

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN SCHOOL FUNDING, MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

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Abstract

This paper examined professional ethics in school with focus on funding, management and supervision. The paper discussed professional ethics and its importance in education, school funding, school management as well as school supervision. It also describe the need for professional ethics in school funding, school management and school supervision as well as the ways of ensuring professional ethics in school funding. Since professional ethics serves as a guide to the conduct of activities by teachers, educational managers and supervisors, the consequences of non-compliance to professional ethics were also discussed to serve as pointer to administrators. The paper concluded that because professional ethics enhances quality in education, the government, educators and other stakeholders should work together to ensure maintenance of ethical standard in the education sector. It is suggested among others, that government should institutionalize a policy guideline for ethical standard as well as strengthen monitoring and evaluation system.

Keywords: Ethics, Professional Ethics, Funding, Management, Supervision.

Introduction

Education provide the basis for societal growth and development as well as promote interpersonal and organizational relationship. It improves the quality of individuals, social and moral behaviours as well as the understanding of themselves for societal benefits. Every society anchors its

development on its moral standard, behaviour and ways of thinking. This helps in shaping the life-style of the people within ensuring respect, mutual understanding, distinction between rights and wrong, in line with the culture and tradition as well as laid down principles and frameworks that guide the people, organization or professions. An organisations principle and practice tailored towards human behavior and conduct provides a standard for ethical reference for such organization. According to Unobunjo (2022) ethics is about behavior and ways of thinking, especially in situations where our choice can affect the dignity and well-beings of others.

The school is a place for teaching and learning as well as other educational activities is associate with social progress which are made manifest by the teachers. The basic purpose of education is to create skills and knowledge along with awareness and consciousness of our glorious natural heritage and the achievements of human civilization, possessing a basic scientific outlook and commitment to the ideals of patriotism, democracy, secularism, socialism and peace (Deepshikha & Ashok, 2020). Teachers and managers of schools are expected to produce leaders in all areas of endeavor as provided by educational policies and programmes inline with ethics of the profession.

Every profession including teaching have their set ethical guidelines and principles that provide its members with morals, attitudes and sense of responsibilities required to exhibit toward the performance of work which is aimed at the achievement of the goals and objectives of the profession. It is a professional pathway that regulate, control and enhance professional behavior of members. Kolo (2014) in Unobunjo (2022) saw ethics as accepted principles of right or wrong that govern the conduct of a person, the members of a profession or the action of an organization. Professional code of ethics is a guiding principle aimed at assisting the conduct of professional to work with zeal, dedication, honesty and integrity. Professional ethics is that which encapsulate all that a professional should implement to enhance better working environment anchored on the principles of integrity, fairness, transparency, and accountability. Professionals are expected to follow the principles and practice of their profession to fulfil the aims and objectives.

The school is an institution for teaching, learning and other extra-curricular activities with various departments or sub-units with each performing specific functions towards the overall achievement of the goals and objectives of the system. These delegation of duties or assignment are done based on expertise or profession with specific or different professional code of ethics. For instance, the teachers' professional code of ethics is designed to help students to learn the academic basics, as well as teach valuable life lessons by setting positive example; ensuring students safety, giving fair treatment to students etc. Other sub-units of the larger school system also has their specific professional code of conduct specifying the guidelines of carrying out the professional responsibilities. This paper seek to examine how ethical practices influence school funding, management, and supervision ethics in education system provide building-trust among educational stakeholders which include the students, parents, educators, and government.

Conceptual Clarification

Ethics

Ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethos* and is the same with “moral” because the Latin word *Mores*, from which *Moral* is derived represents the Greek word *ethos*. They both mean “Customs, ways of life or habits”. Ethics refers to moral principles, values, and rules that regulate the conduct of individual, group or community. Moral, on the other hand, concerns the distinction between good and bad, fair and unfair, praiseworthy and blame worthy or right and wrong.

Ethics concerns the morality of the conduct and actions of humans. It deals with doing things the way it ought to be, behaving in the right way, and help people to do what is right, and deciding between what is good and wrong. Ethics as a discipline deals with study of what is good and bad, right and wrong and with moral duty and obligation. It is crucial because it sets the standard of the rules and customs that a particular profession requires in carrying out its professional assignments or duties. According to Unobunjo (2022), ethical issues are the set of customary principles and practices embodying some sort of normative code to adhere to them differently. Ethical code is crucial in the school system as it enables school administrators to make ethical decisions as well act rightly. Ensuring ethical code and standard in carrying out responsibilities in any profession enhance building of trust among stakeholders of that profession. Thus a school administrator who is ethically behaved will earn the support and respect of all employees. Ethics is connected to specific expectations that society has for professionals in professional settings such as code of ethics (Deepshikha & Ashok, 2020).

