



EVALUATING ADMINISTRATORS' ADHERENCE TO ETHICAL AND VALUE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION



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Abstract

This study evaluated administrators' adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State; from teachers' perception. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Delta State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the 10, 619 teachers in the 1,130 public basic education schools, that is, primary schools only, across the 25 local government areas within three senatorial districts of Delta State. A sample of 600 teachers was selected as sample for the study using a multi-stage sampling technique. The primary instrument for data collection was a 33-item structured questionnaire titled: "Administrators' Adherence to Ethical and Value-Oriented Leadership Practices Questionnaire (AAEVOLPQ)" and organized on a 4-point rating scale of: Very High Extent (VHE)– 4 points, High Extent (HE) – 3 points, Low Extent (LE)– 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) – 1 point, used to answer the research questions. The instrument was validated by three experts: two in Educational Management, and one Measurement and Evaluation expert, from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, in the South-East region of Nigeria. The reliability of the AAEVOLPQ was established through a pilot test conducted on 30 teachers from three public basic education schools in Anambra State (a neighboring State not included in the main study). The data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient to realize reliability coefficient values of 0.83, 0.88 and 0.87 for the three clusters; which yielded an overall reliability index of 0.86 when the score were summed up and divided, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically, mean scores benchmarked at 2.50 and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions. Findings of the study indicated that the extent of administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State were all to a low extent. This implies that the administrators generally did not adhered strongly to ethical and value-based leadership practices in basic education schools. Among the recommendations proffered was that the Post Primary Education Board (PPEB) and other relevant stakeholders such as the Delta State government and policy makers should organize continuous periodic ethical leadership training through workshops and seminars focused on ethical decision-making, conflict resolution, fairness, value re-orientation, equity, justice, integrity, honesty and professional accountability, in order to enhance the moral competence and leadership effectiveness of school administrators; which equally promotes high extent of administrators' adherence to ethical leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in the State.

Keywords: Administrators, Adherence, Ethical, Value-Oriented, Leadership, Practices, Management



Introduction

Basic education schools are educational institutions or schools established to achieve the goals and objectives of basic education in Nigeria. This includes *Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)* with their centres, *primary education with their schools*, and *junior secondary education (that is, the junior secondary schools)*. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014), basic education schools *refer to the formal educational institutions that provide the first nine years of schooling, encompassing Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), primary education, and junior secondary education, designed to equip learners with literacy, numeracy, and life skills necessary for lifelong learning and citizenship. They are institutions or schools that deliver foundational learning, typically covering primary and lower secondary levels, aimed at ensuring access to free, equitable, and quality education for all children, as part of their right to education (UNESCO, 2017).* Therefore, the effective management of basic education schools relies heavily on the administrators, that is, the head teachers who are the executives and at the top ladder of administration. The head teachers administer these schools by running their daily activities. They are the chief custodian of all curricular and extra-curricular activities in the school. Accomplishment of the goals and objectives of basic education heavily rests on the administrators who are saddled with the responsibility of implementing educational policies. The entire management of the basic education schools when it comes to personnel management, instructional leadership, pupils' management, educational resources management, building effective school-community relationships, and financial management, rests upon the administrators. It is however, important that the administrators foster and adhere to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices that will yield positive results and outcomes in the management of basic education schools. Hence, effective management of basic schools depends on the ethical and value-oriented conduct of administrators who serve as key decision-makers and role models within the school system.

