

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Students' Perception of Dual/Multiple Relationships in Academia: Implications for Professional Practice and Counselling

Stephen Doh Fia

Lecturer, Department of Guidance and Counselling, College of Education Studies,
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana

Lebbaeus Asamani

Lecturer, Department of Education and Psychology, College of Education Studies,
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana

Alfred Dickson Dai-Kosi

Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Lancaster University/University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana

Abstract:

Most professional associations frown upon dual relationships because they are likely to be problematic in many cases. However, every individual is in some form of relationship with others, which might be professional, business, social or romantic. Experts are of the view that dual relationships present a subject of conflicting views and are not always avoidable. This study investigated the perceptions of university students regarding various forms of dual relationships in academic settings. The design for the study was descriptive survey and data was obtained from 294 students from the University of Cape Coast using a set of questionnaire. The results, among others, indicate that most students perceived sexual dual relationship between a Lecturer and current student as inappropriate and must be avoided. However, sexual relationship with a former student was not seen as being that problematic. Other forms of non-sexual dual relationships were also explored and the results and their practical and counselling implications were discussed.

1. Introduction

Everybody in our society is in some form of relationship with others, which might be professional, business, social or romantic. Social workers and other human service professional enter into professional relationships with their "clients" from the same society. These clients might be people they already knew in social life or total strangers. As they perform their professional duties, other forms of relationships develop along the line. Some of these new relationships might be intentional, while others would be unexpected and circumstantial. A situation where a practitioner or professional engages in other roles with the same client alongside the professional role is referred to as dual or multiple relationships. Dual or multiple relationships are almost inevitable part of everyday practice. They may occur at the beginning of the professional relationship, during the period the professional is providing the service to the client, or after termination of the service (Western Region Outreach Centre and Consortia-WROCC, 2006).

Most professional associations frown upon dual relationships because they are problematic in many cases. This is expressly prohibited when it involves sexual relationship. The code of ethics of the US National Association of Social Workers (NASW) standard 2.07(a) states: "Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority." Standard 1.09(a) also prohibits Social workers from engaging in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contacts are consensual or otherwise. Sexual relationships with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship, former clients or individuals with whom Social workers have had a prior sexual relationship are also discouraged when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client.

There is always the possibility that one of the relationships, either the professional or personal, would be compromised and emotional harms may result. Zur (2013) observed that counsellors or supervisors who also have personal relationship with a client or supervisee may find it difficult to confront the client in therapy or a supervisee for fear of damaging the working or professional relationship. In clinical supervision, the supervisee may hesitate to talk about deeper struggles for fear that he or she may lose respect before the supervisor. This is a typical challenge that a supervisor or a professional who is also friends with that client would encounter.

However, it would be unrealistic to insist that human service practitioners, such as psychologist, social workers, counsellors etc. should have no other forms of relationships, prior to or simultaneously with their clients. WROCC (2006) noted that more often than not, clients seek practitioners out for the very reason that they are not complete strangers. The critical issue of concern therefore would have to be whether the nonprofessional relationship is likely to interfere with the objectivity and effectiveness, at some point, of the professional relationship. Karl (n.d) aptly asserts that any attempt to prohibit all dual relationships in professional relationship would

invariably lead to the promotion of an artificial “*cleavage, the natural pattern that connects us as human being*. He avers further that such a stance is far more impoverishing than it is protective. This is where the services of counsellors becomes relevant in assisting supervisors and superiors to know the extent they should go and how to prevent excesses that are likely to put the individual and the organization into disrepute.

1.1. What is Dual Relationship?

A dual relationship is one in which there are two or more distinct kinds of relationship with same person (Karl, n.d). Herlihy and Corey (1992) describe dual relationships as occurring when professionals assume two roles simultaneously or sequentially with a person seeking help. Doverspike (2008) provided a similar definition, noting that dual or multiple role relationships occur when a professional assumes two or more roles at the same time or sequentially with a client or with someone who has a significant relationship with the client. According to the APA:

(a) A multiple relationship occurs when a psychologist is in professional role with a person and (1) at the same time is in another role with the same person, (2) at the same time is in a relationship with a person closely associated with or related to the person with whom the psychologist has the professional relationship, or (3) promises to enter into another relationship in the future with the person or a person closely associated with or related to the person.

Zur (2013) also asserts that dual relationships or Multiple Relationships in psychotherapy refers to any situation where multiple roles exist between a therapist and a client. Examples of dual relationships are when the client is also a student, friend, family member, employee or business associate of the therapist. Kagle and Giebelhausen (1994) also noted that dual relationships occur when a practitioner takes on an additional role with a client. This role may include sexual partner, friend, employer, teacher, business associate, or family member. For instance, for a professional in education, the primary role is that of teacher, and additional roles may include sexual partner, friend, therapist, or employer.

Human services professionals encounter actual or potential conflict between their professional relationships and other social, sexual, religious or business relationships. A supervisor might be in the same church with a supervisee or a close relative of the supervisee, or they might be business partners, or the supervisee might be a relative of a school mate of the supervisor, or a partner of the supervisor’s relative, friend, work colleague etc. Each of these scenarios suggests that the supervisor would be performing more than one role in the life of the client. Some of these relationships may even develop after the professional relationship has been terminated. The critical issue is whether the objectivity and effectiveness of the supervisor would be compromised or affected. The reality is that dual relationships cannot be completely avoided in the supervisory relationship. It may be difficult to anticipate situations which are not currently conflicts in role, but may become so at a later time which may result in prohibited dual relationships.

