be situations where a practitioner may experience ethical dilemma, when such individual considers the available rules, proper supervision and channel of communication, issues of unethical conduct could be addressed. The study clearly depicts that ethical conduct and workplace performance are not in isolation. They tend to work together for better result for both patients and workers of the facility. This therefore indicates that worker's progress is dependent on their ability to work in an ethical fashion at Vednan Medical Center for positive output. The study recommends further research studies in how personal morals and emotions could influence the ethical conduct at the workplace.

Keywords: conduct, determinants, health, organisational performance, workplace ethics

1. Introduction

Today's world of business has called for complex strategies not just to improve the product of the organization to the client, but also to ensure that there is proper ethical conduct among the employees for better service delivery for organizational performance. Hastings and Finegan (2011), postulate that an improved working condition and organizational culture that could lead to loyalty and increase in productivity can only be achieved when there is proper ethical conduct among all workers.

Karim et al., (2012) defined ethics as the behaviour on which humanity stands for a sustainable and congenial existence. Ethics have an effective role in the prevention of corruption and tyranny in the society and workplace, and can help identify opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses. The studies on the influence of work ethic on employees' performance are needed to contribute to the improvement of organizational performance (Karim et al., 2012; Hastings & Finegan 2011). Studies conducted in several countries by Rose (2011) showed that about eighty-five percent of organisations have introduced ethical codes in their practice to influence the ethical conduct of employees for better organizational outcome.

To lead an ethical life and to differentiate right from wrong, are universal issues that have to be determined and applied. The word 'ethics' means different to different people and is based on moral, philosophic and religious principles of the society in which it is practiced (MacIntyre, 2017). Likewise, ethics represents different meaning among different professions. In this rapidly changing world, healthcare professionals face multiple challenges encircling ethical dilemmas. There is often a conflict between the healthcare professionals and patients regarding the best choice (Khan, 2013). There is a confidentiality agreement between a patient and a physician. The physician does not have to disclose patient's personal problems to anyone. It has become an integral part of growth in individuals' life and extending to the organisations in which they work. However, in today's society, individuals stand in complex relations of interdependence, competition, and solidarity that can impact ethical health profession in ways that transcend the individual. Thus, health care practitioners are sometimes confronted with ethical dilemma in their field of operation that create huge challenge on the service delivery of their profession (Ortmann, Barrett, Saenz, Bernheim, Dawson, Valentine, & Reis, 2016).

Even though ethics have been studied over and over again, new ideas and the increasing pressure to help improve organizational performance makes an area to look at especially in health care profession (Edwards, 2011). In Ghana, all health practitioners are expected to follow the principles of ethical code of conduct that exist. In order for the health industry to provide the best health care system to all patients, there has been a stipulated code of conduct all personnel must follow in Ghana. In Ghana, the code of ethical conduct for the health service clearly stipulates the general; the moral principles

and rules for behaviour for all health practitioners (Ghana Health Service, 2020). It is expected that all personnel follow this principle to bring about higher health outcome for all patients (Dawson & Jennings 2012).

However, the enforcement of code of ethics is contingent on several factors. These include individual factors such as personal goals, knowledge and values; organizational factors such as leadership, modes of enforcement and organizational culture; and also, the general culture of the country within which the codes are enforced (Boateng & Wu, 2018). Despite this guiding principle for all practitioners they are most often confronted with ethical difficulties that influence their performance and the performance of the institutions (Asamoah et al., 2014). In recent cases, patients are found complaining about the health delivery of practitioners in relation to their ethical conduct (Boateng et al., 2018). Some health personnel are found to put less emphasis on the adherence to ethical code provided by the Ghana Health Service (GHS) on the issue of confidentiality, right to privacy, dignity and respect of patients. These issues according to Ofose-Kwarteng (2012), has impacted the performance and integrity of health workers and the institutions.

Vednan Medical Center, like any other health centre is confronted with ethical challenge by their workers that may either improve or negatively impact the health delivery. This is found to automatically, affect the growth of the organisational performance of Vednan, but rather it will pave the way for other areas to be looked into which will help the facility. Ethical directives are not always evident and people sometimes disagree on what is right and wrong. In effect, how complex the society has developed calls for identifying ethical challenges that confront the role of administrators and medical practitioners in providing health service to patients and provide ways of improving their ethical conduct for organizational benefit.

This paper therefore reports the findings of a thorough study to explore the factors of the determinant of workplace ethics and how it affects an organisations' performance specifically Vednan Medical Center. This is a health facility in Kumasi and it aroused the interest of the study as the center provides services to over 15 communities in the Ashanti region.

2. Problem Statement

Provision of quality healthcare is very crucial in all countries. This is because governments have realized that the health of every nation is the wealth of its citizens. Thus, the health of adults of a nation partially determines its economic strength and well-being (World Bank 2011). The economic benefits of quality healthcare to individual citizens and the nation at large cannot be over-emphasized.

However, the economic benefits of the society will be a fantasy if the health service is not able to provide the best form of healthcare delivery to its people. One of such healthcare deliveries according to the Ghana Health Service (2020) is the ethical code of

conduct of health practitioners. Code of ethics represent the sum of ethical principles and norms, which are obligatory for all employees within the civil service irrespective of their position in the organizational hierarchy (Martínez-Ávila & Beak, 2016; Sakyi & Bawole, 2010). As in other countries, Ghana has instituted a comprehensive code of ethics for the regulation for health service. Ghana's code has strict guidelines on personal and professional conduct, information disclosure, gifts and bribes, responsibilities and interactions with fellow workers as well with patients. Although the code is to be enforced to the latter, there is some evidence to suggest that they are not fully enforced in the delivery of service (Ahenkan, Afari & Buabeng 2018; Osafo, 2016). There have been a lot of reports from patients who complain about the unethical behaviours of health practitioners especially nurses in the hospitals. There always seem to be some form of miscommunication between the administrators and the nurses. The administrators who also serve as human resource managers at hospitals sometimes forget the importance of healthy relationship among employees.