Professional Ethics

Every profession has a way it conducts its affairs based on laid down procedures or guiding principles which ensure that things are done rightly. Professional ethics standards highlight the improvements to be made in a profession to contribute to progress of the organization. Every profession has its peculiar ethical code that guides their conduct. It is, however, required of every professional to demonstrate certain qualities such as integrity, loyalty, truthfulness, sincerity and commitment. The main purpose of education is the creation of skill and knowledge in conjunction with awareness and consciousness of national heritage and the achievement of civilization for growth and sustainable development. Teachers as the driving force of education have their professional code of ethics that is purposely designed to keep teachers on the track of professionalism. As role models, it is important for teachers to keep abreast with their work ethics and core values before taking up the profession because teachers have a greater role to play in the teaching and learning process.

This requires that teachers should be active in recognizing that, every child has a fundamental right to education of good quality; education should be directed to the all round development of

human personality; community respect and support for the teachers are dependent on the teachers' professionalism, and the need for self-discipline and self-direction among members of teaching community. Above all, teachers should demonstrate integrity, impartiality and ethical behavior in the classroom and in their conduct with parents and co-workers (National Council for teacher education, 2009). Summarily put, professional code of ethics plays an important role in shaping the teachers' behavior and personality. When teachers follow their code of ethics diligently, it does not only enhance efficiency and effectiveness in teaching, it also enhances the development of the school, the learners, community and the nation.

According to Davidson and Rock (2014), professional ethics encompass individual conduct or behaviour and practice while carrying out professional duties. Hence, professional practices should go in line with articulated ethical code of the profession which establish the culture to which such profession must operate. To ensure professional ethics in practice, professionals should ensure the following:

- **Commitment to work:** Ensuring commitment to the job of a profession is one of the important things expected of a professional is wholesome compliance and obedience to work ethics required for the growth of the profession. Every professional is expected to meet up the standard of operations of the profession by being punctual, regular, honest, active, and respectful.
- **Continuous Professional Development:** Every profession, especially education, requires attentiveness to continuous education as a requirement for career growth and development. Hence, it is appropriate for professionals to indulge in research, attend conferences, seminars, workshops and consult colleagues (mentor's) to maintain professional relevance as this will provide insight on current trends and global challenges in the profession. A professional who has the opportunity to learn regularly, reflect and apply same can best provide the same ethical skills professionally. According to Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz (2015), teacher continuing professional development refers to teachers learning, learning how to learn, and transferring the knowledge into practice for the benefit of students' educational achievement. Thus, teachers and other professionals must involve in everyday learning to up their game in the profession.
- **Cordial Relationships:** Professionals should foster healthy relationships between colleagues and others. There should be respect for each other as well as positive attitude and mindset. Gossip, including false comments about co-professionals should be avoided. One must not disclose colleagues' private information except authorized.

School Funding

School funding refers to the money or financial resources allocated to schools to support their operations, programs, instructional materials, and infrastructure. School funding directly influence educational opportunities and outcomes as it is one of the determinant factor in the quality of education, teacher salaries, classroom resources, building and maintenance of infrastructure, and other extra-curricular activities. Fund is therefore an important element in the provision of human and material resources in the implementation of education programmes (Nwiku, 2024).

Funding in school drives the implementation of school policies and programmes. Without proper funding of schools, all the educational goals and objectives as enshrine in the National Policy on Education cannot be achieved. Therefore, the school require adequate funding to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency in delivering set goals and objectives. For education to be properly funded, it is expected to meet up the 26% UNESCO requirement of a nations annual budgetary allocations. Regrettably, the Nigerian budgetary allocation to education for over a decade now has been between 10% to 5% of its annual budget which is weigh below UNESCO recommendation. One could therefore imagine how well our educational system could enjoy stability in growth and development in the face of dwindling financial allocation.

When schools are adequately funded, it create positive environment for teaching and learning, enhance hiring of quality teachers and payment of their salaries, provision of textbook, learning material as well as other educational activities.

Inadequate funding of schools has been a major problem in education. Ibara (2021) noted that, Nigeria has had unsteady economy since 1976 which resulted to inadequate financial resources to grapple with educational problems for sometimes now which has hampered current and existing policies and plans of government as well as rendering policy planners handicapped thereby hindering the projection of educational thoughts far into the future. The education sector in Nigeria had witnessed a funding pattern that has been inconsistent, fluctuating, and epileptic over the years.