Management entails *the process of coordinating and overseeing the work activities of others so that their activities are completed efficiently and effectively. Management is also the set of activities, including, planning, organizing, leading, and controlling, directed at an organization's resources with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner (Griffin, 2021; Robbins & Coulter, 2022).* Educational management hence, *refers to the theory and practice of the organization and administration of existing educational establishments and systems (Bush, 2020).* Educational management is a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of educational organizations, focusing on the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of resources towards achieving educational goals (Okumbe, 2021). Egwu (2022) described effective educational management as an instructional technique that integrates the teaching of literacy, skills and job content to move learners more successfully and adequately towards their educational and employment. It is a process that involves the dedication of all aspects of managerial tasks towards achieving the highest standards of education needed by beneficiaries of education including secondary education, parents, employers and society at large (Egwu, 2022). Ethical leadership on the other hand, is defined as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, as well as the promotion of such conduct to followers through communication, reinforcement, and decision-making (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005). Within the school context, ethical leadership practices entail leadership practices such as honesty, transparency, fairness and good judgement, accountability, truthfulness and respect, among many others, for all stakeholders. School administrators who practice ethical leadership foster trust, equity and professionalism in schools, which in turn, improves teacher morale and student outcomes (Chukwuma & Uzoechina, 2020). Northouse (2021) emphasized that ethical leadership in schools' entails making decisions that are morally sound and just, especially in matters relating to staff development, student welfare, and resource management. Administrators who display ethical behaviour are more likely to earn the trust and cooperation of teachers, enhance school performance, and sustain stakeholder confidence in public education. Besides, effective leadership is not just all about giving others, it is about showing kindness and compassion which are part of the indices of ethical leadership principles. When a school administrator prioritizes kindness, such a leader

creates a safe and supportive space for the school subordinates to grow. Kindness helps the administrator understand the subordinates needs, leading to better decision making and problem-solving. Leading with kindness and compassion helps that administrator become such a person who truly cares about the affairs of subordinates in essence influencing subordinates work for goal achievement in the school. In Nigeria and Delta State inclusive, concerns have been raised about widespread unethical practices among school leaders, including, favouritism, financial mismanagement, absenteeism, and abuse of authority (Ogundele & Oparinde, 2022). These lapses have been linked to weak accountability mechanisms, political interference, and the lack of ethics-focused leadership training (Ezeani, 2023). Similarly, value-oriented leadership emphasized leadership actions and practices driven by intrinsic values such as responsibility, compassion, justice, discipline, empathy, accountability, collaboration and teamwork, commitment to excellence and service to others, among many other practices. Value-oriented leaders serve as moral exemplars, shaping school culture and influencing the behaviours of others through their own conduct.

In the management of basic education schools, value-oriented leadership helps shape institutional culture, align stakeholder behaviours with educational goals, and nurture holistic development in learners (Ofojebe & Eboka, 2021). Such leadership is critical in Nigeria's education sector, especially in the management of basic education where schools are often challenged by corruption, mismanagement, and declining moral standards (Okafor & Ede, 2020). According to Sergiovanni (1992), effective school leadership is not just about technical management but also about serving a moral purpose. The values that guide leaders affect their goals, decisions, and relationships within the school system. In the context of basic education, especially, in public schools where societal values may be deteriorating, the role of administrators in instilling and upholding ethical values is more critical than ever. Research has shown that when school leaders consistently practice value-based leadership, schools tend to be more inclusive, disciplined, and focused on holistic student development (Chukwuma & Uzoechina, 2020). Unfortunately, many Nigerian school administrators fall short in this regard due to external pressures, value conflicts, and lack of training on ethical decision-making. From all the foregoing discussions, it is important for administrators, while displaying certain actions and discharging duties, strictly adhere to such ethical and value-based leadership practices for goal(s) accomplishment in the schools. In an era marked by increasing challenges in educational leadership, especially, in developing countries such as Nigeria, the adherence of school administrators to ethical and value-based leadership principles and practices is not just desirable; it is essential for achieving sustainable educational outcomes (Ogundele & Oparinde, 2022). Leadership in education is more than administrative efficiency; it is about influencing staff and students through integrity, moral clarity, good ethical conducts and value-based decision-making to create conducive learning environments and uphold public trust in education (Northouse, 2021). In Delta State, like many regions in Nigeria, the management of basic education schools has faced scrutiny over issues of leadership ineffectiveness, value erosion, and ethical lapses. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) have instituted various reforms aimed at improving school governance. However, concerns persist about how faithfully school administrators comply with ethical guidelines and promote core values in their leadership roles (Ezeani, 2023). Given these concerns, it becomes imperative to empirically evaluate the extent to which administrators adhere to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in managing basic education schools. This includes identifying the degree of adherence to and compliance with ethical standards, assessing how deeply value-based principles are embedded in their leadership practices, and understanding the challenges that hinder such adherence. Several systemic factors and contextual challenges seem to hinder school administrators from adhering to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices. These factors restricting administrators' adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools include: political interference in the appointment of administrators, inadequate professional development, poor supervision, lack of incentives for ethical conduct, and a culture of impunity (Okafor & Ede, 2020).



