



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

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Student Name:- Sana Firoz Haji

Student Id:-2242231

Lecturer:- Dr. Diola Bijlhout

***Exploring the factors that influence professional
behaviour of postgraduate PHSC students in a
public university: a focus group discussion.***

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Overview.....	3
Research Question.....	4
Objectives	4
References.....	5

Introduction

The professional behavior of postgraduate PHSC (Public Health and Social Care) students in public universities is shaped by a complex interplay of individual, institutional, and environmental factors. It's important to note that these factors interact and influence each other, making it difficult to isolate their individual effects (Wedell, 2021). Understanding this complex interplay is crucial for developing effective interventions and fostering a culture of professionalism among postgraduate PHSC students in public universities.

Intrinsic factors stem from the individual student's values, motivations, and personality traits. A strong sense of ethical responsibility, a dedication to public service, and a desire to make a positive impact in the healthcare sector can drive students to conduct themselves professionally (Sanchez, 2022). Additionally, personal characteristics like self-discipline, time management skills, and effective communication can all contribute to professional demeanor.

Extrinsic factors encompass the environment surrounding the students, including the university culture, faculty mentorship, and peer interactions. A supportive university environment that emphasizes professionalism and ethical conduct can set a positive tone for students. Strong mentorship from experienced faculty members can provide guidance and role models for professional behavior. Conversely, a competitive or toxic academic culture can incentivize unethical behavior or shortcuts. Finally, the influence of peers and social groups can also play a role, with positive peer pressure encouraging professional conduct while negative influences can lead to unprofessional behavior.

Overview

Individual factors: Personal values and ethics: A strong sense of ethical responsibility, empathy, and commitment to public service can motivate students to conduct themselves professionally. Motivation and career goals: Students aiming for specific careers in PHSC may be more inclined to demonstrate professionalism to enhance their future prospects. Personality and social skills: Effective communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution abilities are crucial for navigating professional interactions within the university and future workplaces.

Institutional factors: University policies and codes of conduct: Clearly defined expectations and consequences regarding professional behavior within the academic environment can guide students' actions. Quality of teaching and mentorship: Faculty members who role-model professionalism and provide constructive feedback can significantly influence student behavior. Internship and placement opportunities: Practical exposure to professional settings through internships or placements can equip students with valuable skills and shape their understanding of professional norms.

Environmental factors: Socioeconomic background and cultural values: Students' upbringing and cultural context can influence their perceptions and expectations regarding professional behaviour (Lasker, 2020). Social and peer pressure: The influence of friends and classmates can play a role in shaping students' professional conduct, both positively and negatively. Current healthcare and social care landscape: Broader issues like healthcare system pressures, ethical dilemmas in social care, and public scrutiny can influence students' professional responses and engagement.

Research Question

What are the major elements affecting the behaviour of students in public university setting? In addition, how the institute system and academic training and programs are contributing towards professional conduct of PHSC students?

Objectives

- To analyse the positive and negative behaviour of PG students?
- To explore factors affecting professionalism in PG students?
- To examine the education and institutional policies contributing to the cultivation of professionalism.

References

Lasker, C., 2020. Examining professional athletes' role as political opinion leaders.

Sanchez, R., 2022. Experiences of College Professors with Students with Identified Disabilities and ADA Compliance in Face-to-Face Courses at a State College in Florida: A Case Study.

Wedell, E.R., 2021. *The Effects of Antiracism Education on Confrontation of Institutional Discrimination: A Game Theory Approach* (Doctoral dissertation, The College of William and Mary).