1.2. Prohibition of Dual Relationship

WROCC (2006) indicated that dual relationships present a subject of conflicting views and not always avoidable. **However**, it is worth noting that most ethical codes draw strong distinctions between sexual and non-sexual dual relationships. There is clear consensus among the professional associations (counsellors, supervisors, psychologists, social workers, etc.) that concurrent sexual and professional relationships are unethical. Many of the associations agree that a sexual relationship cannot later be converted into a therapeutic or supervisory relationship. For instance, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) standard 2.07(a) states: “Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.” The APA also indicated that “*Psychologists do not accept as therapy clients/patients persons with whom they have engaged in sexual intimacies.*” WROCC (2006) observed that from a legal perspective, non-sexual dual relationships are less likely to produce sanctions than are sexual dual relationships. For instance Healy and Herlihy (1992) found that sexual dual relationships comprised 20% and other dual relationships comprised 7% of complaints made to state counsellor licensure boards. Although the professional codes prohibit the practitioners from having a sexual relationship with a current client, variation occurs in the prohibition of such a relationship with former clients and the length of time that must pass for such a relationship to be permissible (APA, 2002; American Counselling Association, 1995; National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counsellors, 1995).

Apart from sexual dual relationships, the codes of ethics of the American Psychological Association (APA) and other major professional associations prohibit dual or multiple relationships that could reasonably be expected to impair the objectivity and effectiveness of the practitioner or cause harm to clients, supervisees, students etc. Standard 3.05 of the APA code states: “*A psychologist refrains from entering into a multiple relationship if the multiple relationships could reasonably be expected to impair the psychologist’s objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or otherwise risks exploitation or harm to the person with whom the professional relationship exists.*”

The phrase *could reasonably be expected* in the APA code of ethics suggests to whether or not most psychologists would engage in such multiple relationship or most would expect it to lead to harm or impairment of objectivity. If most people would expect a given relationship to lead to impairment and harm, then the supervisor needs to exercise caution in entering into that relationship or taking on such a multiple role. For instance, the objectivity of a psychologist lecturing in a university who enters into a sexual relationship with a student in his department would reasonably be expected. This type of dual relationship could even lead to exploitation and harm.

Dual relationships have become major ethical and legal issue among professionals because practitioners may hold a great deal of power over supervisees and clients that can potentially lead to exploitation. There is a danger of exploiting the student or supervisee because the supervisor holds a more powerful position since they are paid to provide a service. The greatest potential for harm from a

dual relationship may result from the power held, or perceived as being held by the supervisor (WROCC, 2006). Whereas the supervisory relationship would eventually come to an end, the power differential may remain indefinitely and adversely affect any future non-professional relationship between supervisor and supervisee (Haas & Malouf, 1989). This potentially indefinite power differential engendered debates or arguments as to whether practitioners/professionals could enter into other forms of relationships with their former clients, especially when sex is involved. Various views have been expressed as to the number of years that should elapse after termination before other non-professional relationships could ethically develop.

1.3. Prevalence and Effects of Sexual dual Relationship

Notwithstanding the fact that sexual dual relationship is expressly prohibited, studies indicate that it is prevalent in professional practice. Borys and Pope (1989) noted that almost all professionals (98.3%) in their national study in the US indicated that sexual relationships between therapists and clients were unethical. Cechtman (1989, cited in Congress, 1996) noted that despite the prohibitions in the Codes, sexual relationships between human services workers and clients occur. A national study of complaints made about social workers to state licensing or regulatory boards in the US indicated that the majority involved sexual contact with clients (Dawes, 1988), while another study found over 40% of liability insurance payments to clients were related to charges of sexual contact (Reamer, 1994). There is also concern that, similar to rape, sexual contact between therapist and client may be under reported (Heiliner, 1989; Dean & Rhodes, 1992). According to Nystul (2011), it is ethically wrong for counsellors or therapists to have any sexual relation with their clients. It is against the ethics of the profession. This may also apply to other professions as well.

Several studies indicated that a great deal of harm occurs when therapists and clients become sexually involved. In the academia and supervisory relationships for instance, there is concern about the exploitation of students/supervisee because the supervisors have evaluative power over the supervisee/students. Sexual involvement with clients has been linked to disruption of the therapeutic process and emotional and social maladjustment (Colemail & Schaeier, 1986), and conditions comparable to rape and battered women syndromes (Pope, 1988). Analogous comparison in the supervisory relationship would be the disruption of the supervisory working relationship and breach of trust and respect. Olarte (1997) found that about 8-12% of male counsellors had sexual relationship with current or former client, and inappropriate dual relationships in the form of sexual misconduct constitute the most frequent lawsuits filed against mental health professionals (Reamer, 1994). Since emotions are involved in romantic relationships, the objectivity and effectiveness of the supervisor may be highly compromised. In addition, when the romantic relationship becomes sour, the integrity of the supervisor is likely to be greatly affected as well, and it could also lead to severe emotional harm to the supervisee. It is in light of these that all ethical codes prohibit a dual sexual relationship with students, supervisees, clients or patients.

