

Effect of Professionalism on service to humanity in Nairobi County Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of professionalism on service to humanity. Professionalism has been on decline among various professionals despite the widening scope of professions globally. The study sought to establish what constitutes professionalism and how this affects delivery of services to humanity. The study collected from professions such as accounting, Medicine, law, education, civil service among others. The study found out that vocation had the greatest effect on service to community while formal study had the least effect. The study recommends further research on impact of formal study on service to humanity.

Key words: professionalism, vocation, formal study, service to humanity

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I. INTRODUCTION

Twenty first century has seen rapid increase in the number of professions in all sectors of economy. History provides evidence that only three professions had been recognized which include medicine, law and religion. However, in the Twenty First Century, several professionals have emerged especially in areas such as education, management, business, psychology, human resources and engineering among others. This trend may be attributable to the widening variety of services required by humanity. Professionalism is an internal value that drives activities geared towards quality services to mankind. With the increasing human needs in this century which are equally matched with expanding number of professions, the question of professionalism in serving humanity has become critical. This paper aims at determining the effect of professionalism on service to humanity.

Professionalism has been defined in various ways. The Chief Justice of Ontario Advisory Committee on Professionalism as quoted by Balthazard (2014) defined professionalism as an attitude and approach to an occupation that is commonly characterized by intelligence, integrity, maturity, and thoughtfulness. Beaton (2010) viewed professionalism as combination of knowledge, skills, trustworthiness and altruism found in those who commit themselves to a life of service to others. He further quoted definition of a profession adapted in Australia Annual General Meeting of Professions in 1997, as a disciplined group of individuals who have acquired special knowledge and skills from study and are willing to apply them to serve others. APEGA (2004) held the view that professionalism is a calling requiring specialized knowledge and skill in serving others. These definitions allude to the fact that professionalism could be looked at as a vocation that requires one to develop specialized knowledge and skills with an aim of offering services to the public.

What constitutes professionalism?

Different authors and professional bodies view professionalism as constituting several and varied components. The National Association of School Psychologists Principles for Professional Ethics (2010) highlights four key components of professionalism as respect to dignity and rights of all persons; professional competence and responsibility; honesty and integrity in professional relationships and responsibility to schools, families, communities, the profession and the wider society. NASW Code of Ethics provides that professionals must promote client well-being; individual dignity; self-determination; the right to have basic needs met; the right to actualize one's full potential among others. Ssonko (2010) reiterates that professionalism emphasizes values such as loyalty, neutrality, transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness, impartiality, and other values that may be specific to the public service of individual countries. Quoting from Article 21 of the Charter for the Public Service in Africa, Ssonko further emphasized that professionalism manifests itself in the public

service employee's behavior at work and in their constant effort to improve, reinforce and update knowledge, refine the skills that are necessary for carrying out tasks and enhancing output and productivity. The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (2012) for social work holds that values such as respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons, pursuit of social justice, integrity of professional practice, competence and confidentiality constitute professionalism in that sector.

In addition, professionals are expected to continuously develop themselves in order to render relevant services in a changing society. Lilian and Jacinta (2006) identified higher education training, pre-service training and orientation for new staff, in-service training seminars and resource centers, local and national conferences, mentoring programs and ongoing informal resources as means of enhancing skill and knowledge among professionals. These programs are geared towards benefitting both the individual professional and their clients.

It is important to note that professional services are meant to enhance the society well-being. A renowned professional, Aristotle (n.d.), stated that for a society to ensure stability and wellbeing, it depends upon self-governing professional services, stable family & community, health care, education and effective judiciary. He emphasized that the ability to maintain professional standards to regulate our own professions is necessary for a well-functioning society. According to APEGA (2004), professionals have a mandate to give back to society through public bodies that draw on professional expertise as well as participating in activities that contribute to the community well-being in an ethical manner. They should also participate in non-technical activities such as charitable, community and religious services.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Professionals often find themselves in grey areas as they carry out their activities as there seems to be no clear cut boundaries between what is acceptable and what falls below expectation. Blurred boundaries are experienced in areas such as levels of self-disclosure, giving or receiving gifts, overlapping relationships, friendship as well as physical professional distance. Trust is another area where professionalism is normally tested. The public often express misperception of what the professionals should specifically be involved in as they discharge their mandate. More often than not, the public normally sets high expectation on professionals that may not be feasible in real life situations. For instance, patients expect doctor's prescription to alleviate their problem without any failure, general public expects instant service from civil servants while parent expect only highest grade in academic performance of their children. When these expectations are not met, the tendency is to lose trust and confidence on the professionals. It is becoming a growing tendency for professionals to find themselves in dilemma in cases where the public demands services yet failing to meet the expected obligations for the service delivery. This continues to widen the gap between the public's expectations of professional services and the actual deliverables. Based on these problems, this study set to determine the influence of professionalism on service to humanity that was guided by the following research questions.

- a. What is the influence of vocation on rendering of services to humanity?
- b. What is the effect of formal study on provision of services to humanity?
- c. What is the effect of ethical conduct on provision of service to humanity?