Even though rules are drawn and must be obeyed but unfortunately that is not the case in a lot of health centres which Vednan Medical Centre is part. Medical centres report a lot of unethical behaviours. These negative behaviours can be found in developing countries in which Ghana is included. There have been a lot of grossly inappropriate behaviours which are being reported earlier. This has degenerated the lack of trust between workers of health sector and patients. With Vednan serving more than 15 communities, it is imperative for the center to provide the highest level of ethical conduct to gain the trust of its client (Ghana Web, 2018). Thus, this health center being the main health center for the people of Kenyasi requires that better health service is provided. With ethical issues facing most health institutions in Ghana, there is the need to identify the challenges and role of ethical conduct on performance.

In addition, with signals of unethical conduct of some health practitioners and administrators, there is paucity of research on the factors that underlie the non-enforcement of codes of conduct within the Ghanaian health service. Thus, this study addresses the unethical issues among all employees in the facility. It also finds ways to control this situation and further explain the importance of ethics in organizational performance. This research becomes imperative as most research done in the past failed to link how ethics influence organisations' performance. This therefore provides some policy tools and incentives to administrators and health practitioners on the role of ethics, morals and behaviour in organisational performance.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective is to explore the determinants of workplace ethics on organizational performance at Vednan Medical Centre. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Examine the specific determinants of workplace ethics
2. Evaluate the challenges workers of Vednan health Center face in relation with

ethical conduct

3. Explore measures put in place to address issues relating to unethical behaviours
4. Find out how workplace ethics influence performance

4. Research Questions

1. What are the main determinants of workplace ethics at Vednan Medical centre in Kumasi?
2. What procedures are put in place to address unethical behaviours among employees at Vednan Medical centre in Kumasi?
3. What measures are put in place to address issues relating to unethical behaviours?
4. How exactly are the work ethics influencing organizational performance?

5. Significance of the Study

The need for medical practitioners to act professionally cannot be over-emphasized. It is often observed that most studies tend to focus on the need for medical practitioners to follow the ethical code without providing the benefits they gain doing so. This study however, tends to provide medical practitioners not only at Vednan Health Center, but that of Ghana as a whole with the how to exercise proper ethical conduct that could improve the performance of the organization.

In addition, this study presents some ethical dilemma involved in health care delivery and the strategies for the entire health service to identify the appropriate common ground to rebuild such ethical challenges facing medical practitioners. This will therefore serve as a policy tool for the health sector to modify its code of ethics and to meet both the patients and practitioners for improved service delivery. Finally, the study intends to inform health practitioners about their duties of abiding by the ethical code for effective health care service. It therefore highlights the importance of the workers knowing the rules and applying them.

6. Methodology

6.1 Research Approach

The study adopted the qualitative approach as the research method for study. This choice of qualitative approach is informed by the research problem that is being under studied (Hanson et al., 2012). The choice of the qualitative study indicates the need to explore the experiences of health practitioners, and the meaning they attribute to ethical conduct towards health care delivery (Smith, 2018). The use of qualitative approach provided a detailed information on the study and provided better

understanding of ethical conduct by workers of health. This approach also aided in providing meaning to the views of respondents and discover new information on the ethical conduct of workers to meet the objective of the study (Bacon-Shone, 2015). It allowed in providing analysis of various ethical issues at Vednan Health Center.

6.2 Research Design

Case study research design was the research design adopted for this study. The choice of this research design was informed by the research problem which looked at ethical and organizational performance at Vednan Health Center (Greenwood & Levin 2006). Thus, there was the need to use a research design that focused on one unit in order to provide a detailed analysis for the study. This research design allowed the researcher to take a representative from the population for the analysis of the study and at the same time provided the room for a detailed description of findings, thus, making it the appropriate research design for the study (Greenwood & Levin 2006). Thus, an individual depth interview (IDI), qualitative data collection technique was employed, with semi-structured interview guides. In-depth interviews are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored which are particular to the study (Fugard & Potts, 2015).

6.3 Target Population

The target population involves all workers at Vednan Health center in the Ashanti Region. The individual respondents that formed part of the study comprised of the administrators of health workers and the health practitioners. These groups of individuals therefore form the target population. The opinions and experiences of such individuals were sought on the issue of ethical conduct to provide data for the analysis of the study.

6.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sampling is one of the key research instruments that is invariably encountered for reliability and validity purpose. The study therefore chose to select the non-probability sample for the selection of respondents. The use of this sampling technique provides the opportunity for the researcher to select respondents based on his or her discretion. Under the non-probability sampling, the purposive sampling technique was selected. This sampling technique allowed the researchers to select respondents based on their knowledge and experience on the subject matter that is being studied. It therefore ensures that respondents sampled for study have clear knowledge about the study for quality assurance purposes. On the basis of this, administrators of Vednan center, the nurses and doctors on the health center were selected and analysed for the study. It is

from the sampling technique that the sample size was generated to represent the population of the study.

