



TEACHERS ETHICS FOR VALUES EDUCATION IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF EDUCATION LAW IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA



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Abstract

The paper examined teachers ethics for values education in the enforcement of education law in secondary schools in Nigeria. Teachers' ethics have been known to have important influence on students' learning outcome and they also play a crucial role in transmission of values of the society and consequently effective enforcement of education laws. Ethics refers to rules of behaviour and standards that governs relationship among persons. For teachers to positively transmits values of the society, they must cultivate and demonstrate ethical behaviors such as confidentiality, commitment, honesty, among others. Teachers' ethics are the prescribed norms, values, principles, rules, regulations and standards governing teachers' professional conduct. The transmission of values of the society and the implementation of education laws depends on teachers ethical dispositions. The paper concluded that teachers' ethical inclination has a direct link with the transmission of values and consequently the enforcement of education laws for the attainment of education al objectives. The paper further suggested that the government and schools board should set up an effective monitoring committee to make sure that education laws are fully implemented in line with the values of the society for effective administration.

Keywords: Teacher Ethics, Education a Law Confidentiality, Commitment, spirit, Honesty.

Introduction

Ethical behavior considers the rights and interests, as well as the existence of others in the society for mutual living. Teachers, as frontline implementers of education, play a pivotal role in upholding ethical values and instilling core societal values such as discipline, honesty, justice, and respect for the rule of law. However, the effectiveness of values education and the enforcement of education law largely depend on the ethical conduct of teachers.

Thus, teachers in their profession discharge their duties following some ethical values, hence; they implement the organizational control patterns and are also faced with other statutory duties (Kalagbor & Nnokam, 2015). They occupy the place of honor and influence in their communities all over the world. Ethical values are expected to be experienced within the environment of education. For this reason, ethics codes that are determined for education must have compliance with the values of the society. Universal values such as honesty, fairness, loyalty, and respect are taken as basis when determining ethics codes. Teachers are revered as mentors and have a significant impact on students' academic success, even as they transmit the values. Even if today's education is quickly becoming materialistic and marketed, they have a moral obligation to pass on information. Since it produces high-

caliber human resources, responsible citizens, socially adept people, and creative individuals, teaching is viewed as a noble vocation.

Teachers influence students' understanding of discipline, responsibility, patriotism, empathy, and tolerance. A teacher who upholds these values not only promotes moral development but also reinforces adherence to school rules and broader educational regulations. Ethical teachers enforce rules consistently and fairly, thereby reducing incidents of indiscipline and law violations and they build a lawful school culture, hence ethical values are part of everyday teaching, a culture of lawfulness and mutual respect is cultivated, making enforcement of education law more effective (Nwikina & Nwile, 2013). Ethical teachers also reduce corruption and malpractice by displaying a high-level integrity and discouraging examination malpractices, favoritism, and other corrupt practices that undermine education laws.

Teachers' confidentiality also plays a significant role in ensuring the speedy transmission of values of the society for functionality of the citizens. The teacher can interact with parents/guardians by respecting the privacy of the family, by not disclosing personal information of the students to other teachers or use the student as examples during the teaching - learning process. Thus, the teacher has no right to ridicule the student and should not abuse the power that the teaching profession gives to them over the students. Education laws in Nigeria, as outlined in the National Policy on Education and various regulatory frameworks, provide standards for student discipline, curriculum implementation, teachers' rights and responsibilities, and overall school governance. When teachers uphold high ethical standards, they promote rule-following behavior by modeling respect for rules, teachers encourage students to follow school laws and regulations. Ethical teachers enforce rules consistently and fairly, thereby reducing incidents of indiscipline and law violations and they build a lawful school culture, hence ethical values are part of everyday teaching, a culture of lawfulness and mutual respect is cultivated, making enforcement of education law more effective (Oyedeji, 2012). Ethical teachers also reduce corruption and malpractice by displaying a high level integrity and discouraging examination malpractices, favoritism, and other corrupt practices that undermine education laws.

Theoretical Framework

This paper anchored on Functionalist Theory propounded by Herbert Spencer, Emile Dulkheim and Robert Merton as cited in Calnitsky and Martinez (2023).

