



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF ETHICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION

¹Dr. Opara, P.I.

²Dr (Mrs) Aminullahi, Omoyemi Maryam

Department Of Educational Mangament And Business Studies,
Federal University Oye- Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.
Patrickife1964@gmail.com Omoyemi.aminullahi@fuoye.edu.ng

³Mrs Umune Chinyere Hope

Alvan Ikoku Federal University
Of Education Owerri, Imo Nigeria.
chyumune@gmail.com

&

⁴Dr. (Mrs) Umunnakwe,

Office of The Registrar, Records and Statistics Unit,
Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.
Chizobapatricia2@gmail.com

Abstract

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of value. The ethics of the teaching profession are moral belief and rules about right and wrongs that influences teachers behaviors, attitudes and ideals. On the other hand, education is a sure process of developing the citizen cognitively, affectively and psychomotively. The teacher is the pivot on which the educational process rests. The teacher is responsible for transferring knowledge to the learner for the sake of teaching, behavior and skill acquisition. This paper is therefore aimed at streamlining ethical issues in education as a means of enhancing job performance on the part of the student. In this paper, the meaning of ethics and education are discussed, code of conduct as it concerns principals and teachers are outlined, discipline of teachers who break the rules are also discussed and recommendations made.

Keywords: Development, Education, Ethical Issues, Management, Sustainable.

Introduction

Oranusi (1980) defined education as both product and process of transmission of cultural heritage. As a product, education is what we receive through training, learning, ideals, knowledge and techniques etc. As a process it involves the act of learning itself, or the act of teaching someone or learning by itself. In its technical sense, education is the process of deliberately handing down knowledge from one generation to another; through a school and other agents of information dissemination like the mass media- radio, television, film, newspaper, the church etc. In this sense education is a continuous process which goes on throughout one's lifetime. Education cannot be acquired without teaching and learning. Notable importance of education includes eradication of mass illiteracy, improving standard of living, production of manpower needs of the society and so on.

Emenalo, (2010) noted that codes are bodies of laws put together as guide by organizations, governments, societies or school organization who put together list of do's and don'ts which guide and regulate the activities of their members. For example. Teachers manual, students rules and regulations. In government policies or legislation, school rules and regulations carry the force of law if they are reasonable and constitutional. Anyone who breaks or flout them can be punished as if he or she has broken a

common laws or a constitutional or statutory provision. Cases abound where school rules and regulations were upheld in law court as having the effect of laws, for instance school rules that forbids smoking or stealing are upheld by the judiciary. Codes of ethics are rules, guides, social control mechanism, statement or principles that govern the conduct of members of an organization. They are not legal document but rather principles that have their roles in morals (Emenalo, (2013). They serve to a professional body as basis of deciding what is wrong or right. They help to guide the action and conduct of the members of the profession for the upliftment of the profession for example the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) etc.

Some Ethical Issues for the Teaching Profession

Agim (2015) noted that some of these ethical issues in Education which are very important for teachers to know and to guide them to know what to do at any point in time must be observed as follows: Teachers shall recognize and respect the authority of the principal which include the following:

- i. Loyalty to principal and colleagues
- ii. Keep confidential school matters secret.
- iii. Be punctual to school and to class.
- iv. Express permission must be given for being absent from school.
- v. Keep up to date all relevant school records for which they are responsible.
- vi. Participate actively in co-curricular activities
- vii. Unrelated activities should not be undertaken by teachers during normal school duties without principals permission
- viii. Should not make defamatory statements before students
- ix. It is unethical to conduct lessons for students during school hours for a fee.
- x. Teachers shall not belong or introduce organizations likely to be detrimental to the progress of the school.
- xi. They shall make it a duty to attend all professional conferences relevant to their official work in the school.
- xii. All official letters to a higher authority must pass through the principal
- xiii. Teachers shall not exploit their students.
- xiv. Corporal punishment must only be done in accordance with prevailing rules and regulations.
- xv. They should not misappropriate funds or corruption of any kind.
- xvi. They shall not reveal examination questions both internal or external and shall be fair to all students in marking their scripts and not to connive at examination malpractices.
- xvii. They shall not have carnal knowledge of any student or indecent relationship of any kind in the school
- xviii. They shall not take any form of Alcoholic drink during school hours or smoke in any students gathering
- xix. They shall not participate or condone acts of indiscipline in the school
- xx. On no account shall teachers use their position to further their political aspirations or spread the ideology of any political party.