The study selected respondents from each of the department at the health center. The area of General OPD was factored in terms of respondents for the study. Laboratory workers which are key in terms of confidentiality also formed part of the study. General Surgery, Paediatric, Mental health, counselling on diet and Ultrasound scan were all included in the sampling process to ensure that the sample selected fit the population of the study. Respondents were selected based on the objective of the study, that is, respondents sampled for the study had knowledge about the study being conducted, thus, providing information that are related to objectives of the research.

6.5 Data Collection Instrument and Data Collection

Research instrument is used based on the time, kind of research and the type of population. For this reason, interview guide was used as the instrument for data collection. The primary concern of the researcher is to elicit rich, detailed, and first-hand information on participants of their experiences on retirement transition and adjustment. Semi-structured, in-depth, one-to-one interviews were employed to achieve that. For the researcher to accomplish the earlier stated objectives, semi-structured interviews allow the researchers and the participant to engage in a dialogue in real time (Pietkiewicz et al., 2014). In order to ensure that information given reflect the objective of the study, there was a thorough review of literature that led to the structure of the interview guide. Thus, issues of ethics were structured in terms of the medical service so as to provide stronger basis to meet the objective of the study.

Participants were encouraged to express themselves freely on issues relating to retirement thereby creating enough space and flexibility for original and unexpected issues to arise for the researcher to probe with further questions. The interview guide was based on in-depth interviews based on semi structured approach. In-depth interviews on semi-structured ensured that the study establishes better knowledge about the ethical conduct in the medical center (Esterberg, 2002). It provided opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply, inclusive accounts based on personal experience. It was aimed at getting their views on the topic and also being the first-hand of people being affected by the code of conduct, allowed them to provide detailed information on the issue and how it affects them.

In order to ensure that vivid information was analysed, the researcher recorded the responses given by respondents with the aid of tape recorder. As suggested by Esterberg, (2002), it is more appropriate to collect data at the convenience of the respondent in terms of place and time. Thus, the research did as such which ensured better participation rate from the respondents and comfortable share of information by participants.

6.6 *Validity and Reliability of Instrument*

The questionnaire designed for the study went under proper scrutiny to ensure that each information that was asked of respondents was appropriate for the various sections of the research instrument to ensure validity. This was achieved by giving the questionnaire to experts to go through and to promote accurate information to ensure better and valid response from the respondents (Creswell, & Miller, 2000). The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is relevant in any quantitative study (Morse, 1991). As such, the study used a test-retest approach to establish reliability. This provided an indication of the reliability of the instrument that was used in the study (Joppe, 2000).

6.7 *Ethical Consideration*

In conducting a study on ethics provides high level responsibility on the researcher to observe the utmost ethical behaviour in the whole research study. The researchers therefore conformed to the highest level of ethical consideration. The dignity and respect of workers at the medical center was observed and respondents were accorded with the needed respect. In addition, respondent's right to privacy and freedom was also ensured. This was done by asking questions that were solely related to the study. This was done to assure the respondents that they can choose to end the information given at any point in time when they feel uncomfortable to answer any question. Another important area that was observed in this study was the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents. Respondents' identity was not included in the study to ensure anonymity and to promote confidentiality; information used was for academic purpose only.

6.8 *Method of Data Analysis*

Inductive approach with the aid of content analysis through qualitative data was chosen for the study. This principle was informed by the study of Spuck, Hubert and Lufler (1975) as they stipulated that this method tend to result in data collection where the researcher first of all, conductive observation approach and then identify some level of patterns through the observations of variables on the field in order to generalize the outcome of the study from the themes created.

In effect, to generalize the data gathered, information were generalized into uniform unit based on the objective of the study. For easy and effective analysis to be conducted, the data gathered were coded into themes and concepts that are easy to understand. The data collected from respondents were analysed using thematic approach. Before the use of this approach for the analysis, editing for consistency of information was conducted. This made it possible to review the accuracy and appropriateness of the information gathered. The final results were analysed using

thematic approach. This was used to establish connection between ethical conduct and organizational performance of health service. It was however, made possible through the use of statistical package known as the Nvivo. The software provided themes based on the responses given by participants which allowed the researcher to use in the analysis. These accumulated responses from respondent provided information to be analysed to meet the objectives of the study.

As such, for responses to be analysed constructively, Thomas (2006) general inductive approach for analysing evaluation data was adopted. This procedural approach had five main steps as follow;

The first approach of this process is known as the preparation of raw materials also known as the cleaning of raw data. That is, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings at the exact information given by participants. The audio recordings were listened on several times to ensure that information used are what was presented by the participants.

Also, in order to get familiar with the information given, the researcher conducted close text reading approach. This allowed the themes within the information given by respondents to be established for the analysis of the study. The study categorized themes generated from the text that provided patterns, concepts and properties for analysis. Thus, sub-themes were generated from the actual phrases provided by the participants. Overlapping themes and categories were combined, however, text that had no relation with the objective of the study were eliminated. From the categories and subtopics generated from the text, information relating to new insights and contradictory views searched. The themes were sometimes combined when they seemed to have similar meaning and themes that meet the objectives were thus selected.

6.8.1 Coding

Respondents were given the assurance that information gathered were for academic purpose only. In effect, the data gathered were observed with highest form confidentiality and anonymity. This was done by using initials to replace the names of respondents as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Codes for Respondents

Sn	Codes	Gender	General Surgery/Padiatric/Mental health/ counselling on diet/Ultrasound scan
1	AM	Male	Administrator
2	MM	Female	Medical Doctor
3	PM	Male	Physician Assistant
4	NF 1	Female	Nurse
5	NF 2	Female	Nurse
6	NM 1	Male	Nurse
7	NMF	Female	Nurse (Matron)
8	LM	Male	Lab Technician

7. Results and Discussions

The purpose of this research was to provide in-depth, face-to-face interviews to collect detailed data from participants on ethical practices of health workers and how that influence organizational performance. The study tends to explore some of the challenges health professionals face in delivering health care in relation to their ethical duties for organizational performance.