Teachers often influence students more with their behaviour than with what they teach (Congress, 1992b; Lewis, 1987). Thus, if the supervisor engages in sexual dual relationship with the supervisee, he or she would indirectly put the supervisee in a position to also do same when he or she is in the supervisory position in the future. When clients have one set of assumptions about the ground rules of the relationship, and the professional has a different set of assumptions, there is an increased likelihood of vulnerability. Another principle is that when the responsibilities inherent in the dual roles are divergent, there is potential for divided loyalties and a concomitant loss of objectivity. Supervisors, who also have personal, political, social or business relationships with their supervisees, are at risk because their self-interest may be involved and thus compromise the supervisee's best interest.

Pope and Vasquez (1991) asserted that counsellors who engage in dual relationships are often skillful at rationalizing their behaviour, thereby evading their professional responsibility to find acceptable alternatives to dual relationships. Dual relationships affect the cognitive processes that benefit supervisees during their professional development and help them maintain these benefits after termination. Furthermore, it can also create conflicts of interest, and thus compromise the objectivity needed for sound professional judgment.

1.4. Non-prohibited Dual Relationships

Pope and Vasquez (1991) noted that dual relationships are problematic because some dual relationships are clearly exploitative and result in serious harm to the professional and client involved, while others do not cause harm and, others too are unavoidable. Though dual relationships are generally not encouraged, those that would not reasonably be expected to cause impairment or risk exploitation or harm are not unethical (e.g. APA 3.05), and may not be prohibited. For instance, it is not unethical for a University Professor to double as a supervisor of a student in his department, even though the lecturer is performing multiple roles at the same time. Younggren (n.d) intimated that consistent with the risk management model of the APA Insurance Trust, when one chooses to enter into a dual relationship he/she is forced to prospectively assess how other professionals might retrospectively view the outcome of the relationship, potentially years after it had occurred. Thus, when assessing whether or not to enter into a dual relationship, the supervisor needs to proactively predict future reactions to their conduct, and this is something that is not easy at all to do. Younggren (n.d) suggested that in addressing dual relationships, the evaluation of boundary violations in professional practice are often outcome driven determinations. Usually, the determination of whether or not a professional committed a violation of professional practice is arrived at retrospectively when experts or ethics committees evaluate a case. Thus, the ethicality of dual or multiple relationships is more complex than it initially seems to be.

The code of professional ethics of the Psychological Society of Ireland (4.4.3) also indicated that psychologist must:

Be acutely aware of the problematic nature of dual relationships (with, for example, students, employees or clients), and recognise that it is not always possible to avoid them (for example, when offering services in a small community, or engaging in person-centred teaching or training). Where it is possible, psychologists shall avoid such relationships; where it is not, they take active steps to safeguard the students', employees' or clients' interests (p. 15).

This suggests that some dual relationships are simply unavoidable. Some professionals believe that certain dual relationships are inherent to the work of all professionals (Herlihy & Corey, 1992) and cannot be avoided (Keith-Spiegel & Koocher, 1985). In certain situations and contexts, it is simply impossible not to cross boundaries or not perform multiple roles in the supervisory relationship. In those situations, not engaging in dual/multiple relationships would be rather unethical and the supervisor needs to take reasonable steps or precautions to protect the interest and safety of the supervisee.

The foregoing discussion indicates that there are a number of positions within the human service area that have unique ethical issues that surface on a daily basis. Current ethical standards do not include specific references to potentially difficult situations that face counsellors, especially in the area of dual relationships. The standards do, however, give general guidelines that the counsellor may use to draw conclusions about his or her particular situation or ethical dilemma. Whenever professionals are operating in more than one role and there is potential for negative consequences, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to develop safeguards and measures to reduce (if not eliminate) the potential for harm.

1.5. Statement of the Problem

Some authors have expressed skepticism about the general ethical integrity of university and college professors (Anderson, 1992; Callahan, 1982; Sykes, 1989). Others point out how difficult it is to develop standardized expectations for behaviour in university settings given the diversity, professional training, and independence of faculty (Whicker & Kronenfeld, 1994). The caring work of teaching is premised upon having a reciprocal relationship between teachers and students. Reciprocity entails lecturers and students continually developing, negotiating and maintaining a social connection. Lecturer's commitment to social and emotional connections with students naturally brings with it relational tensions (McBride & Wahl, 2005) that have to be negotiated- sometimes daily. Reciprocity also means that not only do teachers influence students, but students also influence teachers.

In addition to acting as teachers/lecturers, psychologists can play many roles in relation to their students-including sexual partner, friend, therapist or employer. Combining the role of an instructor with one of these roles may lead to ethical violations and dilemmas. Each of these roles entails various obligations and responsibilities that have the potential to be in competition with one another. For example, faculty members are obligated to enhance the welfare and development of students and to protect the public from incompetent or unethical professionals. As the disparity between expectations and obligations associated with the various roles increases, the risk for harm and the burden placed on academic psychologists to make ethically responsible decisions also increases. Dual relationship is found in mentoring, friendship, monetary interaction, family, informal social interactions and romantic roles. There is some evidence that student perceptions of ethical climate may be related to the influence of gender, ethnicity and the characteristics of the situation. The role of counsellors is therefore very crucial in assisting people in dual relationships to overcome over familiarity that can destroy the good superior – client relationship.

