



EXPLORING THE PREVALENCE AND CONSEQUENCES OF ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN DELTA STATE



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Abstract

This study examined the prevalence and consequences of ethical issues in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. Two purposes and research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The estimated targeted population for this study consisted of 1, staff strength from two public teacher education institutions in Delta State. The breakdown of this population involves a total of 532 teaching and senior non-teaching staff of Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba; 510 teaching and senior non-teaching staff of COE, Warri, Delta State. Sample size of the study constituted a total of 521 teaching and senior non-teaching staff which included the Deans, Heads of Departments, Directors of units, lecturers and other senior administrative officers across the two public teacher education institutions, selected using the purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. Instrument for data collection was a 35-item closed-ended structured questionnaire designed by the researcher and titled: "Prevalence and Consequences of Ethical Issues in Administration of Teacher Education Institutions Questionnaire (PCEIATEIQ)". The questionnaire was structured on a 4-point rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A)– 3 points, Disagree (D)– 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point. Both validity and reliability of the questionnaire were established. Data collated were analyzed using mean statistics rated at 2.50 and standard deviation statistics. Findings of the study revealed among others that favouritism, ethnicity, tribalism, bribery, poor accountability, nepotism, mismanagement of funds, political interference, lack of transparency in procurement and resource allocation, sexual harassment, culture of silence around unethical behaviours, academic dishonesty, discriminations, delay in payment of staff honorarium, among others, were ethical issues prevalent in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. From these findings' recommendations were proffered and among them included that the regulatory agencies for teacher education institutions, that is, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should establish independent ethics committees to monitor, investigate, and address ethical violations and challenges promptly for effective administration of TEIs in Delta State.

Keywords: Ethical issues, Prevalence, Consequences, Administration, Teacher, Education, Institutions



Introduction

Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) are well-known for the training of pre-service and servicing teachers for the Nigerian education sector. They offer variations of sandwich, regular/full-time and part-time professional diploma, degree and postgraduate degree programmes in various courses and disciplines for the student-teachers in the Colleges of Education (COEs), National Teachers' Training Institute (NTI), School of Education in the Polytechnics, and Institute and Faculty of Education in the Universities, including their affiliations, among others. However, teacher education institutions (TEIs) serve a unique purpose and strategic role in sustainable national development of any nation, as they produce educators and teachers who shape the character and intellectual growth of future generations. Hence, the administration coupled with administrative practices within these TEIs must be grounded in ethical standards to ensure credibility and trust in the education system for their sustainable development (Obasi & Iheanacho, 2020). This requires that the activities, operations and actions of different personnel in the TEIs, among which includes the institutional leadership and management team, Deans and heads of departments, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students must be properly guided and abide by ethical standards and code of conducts of the institution. Ethical standards entail principles that when followed, promote values such as trust, good behaviour, fairness, and kindness and serve as guidelines for individuals to act responsibly in professional and social contexts (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks & Meyer, 2015). Ethical standards also refer to the codes of conduct or expectations that govern behavior within a particular profession, ensuring integrity, accountability, and respect for individuals and institutions (Cooper, 2012). Besides, ethics in educational administration simply refers to the application of moral principles and standards to leadership, decision-making and governance in educational institutions. Ethic in educational administration also deals with the act of doing what is right or wrong including conducts and principles guiding human actions in educational institutions. It involves honesty, fairness, integrity, respect for persons, and accountability in the use of institutional power (Okebukola, 2021). Administration, on the other hand can be described as the process of coordinating people and resources to achieve organizational goals through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling activities effectively and efficiently (Lussier & Achua, 2016).

