ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Outsourcing of Non-core Functions in the Halls of Residence at the University of Cape Coast: Prospects and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

In today's rapidly evolving global market space with growing consumer needs and fierce competition, outsourcing of services is often seen as a tool for which organisations use to manage resources and capabilities efficiently to maximise gains and performance. The areas under study were the six traditional halls of residence at the University of Cape Coast: VALCO, Oguaa, Nkrumah, Casley-Hayford, Atlantic and Adehye Halls. The approach was purely qualitative with a purposive sampling technique. In-depth interviews were conducted with 18 office bearers in the six halls of residence. The purpose of this study is to assess the prospects and challenges of outsourcing at the University of Cape Coast. Therefore, we examined how outsourcing impacts operational strategy, especially on the goals of operations related to cost reduction, improved quality, and better service. Our findings show that managers of the students' Halls of Residence believe that outsourcing has great potential not only for cost reduction but also has an impact on other operational objectives that make outsourcing more strategic. Another finding from the study indicates that outsourcing could significantly affect organisational performance, which empirically corroborates aspects that have only been theoretically analysed previously. This study found that outsourcing will only make sense if it exerts a positive influence on the various goals of operations and halls of residence performance. It was recommended that, with the great benefit to be derived from the outsourcing mechanism, it should be kept in mind by the policy implementors that it can be implemented shortly.

Keywords: Outsourcing, non-core functions, prospects,

challenges, halls of residence.

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INTRODUCTION

Public tertiary institutions like the University of Cape Coast (UCC) in Ghana are required to provide decent accommodation and services for students in the halls of residence during their stay. In the 1960s students were all accommodated free of charge and were served decently as services in the halls of residence were excellent. From the 1980s, services in halls of residence suffered because the main source of revenue for university management to manage halls of residences dwindled (Atuahene, 2018). This has forced management in public universities to consider adopting outsourcing such services to ensure that students get quality service delivery at the various halls of residence. The history of the University of Cape Coast indicates that the University had outsourced some peripheral services in the 2000s. For instance, the former University Bookshop is now managed by Kingdom Books and Stationery Limited. Similarly, some cafeteria services in some of the traditional halls of residence have been outsourced. In recent times, during periods of industrial action by the Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU) some halls do outsource their cleaning and environmental sanitation services.

Wekullo (2017) defined outsourcing as hiring an outside source to perform a service more efficiently, better, or at a lower cost than you can do it yourself. In the view of Wekullo (2017), outsourcing is defined as the process of sub-contracting operations and services to other organisations that specialise in such activities that can do them at a cheaper cost or better (or both). Available literature paints a growing trend of outsourcing among several universities particularly in North America and Europe (Gupta, Herath & Mikouiza, 2005). It has also been suggested that higher education institutions divest themselves of peripheral functions and rather pay attention to their primary mission or core mandate of teaching and research (Wekullo, 2017). Apart from the reasons advanced in the above literature there seem to be other several reasons that go in favour of privatizing certain functions in higher education institutions.

Statistics appear to suggest that global higher education institutions face budgetary constraints. This phenomenon seems to escalate at the turn of the 21st Century largely due to a decline in government subvention (Mensah, 2014). According to Okebukola (2015), from the 1980s, higher education began to experience reduced funding in many African nations. These countries were also given reduced focus by the leading international agencies and donors, and this subsequently led to the relative neglect of Africa's higher education institutions. In the year 1948, when the University College of Gold Coast (Legon) was established in Ghana, on the recommendation of the Asquith Commission on Higher Education in the then British colonies, funding for tertiary education was the sole prerogative of the government. University students were provided with three square meals a day and a monthly stipend to create the necessary environment for sound academic work. It, however, appears funding has been steadily reducing over the years. Under the Tory period in the United Kingdom, from 1979 to 1997, the unit of resource (i.e., government funding per student) had been reduced by 45 % as student numbers rose, but were funded at marginal cost by the British government (Bingab, Forson, Mmbali & Ennumh, 2016).

In Ghana, issues of funding higher education have become a bone of contention between student leadership, authorities of tertiary institutions on one hand and successive governments on the other (Obeng, 2019). Higher education institutions have to compete for the allocation of statutory funds with many other sectors of the economy (Twene, 2014). The tertiary institutions' Internally Generated Fund (IGF) which comes in the form of fees has been capped to about 35% reducing revenues. More worrying, is the successive governments' inability to provide subventions and grants to the universities to maintain residential facilities and other expenditures and this has stretched the inadequate Internally Generated Fund (IGF) to its elastic limit.

These dwindling revenues to tertiary institutions require the optimal utilisation of these scarce resources in the running of public universities in Ghana. It does require universities to concentrate on areas of work they are primarily established to undertake (teaching and research) and allow outside stakeholders to take up services such as the management of hall facilities and adequate security with which efficiency can bring savings to the institution (Twene, 2014).