In Delta State, anecdotal and documented evidence points to issues such as: favouritism in staff deployment, diversion of school funds, and poor handling of teacher grievances as indicators of a leadership crisis. Ezeani (2023) noted that the absence of enforceable ethical codes in many basic education schools creates a vacuum where administrators operate without clear moral accountability. Furthermore, the lack of ethical and value-based leadership development programmes means that many leaders rely on outdated or transactional leadership approaches that are ill-suited to current educational demands. In their study, Ogundele and Oparinde (2022) found out that even where administrators are aware of ethical principles, environmental and organizational factors often make it difficult for them to practice them consistently. This highlights the need for a deliberate and systemic re-orientation toward ethical and values-based leadership in school management. This study is supported by Transformational Leadership Theory and Ethical Leadership Theory. Transformational Leadership emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers toward shared values and goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This aligns with the goal of instilling ethical standards and value-based practices among school administrators. Ethical Leadership Theory, as developed by Brown et al. (2005), focuses on leaders' role in modeling moral behavior and influencing followers through fairness, ethical guidance, and reinforcement. These frameworks provide the basis for evaluating the behaviors and decision-making patterns of school administrators, particularly, in relation to how they uphold integrity, transparency, and values in school management. Previous empirical studies on ethical and value-oriented leadership in Nigerian schools and all over, like those of Adeyemi (2018), Akinbote and Akinyele (2021), Ejimofor (2020), Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2004), Nwagwu (2017), Okeke and Eze (2019), Oyetunji and Daramola (2022) and UNESCO (2021) are emerging, though still limited. These past studies have their own mix, differences, findings and shortcomings, therefore, necessitating this present study. Additionally, Chukwuma and Uzoechina (2020) conducted a study in Anambra State and found that ethical leadership by school principals significantly influenced teacher job satisfaction and commitment. Similarly, Ofojebe and Eboka (2021) examined value-based practices among principals in South-South Nigeria and found a positive correlation between value-oriented leadership and improved school discipline and student behaviour. In Delta State, studies such as that by Ezeani (2023) have documented the challenges administrators face in implementing ethical leadership, including political constraints and poor training. From the reviewed literature, it is evident that ethical and value-oriented leadership are indispensable for effective management of basic education schools. However, there remains a dearth of empirical evaluation in the Nigerian context, thereby, creating a gap in literature within the Nigerian context, regarding the actual adherence levels and the barriers school administrators face. This study contributes to addressing this gap specifically, by evaluating the extent to which administrators in Delta State adhere to both ethical and value-oriented practices, and the factors that hinder their implementation, this is the gap the present study aimed to fill. Providing recommendations for policy and training interventions through the study findings, is aimed at improving school governance and educational outcomes. It is therefore, upon this background that the present study sought to evaluate administrators' adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State; judging from the teachers' perceptions.