This theory provides a profound understanding about the functions of education in individual's life and activities in micro and macro society's development. Durkheim, a major proponent of the theory explained that the function of education is the transmission of society's norms and values. He maintained thus; "society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity, rules and regulation which education perpetuates and reinforces by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities in life demands. In the advancement of functionalist perspective of education, as it concerns the development of individual which is the primary socialization within the family, the school takes over as the focal socializing agency and acts as a bridge between the family and society as a whole, preparing children for their adult role through a series of rules and regulations which must be followed. In detailing of this view, Okunlola & Hendrick (2022) in a related development stated that within the family, the child is judged and treated largely in terms of particularistic standards. The parents treat the child as their particular child rather than judging him in terms of standards or yardsticks that can be applied to every individual because in the wider society the individuals is treated and judged in terms of universalistic standards which are applied to all members regardless of their kinship ties. The relevance of this theory to the paper is that teachers who are at the fulcrum of curriculum implementation should in a bid to enforce education transmits the values of the society to the students that helps them to become functional in the society.

Conceptual Review

Ethics

Ethics deals with principle of right or good conduct in accordance with the accepted standards governing the conduct of a people or society. It is the philosophical study of the general nature of morality and of the specific moral choices to be made by the individual in his relationship with others (Macionis, 2005). This is because it is used as exemplar to justify the principles of moral and methods of operation in a given society using logically and universally accepted standard (Obono et al, 2006). In other words, morality has to do with a set of social rules and standards that guide the conduct of people in a society, including the professional, educational, religious and other social engagements or undertakings. Incipiently, ethics is conceived as a science of morals, a branch of philosophy. Underlying this philosophy is the system of rules, moral principles and values with how people ought to live their lives and interact with others for mutual benefits of all involved. Ethics is therefore, associated with what is good and right as against bad and wrong in the conduct of human affairs.

Furthermore, ethics is connected with rules of behaviour and standards of social contract(s) or relationship (Asobie, 2001). Also, Schreiner (2015) contended that “people who possess a strong work ethic embodies certain principles that guide their work behavior, leading them to produce high-quality work consistently and without the prodding that some individuals require to stay on track”. Consequently, without the adherence to ethics, education which is the major fulcrum for national development will not be achieved. As noted by Agi and Kalagbor, (2016), this is because in all fronts, be it technology, science, law, medicine, teaching, industry, culture, and so on., education is expected to produce the human capital expected to undertake them for the overall development of the society.

Education Law

Education law is the area of law relating to schools; it deals mainly with schools, school systems and school boards. The law is charged with providing education to children, adults and special needs children alike in schools. The reason why there are significant differences among the states in the administration of schools is because each state develops, maintains and operates its own school system. Education law is the portion of the law in a state and/or country that specifically governs educational bodies such as public and private institutions of learning. Various education laws cover every aspect of education and school system. Education law further deals with the sources of funding that school organizations use to acquire resources, as well as the requirements teachers and other faculty and staff must to meet to be certified, trained, hired, retrained, and fired.

Education law are those areas of jurisprudence which focuses on educational activities - the operation of public and private elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions of learning. Alexander (1980) opined that education law or school law as a field of study is “a generic term covering a wide range of legal subject matters, including the basic fields of contracts, property, torts, constitutional law, and other areas of law which directly or indirectly affect the educational and administrative processes of the educational system. Udemezue and Ngige (2024) points out that education law should be seen as a range of rules and regulations guiding the operation and administration of schools. Such rules and regulations border on the students, teachers, administrators, parent and other workers within the educational system.

Teachers Confidentiality as Ethical for Values Education in the Enforcement of Education Law

Confidentiality stands as a cornerstone of professional ethics in teaching, playing a critical role in fostering trust, safeguarding student dignity, and upholding legal standards in education law. As teachers steer the complexities of classroom management, student assessment, and parent-teacher interactions, maintaining confidentiality ensures that sensitive information is protected while promoting an ethical learning environment (Eberhardt, 2024). In Nigeria, where education laws emphasize professional conduct, teacher confidentiality is not merely a moral obligation but a legal requirement that supports values education and academic integrity.