The general objective of the study was to look at the outsourcing of non-core functions at the halls of residence at the University of Cape Coast. Specifically, this study examined the impact outsourcing would have on service delivery at the halls of residence, assessed the extent to which outsourcing can improve and bring about direct benefits to students, clients and the University and finally, examined the challenges associated with outsourcing at the University halls of residence.

Theoretical Context

The four main theories underpinning this study are the Resource-Based Theory (RBT), the Transaction Cost Theory (TCT), the Competence-Based View Theory (CBVT) and the Contract Rational View Theory (CRVT).

Resource-Based Theory (RBT)

The Resource Based Theory (RBT) is rooted in the organisation's inner capacity - that is the available resources and the organisation's capacities to perform. The competitiveness of an organisation is gained from that competitiveness that is special and is the chief determinant of its performance (Barney & Wright (2001). The Resource Based Theory (RBT) challenges an organisation to engage in or spend its resources on activities that bring about resource advantage (Griffith & Yalcinkaya, 2010). It means that an organisation must develop its core competencies to survive and address the needs of the market. In the case of universities, there are core functions and peripheral services. In this light, the University of Cape Coast ought to take steps to divest itself from actively managing peripheral services and focus on core functions of teaching, research and community services.

The Transactional Cost Theory (TCT)

Transactional Cost Theory (TCT) is linked to the Nobel Peace Laureates, Oliver Williamson and Ronald Coase (Martins et al., 2010). The TCT explains the reasons why organisations outsource services to external agents. It explains that organisations while in existence and undertaking their mandate must weigh the cost of performing some tasks themselves (in-house) as against subletting the tasks to an outside entity that has the technological know-how and the facilities to perform the tasks cost-effectively. The TCT is, therefore, of the view that firms must try to minimize costs in bureaucratic processes often embedded in internal processes. In this regard, all costs incurred in the production of services should be minimized (Madhok, 2002). Thus, if possible, the cost of management of some of the peripheral services could be passed on to others.

The Competence-Based View Theory (CBVT)

Competence - Based View Theory explains that organisations outsource their non-core functions so that they could be free to concentrate on where they have the competencies. According to (Nilsson, 2014), this theory encourages firms to have a focus strategy where outsourcing allows them to concentrate on their core competencies and outsource their non-core activities. For example, during the growth and development of the Business Process Outsourcing industry (BPO), businesses began to outsource their human resource and finance functions. The idea is to outsource only the non-core business processes and activities to an external vendor but this trend has now

changed and organisations are also outsourcing their core business processes to get and have a competitive advantage (Mehta & Mehta, 2017). The University of Cape Coast has competencies in the provision of teaching, research and community services and this they must focus on.

The Contract Rational View Theory (CRVT)

Successful outsourcing depends heavily on the happiness of both client/vendor relationships. The relationship and the terms and conditions of the contract should be clearly and mutually understood and agreed to by both client and vendor (Aflabo, Kraa & Agyenyo, 2018). The client and the vendor need to identify areas of conflict before outsourcing contracts could be documented and the relationship should be an enabler to achieve mutual benefits by creating a synergistic opportunity that can last longer (Aflabo, Kraa & Agyenyo, 2018).

Many benefits can be obtained by an organisation as a result of outsourcing; however, these depend on whether the company goes about the outsourcing projects appropriately and if they are willing to put the time and effort into helping their staff to overcome the problems they may encounter as their jobs change and evolve (Shitaye, 2016). The former way of practice where organisations were somehow localised has changed and now most organisations are found in highly competitive international markets. This has called for some industries to move to other jurisdictions to find cheaper and skilled labour at the least cost available. This helps to reduce production costs. These factors have therefore forced most organisations to change to survive in this competitive world (Mekuria, 2007).

Challenges and Prospects of Outsourcing

According to Mekuria (2017), several benefits can be obtained through outsourcing however, it depends on whether the firm appropriately handles the outsourcing issues and is ready to spend time and effort on staff to overcome challenges that come with outsourcing. For several considerations including cost, flexibility and time markets, firms should be flexible in their operations to allow for the outsourcing of some of their non-core functions (Mekuria, 2017). The outsourcing technique is a catalyst for organisations to relieve themselves of peripheral activities and rather concentrate on their core competence and subsequently increase their effectiveness and efficiency therein (Mekuria, 2017). In other literature, Meikuria (2017) believes that if outsourcing is properly managed, it will produce several benefits including reduced costs, improved service delivery and increased efficiency and innovation.

Figure 1.