The study adopted inductive content analysis for the analysis of result. According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, (2020), a qualitative content analysis is basically to systematically change voluminous text of data into a concise and simple information for better understanding. In order to ensure that there is meaningful categorisation and interpretation of information in content analysis, codes were created as a tool for effective outcome.

As noted by Elo and Kyngäs, (2008), if the researcher has chosen to use inductive content analysis, the next step is to organize the qualitative data. This process includes open coding, creating categories and abstraction. With open coding the data was read and reread while notes and headings were written in the text in order to generate codes and themes. After closely examining the emerging themes, it was compared and some were combined.

The analyses resulted in two major themes namely “transition to” and “adjustment in”. Aside these two major themes, sub-themes emerged from participant narratives as indicated in the table below.

Table 2: Main Themes and Sub-Themes for Objectives of the Study

Objectives	Main Theme	Sub-Themes
Examine the specific determinants of workplace ethics	Specific determinants of workplace ethics	Religion/rules and regulation/number of people involved/morals and principles of individuals/punishment/ MOH ethical conduct/center’s principle
Evaluate the challenges workers of Vednan health Center face in relation with ethical conduct	Challenges workers of Vednan health Center face in relation with ethical conduct	Abortion/options for patients (Caesarian and Natural birth)/ hide health history from partner/break confidentiality/male patients flirting nurses/code of ethics GHS/refuse of doctor’s medication/refusing doctor’s advice/ religion/doctor rude to colleagues and patients/ practitioners having affair at the ward (misconduct)/ lie to partners in the favour of patients/patients asking for inflation of prices/home treatment
Explore measures put in place to address issues relating to unethical behaviours	Measures put in place to address issues relating to unethical behaviours	Rule book/flexible leadership system code of ethics GHS/ethical code/ regular meetings/channel of reporting/interpersonal relationship
Find out how workplace ethics influence performance	How workplace ethics influence performance	Doctor-patient relation/hard working practitioners/report of worker’s issue for resolve/broad/ respect and punctuality

7.1 Determinants of Workplace ethics at Vednan Medical Center

This section tends focus on some of the key issues that determines the ethical conduct of workers at the medical center. Thus, it considers the sub-themes generated from the responses given by respondents for the analysis. In essence, the sub-themes for this section include; Religion, rules and regulation, number of people involved, morals and principles of individuals, punishment, MOH ethical conduct and center's principle.

7.1.1 Religion

Under the determinants of workplace ethics, one of the key issues being mentioned was religion. Determinants of workplace ethics was projected in various concepts and circumstances. This therefore led to some health care workers revealing that ones' association to a religious group has significant effect on their ethical conduct at the workplace. These were some of the response given by respondents in relation to religion as a workplace ethics.

For instance, PM has this to say;

"Religion has great deal of existence in the work that we do here. It serves as the moral compass for some us. I in particular, issues of bribery that may come in my way are avoided because my faith frowns upon such behavior. I know it's difficult but relying on my beliefs always get me through by acting in accordance to what is expected of me as a health practitioner..."

In addition, NM 3 revealed that;

"...Sometime in a situation where I am in dilemma and the ethical code is not sufficient to help, I sought to my faith to do what is expected of me as a Christian. You know, being a human being, you are always faced with challenges but as for me having something to rely on always keeps me in check to do the right thing at the work place...."

The outcome of the study is in relation a report of Meyer in 2004. He reported that in times of hardship at the work place. Thus, workers tend to rely on religion when experiencing ethical dilemma at the workplace as a way to overcome such challenges.

7.1.2 Rules and Regulation

Rules and regulation were also found to be another tool used to ensure ethical conduct at the work place. Some participants of the study were in support of the notion that rules which govern individuals' conduct at the work place tends to shape their focus and sense of direction thereby eliminating unpredicted behaviour that could be detrimental to the organization.

These are some of the comments made by some health practitioners;

"...We have a rule book that we designed for the workers called the Code of Ethics, rules and regulations for Vednan medical Centre now Vednan Hospital. With the employees we had earlier we made sure to give them the book as part of their appointment letter..." AM

This is being added by MM, MF and NF2;

"...we are not working in an isolation; we are working under a broad umbrella that is the Ministry of Health. So, under the ministry of health, we have the Ghana Health Service which happens to be more or less the mother, then we have the CHAG. But there is a particular code of ethics that is designed by the GHS that has been adopted by all the three..."

"...we operate under the laws of the ministry of health, we are obliged to follow the ethical regulations of the GHS... As a practitioner, ethically you owe particular patient that duty of care, it is basic. This is duty oath I have sworn and the ethical conduct I must abide by..."

The views of the participants were consonant with the laid down code of ethics by the Ghana Health Service (2020). In addition, respondents' view supports the work of Dawson and Jennings (2012) as their study indicated that code of ethics at the work place is to the moral compass of workers to have a stable working environment. The work of Khan (2013), also confirms the outcome of the study as it concluded that the rules and regulation at the workplace could aid in the limiting ethical dilemma.

7.1.3 Strong Supervision and Punishment

As noted by Walumbwa, Hartnell and Misati (2017), individual's behaviour are sometimes shaped by the kind of controlled behavior that exists within the organization. In essence, workers will tend to conform to the ethical principles when there exist punishment and reward at the organization. It is no surprising that some health practitioners were of the view that punishment and reward that tend to be at the medical center in a way makes them to practice proper ethical conduct.