The secrecy of teachers defines their role in students' life and is one of their primary obligations to them. Above all, teachers must act ethically in the classroom and in their interactions with parents and other staff members. There is little research on how teacher confidentiality affects student learning outcomes, and the few studies that do exist have a strong ethical focus on teachers' classroom practices. Whereas there is a long history of discussion and debate around the connection between teachers' confidentiality and quality instruction, there is a lack of empirical research testing this hypothesis or even connecting knowledge to student learning. Tanang and Abu, (2014) review showed that while much research is still needed to fully support this relationship, as well to test a cross-cultural conceptualization of general teachers' professional ethics, research thus far is beginning to show that teacher's confidentiality is relevant to understanding quality teaching as understood by its impact on student learning outcomes (Banks, 2010).

Consider, for these different types of data, all of the moments in which educators need to prioritize student privacy. It may be a matter of keeping a student's name, password, or parent information private, or maybe assessment results and grades need to be kept confidential. Teachers should also prioritize student security when handling login information or passwords. Only when teachers are aware of these different types of data in their classrooms can they make thoughtful data privacy decisions. Once teachers are aware of classroom data, the next step is to evaluate their own security practices.

Some of these practices can help teachers' keep students' data confidential. For example, when sharing documents with a tool like Google Drive, teacher should double check who they share the document with and the rights each individual has (view, edit, or suggest). This will ensure that only those who have an educational need are able to access the documents. Blomeke, & Delaney, (2012) suggested other practices can keep student data secure such as physical measures such as not using external storage devices like flash (USB) drives, which can easily be misplaced or stolen, and using a screen lock with features such as password protection, fingerprint access, or even facial recognition. Other practices are technical measures, such as using only approved cloud storage and email services. Some schools have even carefully vetted their preferred and required tools and services to ensure that student data is secure; therefore, teachers should use only these tools. These considerations and practices can ultimately ensure student data security.

Once teachers understand privacy, security, and confidentiality in their classrooms, they should also consider how their roles fit into the overall picture of student data privacy in education. Clement, and Vandenberg, (2000) stated that safeguarding privacy must be a shared goal and responsibility among all education stakeholders, starting at the federal level, with laws and guidelines, and culminating in the classroom, with data privacy decisions and security practices...Teachers need to give their students/parents an assurance that what is said will be in confidence (that it will stay secret) because, unless you are able to do that, the students/parents is unlikely to be open with you (Feldon, 2007). However, you also need to be aware of the limits to the confidentiality that you are offering. There are several instances where total confidentiality is impossible, undesirable or illegal.

Commitment as Ethical for Values Education in the Enforcement of Education Law

Commitment in the teaching profession extends beyond mere job performance; it embodies a deep-seated dedication to student success, ethical responsibility, and adherence to educational laws. In Nigeria, where education laws emphasize quality instruction and professional conduct, teacher commitment serves as a vital ethical pillar that strengthens values education and academic excellence. When educators demonstrate unwavering dedication, they not only comply with legal standards but also model perseverance, responsibility, and integrity for their students. Teacher commitment is not just an individual responsibility but an ethical and legal necessity that underpins values education and the enforcement of education laws in Nigeria. When educators demonstrate unwavering dedication, they uphold professional standards, inspire students, and contribute to national development. The dedication that instructors have to their teaching careers is known as teacher's commitment to teaching (TCT). As a result, the teachers' understanding of what pupils should learn in a particular subject or content area will



increase. According to Ashraf et al., (2017), teacher commitment is an internal force that compels educators to put in more time and effort to maintain involvement in the classroom. This readiness to support teaching fosters an emotional bond between teachers and the subject matter, which motivates them to look for methods to improve their profession and provide a productive learning environment so that students can achieve their goals (Banks, 2010). Commitment to teaching is a crucial factor to contribute to the performance of students. In addition, passion has a motivating factor; therefore, it is a significant need for high quality learning and teaching. Passion is seeking for the new, and experiencing new ideas. Passion is on the basis of effective teaching. Passion which is indispensable for learning and teaching facilitates learning thorough desire and enthusiasm it creates. Passionate teachers via creating effective learning environments endeavor to increase learning potentials of their students.

Teachers are all aware of the role of commitment in teaching. Teacher commitment is the process through which teachers become willing to give their loyalty and energy to a particular social system with an emotional bond between the teacher and teaching. The adoption of the goals and values of the teaching constitutes the basis for teachers' commitment to teaching. Commitment results from the job satisfaction teachers who are committed to the goals of the school, work collaboratively and cooperatively with other teachers in the school to seek ways to promote school and teaching profession (Geijssel, et al., 2003).