Benefits of Outsourcing

Benefits of outsourcing
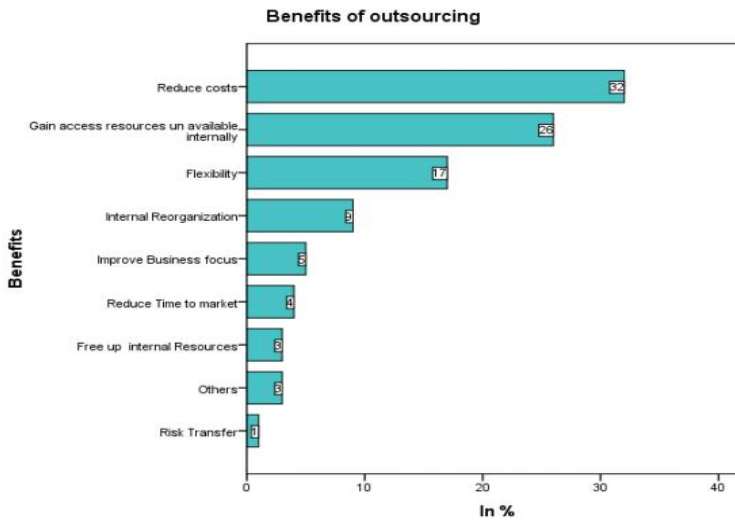
Source: Ashirefa ...etal(2010 , P.13) cited from Trestle group (2004)

Despite success stories associated with outsourcing, several outsourcing contracts have failed over the past few years. Mehta and Mehta (2010) opined that about 78% of the Client-Vendor (C-V) relationships get to the point of failure in the long-term leaving clients alone to bear the cost. According to Sallau and Abdullahi (2015), outsourcing comes with its attendant challenges which include the following: Creation of over-reliance on external provision thereby creating conditions for the organisation to lose personal workers with technical capability, knowledge and skills in various operations. In Maros and Juniar's (2016) view, outsourcing also causes talents in a firm to shrink since the technology that goes with the performance of the job is done outside of the firm. Other challenges include the risk of exposing a firm's confidential data or information, loss of morale, loyalty and decline in productivity and quality risks.

The services to be outsourced at the University of Cape Coast are part of the peripheral non-core activities of the University. The University exists to train students through teaching, research and community service. To achieve this with the students, these ancillary services become dependent on the existence of the University. To the students, they expect to have highly efficient services to make teaching and learning conducive. In effect, to ensure high productivity there should be a high correlation between the peripheral services to the output of the University. There is the need to have some services outsourced to have student satisfaction, high quality and efficient service delivery. In other words, as depicted in Figure 2 below, outsourcing services are the independent variables with the outcome such as performance/output as dependent variables.

Figure 2.

Theoretical framework
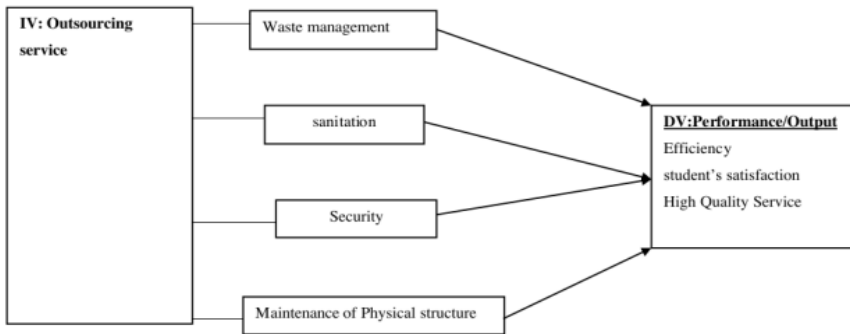
Source: Researchers construct (2020)

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach to examine Out-sourcing of non-core service at the University of Cape Coast. This design allowed the researchers to collect data through in-depth interviews with the focus on bringing forth the expectations and experiences of Hall masters and students in a holistic manner. According to Ryan, Coughlan and Cronin (2007), this represents an exploratory analysis. Furthermore, Barnett-Page and Thomas (2009) stated that an excellent pre-arranged and well-conducted qualitative research study serves as a reliable and rich source of knowledge that can be implemented by providing exploratory information about a phenomenon, providing insight and awareness of human experience and supporting the development of formal frameworks and tools. The study took an interpretive approach which involved integrating human interest and experience for interpretation. This approach is considered suitable for qualitative evaluative research because it is useful, particularly, in intensive small-scale research. Vishnevsky and Beanland (2004) have contended that this approach should include a theoretical framework guiding how to shape meaning derived from a particular belief into interpretable knowledge. According to Packard (2017), the interpretive method provides possibilities for generating fresh insights because it points out different facets of organisational phenomena and can produce significantly different and uniquely informative theoretical views of events.