Educational administration means the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of the activities related to education in order to effectively and efficiently achieve the objectives of educational institutions. Administration in education thus, involves executive functions of planning, coordinating, directing, reporting, controlling, organizing, harmonizing and monitoring activities in the school organization. It further involves the management of staff and utilization of resources in educational institutions. In teacher education institutions, ethical leadership plays a pivotal role in setting the tone for institutional culture and ensuring fairness in areas of administration such as personnel management, resource allocation, facilities management, institutional relationships with external bodies and student affairs (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2022). Ethical standards administration therefore, is a critical component of effective educational leadership, particularly, in teacher education institutions that are responsible for preparing future educators. It provides a foundation for trust among staff, students, and the wider community, and ensures that institutional goals are pursued with transparency and justice (Uche & Okoli, 2023). The integrity and accountability of administrators including other personnel in these institutions directly influence not only internal governance but also the quality of teacher preparation and ultimately, the sustainability of national development efforts (Okebukola, 2021). However, unethical practices such as favoritism, nepotism, forgery, certificate racketing, mismanagement of facilities, laziness and delay in discharge of responsibilities, bribery and misappropriation of funds can compromise the effectiveness of educational leadership likewise any other personnel in the institution; and damage institutional reputation (Olorunsola & Oyeade, 2021). The prevalence of ethical issues in Nigerian teacher education institutions has been widely acknowledged in recent years. Administrative malpractices such as biased staff recruitment, suppression of dissenting voices, and exploitation of power by top officials are frequently reported (Eze & Alutu, 2022). Eze and Alutu further lamented about the anecdotal ethical standards violations persisting within the management of colleges of education and faculties of education in universities, especially, at the

State level (Eze & Alutu, 2022). Such ethical standards violations may include biased recruitment practices, misappropriation of funds, intimidation of subordinates and inadequate mechanisms for accountability and redress. According to Uche and Okoli (2023), administrative favouritism and politicization of leadership appointments are major ethical concerns that erode staff morale and encourage institutional mediocrity. Furthermore, lack of effective internal monitoring structures often allows these unethical behaviours to persist without consequences. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2022) expressed that in recent years, concerns about unethical administrative practices such as issues of favouritism, tribalism and ethnicity, corruption, delay in payment of workers' salary including other honorarium, mismanagement of resources, impartiality in allocation responsibilities, forgery, poor accountability and lack of transparency, among others, have been increasingly raised in Nigeria's educational sector (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2022).

In Delta State, anecdotal and empirical evidence indicates a pattern of unethical conduct among administrators, especially, in the areas of procurement, staff promotion, and student admissions, among others (Obasi & Iheanacho, 2020). However, the situation of ethical standard issues and challenges prevailing in the administration of TEIs in Delta State is particularly concerning. While efforts have been made by government and regulatory bodies to promote transparency and quality assurance in higher education, teacher education institutions still grapple with ethical lapses that hinder their efficiency and effectiveness, therefore, making the attainment of quality almost impossible. According to Uche and Okoli (2023), these ethical challenges not only disrupt administrative functions but also negatively affect staff morale, hinder academic productivity, and weaken public confidence in the education system. If left unaddressed, these issues could undermine the capacity of teacher education institutions to contribute meaningfully to educational transformation and national development. Moreover, ethical issues in administration are not merely isolated organizational concerns, they carry significant consequences for the broader educational landscape. When unethical behaviour becomes normalized in teacher education institutions, it sends a dangerous signal to the pre-service teachers being trained in such environments, thereby, potentially perpetuating a culture of corruption and negligence in the school system (UNESCO, 2022). Furthermore, the consequences of unethical administration in teacher education institutions are far-reaching. First, it undermines the credibility and legitimacy of these institutions, both internally and externally. Staff and students lose trust in leadership, which can result in conflict, low morale, promotion of corrupt practices and high turnover rates (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2022). Second, the presence of ethical challenges compromises the quality of teaching and learning. When administrative decisions are not merit-based, unqualified personnel may be appointed to critical roles, leading to a decline in instructional quality and educational outcomes (Obasi & Iheanacho, 2020). Third, unethical administration affects the training and professional identity of pre-service teachers. Students who observe or experience administrative malpractice may internalize unethical behaviours, thereby, reproducing them in the school system after graduation (UNESCO, 2022). This creates a ripple effect that undermines national efforts toward sustainable national development, especially, in the education sector. From all the foregoing discussions, it therefore becomes imperative to explore the prevalence and consequences of these issues, with a focus on how they affect institutional operations and quality, staff performance, the training of future educators and institution's sustainable development. The rationale for this study is grounded in the need to empirically assess the ethical climate of teacher education institutions in Delta State and identifying the administrative challenges that may hinder their development goals. This study is however, anchored on Ethical Leadership Theory, which posits that leaders who act with integrity, fairness, and concern for others promote ethical behaviour within their organizations (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders are role models whose behaviour influences subordinates through both formal authority and interpersonal relationships. In educational institutions, ethical leadership encourages a culture of accountability, fairness, and inclusiveness, thereby minimizing unethical practices (Okebukola, 2021). Applying this theory to the administration of teacher education institutions provides a lens to assess how the conduct of administrative leaders influences the overall ethical climate and institutional performance.