For instance, this is what NF2 had to say;

"... I have witnessed medical practitioners being punished for their wrong doing. They are not made to act unethically and punishment for me is one of the ways that ensure proper conduct at the medical center...One time a nurse tried to bring her boyfriend to the special ward to sleepover. I was firm even though she is a degree nurse, my senior. I reported the misconduct and I also heard Dr. Boateng was sacked, that doctor was rude..."

"...Management is doing their job well especially sacking Dr. Boateng and Margaret (nurse). Lateness and failure to report to duties is regularly checked and other facilities are very strict on the nurses because they believe the nurses steal the drugs. There are a lot of unethical things that happen if there is no strong supervision... NF1

7.2 Challenges Faced in Relation to Ethical Conduct

Health care professionals in health care establishments face numerous external and internal ethical problems in identifying solutions for organizational sustainability. For example, Crossan et al. (2013) and Khoury, Junkunc, and Mingo (2015) stated that employees' unethical conduct occurs during problematic conflict or situations of ethical dilemma. This section of the study concentrates on analysis the challenges faced by health care professionals in the process of performing their duties. Some of such

challenges include; Abortion; options for patients (Caesarian and Natural birth); hide health history from partner; confidentiality; male patients flirting with nurses; refuse of doctor's medication; refusing doctor's advice; religion; doctor rude to colleagues and patients; practitioners having affair at the ward (misconduct); lie to partners in the favour of patients; patients asking for inflation of prices; home treatment.

7.2.1 Religion

Religion is considered as one of the challenges that impact the role of health practitioners in ethical conduct. This concept was found to be inhibiting workers at the Vednan Center in performing their roles as health professionals. As postulated by Knights and O'Leary (2006) religion has the tendency to create ethical dilemma among health care practitioners and patients which could affect their practices. Some of the workers were of the view that some patients' religious background puts them in ethical dilemma and that seems to influence their role as prescribed by the code of ethics.

PM gave this revelation that put practitioners in dilemma;

...you see Jehovah's Witness don't take blood infusion and I am supposed to administer it when need be. It is conflicting, what do I do. You see there are a lot of Muslims in this area and you need to be careful with the women especially. There are times you have to explain for long before they agree to some of the things being said. Just last week a lady refused Caesarian section because her prophet said she will give birth naturally, look at this!.

NF 3 also indicated that;

...Sometimes too religion also plays a role in the dilemma we nurses and other health workers face. Just imagine a patient refusing to take a medication diagnosed by the doctor because the religion he or she belongs to does not subscribe to such treatment. You know, this makes the work we do very difficult and creates a conflict whether to allow the patient to do what he wants or not.

7.2.2 Issue of Confidentiality

This is another grey area that always put health workers in conflicting situation. As indicated by Faden and Shebaya (2010), the complex situation we find ourselves makes it difficult to ensure confidentiality. Thus, health care practitioners are sometimes confronted with ethical dilemma in their field of operation that creates huge challenge on the service delivery of their profession. This could be assessed from the comments given by respondents of the study with the view that keeping information of patients has become difficult in ensuring that confidentiality is achieved.

This is what PA has to say;

... It is very important to me as a PA. Also, patient confidentiality is very important as doctors are not supposed to reveal patient's information. At the previous hospital that I worked one doctor was very fond of revealing personal information to others whilst he is not supposed to... Yes, sometimes you may be in dilemma as to whether to disclose it or not however, our code of ethics in this case stipulates exactly what you must do...

...In some situations, it is difficult to exercise confidentiality where certain kind of diseases require the presence of the partner if the individual is married. For instance, one time there is this lady who has a particular infection that her partner needs to be aware of, but she told me not to disclose such information to the partner...And as a health practitioner because my duty is to protect the patient, I had to oblige... NM, MM and LM.

7.2.3 Patient's Disregard to Diagnoses

Patients' disregard to diagnoses of their illness is seen to be much regular at various health centers. The report given by health practitioners indicates how patients often do not trust the diagnoses provided by the health professionals but rather put much emphasis on their culture, religion or intuition. This could be found report from the Ghana Web (2018) where their report showed how there is the lack of trust between patients and doctors and this often leads to patients not showing so much interest to the diagnosis given by doctors.

The following comments were made by NF1

"...When a patient refuses something and I have to go out of my way to do it. A patient even refused plasters even though she was not reactive to it, common plaster it is hard sometimes. A patient insulted us one time and you know it is frequent here, but you have to be a professional and tolerate them... One guy died a painful death at home because the relatives believed we were doing nothing and the 'abibidro' will help. He died just two weeks after we consented to discharge him even when he was not fit..."

"...There are times where patients refuse to go by the medication they are prescribed to take. Like one time, we prescribed a drug for a patient and she told us that she will rather go for local herbs that the one prescribed..." NM

7.2.4 The issue of Abortion and Pregnancy

The issue of dilemma has several challenging points on the field of health care practice. Issues of abortion and patients taking options that are detrimental to their life as against the choices of the medical professionals has been far more frequent. The outcome of the study showed that there were situations where pregnant women would want natural birth which could be dangerous to their life rather than having a cesarean. In another situation, some pregnant women would want an abortion for a pregnancy that is beyond the point for such act and at times, the need for termination of a pregnancy to ensure the safety of the woman also becomes huge challenge because of the failure on the part of the pregnant woman to accept such decision.