The study used a case study approach and followed the descriptive and exploratory qualitative design to examine the out-sourcing of non-core functions at the University of Cape Coast. One of the advantages of a case study is that it is more descriptive and exploratory and less explanatory. This approach was considered appropriate for this study because according to Hollweck (2016), the empirical element of a case study method presents a phenomenon in a real-life context. Silverman (2006) states that a case study data analysis involves an iterative, spiraling or cyclical process that proceeds from a generalized perspective to more specific observations that can be generalized. The approach for the present researchers was to generate and integrate themes derived from the interview in line with the conducted literature. Munsamy and Venter (2009) observed that this approach is reliable and works consistently with the modernistic interpretive strategy.

Setting and Participants

The setting for this study is the University of Cape Coast which is one of the Public Universities in Ghana with a

huge infrastructural challenge. Traditional halls of residence were selected as the oldest halls of residence though we have other halls of residence which were once classified as university hostels.

The population of the study comprised Hall Masters, Hall Presidents, Hall Administrators and Welfare Officers of the Junior Common Rooms (JCRs) of all the six traditional halls of residence for students at the University of Cape Coast. The traditional halls of residence include Adehye, Oguaa, Atlantic, Casley Hayford, Kwame Nkrumah and Valco Hall. The Presidential Special Initiative Hall; Valco Trust Graduate Hall, Superannuation Hall, Students Representative Council Hall and the Alumni Hall were excluded because until recently, they were managed as Hostels with different administrative and management structures.

In this study, we purposively selected six traditional halls of residence namely: Adehye, Atlantic, Casley-Hayford, Kwame Nkrumah, Oguaa, and Valco Hall. These halls of residence are not for commercial purposes. For each hall, we contacted the Hall Master or Warden, Senior Hall Tutor, Hall Manager/Manageress and Accountant where applicable. In all, the participants comprised 18 office bearers with experience in university hall administration, selected from all the six traditional halls of residence of the University of Cape Coast. In selecting the sample size, the following criteria were used: the participant must have been staff with 1 – 10 years of working experience from any discipline and gender. The participant should be or might have been a Hall master/warden or Senior Resident Tutor, Hall President, Hall Assistant/Hall Student Leader.

This study adopted purposive sampling. Neuman and Robson (2014) postulates that purposive sampling enhances the understanding of what will be presented by the respondents and aids in developing theories and concepts. Vishnevsky and Beanland (2004) argued that, in qualitative research, the sample size is infrequently predetermined, and the researcher can include as many respondents as necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. The participants were selected based on their positions and experience, with a focus on who could provide the information for the study.

Procedure

Data was collected through individual interview sessions. The interviews were conducted using structured questions, allowing consistency throughout the interviews. Neuman and Robson (2014) mentioned that structured questions assist the researcher in guiding participants in their discussions, which allows for the systematic collection of data on a defined area of interest.

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed a five-step procedure namely; data collection; connecting and organising all the data, coding of the data, analysing the data to find meaningful insights and reporting on the data. During the Data collection, data was captured through recordings during the in-depth interviews with respective respondents using unstructured interview guide. This was used to deduce the meaning behind words people used. On connecting and organising the data, the thematic data analysis approach was adopted. This method was used to describe, interpretate data in the process of coding and in constructing research themes. In protecting the data and its interpretation, the researchers followed the standards of data analysis. This was done to arrive at useful data for decision making purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General view about outsourcing

Generally, respondents perceived outsourcing to be a good strategy for boosting organisational performance. However, before outsourcing there is the need to do a comparative needs assessment of the existing systems to fully understand areas that can be outsourced and those that cannot maximise the full gains of the strategy. Overall, most of the respondents alluded to the fact that outsourcing should necessarily be accompanied by a cost-benefit analysis. This view is similar to views expressed by Suraju and Hamed (2013), who stated that outsourcing is a good strategy for organisational performance but cost benefits have to be done to maximise the full benefits. Below are some of the excerpts from respondents to substantiate the claim:

R1: For me, outsourcing has both advantages and disadvantages and it is a good thing to consider but we need to do a comparison to see what benefits you will derive from the outsourcing and what disservices you are likely to get from the existing system. Thereafter, we can look at outsourcing and the benefits that it will bring as well as the disservice that it will cause. So, we need to approach it from that angle. Outsourcing in itself is a good thing (Respondent #1).

From my perspective, outsourcing should be one major thing we should consider when thinking about the hygienic condition of our halls of residence in the institution because, in the current system, attention is not given to the cleanliness of the halls of residence since the staff come to work the time they like and leave at their preferred time without focusing on the job they are hired to do. Given this, we can understand that outsourcing will cause some conditions in the halls which might be too difficult for the halls of residence to bear. From a general point of view, outsourcing will be the best option to ensure a good hygienic environment that will be conducive for the students (Respondent #2).

Outsourcing is generally a good thing and currently there are important private service providers we have in the halls. For example, some private waste management companies are called upon to take care of the waste in the halls whenever the school waste management team are facing challenges. These are people we can't live without so we always need them around. But we need to study them very well before approaching them so that they do not cause more harm than good (Respondent #3).