The inability of the government to provide the needed funding for education, on the one part, continue to be a set back to the successful management of its programmes and policies, while on the other part, poor management of the resources allocated by the managers by way of misappropriation, mismanagement and diversion also affect the smooth and successful implementation of school policies and programmes.

Funds for education comes through various government revenues such as taxes, federation account appropriated for education, grants, interventions; international donations from UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank; Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs); School Fees, Levies, School Farms etc; Alumni Donations, PTA membership due; and Community Voluntary Donations, Sponsors of Project/ Scholarships.

School Management

The term ‘management’ is important to individual, groups and organization. It is used in daily, termly or yearly affairs of individual or groups. The application of management may be different based on the organizational setting yet all are geared towards the achievement of the organisations common goals. It is the process of bringing people or individuals together with the sole aim of achieving desired goals or objectives. Management includes planning, organizing, directing, staffing, controlling and coordinating.

Yalokwu (2002) in Jor (2020) defines management as a systematic process of planning, organizing, co-ordinating and controlling effectively, the available human and natural resources to achieve the desired outcome in the quickest and most optimum level. In the modern organized context, management is viewed either as an art or science of a social process, which is designed to ensure the co-operation, participation and involvement in the effective achievement of a given objective (Jor, 2020). School management could therefore be seen as a systematic process of harnessing human and material resource towards the achievement of school goals and objectives through planning, coordination, budgeting, control and evaluation. The management of school involves human and material resources. The human resources are teaching and non-teaching staff, while the material resources are finance, infrastructure, instructional material, vehicles etc.

Proper school management enhance quality of education; optimum use of resources, professional growth, efficiency and improvement; and multidisciplinary management approach; centralized decision making etc.

Poor school management will ultimately affect the proper functioning of the school as both human and material resources will not be in good shape rendering the objectives of the school unachievable.

School Supervision

Supervision in itself could be regarded as a profession because it require professional expertise to a great extent. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014) highlighted in precise terms the objectives of educational supervision which include “ensuring quality control through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instructional and other educational services. Hence, from the ongoing, supervision is seen as very necessary and important in education. The focal of supervision is to stimulate, guide, oversee and appraise all factors that will lead to improved teacher’s performance for optimal educational outcome (Udeozor, 2003). Teachers’ efficiency and effectiveness are results of intense, conscious and effective supervision which is aimed at enhancing productivity.

Abraham (2013) saw supervision in its broad sense as that which is geared towards helping teachers attain proficiency and confidence in the teaching task with the aim of improving on instruction delivery for the achievement of educational goals. Hence, supervision should be seen as growth oriented, that which is to stimulate teacher's professional capacity and competence for instructional effectiveness. Supervision is one of the panacea for quality education. Supervision is perceived by Robert-Okah (2014) as a way of advising, guiding, refreshing, encouraging, stimulating, improving and overseeing certain groups with the hope of seeking their cooperation in order for the supervisor to become successful in their tasks. Teachers cooperation is key to an effective and successful supervision that will dissuade the teachers from applying wrong procedures while carrying out their functions and as well enhance positive correction.

School supervision involves both the supervision of human and material resources. It is therefore categorized as instructional supervision and personnel supervision.

Instructional supervision involves the set of activities that are carried out with the purpose of making teaching and learning better for the learner, while

Personnel supervision deals with the sole aim of sensitizing, mobilizing and motivating school staff towards performing their duties optimally with regards to achieve educational objectives (Nwankwo, 1999).

School supervision is the process of harmonizing both human and material resources by school management through stimulation, persuasion, guiding and corrections in order to achieve productivity without undue victimization or punishment. It also involve the continuous examination of instructional goals as well as performance assessment. School supervision is an indispensable task for school administrators in ensuring a good school system because outside the role of ensuring the provision for effective teaching, the supervision of instruction going on in the class must also be undertaken. The purposes of school supervision are:

1. To ensure that teachers perform their duties effectively.
2. To promote and develop favourable condition for teaching and learning.
3. To help teachers improvement in their status skills and knowledge.
4. To motivate and encourage the teachers to develop healthy attitude towards work etc. (Olorode & Adeyemo, 2012).

In order to achieve efficient and effective school supervision, the supervisors must possess good qualities and characteristics which include:

1. Must be understanding and committed.

2. Must be an organizer
3. Must be intelligent
4. Must be educationally sound with professional experience
5. Must be fair and friendly, but firm etc. (Abraham, 2013).