For instance, NMF indicated that;

... One major dilemma we also face is when we advise a patient to go for Caesarian and she refuses on grounds of she wants to give birth naturally and the whole myth of caesarian section. We nearly lost a baby and its mother yesterday because she said she wanted to give birth naturally when it was medically impossible. You see the patient is refusing and your work is also at stake what exactly can you do...

... when a patient does not want to keep the baby or we feel they cannot keep the baby due to health reasons or if she is a street child. It can also be she ran from home when she was pregnant and she does not want to take the baby home for fear of being rejected. If she is not mentally stable, then we have the right to take the

baby to the children's home. If she is stable but insists on not keeping the baby, we need her full consent and another consent from a trustworthy family member to take the baby away from her. It will be sad to deliver someone and she throws the baby away in a bush... In case of pregnancy too some request for abortion because their partners are definitely not responsible for their pregnancy... but here in Ghana it is very rare for us to agree to abortion if it is not prescribed by the doctor. I strongly advise them to keep the baby if the baby or the child's life is not in danger. ...NF2 and NM1

7.2.5 Falsifying of information

Falsifying of information is highly forbidden in the field of health care delivery. However, medical practitioners are found to experience such circumstances with their patients. Some patients put medical practitioners in a position where they force them to lie about their health history and sometimes, ask for the payment of their treatment to be increased for their own benefits. This outcome however refutes the Ghana Health Service code of ethics introduced in 2008.

Some comments made by participant can be viewed below;

Some of the popular dilemma we face here is the issue of the women who want us to lie about their health history to their husbands... I remember last month one guy tested positive to HIV and told us to keep it a secret from his girlfriend. Ethically it is wrong and there was no way we could hide such information from his partner...PM

Some of the popular dilemma we face here is the issue of the women who want us to lie about their healing history to their husbands. Some pregnant women even want us to lie about the amount we charge in order to get more money from their husbands...Sometimes patients can tell you to even lie about their health history to their spouses...NF3

The patients sometimes want you to price the drugs higher, especially the women in order to get more money from their husbands. Some too have the money but after the bill they will plainly tell you they cannot pay all and I should remove some of the drugs. Some of the doctors will also want you to give them access to the area to take the drugs to treat their patients at home...AF

This is what the AF had to say;

...Some of the patients and even the health workers abuse drugs and they will try to convince you to give them the drugs. They will pay any amount you want just for them to take these drugs...

7.2.6 Patient's Choices and Practitioners' Relationship with Patients

Patients according to medical practitioners makes it difficult for them to perform their duties as doctors. Just as some patients may not want some treatment because of their religious affiliation, some patients tend to make choices of their own without backing by faith or science but rather on personal level. For instance, some patient may not want to be rescued when unconscious and such situation puts doctors on dilemma as their work is to ensure that they save lives. It is also a challenge for medical practitioners to treat patients they may have been uncomfortable situation with. This is supported by the report of Carter (2015), saying, the challenges from clients may put workers from performing their duties ethically.

This is a revelation from MM

... As a practitioner, ethically you owe particular patient that duty of care, it is basic. But you know that this particular person probably the issue you have with that person and indeed the person also knows you have an issue with him or her. Should something go wrong this person he or she will say because you have an issue with me that is why you didn't do the right thing These are some of the things that come up or sometimes you can actually be handling your ex in the consulting room...

...There are a lot of times that you may run into such dilemmas...The other day as I was telling you there was this patient that had something written on his chest do not resuscitate, so if such person is brought to you in an emergency unconscious and then you see that, that means you owe that person that care to save a life. But here is the case that the person says do not resuscitate, that means the person actually knows why he is saying that... AM, NMF and LM

Faden and Shebaya (2010), Edwards (2011) and Khan (2013) all had a confirmed view on the outcome of the study as they all concluded that ethical dilemma is one challenging issue in all organization. This outcome confirms the notion that information confidentiality and acting in relation to the principles and ethical code is not as easy as being stipulated and rather entails several tools and challenges practitioners have to navigate to ensure best practices.

7.3 Measures put in Place to address Issues Relating to Unethical Behaviours

This section focuses on finding out some of the measures adopted by Vednan Medical Centre to ensure that ethical conduct of all workers is at the best possible level. The need for this is not only to ensure the best practice is achieved, but also to help promote the organisational performance of the center. Measures has been introduced in the Ghana Health Service (2020) on what is required of them to provide best practice. Also, Dawson and Jennings (2020) confirmed the need for all personnel to abide by a common rules and principles serve as a tool to maintain order in an organisation. Some of the measures adopted by the center were Rule book, leadership system, code of ethics GHS/ethical code, regular meetings, channel of reporting and interpersonal relationship.

7.3.1 Rule book

The rule book according the administrators and health practitioners is different from the actual ethical code of conduct by the Health Service. This form of rule is peculiar to Vednan Medical center and even though it took cues from the ethical code, it has some rules and regulations that shape the behaviour of all workers. The respondents to the study revealed that there is a rule book that each individual within the organisation must abide by it in order to perform at their very best and in an ethical manner.

This was NMF view concerning the rule book;

..We have the rule book that we refer from, in case of disciplinary action. This rule book was used to sack a Dr for his unethical conduct which could have put the centre to a jeopardy.

... I remember Dr. Nathaniel telling me about how Dr. Boateng was suspected to be having sexual relations with a nurse and how management solved it. A meeting was called and the lady was called aside. I heard how rude she was becoming but after that incident she has become very calm and she is working well...PM

7.3.2 Channel of Communication

Channel of communication is also seen to be key to maintain standard and smooth operation of an organisation. Ahenkan, Afari and Buabeng (2018) and Osafo, (2016) both revealed in their report that when there is a clear channel of communication within an organisation, it leaves limited room for wrong practices as all individuals' problems are resolved and people that also act contradictory to the rules and regulation are also dealt with when they follow the right channel. This could be found from some of the responses given by practitioners.