Outsourcing is a very controversial issue, but I think outsourcing will be a fantastic thing, especially with the sanitary and conservancy duties in the halls of residence. In that regard, whichever company is selected to do the work is given free will so that when they fall short, they can be held accountable. The working attitude of the permanent staff who take care of the sanitary and conservancy works in the halls are not the best. They know that at the end of the month they will collect their salaries because this is a public job. Their work attitude is characterized by absenteeism, lateness, and laziness to say the least. I believe that a private person or company will not tolerate these things so if a worker doesn't perform, he knows that he will lose the job and so he makes sure that he will do the work. So, in this case, outsourcing will bring about efficiency. However, when you also think of the other side too people are going to lose their jobs. So, you see, we need to do a cost and benefit analysis and know what is the best way out (Respondent #4).

From where I sit and the experiences I have gathered, I think outsourcing some of the activities in the hall will be of benefit to the University, to students and the hall because it is going to bring about a higher level of efficiency in the system. We don't have efficiency in certain contexts because people are being paid by the University. Whether they work or not they are paid at the end of the month but if you are working for a private person, you will be made to work for the number of hours which you are going to be paid. In this

case, the level of work that you put up will also be higher so to me I am all for outsourcing (Respondent #5).

From the general point of view of all the respondents concerning their take on the concept of outsourcing in the University halls of residence, they believe strongly that, it would be a good initiative to be taken by the University management to ensure good sanitation in the halls of residence. They are all of the views that private companies taking care of the halls will focus on the work and be time conscious to get the work done. All the respondents are of the similar understanding that, outsourcing services in the halls will bring hygienic conditions in the halls and will ensure value for money since they will be paid based on the work done, unlike the existing situation where workers are paid by the University decide to come to work at their discretion and leave at their own time. In tandem with the views expressed by respondents in the study, Ampadu (2017), contends that outsourcing waste and refuse management will generally improve sanitation because a private entity is likely to pay more attention to the work and will be time conscious in the delivery of services.

Services That Can Be Outsourced Within the University of Cape Coast

Overall, analysis of the responses from the respondents suggests that there are quite a lot of things in the University of Cape Coast that can be outsourced. These include but are not limited to sanitation and security. Some of the area's respondents alluded to were sanitation and security which were considered a top priority of the University of Cape Coast. Literature available indicates that the most outsourced services in many universities around the world are sanitation and security services. It is a considered view that these services are outside the core mandate of the university management and therefore can be better managed by organisations that are experts in the delivery of such services to save cost and bring about effectiveness and efficiency as stated by Mokoena (2019).

> The security system is one major part we cannot look down upon. We need it around 24 hours both day and night. An example is having the police station situated on campus to ensure security day and night but still not enough. For sanitation, it is often said that cleanness leads to godliness. Our sanitation too needs to be outsourced. The earlier we re-look at some of these issues in terms of outsourcing them, the better. For instance, when you enter the hall, the kind of stench that meets you at the entrance is uncalled for and needs to be looked at because those working on the sanitation side are not doing the job well because you cannot sack them as a hall master. After all, you are not the one paying them. If the authority is given to the hall masters/tutors to outsource with adequate funds, they would have the power to sack such recalcitrant staff and go for outsourcing (Respondent #4).

> Sanitation should be the service to be outsourced in the University as far as I am concerned because for the whole University community, there is only one truck to convey the refuse on campus so whenever the truck breaks down the whole campus becomes dirty. This is where outsourcing becomes very important, maybe they outsource the sanitation to the Zoomlion company to convey the rubbish on campus. The sanitation issue on campus is very bad so I was thinking why can't the University liaise with Zoomlion to help procure some trucks for conveying the refuse on campus? So preferably, I am of the strong point of view that, sanitation and security services on campus should be outsourced (Respondent #7).

> Waste management will be a perfect thing to outsource. Security will also be good because it looks like the University is always short of security personnel. So, if they could offload the halls to a private company then, the University could focus on providing security to its staff and offices. The current security situation

in the halls of residence at the University is not the best. Sometimes you find one security man patrolling three halls which is very ineffective. So, if security is outsourced, it will boost the security situation considerably. I also think that sanitation in the halls can be outsourced as well. In my view, therefore, waste management, security and sanitation could all be outsourced while minor maintenance works in the halls could be left for the University staff to deal with (Respondent #12).

When it comes to things that need to be outsourced, I will look at three. The first one is the conservancy services, cleaning the bathroom and others, then the sanitary services, general clean-up of the place and the third one is security. So, you can outsource security, conservancy and sanitary. If you can do this, you are going to have a higher level of efficiency in cleanliness and security in the halls of residence at the University (Respondent #15).

In a general overview of the services that need to be outsourced, all the respondents pointed out the major three services. These are the sanitation services, waste management and security services. Some of the respondents also pointed out some other services that can be outsourced which are, weeding and pruning of trees around the halls. In a nutshell, the University management needs to outsource these services in the halls of residence to ensure good hygiene in the halls of residence.