Dual relationship in academia are rarely discussed or addressed by university policy despite the risk of problematic or unethical faculty-student interactions. This study seeks to contribute to an understanding of undergraduate students' perception of appropriateness of faculty-student relationship. The few studies which have addressed student perceptions of faculty ethical behaviour have ignored significant methodological issues, such as the dimensionality of the rating instrument used to assess student perceptions, and the validity and reliability of the measurement. The primary purpose of this study is to improve the measurement of student perceptions of faculty ethical behaviour and the role counsellors' need to play in attaining this.

1.6. Research Questions

- 1) How do students perceive sexual dual relationship in academic environment?
- 2) How do students perceive non-sexual dual relationship in academic environment?
- 3) Which dual relationships do students consider ethical?
- 4) What is the impact of the dual relationship on teaching and learning?

1.7. Significance of the Study

Recent developments in teaching and learning have brought ethics to the forefront of public debate and media attention. However, while several scholars have suggested that teaching is rife with ethical dilemmas (Svinicki, 1994), relatively little empirical research has been conducted on ethics in academia (Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel & Pope, 1991; Keith-Spiegel, Tabachnick, and Allen, 1993). The little research on faculty ethical behaviour which has been conducted has typically focused on such topics as sexual harassment and has largely ignored the many daily ethical dilemmas which occur in faculty-student interactions (Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel & Pope, 1991). Surprisingly, there is very little research on student perceptions of faculty ethical behaviour, and the outcomes of those perceptions (Morgan & Korschgen, 2001). Evidence of the growing concern of ethics in academia is the number of professional organizations which have developed codes of ethics (e.g., Ghana Psychological Association, American Psychological Association). In addition, many colleges and universities have developed codes of conduct, although it has been suggested that many of these take a legalistic or minimalist approach, defining codes of conduct largely in terms of legal compliance (Kibler, 1994; Zabihollah, Elmore & Szendi, 2001).

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The design for the study was descriptive survey. The rationale for the choice of this design was to find out students' perception with what truly exist as an institutional policy on the above subject. Researches that employ survey method to collect data enjoy a number of benefits. First, surveys are an excellent way to gather lots of information from many people. Surveys are relatively cost effective. Also, they have a potential for generalizability. Last but not the least, surveys are standardized in that the same questions, phrased in exactly the same way, are posed to participants. As with all methods of data collection, surveys also come with a few drawbacks. First, while one might argue that surveys are flexible, the researcher is however generally stuck with a single instrument for collecting data (i.e. the questionnaire). There are elements of action research in this study since it seeks to advocate for clear-cut University policy or to inform already existing policies on teacher- student relationships.

2.2. Population

Population is the entire aggregate of cases that meet a designated set of criteria (Polit and Hungler, 1996). The target population is the aggregate of cases which the researcher would like to make generalization on. The target population in this study is the students of the University of Cape Coast as well. The accessible population is estimated at about 17,000 students (Students' Record, UCC, 2015).

2.3. Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sample is a representative of a population that reflects the characteristics under study. A total of 300 students were drawn from University of Cape Coast level 200 to 400 students and other graduate students who have been in the system for quite some time and knew about the existence of dual relationships. Two hundred and ninety-four responses were received and deemed appropriate for analysis. This is made up of 190 (64.6%) males and 104 (35.4%) females, with mean age of all the respondents being 24.54. Random sampling technique was used. With this type of sampling method all participants have an equal opportunity of being selected and is a true reflection of the characteristics within the population. This method is administered by selecting samples at random from the different levels. This affords all members an equal chance of being selected as a participant for the study. The technique is appropriate for the study because it is more likely to lead to a sample that is highly representative of the population and gives every individual in the target group equal opportunity for participation. It also helps to ensure that all subgroups in the population and the various characteristics are fairly represented. The method is however disadvantages in the sense that it is more complex to administer and also requires a great deal of effort and time.

2.4. Instrument

Research instrument is the tool which was used to collect the data. The instrument developed and used for the study was a questionnaire. This was considered more expedient and suitable since the population is made up of literate respondents. The entire questionnaire had fifty-five (55) items consisting of three sections A, B and C. Section A gathers background information about the respondents. The specific background information collected includes the age of the respondent, gender, resident, level and course of study. Section B assessed students' perception of various forms of dual relationship activities to be rated on a five-point Likert scale of: (1) completely appropriate (2) somehow appropriate (3) neutral (4) somehow inappropriate (5) completely inappropriate. Section C assessed students response to (1) one open ended question on the impact of dual relationship in academia.

2.5. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was self-administered. They were distributed to respondents in their various lecture rooms and halls of residents after seeking permission from school authorities. The researchers first introduced themselves and explain the research topic and the purpose of study to the respondent. Individual respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire. In some cases, it was administered in groups. The response rate for the questionnaire was 294.

2.6. Method of Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, only questionnaires that were returned and fully completed were used. Clarity of expression and accuracy of the questionnaire were checked. Questionnaires were analyzed item by item. The responses of the questionnaires were coded, edited and fed into the computer the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) used to analyse the data. Quantitative data was collected from the administration of the questionnaire. The data collected from respondents are analyzed using frequencies percentages

3. Results and Discussion

The main data looked at issues concerning the various forms of dual relationship that develop in academic settings. These various forms of dual relationship that were considered in this study are broadly categorised under sexual and non-sexual dual relationships (social dual relationship, response set minimizers, professional dual relationship, incidental boundary crossing, financial dual relationship, familiar dual relationship and circumstantial dual relationship). The analysis of the main data is organized on the basis of the research questions and in direct relation to the purpose of the study. For easy presentation and discussion of findings, the five rating: completely appropriate, somehow appropriate, neutral, completely inappropriate and somehow appropriate were collapsed into

three ratings. Completely appropriate and somehow appropriate were fused to Appropriate and completely inappropriate and somehow inappropriate were labelled Inappropriate. Neutral was remained.