For instance, NMF commented that;

...There are official ways of airing your displeasure to management. That is the reason why we have the organogram. If you do not understand the organogram, you will not be able to understand the channel of communication. As a midwife if you have an issue ideally it is supposed to go to you in charge. If you're in charge and you are not able to solve that problem, you will carry that problem to the nurse manager or matron. If it goes beyond the matron, then the matter is supposed to be carried to the medical director in case of clinical matters.

The medical doctor (MM) of the center added that:

...She did not observe the proper channel of communication, but it should have been in writing to the nurse manager but you don't sit in the comfort of your home and record an audio. The mode of communication and tone was bad, when you do that it means you have no regard for your matron. You don't also regard our mode of communication...

..... One time a nurse tried to bring her boyfriend to the special ward to sleepover. I was firm even though she is a degree nurse, my senior. I reported the misconduct and I also heard Dr. Boateng was sacked, that doctor was rude...NF3

7.3.3 Leadership System

Organisation could have the best workers, best ethical code and skilled professionals however, when there is the lack of leadership everything becomes superfluous. Demirtas and Akdogan, (2015); Shim et al., (2018) have indicated that leadership can leverage the ethical image of an organization to promote the wellbeing of stakeholders. This was also found to be significant at the Vednan Medical center per the information gathered.

The health professionals of the center revealed some leadership system that exist at the facility.

One of the nurses reported that;

...The facility also has a flexible leadership system where issues are mainly solved among ourselves before management even gets to know about it. I make sure to talk to the nurses all the time and advise them as a mother and a matron... NMF

She also added that;

...The leaders of the organization show so much concern to us not only at the professional level but also at the personal level... this has actually led to good interpersonal relationship among all staff and leading to our grievances to be resolved in no time...

7.3.4 Code of Ethics

The main guiding principle for health professionals is the ethical code stipulated in their duties. Such code is the main tool to check their conduct and to serve as channel for effective service delivery to its workers. The Ghana Health Service Ethical Code is said to be the general moral principles and rules that defines the conduct of all practitioners in the performance of their duties. Gotterbarn et al., (2018), reported that for workers to be committed to the professional values of the organization, such individual must be committed to know what is expected of him. It not surprising that most of the health professionals were of the view that the ethical code of the profession is key to their duties during challenging times.

This is what the medical doctor reported;

...I think right from the word go, because of the regulatory body that we all ascribe to it ensures that you work according to the code of ethics of your profession. That is the biggest one. Then the second one has to do with the management vis a vis of the facility...MM

In addition, NF2 also commented that;

... We have our own ethical code as health professionals that we must follow. This code serve as a check on our behavior...If we act in contradiction to the moral principles of the code, our certificate could be evoked and as such, there is the need to ensure that such code of ethics is followed and where there is dilemma, we follow the due process...

7.3.5 Regular Meetings

One of the discoveries of the study was on the basis of regular meetings held at the medical center. According to respondents, such meeting ensures that all grievances are resolved and all misconducts are dealt with at in time in order to prevent others from doing same. This according to respondents, has created good environment among all workers and patients as everyone's issue is attached with the highest level of seriousness.

NF2 has this to say concerning meetings;

... There are regular meetings to discuss any issue we have and they advise us on the right channel to report any form of misconduct or issues that happens...

PM also added this to the comment;

...A doctor was suspected to be having sexual relations with a nurse and how management solved it. A meeting was called and the lady was called aside. I heard how rude she was becoming but after that incident she has become very calm and she is working well...

Measures in promoting ethical conduct has been analysed in this study and its evidently

clear that several approaches are adopted by the medical center which are in agreement in previous studies. For instance, Boateng (2018) reported that having code of ethics could be the first step in ensuring positive behavioural change among workers and this could be impactful to the organization. Also, the rules and regulations were found to be consisted with the work of Driskill (2018) who concluded that rules are key promoting moral values. The outcome of the study a discovery on the meeting held regularly to ensure that misconceptions and grievances are resolved.

7.4 How Workplace Ethics Influence Performance

The organisational performance of is vital to the sustainability of the organisation. In a situation where productivity is low, it tends to affect the workers and the organisation as a whole. In this regard, this section focused on the identifying how workplace ethics promote organisational performance at Vednan medical center. It was found that Doctor-patient relation, hardworking practitioners, report of worker's issue for resolve and respect and punctuality has led to positive outcome for not only the center but also patients that come to the facility.

7.4.1 Practitioners-Patient Relation

Often relationship between doctors and patients are highly skewed with patients expected to accept every "command" from the doctor. This is often seen as inhibiting good relationship between doctors and patients (Barry, 2009). However, respondents from the study were of the view that relationship between patients has led to higher performance of the center. They were of the view that they respect the self-determination of patients and that has led trust between them and patients.

This was reported by medical doctor of the facility;

...One thing I praise all the staff here is the way they receive the clients...We respect every individual that comes here and tries to only provide them with options for them to choose from that has breed some level of respect. In fact they feel comfortable telling me their problem and this has always had a positive outcome on the center...MM

In addition, NF3 added that;

...Productivity increased due to our conduct and the patients say it all the time. They always tell us they will bring us more patients because of the way we treated them at the facility. So VEDNAN's growth has been mainly through the patients spreading the information across...