How Does Outsourcing Impact Service Delivery at The Halls of Residence

In the view of the respondents, outsourcing will impact service delivery at the University of Cape Coast in diverse ways. First, outsourcing will lead to efficiency. Generally, unlike the public sector, the private sector does not tolerate issues like absenteeism, laziness and underemployment which all lead to inefficiency. If most of the services like sanitation are outsourced, people will learn to come to work early and do the right thing at the right time. Outsourcing support services such as sanitation, security, and maintenance in the University's halls of residence is considered impactful because it helps in reducing costs and achieving value for money through improved service delivery (Ikenwa & Olusegun, 2019).

Well, as you know currently the staff come to work from Monday to Friday and since they are absent on weekends cleaning the place during weekends becomes an issue. If the staff are to come to work on weekends, they would demand the payment of overtime. In the private sector, however, many will not think of overtime so outsourcing will help a lot (Respondent #1).

Obtaining good sanitation in the halls mostly depends on the number of workers and their attitude towards work. Having workers who indulge in laziness, truancy and lateness will not promote cleanliness in the halls of residence. In Valco Hall, for instance, there are more than 65 conservancy and sanitary workers whereas 20 people can do the work even better than what we are getting now. Many of these workers play truancy and are also lazy on the job. So, if you bring in a private firm, that private firm will be worried about the amount of money it will be spending on staff and therefore will have to tailor its personnel to suit the job. In this regard, there are going to be redundancies but that is what will bring about efficiency (Respondent #2).

Secondly, outsourcing will lead to effective supervision of work at the University of Cape Coast because most of the workers especially those who sweep, clean and collect waste are not well supervised. They often do shoddy work and sometimes most of them do not even show up for work at all.

Generally, I think outsourcing will improve service delivery considerably. Currently, the problem we have

with our staff who are in two categories namely conservancy and sanitary is their negative attitude towards work (the sanitary workers are those who do the sweeping in open spaces and the drains while the conservancy staff are those who work in the washrooms). Just as I was saying, the work satisfaction of these staff is always an issue. Among the two, the sanitary staff always consider their conservancy counterparts as being paid higher. They therefore continuously request that we shift them from sanitary to the conservancy. In most of these cases, what we are told to do by the Directorate of Human Resources (DHR), is to direct such staff to the Directorate for consideration.   At times such people are made to go into the conservancy stream for six months. If they can cope with the schedule over there, they are made to switch. Interestingly, some are not able to cope with the conservancy work for just two months so they revert to their sanitary duties. The other thing I have also come to appreciate about these categories of staff in this institution is that they do not consider things belonging to the state to be important. A private man will not tolerate this behaviour and will not hesitate to fire staff. But then it also depends on how management is controlling them, honestly, I think outsourcing will be very good (Respondent #5).

Some other responses also show that outsourcing saves time and money because the amount of money paid to these University workers every month without working is too much unlike private companies working on time and charging the prices for the services delivered at a low cost which then helps the halls of residence or the University to save some money while ensuring that work was also done on time. Ikenwa and Olusegun (2019) are of similar views that outsourcing saves cost and time for the institution concerned when they said that in other areas there were reports of outsourcing improving services and reducing the cost of students' support service delivery in the halls of residence.

The Extent to Which Outsourcing Directly Benefits Students, Clients and The University Students

Outsourcing comes with enormous benefits to students directly. That is to say that outsourcing sanitation work in the halls will lead to good health, a clean environment and a good reputation for the University. Outsourcing in the halls of residence can be beneficial to students, clients and the University in terms of cost reduction, time-saving and maintenance of security (Sang, 2010).

Yes, when a private man is given the work to do, it will help the students in one way or the other. Currently, students in the University obtain most of their items such as hall clothes, toilet rolls and exercise books through outsourcing initiated by the JCRCs and the SRC Executives. Such items are not produced here on campus. So, in this regard, outsourcing benefits the students a lot. During the procurement process, the students can bargain well thus, reducing the cost (Respondent #2).

As for the benefits of outsourcing to students, it would depend on the company. If the company does its work well then, the students are going to derive benefits. For instance, like security, if it is outsourced, I think the students will be safe because those security persons will always be at the post. Once the security men are around all the time, intruders cannot enter students' rooms easily which means the students will live in peace. Concerning sanitation, I think the company may have problems with the students because some students will deliberately resort to destroying the dustbins placed at vantage points. Others still may be in the habit of throwing rubbish around the dustbins by refusing to open them (Respondent #4).

In health, the students can also benefit tremendously from outsourcing. However, the negative attitude of some of the students can pose a challenge. Most of the students don't even clean their rooms let alone their

immediate surroundings unless they are sometimes forced by some of the cleaners. In some situations, students send personal clothing to the laundry. If the work is outsourced, it will not be easy for the outsourced firm to force students to do some of these works. The above notwithstanding, if the work is done well the place will be clean and the students will not fall sick.