Honesty as Ethical for Values Education in the Enforcement of Education Law

In the hallowed halls of Nigeria's secondary schools, where young minds are shaped and national futures are forged, honesty stands as the unshakable pillar supporting both values education and the enforcement of education law. This fundamental virtue transcends mere truth-telling - it represents a comprehensive ethical framework that governs teacher-student interactions, academic assessments, and institutional accountability. As Nigeria strives to strengthen its educational system, the cultivation of honesty among educators emerges not just as a moral obligation, but as a legal requirement with far-reaching consequences for national development. Being honest is being open, trustworthy, and truthful. When people are honest, they can be relied on not to lie, cheat, or steal. Honesty is telling the truth. It is admitting mistakes even when you know someone might be angry or disappointed. Being honest means that you don't pretend to be something you are not. With honesty, you can trust things to be as they appear. Honesty is a character that can eradicate this country from corruption, collusion, and nepotism. Honesty in Indonesian dictionary is a quality of being honest, not cheating. In other word, honest can be said as "there is similarity between what someone says and what really happens", or "as it is" (Kesuma, 2011). Honesty is a true reality, whether in words, behaviour, or actions; in outside and inside himself. Honesty is a strong belief system, stable in speaking, acting, and saying what is in the heart (Aqib, 2011). This concern has motivated the writer to observe the problem about honesty in education. Everyone has his own character, but this character has not developed optimally. The writer tries to offer an effort about the realization of honesty in education through a group guidance service using balalasaman game technique to help developing students' honesty. The result of this research showed that traditional child game can stimulate children in developing group work, hard work, interaction, empathy, and appreciate others to behave honestly (Kurniati, 2011).

There ought to be, in the first place, honesty of motive in entering the profession. To many it is a mere make-lift to occupy them only till they get something in their view better. Others see in it only a convenient way of making a little money. Doubtless in the majority of cases it is a regular employment which provides the teacher with his only means of support, generally scanty enough (Belart, 2017). But when this is the sole motive for entering a profession, which is otherwise disagreeable, there can be no true success attained in it. Success can come only when the controlling motive is a hearty love for the work and interest in it. There should be, again, an honest and adequate preparation. Here we touch one of the vital defects in our system of education. It is lamentable to observe not merely how little culture frequently is thought necessary by the teachers themselves to fit them for their responsible positions, but how meagre the requirements of school committees are, particularly in outlying districts. Scholars who could not have the remotest chance of passing an examination in the elementary studies for



admission to a High School, who do not know the difference between a noun and a conjunction or between an English shilling and a Yankee shilling, are permitted to undertake the training of scores of pupils, it may be, in these very studies, and are expected to teach things of which they have themselves no adequate conception.

Catalana (2020) submitted that very erroneous ideas have prevailed with regard to the province of normal schools, notwithstanding the efforts of Normal School principals to counteract such impressions. It has been very widely imagined that a few months at a Normal School would put one in possession of the art of teaching, no matter what his previous acquirements had been, and it is quite possible that Superintendents of Normal Schools have at times felt compelled to yield to an urgent outside pressure and reluctantly to send forth as qualified teachers, bearing the proper certificates, those who in reality come far below their own ideal standard.

Conclusion

The enforcement of education law in Nigerian secondary schools depends fundamentally on teachers' ethical practice. Through confidentiality, commitment, and integrity, administrators can significantly improve learning outcomes while fulfilling their vital role in national development. Systemic support through policy, training, and accountability measures will strengthen ethical standards across the profession. When teachers embody ethical principles in their daily practice, they not only enhance individual student achievement but also contribute to building a more just and prosperous society. The teaching profession's nobility ultimately resides in its ethical foundation - a truth that must guide all educational practice in Nigeria's secondary schools.

Suggestions

Based on the discussions of this paper and conclusion, the following suggestions are made;

1. The government and schools board should set up an effective monitoring committee to make sure that education laws are fully implemented in line with the values of the society for effective administration.
2. Teachers should be strictly confidential with students' information to effectively enforce education law and transmit the values of the society to the students.
3. Teachers should be honest in the discharge of their professional duties as value needed enhance the enforcement of education law for effective administration.
4. Teachers should be committed in their services to the school to ensure rigid compliance to education laws for smooth administration.
5. Teachers should be committed in their teaching roles and any other roles that may be assigned to them for effective students performances and overall health administration.

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