Need for Professional Ethics in School Funding

Ethical considerations in school funding include the following:

1. **Equity and Equality in Resource Allocation:** The issues of inadequate funding and resource allocation has been a serious concern to education. The allocation of funds and resources should be fairly distributed across socio-economic divides devoid of favouritism. There is the need for equal access to educational funding and resources.
2. **Transparency in Budgeting and Expenditures:** The Nigerian budgeting process has of recent been characterised by budget padding which is the practice of adding unnecessary or exaggerated amounts to a budget to make it appear that more money is needed than actually required. It is often done for dishonest, manipulative, or strategic reasons which are unethical. To ensure professional ethics there should be open disclosure of how funds are allocated and spent.
3. **Ethical Challenges:** Funds for schools are often mismanaged and misappropriated due to political influence and corruption. In most cases funds are often disbursed or released late and in piece meal. All these poses serious challenge to educational funding and should be discouraged since they are unethical.

Ways of Ensuring Professional Ethics in School Funding

1. There should be independent auditing of the funds meant for education.
2. Stakeholders should be involved in the budgeting process.
3. Government should ensure there are clear policies and guidelines for funding in education.

Professional Ethics in School Management

The school requires the following professional ethics in its management:

1. **Leadership and Ethical Decision-Making:** School management should ensure that in taking decisions as leaders, it should reflect the fact that they are role models and should demonstrate ethical behaviour so that others will emulate and follow.
2. **Transparency in Staff Recruitment and Appraisal:** School managers should ensure that the process of hiring staff should be transparent devoid of favouritism. Also the process of evaluation should be merit-based without undue concession.
3. **Financial Management Ethics:** In managing of school finances, the administrator should ensure that it is done responsibly in line with the specifics of allocation. Also the manager should deliberately avoid conflict of interest while managing finances to avoid misappropriation and diversion of funds that was originally allocated for a certain project to another.
4. **Creating a Culture that will be Ethical Compliance:** The school manager should ensure that there are organisational culture that is ethically driven is created to provide a code of conduct that will guide the conduct of staff within the school. Again, the management should ensure there should be regular and continuous staff professional development on ethical conduct.

Professional Ethics in School Supervision

Ethical conduct in school supervision is a requisite for quality education. Hence the following are important in ensuring professional ethics in school supervision.

1. **The Role of Supervisors:** This is important in supervision process. The supervisor should ensure quality education through ethical oversight; maintain good relationship between teachers, colleagues, staff members, and members of the public.
2. **Unbiased Evaluation:** The supervisor should be objective in the assessments of the performance of school as personnel. The supervisor should be honest, consistent and reliable during evaluation.
3. **Confidentiality and Respect:** The supervisor in ensuring ethical conduct must be ethical in handling sensitive information. He must not disclose such information to even a close friend, except it is authorised by law to do so.
4. **Ethical Decision of Choice:** The supervisor, while taking decision in dilemma, should ensure a balance authority with fairness. That is to say that the supervisor should use powers of the office to make decisions firmly and confidently, while also being just, impartial, and respectful of others. Also, the supervisor must ensure the issue of

underperformance is ethically dealt with. Hence, the supervisor must be fair and friendly, but firm.

Effects of Professional Ethical Lapses on School

Non-compliance to professional ethics in school has the following consequences:

- a. **Poor Quality of Education:** This is as a result of the negative impact on teacher and student thereby resulting in poor learning outcome.
- b. **Loss of Public Trust:** Because of unprofessional conduct, the trust the public had on the school will be lost.
- c. **Legal or Disciplinary Actions:** The inability to conduct affairs ethically will lead to legal tussle. For instance, if a teacher who is supposed to act as guidance and role model to a student is caught in sexual molestation with a female student, such teacher will be made to face legal issues and possible disciplinary action. Or a teacher is found in financial mismanagement and corruption, such teacher will be prosecuted accordingly, inline with the provisions of the law.
- d. **Institutional Reputational Damage:** Unethical conduct will have adverse effect on the schools image and the belief or opinion about the school. People will perceive that the school is not morally fit for students.

Conclusion

Professional ethics in school is key to achieving quality education. It provide the basis on which teachers and other educational stakeholders conduct the affairs of education. In order to ensure and uphold continuous professional ethical standard in education, there is the need for collaborative efforts and actions by government, educators, communities, and stakeholders. Education is key to national growth and development, thus maintaining ethical conduct in education will rejig national growth and development.

Suggestions

1. Government should ensure that there is a policy guideline for ethical standard which should be institutionalized.
2. Government should ensure that the monitoring and evaluation system is strengthened.
3. There should be community participating in school ethical process.

4. School administrators, supervisors as well as teachers should undergo continuous ethical professional development to keep them abreast with professional ethic and code of conduct.

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