Despite the availability of general literature on corruption and ethical lapses in Nigerian higher education, specific research focusing on teacher education institutions in Delta State remains limited. Several empirical studies have addressed ethical challenges in Nigerian higher education. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2022) found out that institutions with strong ethical policies recorded higher staff commitment and better academic outcomes. Similarly, Eze and Alutu (2022) identified a direct link between ethical leadership and institutional effectiveness in Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria. However, most existing research like those of Adeleke and Odebunmi (2021), Ewuim and Ekwe (2019), Oduwaiye (2014), Omoregie and Egbo (2020), and Okebukola (2018) has focused broadly on public universities or higher education institutions in other geopolitical zones, leaving a gap in localized data on ethical issues in teacher education institutions (TEIs) in Delta State. This study contributes to filling that empirical gap by focusing specifically on prevalence and consequences of ethical issues in administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State's. The study, therefore, sought to fill that gap by providing empirical insights that could inform ethical policy reforms, capacity building, and institutional accountability frameworks in Delta State teacher education sector.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher education institutions serve as foundational pillars in shaping the quality and integrity of the teaching profession, which is vital for sustainable national development of the country. The administration of these institutions is expected to reflect the highest ethical standards, given their role in producing morally upright and professionally competent teachers. However, there is growing concern over the erosion of ethical values in the administration of teacher education institutions across Nigeria, including, in Delta State. Reports of favouritism in staff recruitment and promotion, financial mismanagement, lack of transparency, abuse of power, mismanagement and lack of maintenance of facilities, misbehaviour, nepotism, forgery, sexual harassment from students and lecturers, malpractices of all sort, indiscipline, certificate racketing and poor accountability mechanisms have become increasingly common as reported in few studies (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2022; Eze & Alutu, 2022; Uche & Okoli, 2023). These ethical lapses not only compromise or undermines institutional credibility and internal harmony but also negatively impact the quality of training provided for recipients, administrative operations and morale of pre-service teachers. When the administrative environment is characterized by unethical practices, it sets a poor example for future educators, potentially perpetuating a cycle of corruption and professional misconduct in the education system. However, the prevalence of unethical standards and practices can lead to crisis in the administration of TEIs. Furthermore, ethical failures in administration may lead to reduced staff motivation, high turnover, strained stakeholder relationships, and a decline in academic productivity and innovation. Despite existing literature on ethical leadership and institutional governance in higher education, most studies focus broadly on universities or general public sector ethics. There is a noticeable scarcity of empirical research specifically examining the prevalence and consequences of ethical issues in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. This lack of localized evidence creates a critical gap in knowledge and undermines efforts to design targeted interventions that address the unique challenges faced by these institutions. This study is, therefore, designed to fill this gap by empirically exploring the nature, frequency, and consequences of ethical issues in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. It aimed to provide data-driven insights that will guide ethical reforms, strengthen institutional accountability, and ultimately support the goal of sustainable national development through effective administration of quality teacher education. Thus, the problem in which this present sought to address is to investigate and determine the prevalence and consequences of ethical issues in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence and consequences of ethical issues in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. Specific objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the prevalence of ethical issues in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State.
2. investigate the consequences of these ethical issues on the operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the ethical issues prevalent in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State?
2. What are the consequences of these ethical issues on the operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State?