Statement of the Problem

The management of basic education schools in Nigeria, and particularly in Delta State, continues to face significant challenges stemming from unethical practices and the erosion of core leadership values. School administrators entrusted with the responsibility of setting the tone for institutional governance, staff relations, and students' holistic development are increasingly being scrutinized for lapses in integrity, accountability, fairness, and transparency. Reports of favouritism in appointments, misappropriation of school resources, lack of transparency in decision-making, corrupt practices, indiscipline, poor accountability and inadequate role modelling have become common concerns, especially, in the management of basic education schools. These issues compromise trust, reduce staff motivation, and negatively affect the overall quality of teaching and learning in basic education schools in Delta State. Although, ethical and value-oriented leadership practices are widely

recognized as foundational to effective school governance, there is a growing concern that many school administrators in Delta State either lack the commitment or the capacity to embody these ideals in their daily leadership roles. Moreover, systemic factors such as political interference, weak accountability structures, and lack of leadership training seems to or may be contributing to the deterioration of ethical standards in the management of basic education schools. Despite the strategic importance of ethics and values in educational leadership practices, there is limited empirical research specifically evaluating how well school administrators in Delta State basic education schools adhere to these principles in practice, especially, in the management of schools. Existing studies have mostly focused on general leadership styles or school effectiveness without sufficiently interrogating the ethical and value-oriented dimensions of leadership, particularly, in the context of Nigeria's basic education sector. This gap in empirical evidence hinders targeted policy interventions and professional development programmes that could strengthen ethical and value-oriented leadership practices capacity among school leaders in basic education schools. This study thus, aimed to fill the identified gap by evaluating administrators' adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State, looking at the teachers' perceptions. By addressing this gap, the study contributed to both theory and practice, offering evidence-based recommendations for school leadership improvement, professional ethics training, and education policy reforms tailored to Delta State's context.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate administrators' adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State. Specifically,

The objectives of the study aimed at:

1. Finding out the extent of administrators' adherence to ethical leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State.
2. Ascertaining the extent of administrators' adherence to value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State.
3. Determining the extent to which certain factors impede administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based in the management of basic education schools in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do administrators adhere to ethical leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State?
2. To what extent do administrators adhere to value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State?
3. To what extent do certain factors impede administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based in the management of basic education schools in Delta State?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was deemed appropriate because the study sought to collect data from a representative sample of basic education school teachers in order to evaluate administrators' adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices. The design enabled the researchers to describe, analyze, and interpret the prevailing conditions without manipulating any variable (Nworgu, 2015). The study was conducted in Delta State, Nigeria. Delta State is located in the South-South geopolitical zone and comprises 25 local government areas. The area was chosen due to ongoing concerns about leadership practices and governance issues in public basic education schools, as reported by stakeholders and media outlets. The population of the study comprised all the 10, 619 teachers in the 1,130 public basic education schools, that is, primary schools only, across the 25 local government areas of Delta State. According to records from the Delta State Universal Basic

Education Board (DSUBEB, 2024), there are approximately 10,619 teachers in public basic education schools, which include the primary schools. But the junior secondary school teachers were not part of this present study. A sample of 600 teachers was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, five local government areas were randomly selected from each of the three senatorial districts (Delta North, Delta Central, and Delta South), making a total of 15 LGAs. In the second stage, 40 teachers were randomly selected from each selected LGA, giving a sample size of 600 teachers and their schools selected for the study. This technique ensured fair representation across geographic and administrative units. The primary instrument for data collection was a 33-item structured questionnaire titled: “Administrators’ Adherence to Ethical and Value-Oriented Leadership Practices Questionnaire (AAEVOLPQ)” and organized on a 4-point rating scale of: Very High Extent (VHE)– 4 points, High Extent (HE) – 3 points, Low Extent (LE)– 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) – 1 point, used to answer research questions 1 to 3 respectively.