Functions of Ethical issues in Education

According to Agim (2015) teaching and learning has the teacher as its fulcrum and the role of the teacher is therefore multifaceted. Many studies have reported strong and positive relationship between what teachers do, and how they do these on the one hand and their student's achievement or learning outcomes on the other hand (Akuezilo, in Agim, 2015). At this point it is important to let teachers know the ethical issues in education. This will guide them to know what to do at any point in time, especially as it relates to the following:

- Respect to the uniqueness and diversity of students
- Their professional knowledge and practice



Honesty and integrity

Work in collaboration with colleagues, parents and guardians

Maintain trust in the professional relationship with students and family to maintain trust in the profession

These ethics and code of conduct if maintained by teachers can lead to the enhancement of their job performance in schools and the improvement of the academic performance of the students. The teacher is a crucial facilitator of knowledge acquisition, hence the students learn from their mannerism in speech, attitude, private and social life patterns etc. This is the rationale for discussing the ethics in the teaching profession. The code of ethics is meant to guide teachers behavior and job performance. The task of education is to guide the total growth and development of young people so that they will be functional, competent, well adjusted and sociable citizens of their communities. Ethics of the teaching profession are moral beliefs and rules about rights and wrong that influence teacher's behavior, attitude and ideals, (Agim, 2015).

The Significance of Ethics in the Teaching Profession

Yaqub (2014) stated that teaching and learning processes have their standards or prescriptions, which have shaped the teaching profession over the years. The teaching profession is actually not different from other professions in terms of ethical standards. All professions, indeed have defined ethics to guide the conduct of their members. To a large extent, the many professions that the human kind has evolved and have drawn their ethical codes from the societal ethical code of conduct. The codes of the professions may differ from one another to the extent that what each profession would have adapted as its ethical codes from the larger society would be regarded as suitable to its professional pursuit (especially with regards to promoting the unique features of the profession concerned). Again, because of the influence of society on both the development of the professions and their ethical standards, emphasis regarding how far to reward good or punish bad behaviors may be the distinguishing aspect to consider, rather than that of the larger societal ethics. In addition to these views, we may also need to stress another angle which is the fact that ethical codes for the professions are learnt as

Complements to those of the larger society, therefore the differences in the ethical code of the professions may not be all that very rigid and non-cross-cutting in their relationships. We may need to emphasize the point that various professions draw the strength of their professional ethics from one another as well, (Yaqub, 2014)

The Ethics of Effective Teaching and Productivity

It is not enough to go to class punctually and woefully being unable to teach. Teaching has two components and one aim to it. The components are the subject matter (content) and the method of transmitting it successfully (pedagogy). Both are sine qua non in the teaching and learn process. The teacher has had to acquire the knowledge of the subject he is going to teach before it could be transmitted. To this extent, the teacher must be well trained before and in the course of advancing their career. The process of transferring the acquired knowledge is the pedagogy. The ethical issues in both teaching and learning are different with the two processes, but are very well related organically. The two must work in tandem with one another to attain the common objective of effective teaching and learning. The modern conceptualization of learning comprehensively sees a learning situation as a process by which the pupils are active participant in the classroom (child centred learning). The teacher is in this instance assumed to be a facilitator.- If this is achieved the learner is highly motivated to engage in and accept shared responsibilities. In the process, their confidence will be boosted and what is learnt is not going to be assumed to have come from the teacher, where this ideal situation is dominant, it is likely that the ethics of learning will also fundamentally change for the better. The learners are not likely to cheat and be dishonest during examinations. Furthermore, they would not like to avoid taking responsibilities when made available or necessary and most importantly. They would strive to achieve the defined goals of learning (Yaqub, 2014).

Code of Conduct and Discipline of Teachers

According to Federal Ministry of Education (1990:2) "A code of conduct for teachers may be defined as a body of rules and regulations stipulating a particular form of behavior expected of teachers". Ethics are laid down rules of behavior and practice. They can be called code of conduct. These indeed are the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of the teaching profession. Some of the acceptable norms are honesty, loyalty, self-discipline, (for instance not smoking in the presence of students) and in public places, dressing neatly and decently to school, sexual comportment, no corporal punishment, punctuality etc. Agim (2015) stated that infringement of any article of the code of conduct shall attract punishment by the school management board in the case of the principal. Such punishment shall range from caution to dismissal depending on the seriousness of the offence after fair hearing to the offender. The school management board punishment includes:

Written caution

Suspensions on half pay (e.g. where court case is in progress).

With holding of increment

Withdrawal of salary

Reduction in rank

In the case of teachers found wanting the principal is permitted by law to give out the following punishments:

Oral caution

Written caution recorded in the log book

Sur charge (for absenteeism from school or such dereliction of duty)

Adverse annual report

Suspension from class with an immediate report to the relevant authority requesting ratification of the suspension and placement on half pay, pending appropriate action of the authorities.