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive, cross-sectional survey design. Data was collected from 122 professionals from fields such as education, business, medical world, civil service, lawyers among others. Online questionnaires were used to reach the different professionals in various organizations. Data was tested for validity and reliability.

Reliability tests

Reliability is the measure of the extent to which a scale produces consistent results on repeated measurement of a characteristic and indicates the accuracy or precision of the measuring instrument (Norland, 1990). The study tested this by using items that had been used by others in developing research instrument. The study further subjected the data to Cronbach alpha test and the results are indicated in Table 1 where all variables met the recommended threshold of 0.7. The study also used factor analysis for further test on the reliability of the research instrument.

Table 1 Cronbach Alpha Test

Item	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Vocation	0.743	13
Formal study	0.686	10
Ethical conduct	0.926	16
Service to humanity	0.757	10

The results indicate that the data collection instrument was reliable given that all items met the threshold of 0.7 on Cronbach alpha test. Factor analysis is a data reduction procedure where Principal Component Analysis (PCA) technique with Varimax rotation is used. The procedure allows confirmation of underlying dimensions/drivers of the predictor variables. PCA reduces large sets of variables into a smaller set of variables called principal components showing how particular factors contribute to the component. PCA also establishes the specific elements that measure the variables of the study, thereby increasing research instrument's reliability. Varimax rotation was used as it maximizes the dispersion of loadings within the components loading to a smaller number of variables highly for each factor. As recommended by Kaiser (1974), only items with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and loadings greater than 0.5 were extracted. Each variable was subject to factor analyses and results are presented in tables 2-5

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)</i>	<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</i>		
	<i>Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</i>	<i>Approx. Chi-Square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Vocation/calling	.783	419.892	78	0.000
Formal study	.728	312.571	45	0.000
Ethical conduct	.917	1142.215	120	0.000
Service to humanity	.825	389.735	45	0.000

The results in table 2 show that KMO values ranged from 0.728 for formal study to 0.917 for ethical conduct implying that the sample used was adequate as the values are even greater than the recommended value of 0.5 (Malhotra and Dash, 2011) and that the variance in the study variables was caused by the underlying factors. For all study variables Bartlett test of Sphericity was 0.000 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 indicating that the correlation matrix was not identity and that the study variables were related. In all cases, the determinant was greater than 0.000 implying that the data collected was meaningful.

Table 3 Total variance explained and factors obtained

Variable	Factors	% of variance	Cumulative %
Vocation	Sense of responsibility	25.379	55.766
	Vision	16.813	
	Sense of awareness	13.574	
Formal study	Formal training	24.021	62.036
	Proficiency	23.232	
	Expected returns	14.783	
Ethical conduct	Integrity	26.758	64.597
	Professional standards	19.568	
	Correctness	18.271	
Service to humanity	Selflessness	29.927	62.551
	Altruism	21.332	
	Meekness	11.291	

Table 3 indicates that vocation produced sense of responsibility, vision and sense of awareness as the underlying factors accounting for 56% variance. Formal study generated formal training, proficiency and expected returns as the main factors accounting for 62% variance. Ethical conduct constituted integrity, professional standards and correctness as core factors accounting for 65% variance while service to humanity was made up of selflessness, altruism and meekness accounting for 63% variance. These findings show that the research instrument was reliable and therefore data collected could be subjected to further analysis.

Validity tests

Validity refers to the extent to which difference in observed scale scores reflect the difference among objects on the characteristic being measured (Malhotra & Dash, 2010). Face validity helps to determine if the instrument measured what it was supposed to measure as recommended by Carmine and Zeller (1979). This study measured face validity by discussing the research instruments with professionals.

Linear Regression Model

The study has adapted linear regression analysis approach to help capture the effect of professionalism on service to humanity. Professionalism as the independent variable has been operationalized into three components that include vocation, formal study and ethical conducts. To capture the effect of vocation, formal

study and ethical conducts on service to humanity, the study has conducted simple linear regression analysis whose are presented in the tables respectively.

Effect of vocation on service to humanity

Table 4.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.496 ^a	.246	.240	.4871070	.246	38.870	1	119	.000	1.715

- a. Predictors: (Constant), VOCATION
- b. Dependent Variable: SERVICE TO HUMANITY

4.2 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1.696	.365		4.648	.000			
	VOCATION	.569	.091	.496	6.235	.000	.496	.496	.496

- a. Dependent Variable: SERVICE TO HUMANITY

The simple regression model results in table 4.1a shows that the model is significant at p=0.000 with vocation accounting for 24.6 % variance on service to humanity. The result on the standardized beta coefficient is significant indicating that for every unit change in vocation, service to humanity would increase by 0.496. This implies that the more a professional identifies his job as a vocation, the more positively it will serve humanity.