Yes, if outsourcing will give us the required results, then students will feel more comfortable coming and using the facility because everybody would want to leave in a clean environment. And so, if the environment is clean, the students will prefer to be here to some other places (Respondent #6).

Actually, students will benefit because the environment will become clean and their toilet facilities will always be clean. This means they will not fall sick regularly. When the sanitation issues are outsourced, the monitoring will be more effective. If the outsider doesn't do the work well you can easily sack the person but it is not easy to sack a staff from the University. This will benefit the students because the work will be done well and accurate (Respondent #10).

The private man can decide that staff comes two days and another person comes two days and he is paying you per day and they will deal with casual workers more than permanent workers. So, the issue is that in outsourcing, the private man has more flexibility than in the government institution even though the labour law is there. I think it will impact a lot because if you are required to scrub a place three times a day before you are paid, you will do it but here if you say the person should go and scrub three times a day, he goes once before you are aware, they have vanished and that is why I, in particular, will insist on good work so when you finish you will know that good work has been done. I use that one as a means of grading when it comes to your promotion, I make it very clear to you (Respondent #11).

Do you have other clients that use this facility?

Yeah! we do. Some other organisations book accommodation during the long vacations to come and have activities apart from Sandwich. Previously, they used to come a lot but these days I don't know whether it is due to financial reasons but once in a while, they come to use our facility.

Do you think outsourcing will benefit these people too?

Yeah! if they do it well. If the outsourcing works well it is going to benefit anybody who comes around throughout the year. But if they don't put proper measures in place and you just outsource, it will rather worsen the situation.

Do you think outsourcing has some financial benefits in terms of how much you pay the workers?

Yeah! it is going to be a 50/50 situation. When you outsource the work, the University is going to pay huge money to the company than when you maintain the workers here because the person has to pay taxes. He will look at SSNIT contributions of the staff, taxes and other things that will maintain his company in business for a long time. So, it is not going to be small money. In my point of view, outsourcing will be more capital intensive than maintaining the people as regular staff in the University. I think we have to reduce the workforce and ensure that those left are supervised to do the work well. Monitoring them and offering some good incentive packages will motivate them to deliver rather than taking a lot of them and spending on them without getting much from them. In my view again, the University management has to restructure and maintain some of the existing staff rather than giving out everything to outsourcing.

Outsourcing to me is a more specialized issue such that if one is asked to do cleaning business, that should be the only thing the outsourced company should offer and nothing more.

Perceived challenges associated with outsourcing at the University of Cape Coast

Regarding challenges that may be associated with outsourcing within the University environment, respondents stressed that there would be a lot of challenges when it comes to outsourcing. Sang (2010), in his study, found that the main challenges of outsourcing at public universities included negative attitude of staff, poor monitoring and evaluation, non-cooperation by students to the outsourced company and interference by the community. The study also affirmed that for a university to successfully outsource its functions, it requires proper evaluation and planning. However, each university has its particular challenges when it comes to outsourcing like in this study the major challenges were found to be: (i) Labour agitations, (ii) Increasing cost of living due to loss of jobs, and (iii) Timely delivery of services.

Below are some of the challenges perceived by the respondents.

In the initial stages, because people have been working in the system for several years, any attempt by management to outsource their work could trigger labour agitation and unrest. So, if you take their jobs from their hand and give it to a private person who may be coming around for the first time especially, within the first few weeks or months after taking over, I believe there will be challenges.

Sometimes the private firms might not do the work well if there is no effective supervision. The work done will not be accurate. Also, there might be theft issues because you may not know the people from the outside firm well and maybe they will not say the truth if some materials in the hall get missing. The fear is that the new employees might engage in theft and that will be a major challenge.

The loss of jobs by the workers will increase the cost of living for the people since their source of livelihood has been taken away from them and this may result in all sorts of social vices in society.

There will be an issue with the source of funding since the University will have to pay the company. Where will the University get the funds from to outsource these services effectively and efficiently? If it is the government that is to provide the funds, chances are that the government will interfere more in the activities of the University and its autonomy will be at stake.

The other aspect the respondents stressed is the fact that most of the workers in the University are the relatives of some of the persons in university authority, so outsourcing some of the services in the University would mean job losses to some staff with daring consequences to themselves, and dependents and ultimately the people who got them their employment. This will not be an easy task to handle and therefore, outsourcing some services to the University does not look feasible at least in the current state of affairs.