The instrument was designed by the researchers based on the review of related literature and the study’s objectives. It was divided into three sections involving items on extent of administrators’ adherence to ethical leadership practices; extent of items on adherence to value-oriented leadership practices; and items on extent to which certain factors impede adherence to ethical and value-based leadership. Construction of this questionnaire was based on the purpose of the study and several literatures consulted. The instrument was validated by three experts: two in Educational Management, and one Measurement and Evaluation expert, from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, in the South-East region of Nigeria. These experts’ inputs helped refine the language, relevance, and structure of the items to ensure face and content validity. The reliability of the AAEVOLPQ was established through a pilot test conducted on 30 teachers from three public basic education schools in Anambra State (a neighboring State not included in the main study). The data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient to realize reliability coefficient values of 0.83, 0.88 and 0.87 for the three clusters; which yielded an overall reliability index of 0.86 when the score were summed up and divided, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Data were collected through direct administration of the questionnaire by the researchers and trained assistants to the teachers. Respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire, and efforts were made to ensure confidentiality and objectivity in their responses. Administration of the 600 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents took a period of one week, and the retrieval rate was at a 100% rate of return. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Specifically: mean scores and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions. A criterion mean score of **2.50** was adopted as the benchmark for decision-making. Mean values of 2.50 and above were interpreted as “high extent”, while mean values below 2.50 were interpreted as “low extent”. No hypotheses were tested, as the study focused on descriptive evaluation guided by research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do administrators adhere to ethical leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean Scores and SD of Teachers concerning the Extent to which Administrators Adhere to Ethical Leadership Practices in the Management of Basic Education Schools in Delta State
N = 600 Basic Education School Teachers

S/ N	Please rate the extent to which you agree with the under listed statements using the scales provided.	VH E	HE	LE	VL E	X	SD	Decision
	Extent to which the administrator adhere to ethical leadership practices in the management of your school in:							
1.	consistently leading by example in honesty and integrity	109	119	201	171	2.28	1.06	Low Extent
2.	treating all staff members fairly and	118	100	199	183	2.26	1.09	

	equally, without favouritism of any sort attached							Low Extent
3.	maintaining transparency including open communication to unanimously involve all staff in active decision-making processes	124	101	173	202	2.25	1.13	Low Extent
4.	always taking and implementing decisions that are morally sound and just, especially, in matters relating to staff development, student welfare and resource management	109	127	170	194	2.25	1.09	Low Extent
5.	constantly ensuring accountability in the use of school resources, maintaining open records of school finances; likewise, regular monitoring of teachers lesson plans , attendance and evaluation of academic performance	115	123	195	167	2.31	1.07	Low Extent
6.	avoiding any form of corruption or unethical conduct	106	130	213	151	2.32	1.04	Low Extent
7.	disciplining staff or pupils fairly, according to rules	211	149	128	112	2.77	1.12	High Extent
8.	encouraging whistle blowing in order to protect informants	111	122	198	169	2.29	1.07	Low Extent
9.	prioritizing kindness likewise compassion in most cases in order to understand the subordinates needs	203	169	121	107	2.78	1.10	High Extent
10.	helping staff fairly/justly to resolve both personal including work difficult situations for goal achievement in the school	109	103	207	181	2.23	1.07	Low Extent
11.	promoting ethical culture in school by integrating ethics and values in school assemblies , speeches, and extracurricular activities likewise celebrating Ethics week or organizing value-based competitions to build character and leadership	104	116	159	221	2.17	1.11	Low Extent
Overall Mean Score & SD =						2.35	1.11	Low Extent

Analysis of data in Table 1 revealed that only items 7 and 9 were rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the basic education school teachers to show that they agreed with all the statements. All the other items from 1 – 6, 8 and 10 – 11 were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the teachers to show that they disagreed with these statements. The grand mean of 2.35 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.11 indicates closeness in the responses of the teachers showcasing that the extent of administrators' adherence to ethical leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State was to a low extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent do administrators adhere to value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean Scores and SD of Teachers concerning the Extent to which Administrators Adhere to Value-Oriented Leadership Practices in the Management of Basic Education Schools in Delta State