- Research Question 1: How do students perceive sexual dual relationship in academic environment?

3.1. Students Perception on Sexual Dual Relationship

ITEMS	A (%)	N (%)	I (%)
A student becoming sexually involved with a former lecturer six months after graduating	26.6	20.8	52.8
A lecturer having a sexual relationship with a previous student six months after graduating	32.7	23.5	43.9
A lecturer having a sexual relationship with a current student	13.3	8.5	78.8
A lecturer having a sexual relationship with a previous student two years after graduation	51.7	19.7	28.5

Table 1: Sexual dual relationships

KEY: A = Appropriate, N= Neutral and I= Inappropriate

Table 1 indicates that, more than half of the respondents (52.8%) believed that, a student becoming sexually involved with a former lecturer six months after graduating was inappropriate to (26.6%) who found it appropriate while less than half of the respondents (43.9%) believed that a lecturer having a sexual relationship with a previous student six months after graduating was as against (32.7%) who found it inappropriate.

From the statistic above, most of the responses indicated that sexual relationship between teacher and a student is inappropriate as pointed out by Borys and Pope (1989) that almost all professionals seen sexual relationships between therapists and clients as unethical. Cechtman (1989, cited in Congress, 1996) that despite the prohibitions in the Codes, sexual relationships between human services workers and clients occur. However, Colemail and Schaeier, (1986) observed that such relationship would inhibit teaching and learning emotionally in the academic environment.

- Research Question 2: How do students perceive non-sexual dual relationship in academic environment?

3.2. Students Perception on Social Dual Relationship

Social dual relationship is one in which the therapist and client are also friends or have some other type of social relationship which may include having a client as a Facebook friend (Zur, 2013; WROOC, 2006; & Fisher, 2008). Table 2 presents the results of the views of students on social dual relationship in the academia.

Statements	A (%)	N (%)	I (%)
A student disclosing details of personal stresses to a lecturer	64.2	21.4	12.9
A student inviting a lecturer to a party or social event	42.2	25.9	32.0
A lecturer inviting a student to a personal party or social event	52.8	22.1	25.2
A lecturer becoming a social friend with a student social	65.3	20.1	14.6
A lecturer going out to have drink, lunch or dinner with a student	38.8	28.2	33.0
Lecturer involving in caring roles such as visiting and making friends. Social	44.2	28.9	26.9
A lecturer becoming friends with a previous student two years after graduation	75.5	16.3	8.1

Table 2: Social dual relationships

KEY: A = Appropriate, N= Neutral and I= Inappropriate

Table 2 showed that more than half of the respondents (64.2%) indicated that it is appropriate for a student to disclose details of personal stresses to a lecturer while 12.9% stated that it is inappropriate. Also, most of the respondents (42.2%) indicated that a student inviting a lecturer to a party or social event was appropriate as against (32.0%) who stated that it is inappropriate. On the same line, majority of the respondents (65.3%) found lecturer inviting a student to a personal party or social event as appropriate.

3.3. Students Perception on Response set minimizers

Respondents were asked about their perception on response set minimizers. The results from their responses are presented in table 3.

ITEMS	A (%)	N (%)	I (%)
A lecturer allowing a student call him or her by first/given name	35.7	28.2	36.0
A student giving gifts to a lecturer	38.2	32.7	29.3
A student sending seasonal greeting card to a lecturer	51.4	25.9	22.7
A lecturer accepting a <i>Thank-You</i> card from a student on his or her graduation	66.0	20.7	12.9
A lecturer accepting an expensive gift from a student	37.8	26.9	35.3

Table 3: Response set minimizers

KEY: A = Appropriate, N= Neutral and I= Inappropriate

In reference to Table 3, majority of the respondents (66.0%) indicated that a lecturer accepting a *Thank-You* card from a student on his or her graduation is appropriate against (12.9%) who indicated that it was inappropriate. More than half of the respondents (51.4%) indicated that a student sending seasonal greeting card to a lecturer was appropriate and (22.7%) indicated that it's inappropriate. Also, there was a very close tie on the appropriateness of a lecturer allowing a student call him or her by first/given name, while 35.7% of the respondents saw it to be appropriate, 36.0% of the respondents believed that it was inappropriate.

3.4. Students Perception on Professional Dual Relationship

Responses on students perception on professional dual relationship is presented in table 4. Professional dual relationship is a situation in which practitioners and client are also professional colleagues in colleges, training institutions, presenters in professional conferences or co-authoring a book (Zur, 2013).