Timely delivery, quality of work done and lack of control of an outsourcing company. The University may not have much control over the timely delivery and the quality of work an outsourced company may be doing on campus. At least the situation may not be as if the staff of the University are in charge. Sometimes emergencies occur and staff directly in charge are called to take care of them. A case in point was when the University was being re-opened for the final year students alone to complete their studies following the closure of all educational institutions by the government because of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers in charge of the sanitary and conservancy in the halls were called back to clean specific

rooms for the students. Even though the period was very short, we had to meet our target because adequate control measures were put in place to meet the targets set for each staff. If the work was outsourced, the workers of that company may have to wait for instructions from their superiors who may not even be around always to ensure that the right thing was done on time and satisfactorily.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Outsourcing is often marked as the efficient strategy that organisations now adopt to manage resources and capabilities with the sole objective of maximizing gains and performance in today's highly volatile business space with growing consumer needs and fierce competition. In this purely qualitative study, we examined how outsourcing impacts operational strategy, especially on the goals of operations related to cost reduction, improved quality, flexibility and better service. We demonstrated that generally, respondents perceived outsourcing to be a good strategy for boosting organisational performance. However, before outsourcing there is the need to do a comparative needs assessment of the existing systems to fully understand areas that can be outsourced and those that cannot maximise the full gains of the strategy.

Overall, most of the respondents alluded to the fact that outsourcing should necessarily be accompanied by a cost-benefits analysis. In terms of services that could be outsourced within the University of Cape Coast, overall, analysis suggests that there are quite a lot of things in the University that could be outsourced. These include but are not limited to sanitation and security. Respondents alluded to the fact that sanitation and security were some of the areas that should be the top priority of the University of Cape Coast. Regarding how outsourcing impacts service delivery at the Halls of residence, the study further showed that outsourcing will impact service delivery in diverse ways including efficiency. Moreover, outsourcing will directly benefit students, clients and the University at large. However, there were perceived challenges associated with outsourcing at the University of Cape Coast including labour agitations, increased cost of living due to loss of jobs and lack of timely delivery of services.

From the findings and the results generated in our investigations on outsourcing of some services in the halls of residence at the University of Cape Coast, we would like to recommend to policymakers in tertiary institutions, university management and other relevant authorities to look into the concept of outsourcing and consider it in their institutions for efficiency and effectiveness, that:

1. Outsourcing in the University will be very good and beneficial but it should be carried out after careful planning before implementation. These views expressed by respondents in this study supports Ampadu (2017), where he contends that outsourcing waste and refuse management will generally improve sanitation because a private entity is likely to pay more attention to the work and will be time conscious in the delivery of services. The Outsourcing of non-core functions according to Nilsson, (2014) is supported by the Competence Based View Theory, which encourages institutions to focus on their core competencies and be more efficient. For this reason, it is recommended that the University Management should take steps to outsource some of the no-core services.

2. On Services that can be outsourced within the University of Cape Coast, most respondents pointed out three major services, such as sanitation, waste management and security services. Furthermore, some respondents indicated additional services that could be outsourced, and these are, weeding and pruning of trees around the halls. Our recommendation is that the University management needs to outsource these services in the halls of residence to ensure good hygiene in the halls of residence. This

recommendation is buttressed by the Resource Based Theory, which explains that organisations must develop its core competencies to survive and address the needs of the market. In this regard the University of Cape Coast Management must take steps to divest itself from engaging in peripheral services and focus on core competencies to ensure efficiency of core service delivery such as teaching, research and community service.

3. How does outsourcing impact service delivery at the Halls of Residence? Views from some respondents suggest that, outsourcing will have great impact on service delivery at the halls of residence first directly to students and to other stakeholders. The respondents' views support the assertion by Ikenwa and Olusegun (2019) that outsourcing saves cost and time for the institution concerned when they said that in other areas there were reports of outsourcing improving services and reducing the cost of students' support service delivery in the halls of residence. It is recommended that outsourcing should be done as it improves efficiency in service delivery and reduces cost of operations and promote client's satisfaction.

4. The extent to which outsourcing directly benefits students, clients and the University. Respondents were of the opinion that outsourcing comes with enormous benefits to students directly and then to other clients. To these respondents, outsourcing sanitation work for example in the halls of residence will lead to good health, a clean environment and a good reputation for the University. According to Sang, (2010) Outsourcing in the halls of residence will be directly beneficial to students, clients and the University in terms of cost reduction, time-saving and maintenance of security. It is, therefore, recommended that the University Management, Management at the various halls of residence and the Students Representative Council must take pragmatic steps to plan and implement outsourcing because of the enormous benefits to students and other clients.

5. On the anticipated challenges that could be associated with the implementation of outsourcing of services at the University of Cape Coast. These include potential labour agitations, increasing cost of living due to loss of jobs and delayed delivery of services. It is, therefore, recommended that University management should take strategic steps to deal with these potential threats, by engaging the Trades Union Congress and the four Labour Unions in the University of Cape Coast in finding alternatives employment opportunities for those to be affected before implementing any outsourcing policy.

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