N = 600 Basic Education School Teachers

S/ N	Please rate the extent to which you agree with the under listed statements using the scales provided.	VH E	HE	LE	VL E	X	SD	Decision
	Extent to which the administrator adhere to value-oriented leadership practices in the management of your school in:							
12.	promoting moral and civic values among staff and pupils	53	126	221	200	2.05	0.95	Low Extent
13.	efficiently fostering mutual respect, collaborations and teamwork among teachers likewise non-teaching staff at all times	111	69	190	230	2.10	1.11	Low Extent
14.	always modelling punctuality to school for staff and pupils	187	254	71	88	2.90	1.00	High Extent
15.	ensuring equity likewise inclusion in all school activities	92	87	251	170	2.17	1.01	Low Extent
16.	encouraging value-based instruction and guidance	109	100	224	167	2.25	1.05	Low Extent
17.	enforcing anti-bullying including anti-discrimination policies to create a safe school environment	103	110	169	218	2.16	1.10	Low Extent
18.	demonstrating honesty likewise truthfulness in communication, budgeting and reporting	84	107	235	174	2.17	1.00	Low Extent
19.	setting high academic and behavioural standards and supporting students and teachers to meet them	43	130	244	183	2.06	0.90	Low Extent
20.	recognizing and rewarding academic achievements, innovation, and good conduct during school assemblies or special events	64	95	198	243	1.97	0.99	Low Extent
21.	creating platforms for sharing ideas and best practices (e.g., weekly departmental meetings)	86	108	217	189	2.15	1.02	Low Extent
22.	ensuring that no learner is denied learning opportunities due to socioeconomic background or ability	155	262	98	85	2.81	0.98	High Extent
Overall Mean Score & SD =						2.25	1.05	Low Extent

Analysis of data in Table 2 revealed that only items 14 and 22 were rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the basic education school teachers to show that they agreed with all the statements. All the other items from 12 – 13 and 15 – 21 were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the teachers to show that they disagreed with these statements. The grand mean of 2.25 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.05 indicates closeness in the responses of the teachers showcasing that the extent of administrators' adherence to value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State was to a low extent.

Research Question 3: To what extent do certain factors impede administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based in the management of basic education schools in Delta State?

Table 3: Mean Scores and SD of Teachers concerning the Extent to which Certain Factors Impede Administrators Adherence to Ethical and Value-Oriented Leadership Practices in the Management of Basic Education Schools in Delta State

N = 600 Basic Education School Teachers

S/ N	Please rate the extent to which you agree with the under listed statements using the scales provided.	VHE	HE	LE	VL E	X	SD	Decision
	Extent to which these under listed factors impede administrator adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in the management of your school.							
23.	Political interference due to appointment being political affects administrator's ability to act ethically	217	203	84	96	2.90	1.06	High Extent
24.	Lack of ethics and value-oriented leadership formal training coupled with awareness limits administrator's leadership effectiveness	220	209	102	69	2.97	1.00	High Extent
25.	Fear of backlash prevents administrator's from implementing discipline	197	231	58	114	2.85	1.08	High Extent
26.	Limited resources, infrastructure likewise teaching resources hinder value-based or value-driven school initiatives and management difficult	247	188	93	72	3.02	1.02	High Extent
27.	Community pressure sometimes influences administrator's decisions	87	79	257	177	2.13	1.00	Low Extent
28.	Lack of monitoring and supervision reduces administrator's accountability	248	194	73	85	3.01	1.05	High Extent
29.	Corruption in the system as a result of weak financial monitoring and oversight	172	301	56	71	2.96	0.92	High Extent
30.	Poor salaries, delayed promotions, and lack of incentives may tempt administrators into unethical acts like diverting school funds or accepting bribes	209	167	136	88	2.83	1.06	High Extent
31.	Excessive workload and multitasking reducing time for reflection, ethical leadership, and participatory decision-making	189	254	84	73	2.93	0.97	High Extent
32.	Some administrators are used to authoritarian, command-style leadership and may resist adopting ethical, participatory, and value-based models for fear of losing control or being challenged	198	238	78	86	2.91	1.01	High Extent
33.	Absence of clearly defined codes of ethics including weak enforcement mechanisms making it difficult to hold leaders accountable	249	211	65	75	3.06	1.01	High Extent
Overall Mean Score & SD =						2.87	1.05	High Extent