ITEMS	A (%)	N (%)	I (%)
A student having a lecturer as a mentor or counsellor	86.7	8.2	5.1
A student collaborating on a research paper and conference presentation with a lecturer	70.5	16.3	13.2
A lecturer teaching a co-worker	76.5	17.0	6.5
A lecturer hiring/employing a current student	67.4	20.4	12.2
A lecturer teaching his or her religious leader's child	57.9	31.0	11.2
A lecturer having a relative in his or her class as a student	60.9	28.2	12.9
A lecturer teaching his or her religious leader (e.g. Pastor/Elder/Imam)	63.3	21.8	15.0
A lecturer having his or her child/ward in his class	51.7	30.6	17.7
A lecturer hiring a previous student six months after graduating	69.7	16.7	13.6
A lecturer teaching a child of a relative, friend or lover	60.6	28.2	11.2

Table 4: Professional dual relationships
KEY: A = Appropriate, N= Neutral and I= Inappropriate

Table 4 shows that, more than half of the respondents indicated that almost all professional dual relationships formed in academic environment was appropriate, in which 86.7% believed that a student having a lecturer as a mentor or counsellor was appropriate and also, 70.5% of the respondents indicating that a student collaborating on a research paper and conference presentation with a lecturer was appropriate. Most of the respondents (60.6%) indicated that a lecturer teaching a child of a relative, friend or lover was appropriate while only few of the respondents indicated that it was inappropriate.

From the statistic above, most of the respondents (76.5%) indicated that it appropriate for a student to collaborate on a research or presentation with a lecture. Similarly majority of the respondents (60.6%) indicated that there is nothing wrong for a lecturer to teaching his/her a relative or a lover.

3.5. Students Perception on Incidental Boundary Crossing

ITEMS	A (%)	N (%)	I (%)
A student hugging a lecturer	23.6	31.8	44.5
A lecturer shaking hands with a student	76.9	15.7	7.4
A student asking for favours from lecturers (e.g. A ride home)	36.7	23.1	39.8
A student visiting a lecturer for the weekend	27.2	24.5	48.3
A lecturer giving a student a ride home after a class	51.7	28.9	19.4
A lecturer accepting a gift from a student worth about GHC 20.00	37.4	33.3	29.2
A lecturer accepting an invitation to a student's special occasion (e.g. wedding)	66.0	22.1	11.9
A lecturer hugging a student	34.8	29.0	36.1

Table 5: Incidental boundary crossing
KEY: A = Appropriate, N= Neutral and I= Inappropriate

Table 9 shows that, about 44.5% of the respondents indicated that a student hugging a lecturer was inappropriate while just 23.6% believed that it was appropriate. Most of the respondents (76.9%) believed that a lecturer shaking hands with a student was appropriate while only 7.4% of the respondents indicated that it was inappropriate.

3.6. Students Perception on Financial dual Relationships

According to Zur (2013), financial dual relationship is where practitioners and clients are also business partners or have an employer-employee relationship. Table 6 presents information on respondents' perception on financial dual relationship in the academic setting.

ITEMS	A (%)	N (%)	I (%)
A student going into business with a lecturer	53.2	23.5	23.3
A lecturer going into business with a current student	60.5	20.7	18.7
A lecturer lending a student money over GHC 50.00	51.0	30.3	18.7
A lecturer selling an item to a student which is unrelated to learning	35.0	28.9	36.0
A lecturer lending a student less than GHC 50.00	45.8	33.0	21.2
A lecturer purchasing goods from a student	46.6	28.9	24.5
A lecturer going into business with a previous student	60.2	22.4	17.3
A lecturer receiving goods and/or services in exchange for an academic service if a student is unable to pay	18.4	20.1	61.5
A lecturer selling to a student an item worth about GHC 20.00 which could be considered a learning aid/material	51.7	26.2	22.1

Table 6: Financial dual relationships
KEY: A = Appropriate, N= Neutral and I= Inappropriate

Table 6 shows that most of the respondents (53.2%) stated that a student going into business with a lecturer was appropriate while (23.3%) of the respondent believed that it was inappropriate. Almost 36.0% of the respondents believed that a lecturer selling an item to a student which is unrelated to learning was inappropriate while 35.0% of the respondents indicated that it was appropriate. Most of the respondents (61.5%) indicated that, a lecturer receiving goods and/or services in exchange for an academic service if a student is unable to pay was inappropriate while a few (18.4%) believed that it was appropriate.

Majority of the students perceived a lecturer going into business with a student as appropriate. Similarly most of the respondents perceive a student going into business with a lecturer as appropriate.

3.7. Students Perception on Familiar Dual Relationships

Table 7 presents information on respondents' perception on familiar dual relationships.

ITEMS	A (%)	N (%)	I (%)
A student choosing optional courses because of a special relationship with a particular lecturer	22.8	22.4	54.8
A lecturer teaching a co-worker's partner/spouse	62.1	24.9	13.0

Table 7: Familiar Dual Relationships
KEY: A = Appropriate, N= Neutral and I= Inappropriate

Table 7 shows that more than half of the respondents (54.8%) indicated that a student choosing optional courses because of a special relationship with a particular lecturer was inappropriate while 22.8% of the respondents indicated that it was appropriate. Most of the respondents (62.1%) also believed that a lecturer teaching a co-worker's partner/spouse was appropriate while 13.0% of the respondents believed that it was inappropriate.