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was deemed appropriate because the study sought to collect data from a sample of respondents to describe and interpret the current status of ethical issues in the administration of teacher education institutions without manipulating any variables. This design enabled the researcher to examine the prevalence and consequences of these ethical issues based on respondents' experiences and perceptions. The estimated targeted population for this study consisted of a total of 1,042 staff strength from two public teacher education institutions in Delta State. The breakdown of this population involves a total of 532 teaching and senior non-teaching staff of Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba; 510 teaching and senior non-teaching staff of COE, Warri, Delta State. The population further comprised all the administrators, academic staff and senior non-teaching staff from the two public teacher education institutions in Delta State. This included the Deans, Heads of Departments, Directors of units, lecturers and other senior administrative officers across the two public teacher education institutions. A total sample of 521 respondents consisting of 299 teaching and 222 senior non-teaching staff was selected using purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. First, purposive sampling was used to select 2 public teacher education institutions within Federal-Government owned institution and State-Government owned TEIs in Delta State. Then, stratified random sampling was used to select respondents across strata (Federal-Government owned institution and State-Government owned institution): 15 administrators, 299 academic staff and 207 senior non-teaching staff, ensuring a balanced representation.

The main instrument used for data collection was a 35-item closed-ended structured questionnaire designed by the researcher and titled: "Prevalence and Consequences of Ethical Issues in Administration of Teacher Education Institutions Questionnaire (PCEIATEIQ)". The questionnaire was structured on a 4-point rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A)– 3 points, Disagree (D)– 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point. Construction of the questionnaire was guided by the purpose of the study and research questions. The content and face validity of the instrument were ensured by presenting the drafted copy to three experts from the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences in Dennis Osadebay University, Delta State. Their feedback led to improvements in the clarity, structure and relevance of the questionnaire items before its final distribution to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha method to measure scores gotten from the pilot-test. Moreover, a pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents from three teacher education institutions not included in the main study. After the pilot test, the scores of 0.89 and 0.87 were calculated from the two clusters respectively using the Cronbach Alpha method and were summed up to give an overall reliability coefficient which was found to be 0.88, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The researcher, with the help of four research assistants, administered the questionnaires to respondents from the sampled public institutions adopting an on-the-spot, face-to-face and hand-delivery contact with the respondents. Respondents who were assured of confidentiality and

anonymity of their responses completed the questionnaire immediately on the spot and returned them back to the research assistants. Distribution of the questionnaire took a period of five working days and were also retrieved at a 100% rate of return. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer the research questions. An item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as agree (that is, prevalent or consequential), while an item below 2.50 was considered as disagree. Results were presented in frequency tables for clarity and interpretation.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the ethical issues prevalent in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean Scores and SD of Respondents concerning the Ethical Issues Prevalent in the Administration of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in Delta State
N = 521 Respondents (academic staff and senior non-teaching staff)

S/N	Please indicate your agreement concerning the ethical issues prevalent in the administration of your college using the rating scales provided	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decision
1.	Favoritism together with ethnicity, tribalism, bribery, is a common practice in admission, staff promotion likewise official appointments	25 7	22 2	30	12	3.39	0.70	Agree
2.	Poor accountability from higher officials alongside with lack of effective internal monitoring structures present in the institution	24 8	21 2	33	28	3.31	0.81	Agree
3.	Nepotism affects recruitment including employment processes in terms of hiring, or assignment decisions based on personal relationships rather than merit	26 6	19 9	40	16	3.37	0.76	Agree
4.	Mismanagement/misuse of institutional funds is prevalent	22 0	25 0	27	24	3.28	0.76	Agree
5.	There is lack of transparency in procurement likewise resource allocation	22 3	23 1	20	47	3.21	0.89	Agree
6.	Inadequate ethical oversight and policy enforcement as in connection with institutional ethical codes of conduct not enforced consistently or failure to implement them; including, lack of ethical training and weak internal control systems	21 7	26 6	14	24	3.30	0.73	Agree
7.	Political interference affects key administrative decisions	29 9	18 0	25	17	3.46	0.73	Agree
8.	There are reports of sexual harassment involving staff and students	18 7	27 3	39	22	3.20	0.75	Agree
9.	There is a culture of silence around unethical behaviours	27 1	20 3	20	27	3.38	0.79	Agree
10.	Demanding bribes for grades or favourable treatment	21 3	26 7	11	30	3.27	0.77	Agree
11.	Academic dishonesty including certificate racketeering such as tolerating or participating in plagiarism, falsification of records, or sale of certificates	21 8	27 5	18	10	3.35	0.64	Agree
12.	Exploitation in the form of abuse of authority by staff over students or subordinates	23 3	20 9	42	37	3.22	0.87	Agree
13.	Discrimination and unequal treatment based on gender, religion, ethnicity, or political affiliation, including marginalization of minority staff or students	20 7	21 4	36	64	3.08	0.98	Agree
14.	Infringement of academic freedom by punishing staff or students for expressing differing opinions; likewise, denial of promotions and limiting academic research or expression based on institutional bias	18 8	24 7	52	34	3.13	0.84	Agree
15.	Delay in payment of staff honorarium	21 5	25 1	15	40	3.23	0.83	Agree