...Our conduct has seen significant changes in the facility. We register more than 10 midwives on ANC days. How we talk to the patients from doctor down to the security is something we get complements on every day. The nurses get gifts all the time and they tell me how wonderful our nurses and doctors are. Other sections too have seen significant improvement and VEDNAN is gradually becoming one of the most popular hospitals here in Kenyasi and I am sure with the pace we are working we will become very popular in Kumasi too...NMF

7.4.2 Respect and Punctuality

Respect among peers and client has positive outcome on relationship and overall performance of organization. Punctuality being one of the ethical principles of every organization, there is no doubt how that could trigger positive result to the organization. It was not surprising that respondents of the study were of the view that respect and punctuality within the organization is one of the ways that has led to positive outcome. MM of the facility was of the view that;

...The workers are very respectful and they are very punctual. Their time is something that I always complement on. It has really increased our productivity...

7.4.3 Report of Issue for Resolve

The organization is set of have better channel of communication which ensures that issues regarding workers' and patients' problems are resolved in timely manner. Participants of the study were of the notion that because they are not hesitant to report their challenges and patients have access to have their grievances resolved; this has led to positive outcome to the organization.

For instance, NM and NF3 commented that;

... We report all our issues to the administrator and the matron. The facility also has their own rules and regulations...This provides fast resolve of any challenges we may face and always leads to increase in productivity... The CEO is always around and she is always advising us too. We are very comfortable to report any issue we face.

7.4.4 Hardworking

Hard working is observed as one of the relevant tools for increase productivity. The respondents were of the view that working is key to the rules and regulations governing the facility and due to that every worker aspire to achieve higher standard through hard work which has positively impacted the growth of the center.

This is what was said by NF3

...We the workers at the center put in our very best to promote the goals of the institution...From 2018 up till now there have been significant improvement in the attendance all because of how we act professionally here.

In addition, the administrator reported that;

...I have been an administrator for almost three years now and I have not had any issue because of my conduct. I influence them a lot and when I speak they all listen. This has fast paced the facility now, because of how diligent I work. Every penny is accounted for and I make sure to come early to inspect the place. I work overtime, I work on weekends, I have slept at this facility for about 2 weeks because the security man was not available. All the sacrifices have greatly influenced productivity...AM

The outcome of the study showed that due high ethical conduct among

practitioners, there is increase workplace performance. This is not in isolation as Draft (2015) reported that ethical conduct has a positive effect on workplace performance. Also, Talbot (2010) confirms the outcome of the study as it concludes that there is increase in workplace output when ethical code of conduct is highly observed. There is also a consistent outcome of the study and that of McKinley et al., (2002) as it showed that patient's satisfaction is achieved by meeting their needs.

8. Conclusion

The outcome of the study clearly shows how imperative for health centers to dwell on ethical conduct of every worker if trust is to build between both workers and patients. The result showed that even though there may be situations where a practitioner may experience ethical dilemma, when such individual considers the available rules, proper supervision and channel of communication, issues of unethical conduct could be addressed. The study clearly depicts that ethical conduct and workplace performance are not in isolation. They tend to work together for better result for both patients and workers of the facility. This therefore indicates that worker's progress is dependent on their ability to work in an ethical fashion at Vednan Medical Center for positive output.

9. Recommendation

Based on the analysis and conclusion of the study, the following are some recommendation outlined;

1. The result of the study clearly suggests that for there to be organizational performance, each worker must follow the ethical conduct of the organization. In essence, they are to follow the guiding principles stipulated in the organization to achieve higher productivity. Thus, Vednan Medical Center could achieve growth when there is adherence to the ethical code at the facility.
2. Leadership role at the organization was found to play a significant role on how practitioners behave at the facility. In essence, the study recommends that leadership within the medical facility should be flexible but strict to fit in particular situation. As such, the leadership system should not be in straight jacket and must be able to change depending on the circumstances if workers are to accept such system.
3. In another circumstances are the issue of ethical code. Even though, some participants suggested the need for the ethical code to be pasted on the wall for it to be observed, the best way to ensure that workers follow the ethical code of the center is practice such code at work. That is, workers must be praised and rewarded when they follow the ethical code especially during dilemma and must be punished for not following the ethical code of the duty. This will ensure that workers are in full knowledge about the code of ethics within the center.

4. The study also recommends that consistent workshop and training must be organized for health practitioners to improve not only their skills, but also remind themselves about the need for them to follow the code of ethics of Ghana health service. Such application and processes will serve as a tool to ensure that workers perform their duties at the highest level of ethical conduct.
5. The study also recommends that workers at the Vednan Medical Center must be mindful of religion and culture as some of the challenges they may face in executing their duties. In effect, when such issues are met, the proper protocols at established at the center must be followed. This ensures that workers behavior could be measured based on what is expected and not on individual action which may negatively affect the organization.
6. Most studies have indicated that the surest way to achieve workplace productivity is when workers are willing to work harder. As such, this study also suggests that workers at the Vednan Medical Center could achieve the best outcome when the concentration is based on hard working which also one of the key principles of a health professional.
7. This study clearly shows how ethical conduct and workplace performance are not in isolation. They tend to work together for better result for both patients and workers of the facility. This therefore indicates that worker's progress is dependent on their ability to work in an ethical fashion at Vednan Medical Center for positive output. This therefor suggests whiles practicing their duties, they must be aware the ethical conduct for over organizational performance.
8. The outcome of the study clearly showed that there still remains some ethical dilemma which must be resolved for better ethical conduct among professionals. The study therefore recommends that policy makers in the area of health must re-evaluate the code of ethics of the Ghana health service to ensure that issue of dilemma reduced to the minimum to achieve the best ethical conduct.

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