3.8. Students Perception on Circumstantial Dual Relationships

Respondents' views on the perception of circumstantial dual relationship are presented in table 8

ITEMS	A (%)	N (%)	I (%)
A student having a religious or political affiliation with a lecturer	50.6	24.5	24.9
A lecturer coincidentally attending an ongoing community class with a student	58.9	29.9	11.2
A lecturer dining at a restaurant where a student is a server	58.2	29.6	12.2
A lecturer attending a fitness facility (gym) where the occasionally runs into student(s)	52.7	29.5	17.8

Table 8: Circumstantial Dual Relationships
KEY: A = Appropriate, N= Neutral and I= Inappropriate

Table 8 shows that more than half of respondents believed that almost all circumstantial dual relationships formed in academic environment was appropriate. Most of the respondents indicated that a student having a religious or political affiliation with a lecturer was appropriate while 24.9% of the respondents believed that it was inappropriate. Also, most of the respondents indicated that a lecturer coincidentally attending an ongoing community class with a student was appropriate while 11.2% indicated that it was inappropriate.

➤ Research Question 3: Which dual relationships do students consider ethical?

The study's third research question asked which dual relationships students considered ethical. In reference to Table 1, more than half of the respondents (78.8 %), agreed that a sexual relationship with a current student was unethical. The findings also show that

students considered sexual dual relationship with either a current student or a former student in less than two years after graduation as unethical. The most similar previous research to compare with the current findings was conducted by Borys and Pope (1989) who noted that almost all professionals (98.3%) in their national study in the US indicated that sexual relationships between therapists and clients were unethical.

In contrast, most respondent viewed almost all the various forms of non-sexual as ethical. Majority of the respondents (64.2%) considered social dual relationships where a student disclosing details of personal stresses to a lecturer as completely ethical. Also 75.5% of the respondents considered a lecturer becoming friends with a previous student two years after graduation as ethical. Furthermore, in reference to Table 2 majority of the respondents (66.0%) indicated that a lecturer accepting a *Thank-You* card from a student on his or her graduation was ethical against (12.9%) who indicated that it was unethical. Also, there was a very close tie on the ethicality of a lecturer allowing a student call him or her by first/given name, while 35.7% of the respondents saw it to be ethical, 36.0% of the respondents believed that it was unethical while the others were indecisive. Unlike sexual dual relationships, professional bodies do not absolutely prohibit non-sexual dual relationships. The APA code indicates that multiple relationships that would not reasonably be expected to cause impairment or harm are not unethical. Not engaging in some kinds of non-sexual dual relationships are rather perceived to be unethical (Zur, 2013).

➤ Research Question 4: What is the impact of the dual relationship on teaching and learning?

Respondents' views on the impact of dual relationship on teaching and learning are presented in table 9.

Impact of dual relation on teaching and learning	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inhibit teaching and learning	100	34.1
Enhances teaching and learning	160	54.5
Encourages examination malpractices	11	3.7
Encourages favouritism	23	7.7
Total	294	100

Table 9: Impact of dual relationship on teaching/training and learning/instruction

The results shown in Table 9 indicate that more than half of the students (54.5%) were of the view that non-sexual dual relationships enhance teaching and learning in the academic environment while 34.1% of the respondents believed that dual relationship inhibits teaching and learning. Also, few of the respondents (3.7%) indicated that dual relationship encourages examination malpractices while 7.7% of the respondents also believed that dual relationships in academia encourages favouritism. This finding is in contrast to a study conducted to investigate the potentially harmful effects of dual relationships. These effects include erosion of the therapeutic relationship, conflict of interest, and limiting the benefits of therapy after termination (Borys, 1994; Pope & Vasquez). These variations supported by Pope and Vetter (1992) who sampled more than 1,300 psychologists and identified dual relationships as the second most frequently reported ethical dilemma. However, dual relationships are complicated in that they are not always considered harmful by counsellors and clients, and the degree of harm may vary widely (Gabbard, 1994; Corey & Herlihy, 1997; Lazarus, 1994).

4. Summary

Findings from the study indicated that most of the respondents perceive sexual dual relationship with current students as inappropriate while sexual dual relationship with former students was not viewed negatively. However, some forms of non-sexual dual relationship were considered as ethical while others were considered unethical.

Students perceived most forms of non-sexual relationship in the academia as ethical given the right constellation of circumstances. However, with regards to financial dual relationships, the findings suggest that most students who take monies from their lecturers barely make an effort to pay back or normally lead to a sexual relationship. The results also indicate that respondents who participated in the research perceived the impact of dual relationship as enhancing teaching and learning in universities.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the research questions, responses and findings arrived at as a result of the research, it is recommended that authorities of schools and curriculum planners should design instruction and plan the curriculum in such a way that it promotes students collaborating with lecturers on presentations and research endeavours and also encourage lecturers to play the role of mentors and counsellors to students.

There should also be a clear-cut policy on student-lecturer relationships in universities. This would clearly spell out the boundaries that can or cannot be crossed and those that can be negotiated. Since the client's greater good is what the relationship serves, there should be to that effect, a section or department where victims of harassment and exploitations that such dual relationships present can also report their cases to.

Students at universities should be taught about dual relationships and the implications in various aspects of their academic life. It is suggested that this is done during counselling sessions and as a component in the fresher's orientation programme.