Overall Mean Score & SD =

3.28 0.80 Agree

Analysis of data in Table 1 revealed that all the items from 1 - 15 were rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents (academic staff and senior non-teaching staff) to show that they agreed with all the statements. None of the items were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents to show that they disagreed with any of the statements. The grand mean of 3.28 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.80 indicates closeness in the responses of the respondents showcasing the ethical issues prevalent in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State.

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of these ethical issues on the operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean Scores and SD of Respondents concerning the Consequences of these Ethical Issues on the Operational Effectiveness, Quality of Teacher Education and Sustainable Development in the Administration of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in Delta State

N = 521 Respondents (academic staff and senior non-teaching staff)

S/N	Please indicate your agreement concerning the consequences of these ethical issues on the operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in your college using the same rating scales provided	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decision
16.	Ethical misconduct reduces staff morale, commitment likewise job satisfaction hindering the institution to produce confident, ethically grounded teachers capable of nurturing future generations	250	210	35	26	3.31	0.81	Agree
17.	Diminishes motivation among qualified staff, affecting dedication to academic excellence	213	246	15	47	3.20	0.87	Agree
18.	It leads to low quality of teacher training likewise poor student outcomes by producing underqualified teachers who lack the integrity to serve as role models	256	198	29	38	3.29	0.87	Agree
19.	Creates a workforce lacking the competence including ethics needed for national development	239	200	40	42	3.22	0.90	Agree
20.	Reduces competence in curriculum delivery and mentoring of student teachers	233	180	55	53	3.14	0.97	Agree
21.	Ethical violations result in loss of institutional credibility and integrity, negatively affecting the institution's ability to contribute to national development	277	165	21	58	3.27	0.97	Agree
22.	It discourages innovation likewise weakens institutional capacity, limiting long-term growth	244	144	85	48	3.12	0.99	Agree
23.	Undermines merit-based staffing, leading to low-performing personnel in key roles, thereby, cultivating a toxic environment that inhibits collaboration and trust	209	190	76	46	3.08	0.95	Agree
24.	Students may replicate unethical behaviours which weakens student discipline structures and affects their future professional lives	248	195	40	38	3.25	0.88	Agree
25.	Depletes financial resources meant for infrastructure, training, likewise, instructional materials; therefore, limiting access to modern teaching tools including facilities, affecting the learning experience	210	233	51	27	3.20	0.82	Agree
26.	Erodes public trust likewise derails government and donor investment in teacher education which hampers equal educational opportunity, contradicting principles of equitable growth	277	180	22	42	3.33	0.89	Agree
27.	Ethical issues disrupt the smooth running of academic and administrative activities, therefore, making the learning environment become hostile and discouraging for both students and staff	217	276	18	10	3.34	0.64	Agree



Analysis of data in Table 2 revealed that all the items from 16 - 35 were rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents (academic staff and senior non-teaching staff) to show that they agreed with all the statements. None of the items were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents to show that they disagreed with any of the statements. The grand mean of 3.24 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.88 indicates closeness in the responses of the respondents showcasing the consequences of these ethical issues on the operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State.