Analysis of data in Table 3 revealed that only item 27 were rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the basic education school teachers to show that they agreed with all the statements. All the other items from 23 – 26 and 28 – 33 were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the teachers to show that they disagreed with these statements. The grand mean of 2.87 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.05 indicates closeness in the responses of the teachers showcasing that the extent to which these factors impede administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State was to a high extent.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study generally revealed that the extent of administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State were to a low extent. This implies that the administrators generally did not adhere strongly to ethical and value-based leadership practices. It was discovered in this study that the extent of administrators' adherence to ethical leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State were to a low extent. The extent to which the administrator adhered to ethical leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in terms of: consistently leading by example in honesty and integrity, treating all staff members fairly and equally, without favouritism of any sort attached, maintaining transparency including open communication to unanimously involve all staff in active decision-making processes, always taking and implementing decisions that are morally sound and just, especially, in matters relating to staff development, student welfare and resource management, constantly ensuring accountability in the use of school resources, maintaining open records of school finances; likewise, regular monitoring of teachers lesson plans, attendance and evaluation of academic performance, avoiding any form of corruption or unethical conduct, disciplining staff or pupils fairly, according to rules, encouraging whistle blowing in order to protect informants, prioritizing kindness likewise compassion in most cases in order to understand the subordinates needs, helping staff fairly/justly to resolve both personal including work difficult situations for goal achievement in the school, and in promoting ethical culture in school by integrating ethics and values in school assemblies, speeches, and extracurricular activities likewise celebrating Ethics week or organizing value-based competitions to build character and leadership; were all to a low extent.

The finding that administrators in Delta State generally adhered to ethical leadership practices to a low extent deviated and does not support the assertion by Brown and Treviño (2006) study which discovered that ethical leaders acted as role models, influencing ethical conduct through their personal behaviour and decision-making in schools. The present study finding is equally at variance and not in consonance with the findings of Okeke and Eze (2019) study which indicated that the school leaders modelled ethical behaviour which created a school climate that enhanced trust, transparency, and accountability. Also, the observed gaps in whistleblower protection and handling of corruption reflects and agrees with systemic issues confirmed by Adeyemi (2018) study which found out that many school leaders in Nigeria were constrained by socio-political pressures, weak regulatory frameworks, and fear of victimization when confronting unethical behaviours.

It was also found out in the finding of this study that the extent of administrators' adherence to value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State was to a low extent. This finding further implies that administrators' high extent of adherence to value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State was only found in a few areas of: always modelling punctuality to school for staff and pupils; and in ensuring that no learner is denied learning opportunities due to socioeconomic background or ability. All the other areas of adherence to value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in: promoting moral and civic values among staff and pupils, efficiently fostering mutual respect, collaborations and teamwork among teachers likewise non-teaching staff at all times, ensuring equity likewise inclusion in all school activities, encouraging value-based instruction and guidance, enforcing anti-bullying including anti-discrimination policies to create a safe school environment, demonstrating honesty likewise truthfulness in communication, budgeting and reporting, setting high academic and

behavioural standards and supporting students and teachers to meet them, recognizing and rewarding academic achievements, innovation, and good conduct during school assemblies or special events, and in creating platforms for sharing ideas and best practices (e.g., weekly departmental meetings); were all applied by the administrators to a low extent. This study finding does not tally and deviates from the findings of Akinbote and Akinyele (2021) study which reported that value-based leadership contributed applied by administrators significantly influenced school effectiveness and moral education. Furthermore, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2004) emphasized that leadership grounded in values like equity, inclusiveness, and human dignity, which enhanced staff morale and learner outcomes.