Code of Conduct for Principals

The principal is the administrative and academic head of the school, he or she shall be a professionally trained teacher. According to the Nigeria teachers service manual (FRN, 1990:4), the principal as an administrator

- Shall maintain a pleasant personality, be approachable and courteous, in particular to parents and guardians.
- The principal shall be of exemplary character in honesty, moral and integrity
- He shall be firm, fair and consistent
- He shall involve his staff in the decision making process.
- He shall have cordial relations with all members of his staff and maintain transparent impartiality with them. This can be done by commending his staff for work well done and giving constructive criticism and advice when necessary. He shall be open minded and shall keep his staff aware of all information that may be of official interest to them.
- As the academic head of the school the principal shall give academic leadership to his staff, since the school is an academic community.
- The principal shall ensure that teachers attend classes regularly. He shall ensure that teacher's notes and records are properly checked.

The Principal and the Discipline of Student

The principal should be able to know his students and identify their problems where possible solve them. In boarding school he shall monitor meals provided to students through committees who supervise the kitchen.

He shall take care of the health and welfare of his students

When the principal notices any of the following disciplinary acts that infringe on the normalcy of the society which constitute indiscipline like the followings: Vandalism, rioting, hooliganism, stealing,



bullying, loitering, homosexual, fighting, assault, drug abuse, smoking, truancy, drunkenness, noise making, discrimination, suicide attempts, grumbling, wearing wrong uniform, gangsterism, insubordination and victimization he shall act without delay.

The principal, staff and students must be aware of the rules and regulations regarding punishment. The student should be allowed to accept to serve the given punishment willingly and should not make them do the punishment as one given out of vengeance, malice and hatred. Corporal punishment must be administered by the principal. If a teacher does, the principal takes up the responsibility of the teacher's action and inaction. (Emenalo, 2010).

Legality of Punishment

Emenalo (2010:223) said that punishment could be seen as an act of disciplining a child or training the child in the art of self-management. Because of greater enlightenment and consciousness of fundamental rights and due process. Punishments of any kind in the school are constantly being questioned. In view of this, principals and teachers have to be very careful to ensure that punishment meted to any student are done with reasonableness and within legal boundaries, punishment should be meted to students according to the nature and gravity of the offence committed by the student and the student must be made to know why he is being punished. What constitutes indiscipline varies from place to place but despite of this variation, there is still a generally acceptable value. Indiscipline may be viewed as acts or behaviors which are disruptive, corruptive and subversive that upset, infringes and counters social orderliness and expectation (Emenalo, 2013).

Standard to Consider when Administering Punishment

Three standards against which any form of punishment can be addressed have been set by Barrel cited by Emenalo 2013. These include:

1. Retributive: Offence committed should represent an expression of displeasure by the society.
2. Deterrents: Punishment should aim at preventing that person or any other from committing that offence in the future.
3. Reformative: The punishment should be corrective, an effort to make the offender a better person with acceptable behavior.

Conclusion

The quality of an institution cannot be greater than the quality of service of the people who staff it. The effectiveness of the school in achieving its objectives is largely dependent upon the professional competence of the principal. The role of the principal has continually changed from closely resembling the role of a teacher to that of a school leader. The major factors bringing about these accelerated changes could be attributed to the continuing evolution of the secondary school system, increasing urbanization, population growth, students and teachers actions to gain increased participation in the decision making process and the changing societal values. If the principal observes and maintains the above ethical behaviors and others as may have been acquired through his professional training, he will enjoy smooth running of the school. This in-turn will bring about conducive learning environment that will support academic Work.

Suggestions

From the foregoing, there is no doubt that acts of indiscipline in schools are enormous and so urgent measures or steps have to be taken to manage or discipline students in order to eliminate student undesirable behavior. This may involve adequate close supervision of students activities, organizing seminars for them, establishing cordial relationship with them by creating conducive atmosphere for learning, providing counseling service to them and the use of democratic leadership style to foster intimacy, belongingness, recognition, support and cooperation. This is necessary because most incidents of indiscipline occur because of the failure of teachers and principals to recognize and



solve the problems of students. A distressed student needs to be recognized and adequate steps be taken to correct or change those factors leading to the distressful state.

Further suggestions, any principal or teacher in the teaching profession who commits any of these offenses should be given appropriate punishment as the law stipulates.

- i. Dishonest conduct in relation to an examination (examination malpractice)
- ii. Immorality with a school pupil's/student
- iii. Misappropriation of school fund.
- iv. Suppression or falsification of school records or statistics
- v. Bribery, corruption or exploitation of children's services for personal gains.
- vi. Engaging in an illegal school either as a proprietor, headmaster or principal.
- vii. Engaging in any commercial activity or trades including hawking of any type during school hours.
- viii. Give corporal punishment to students despite ban on it.
- ix. Proven act of insubordination to immediate boss and consistent dereliction of duty.
- x. Found involved in any form of secret cult in or outside the school.

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