Findings of this study generally revealed that ethical violations were prevalence and widespread in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. However, these ethical violations had negative consequences on the operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. It was indicated through the findings of these study that the key ethical issues prevalent in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State include: favoritism, ethnicity and tribalism in staff promotion and official appointments, bribery in admission, poor accountability from higher officials alongside with lack of effective internal monitoring structures, nepotism in recruitment including employment processes in terms of hiring, promotion, or assignment decisions based on personal relationships rather than merit, mismanagement/misuse of institutional funds, lack of transparency in procurement and resource allocation, inadequate ethical oversight and policy enforcement in connection with institutional ethical codes of conduct, lack of ethical training and weak internal control systems, political interference affecting key administrative decisions, sexual harassment involving staff and students, culture of silence around unethical behaviours, demanding bribes for grades or favourable treatment, academic dishonesty including certificate racketeering such as tolerating or participating in plagiarism, falsification of records, or sale of certificates, exploitation in the form of abuse of authority by staff over students or subordinates, discrimination and unequal treatment based on gender, religion, ethnicity, or political affiliation, including marginalization of minority staff or students, infringement of

academic freedom by punishing staff or students for expressing differing opinions, including, denial of promotions and limiting academic research or expression based on institutional bias, and delay in payment of staff honorarium.

This finding agrees and corroborates with Eze and Alutu (2022) study which found out that administrative malpractices such as biased staff recruitment, suppression of dissenting voices, and exploitation of power by top officials are frequently reported. Eze and Alutu further confirmed that the anecdotal ethical standards violations persisting within the management of colleges of education and faculties of education in universities, especially, at the State level include: biased recruitment practices, misappropriation of funds, intimidation of subordinates and inadequate mechanisms for accountability and redress. The present study finding also relates and does not deviate from Uche and Okoli (2023) study which found out that administrative favouritism and politicization of leadership appointments are major ethical concerns that erode staff morale and encourage institutional mediocrity. Furthermore, lack of effective internal monitoring structures often allows these unethical behaviours to persist without consequences. Findings of Ajayi and Ekundayo (2022) study raised concerns about several unethical administrative practices such as issues of favouritism, tribalism and ethnicity, corruption, delay in payment of workers' salary including other honorarium, mismanagement of resources, impartiality in allocation responsibilities, forgery, poor accountability and lack of transparency, among others, have been increasingly raised in Nigeria's educational sector (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2022). The present study finding concurs with Oduwaiye (2014) study which indicated that ethical erosion in Nigerian universities undermined meritocracy and fuels systemic inefficiencies. Similarly, Omoregie and Egbo (2020) study found out that administrators' unethical behaviour compromised institutional goals and erodes public confidence in teacher education programmes. The presence of sexual harassment, culture of silence around unethical behaviours or lack of whistleblower protection as uncovered in the present study also aligns with Ewuim and Ekwe (2019) study which found out that a culture of silence perpetuates unethical practices in public institutions due to fear of retaliation. All these ethical issues plunging the administration of TEIs, also have grievous consequences on the growth and sustainability of these institutions.

On the consequences, the finding indicated that these ethical issues had grievous repercussions on the operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State; and they include: reduces staff morale, commitment and job satisfaction thereby, hindering the institution to produce confident, ethically grounded teachers capable of nurturing future generations, diminishes motivation among qualified staff, affecting dedication to academic excellence, leads to low quality of teacher training and poor student outcomes by producing underqualified teachers who lack the integrity to serve as role models, creates a workforce lacking the competence including ethics needed for national development, reduces competence in curriculum delivery and mentoring of student teachers, loss of institutional credibility and integrity, which negatively affects the institution's ability to contribute to national development, discourages innovation and weakens institutional capacity, limiting long-term growth, undermines merit-based staffing, leading to low-performing personnel in key roles, thereby, cultivating a toxic environment that inhibits collaboration and trust, students may replicate unethical behaviours which weakens student discipline structures and affects their future professional lives, depletes financial resources meant for infrastructure, training, likewise, instructional materials; therefore, limiting access to modern teaching tools including facilities, affecting the learning experience, erodes public trust likewise derails government and donor investment in teacher education which hampers equal educational opportunity, contradicting principles of equitable growth, disrupt the smooth running of academic and administrative activities, therefore, making the learning environment become hostile and discouraging for both students and staff, reduces competitiveness of teacher education institutions in driving educational innovation, discourages talented individuals from joining or remaining in the system which interrupts academic performance, especially, for victims, and leads to dropout or demotivation, staff and students in such situation, are often reluctant to report unethical practices, therefore, creating a culture of impunity which allows repeated misconduct and systemic inefficiencies,