It was further discovered in this study that the extent to which certain factors impede administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State was to a high extent. This includes that factors such as: political interference due to administrators' appointment being political affecting administrator's ability to act ethically, lack of ethics and value-oriented leadership formal training coupled with awareness limiting administrator's leadership effectiveness, fear of backlash preventing administrator's from implementing discipline, limited resources, infrastructure likewise teaching resources hindering value-based or value-driven school initiatives and management difficult, community pressure which sometimes influences administrator's decisions, lack of monitoring and supervision reducing administrator's accountability, corruption in the system as a result of weak financial monitoring and oversight, poor salaries, delayed promotions, and lack of incentives tempting administrators into unethical acts like diverting school funds or accepting bribes, excessive workload and multitasking reducing time for reflection, ethical leadership, and participatory decision-making, some administrators being used to authoritarian, command-style leadership and resisting adopting ethical, participatory, and value-based models for fear of losing control or being challenged, and absence of clearly defined codes of ethics including weak enforcement mechanisms making it difficult to hold leaders accountable; hindered administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State to a high extent. Consistent and corroborating with previous empirical studies, this present study finding revealed political interference and lack of training, among others as key barriers. This finding is also related with Nwagwu (2017) study which found out that political interference undermined school administrators' autonomy, often forcing them to compromise ethical standards for political loyalty or job security. Moreover, Oyetunji and Daramola (2022) study confirmed that the absence of continuous training on ethical leadership leaves administrators unprepared to handle complex moral dilemmas in educational environments. Resource constraints and insufficient supervision were also identified which supports the empirical evidence and report from UNESCO (2021) which indicated that leadership effectiveness in education, especially, in developing countries, is often hampered by inadequate funding and weak monitoring mechanisms. However, challenges in implementing value-based instructions and inclusion echoed the findings of Ejimofor (2020) which indicated that while leaders may support values in principle, translating them into pedagogy requires professional development and institutional support. Overall, the findings of this study generally confirmed that while administrators in Delta State show considerable adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices to a low extent, systemic barriers such as political pressure, lack of training, and poor resource allocation continue to hinder full compliance to a high extent. Strengthening institutional frameworks, promoting regular ethics training, and depoliticizing school governance are necessary to enhance ethical and value-driven school leadership.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the extent to which school administrators in Delta State adhere to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools. The findings revealed that the administrators generally exhibited moderated and low extent of adherence to ethical principles in leadership practices such as transparency, fairness, integrity and accountability, among others; showcasing notable gaps in these areas. Similarly, the finding indicated that administrators only

exhibited high extent of adherence to value-oriented leadership practices in areas such as always modelling punctuality to school for staff and pupils; and in ensuring that no learner was denied learning opportunities due to socioeconomic background or ability; there were still notable gaps in areas such as moral and civic values, equity and transparency in inclusion of everyone in all school activities, demonstrating honesty likewise truthfulness in communication, among others, which were found not to be substantial and only adhered to a low extent, though impeded by factors such as political interference, lack of professional training, inadequate resources, and weak monitoring systems, among others. These findings affirmed that ethical and value-based leadership is critical for the sustainable and effective management of basic education. However, to fully realize the benefits of such leadership, systemic challenges must be addressed. Strengthening institutional support, capacity-building and policy enforcement are essential for promoting a leadership culture rooted in ethics and societal values.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Post Primary Education Board (PPEB) and other relevant stakeholders such as the Delta State government and policy makers should organize continuous periodic ethical leadership training through workshops and seminars focused on ethical decision-making, conflict resolution, fairness, value re-orientation, equity, justice, integrity, honesty and professional accountability, in order to enhance the moral competence and leadership effectiveness of school administrators; which equally promotes high extent of administrators' adherence to ethical leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in the State.
2. Basic education schools should be well-funded and equipped to implement value-based initiatives such as civic education, moral instruction, equity-focused activities, and inclusive governance. When administrators are empowered with the right tools, adequate resources and infrastructure, they are more likely to practice value-oriented/driven leadership practices which improves their management of basic education schools in Delta State to a high extent.
3. Delta State government should strengthen oversight and monitoring mechanisms that will aid to eliminate factors highly impeding administrators' adherence to ethical and value-based leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State to a low extent. This involves shielding administrators from undue political influence and minimizing leadership corrupt practices. Policies promoting merit-based appointments, transparent leadership evaluations, and whistleblower protection should be strictly enforced to maintain ethical and value-based standards, in order to enhance high extent of administrators' adherence to ethical and value-oriented leadership practices in the management of basic education schools in Delta State.

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