5.2. Implications for Counselling

The finding that responses on sexual relationships were neutral implies that people in such relationships may find it difficult to come out boldly to admit such relationships. However, clients need to be empowered to come out with such issues where it really exists. Also, where respondents perceived such relationships as non-sexual, it is ethically right and need to be encouraged. However, where there are financial dual relationships, students who take money from lecturers and cannot pay back may lead to sexual relationships. This implies that students need to manage their finances and avoid taking monies from supervisors since the inability to pay may lead to "sexual payment"

Finally, some respondents were of the view that dual relationships enhance teaching and learning. This implies that lecturers and people in authority should relate well with students casually. This would make them approachable to help students to overcome their learning difficulties in order to perform academically.

6. References

- i. American Counseling Association. (1995). Code of ethics and standards of practice. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- ii. American Psychological Association (1992). Ethical principles of psychologists. *American Psychologist*, 36 (6), 633-638.
- iii. Barnett, J. E. & Yutrzenka, B. A. (2002). Nonsexual dual relationships in professional practice, with special applications to rural and military communities. A. A. Lazarus and O. Zur (Eds.) *Dual relationships and psychotherapy*. New York: Springer (pp.273-286)
- iv. Borys, D. S. & Pope, K. S. (1989) Dual relationships between therapist and client: a national study of psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 20, 283-293
- v. Brownlee, K. (2012) 'Multiple Relationships: Maintaining Professional Identity in Rural Social Work Practice' *Journal of Comparative Social Work*, 1, 1-11
- vi. Campbell, C. D. and Gordon, M.C. (2003) 'Acknowledging the inevitable: Understanding multiple relationships in rural practice.' *Professional Psychology*, 34, 430-434
- vii. Congress E. P. (1996). Dual Relationships in Academia: Dilemmas for Social Work Educators, *Journal of Social Work Educators*, 32(8), 329-338.
- viii. Corey, G. and Herlihy, B. (1997) 'Dual/multiple relationships: Toward a consensus of thinking' in Hatherleigh Editorial Board (Eds.) *The Hatherleigh guide to ethics in therapy*. New York: Hatherleigh Press (pp. 183-194)
- ix. Doverspike, W. F. (2008). Dual relationships and psychotherapy. *Georgia Psychologist*, 62(3), 17.
- x. Evans, M. (2008). When worlds collide: Understanding the intersection of the personal and the professional in social work practice' in R. Pockett and R. Giles (Eds.) *Critical reflection: Generating theory from practice* (pp. 1-15). Sydney: Darlington Press
- xii. Evans, T. and Harris, J. (2004) 'Citizenship, social inclusion and confidentiality.' *British Journal of Social Work*, 34, 69-91
- xiii. Galambos, D.S.W., Watt, J. W., Anderson, K. and Danis, F. (2005) 'Ethics Forum: Rural Social Work Practice: Maintaining Confidentiality in the Face of Dual Relationships' *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 2, 2 retrieved Aug 2, 2015 from <http://www.socialworker.com/jswve/content/view/23// 10/13/15>.
- xiv. Gottlieb, M. C. (1993) 'Avoiding exploitative dual relationships: a decision making model.' *Psychotherapy*, 30, 41-48
- xv. Graham, J. R., Brownlee, K., Shier, M. and Doucette, E. (2008) 'Localization of social work knowledge in Canada's geographic norths: An exploratory qualitative analysis of practitioner adaptations to social work knowledge in northern Ontario and Northwest Territories', *Arctic*, 61, 399-406
- xvi. Green, R. and Mason, R. (2002) 'Managing confidentiality in rural welfare practice in Australia.' *Rural Social Work*, 7(1), 34-43
- xvii. Green, R., Gregory, R., and Mason, R. (2006) 'Professional distance and social work: Stretching the elastic?' *Australian Social Work*, 59, 449-461
- xviii. Gripton, J. and Valentich, M. (2004) 'Dealing with non-sexual professional-client dual/multiple relationships in rural communities.' *Rural Social Work*, 9, 216-225
- xix. Guthmann, D. (1999). Ethical Issues for Hearing Professionals working with Deaf Individuals. (Unpublished article).
- xx. Haas, L. & Malouf, J. (1989). Keeping up the good work: A practitioner's guide to mental health ethics. Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Exchange.
- xxi. Herlihy, B., & Corey, G. (1992). Dual relationships in counseling. Alexandria, VA: American Association for Counseling and Development
- xxii. Kagle, J., & Giebelhausen, P. (1994). Dual relationships and professional boundaries, *Social Work*, 39 (2), 213-220.
- xxiii. Kitchener, K.S., & Harding, S.S. (1990). Dual role relationships. In B. Herlihy & L. Golden (Eds.), *Ethical standards casebook* (4th ed., pp. 146-154). Alexandria, VA: American Association for Counseling and Development.
- xxiv. NASW code of ethics. Washington, IX. Author.
- xxv. National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (1995). Ethical standards of alcoholism and drug abuse counselors. Arlington, VA: Author. Pope, K. (1988). How clients are harmed by sexual contact with mental health professionals: Pope, K.S., & Vasquez, M.J.T. (1991). *Ethics in psychotherapy and counseling*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- xxvii. Psychological Society of Ireland (2010) Code of Professional Ethics
- xxviii. Solomon, R.S. (1984). *Ethics: A brief introduction*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- xxix. Zur, O. (2013). *Dual Relationships, Multiple Relationships & Boundaries in Psychotherapy, Counseling & Mental Health* Retrieved November 20, 2014 from <http://www.zurinstitute.com/dualrelationships.html>.