results into internal conflicts among institutional stakeholders due to perceived injustice and inequality, marginalizes qualified staff and students, leading to underutilization of talents, restricting progressive ideas that can inform educational reforms and policies, hinders sustainable institutional reforms and disrupts accountability in practices, assessment and supervision, diminishes institution's leadership fairness in decision-making processes including efficiency in educational planning and implementation which reduces confidence in institutional governance, and limits creativity, research, and critical thinking among academic staff which breeds low compliance with institutional goals. This finding supports Okebukola (2018) study which found out that ethics-driven administration is key to improving teacher education quality and achieving sustainable development. Furthermore, the findings of most previous studies have reinforced the concern that students exposed to unethical systems may adopt such norms in their future classrooms, which is a concern also confirmed by Adeleke and Odebunmi (2021) in their research on value-based education. The present study finding aligns and agrees with Uche and Okoli (2023) study which confirmed that ethical challenges not only disrupt administrative functions but also negatively affect staff morale, hinder academic productivity, and weaken public confidence in the education system. If left unaddressed, these issues could undermine the capacity of teacher education institutions to contribute meaningfully to educational transformation and national development. Moreover, ethical issues in administration are not merely isolated organizational concerns, they carry significant consequences for the broader educational landscape. When unethical behaviour becomes normalized in teacher education institutions, it sends a dangerous signal to the pre-service teachers being trained in such environments, thereby, potentially perpetuating a culture of corruption and negligence in the school system. Unethical administration affects the training and professional identity of pre-service teachers. Students who observe or experience administrative malpractice may internalize unethical behaviours, thereby, reproducing them in the school system after graduation (UNESCO, 2022). The present study finding corroborates with the findings of Ajayi and Ekundayo (2022) study which discovered that the consequences of unethical administration in teacher education institutions are far-reaching because they undermine the credibility and legitimacy of these institutions, both internally and externally. Staff and students lose trust in leadership, which can result in conflict, low morale, promotion of corrupt practices and high turnover rates, among other findings. Therefore, it is important to curb these ethical issues in order to prevent its consequences on operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State.

Conclusion

This study established that ethical issues such as favouritism, ethnicity, tribalism, bribery, poor accountability, nepotism, mismanagement of funds, political interference, lack of transparency in procurement and resource allocation, sexual harassment, culture of silence around unethical behaviours, academic dishonesty, discriminations, delay in payment of staff honorarium, among others, are prevalent in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. These unethical practices have serious and grievous consequences on operational effectiveness, quality of teacher education and sustainable development in the administration of teacher education institutions in Delta State. These consequences reduced staff morale, diminished training quality, strained stakeholder relationships, a decline in academic productivity and innovation, institutional mistrust and a potential negative influence on future educators' ethical standards, among many others. These findings underscore the urgent need for policy-driven ethical reform to safeguard the credibility, functionality and developmental goals of teacher education in Delta State and beyond. Without addressing these ethical challenges, the teacher education institutions may fail in their mandate to produce morally sound and professionally competent teachers who can drive sustainable national development in the country. Thus, the recommendations made below.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the following recommendations were proffered:



1. The regulatory agencies for teacher education institutions, that is, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should establish independent ethics committees to monitor, investigate and address ethical violations and challenges promptly for effective administration of TEIs in Delta State. These bodies must have the autonomy to enforce rules and ensure accountability and transparency without political interference. Also, institutions should implement confidential and secure whistleblower systems, with strong legal and institutional backing, to encourage the reporting of unethical practices. This will help expose hidden misconduct and deter potential violators.
2. Continuous professional development programmes organized through workshops and seminars on institutional ethics should be mandatory for all administrative and academic staff in teacher education institutions in Delta State. These programmes should focus on integrity, transparency, work performance and accountability, reinforcing ethical behaviour across all levels, so as to ward off the consequences of these ethical issues in the administration of TEIs in the State.

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