Effect of formal study on provision of services to humanity

Table 4.3 Model Summary of effect of formal study on provision of services to humanity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.327 ^a	.107	.099	.5302666	.107	14.217	1	119	.000	1.755

- a. Predictors: (Constant), FORMALSTUDY
- b. Dependent Variable: SERVICETOHUMANITY

Table 4.4 Coefficients effect of formal study on provision of services to humanity

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.553	.375		6.815	.000
	FORMALSTUDY	.369	.098	.327	3.771	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: SERVICETOHUMANITY

The simple regression model on the effect of formal study on service to humanity is significant and accounts for 10.7% variance while the standardized beta of 0.327 is also significant. This means that though the proportion of formal study that explains service to humanity is not as large, it is positively significant.

Effect of ethical conducts on provision of services to humanity

Table 4.5 Model Summary on effect of ethical conducts on provision of services to humanity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	

1	.584 ^a	.341	.335	.4555602	.341	61.492	1	119	.000	1.857
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a. Predictors: (Constant), ETHICALCONDUCT

b. Dependent Variable: SERVICETOHUMANITY

Table 4.6 **Coefficients** of effect of ethical conducts on provision of services to humanity

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.118	.364		3.071	.003
1 ETHICALCONDUCT	.641	.082	.584	7.842	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SERVICETOHUMANITY

The result on simple linear regression model on effect of ethical conducts is significant and shows that the variance on service to humanity explained is 34.1% with beta value indicating that for every unit change in ethical conduct service to humanity changes by 0.584. The relatively large and significant beta coefficients imply that ethical standards significantly predict the service to humanity provided by professionals.

Professionalism and provision of services to humanity

Table 4.7 **Model Summary** of Professionalism and provision of services to humanity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.561 ^a	.315	.309	.4645181	.315	54.598	1	119	.000	1.740

a. Predictors: (Constant), PROFESSIONALISM

b. Dependent Variable: SERVICETOHUMANITY

Table 4.8 **Coefficients** of Professionalism and provision of services to humanity

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.895	.416		2.152	.033
1 PROFESSIONALISM	.753	.102	.561	7.389	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SERVICETOHUMANITY

The composite variable, professionalism has a significant simple linear regression model that explains 30.9% of variance on service to humanity. The standardized beta value is equally relatively large and significant implying that professionalism has strong positive predictive power on service to humanity.

Table 4.9 **multivariate regression Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.584 ^a	.341	.335	.4555602	.341	61.492	1	119	.000	
2	.609 ^b	.370	.360	.4470320	.030	5.584	1	118	.020	1.810

a. Predictors: (Constant), ETHICALCONDUCT

b. Predictors: (Constant), ETHICALCONDUCT, VOCATION

c. Dependent Variable: SERVICETOHUMANITY

Table 4.10 Multivariate regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	1.118	.364		3.071	.003
1 ETHICALCONDUCT	.641	.082	.584	7.842	.000
2 (Constant)	.778	.385		2.020	.046
2 ETHICALCONDUCT	.492	.102	.448	4.826	.000
2 VOCATION	.252	.107	.219	2.363	.020

a. Dependent Variable: SERVICETOHUMANITY

To try and distinguish the level of significance for each of the components of professionalism on service to humanity, a stepwise regression analysis was conducted as presented in table 4.5a, b. The first stepwise regression model is significant and captures ethical conduct as the one with the most predictive power accounting for 33.5% variance on service to humanity. The second model adds vocation as the next predictive variable with additional of 2.5% variance. Formal study is dropped out as having no significance effect when all the components of professionalism are considered together. These results raise the concern on why the level of formal study as a major component of professionalism does not come out as a strong predictor of service to humanity among modern time professionals.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In determining the effect of professionalism on service to humanity, the study has effectively incorporated test of reliability and validity of data. This is to ensure that the results of the study significantly add value to this critical area that touches everyhuman globally. The factor analysis has solidified the components of professionalism; vocation, formal study and ethical conduct to fewer factors that could easily be tracked and evaluated in any professional activities. Vocation constitutes sense of responsibility, vision and sense of awareness as the underlying factors behind pursuit of certain professional area, with formalstudy comprising formal training, proficiency and expected returns. Ethical conducts on the other hand is captured in integrity, professional standards and correctness. Service to humanity is expressed through selflessness, altruism and meekness. It is however observed that these factors explain components variance of about 60% implying that there is still a greater portion of the professional components that have not been captured in the identified factors.

Linear regression models show that professionalism has significant predicting power on service to humanity and that increasing the magnitude of each component could enhance services offered to humanity. To effectively provide the neededservices to mankind, enhancing the dimension of professionalism in all institutions is critical.

Nevertheless, the simple linearregression models could only explain variance of 24 %, 10 % and 33.5% of service to community by vocation, formal study and ethical conduct respectively. This indicates that the complex nature of the expression of these components in real life may not be fully captured in linear relationship analysis but rather in more complex nonlinear relationships. The stepwise regression model expressed ethical conduct as the strongest predictor of service to humanity followed by vocation but failed to include formal study as significant when all components are considered together. The findings are a surprise as it would have been expected that greater pursuit of study would contributemore to enhancing service to humanity.

The study results awaken greater interest into deeper insight on professionalism and service to community in modern world. The study would recommend further research into more constituents of professionalism, use of other analytical models to capture high predictive power of professionalism on service to humanity and more insightful studies to whatails formal study as contributor to the service to humanity.

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