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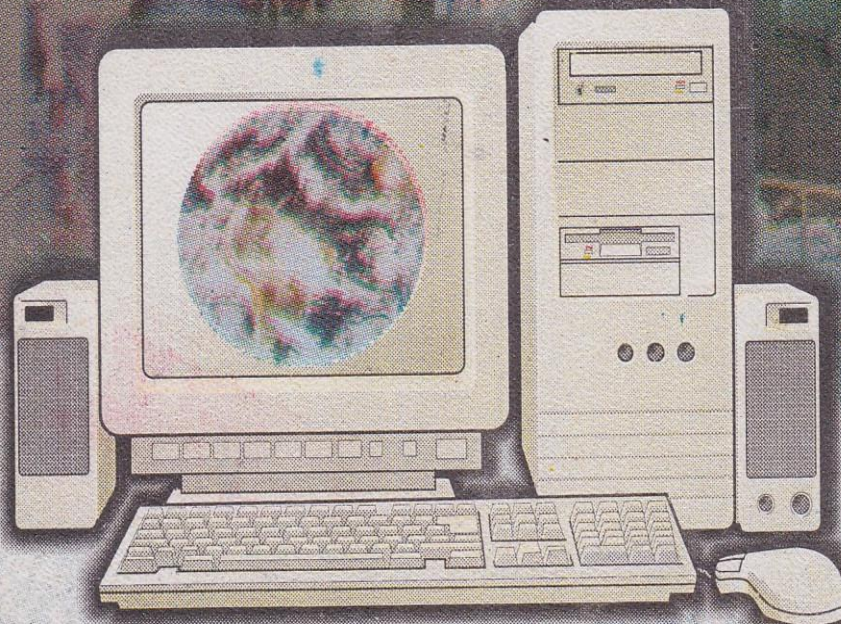
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# RECREATING TEACHER EDUCATION FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVITY: THE ETHICAL AND ATTITUDINAL PERSPECTIVE

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## **Abstract**

Effectiveness of every educational system globally is dependent on the competence, effectiveness, efficiency and devotion to work by its teaching force. Teaching requires professional competencies and skills to satisfactorily be effective on the job. In addition to the competencies required in the field of teaching, there is also the need to embrace and practice the ethical codes associated with the teaching profession. This paper upholds that teaching like every other professional field, has established code of ethics. The paper reveals that there are cases of professional misconducts recorded among teachers in schools which have impaired educational growth and productivity. Teachers go to school late, some often absent themselves from school without reason, there is evidence of teachers aiding and abetting examination malpractice, sexual immorality and illegal collection of fees and admission irregularities. There is also general low attitude to work by teachers. These issues are of ethical concern to school administrators, government and the general public. Consequently, it is recommended that government intensifies efforts in the value orientation for teachers. This would be achieved through the reflection of ethical issues in national conferences and seminars for teachers. Again, teaching should be fully professionalized with only those who possess teaching qualification employed in the job. This way, the best caliber of teachers will be groomed for effectiveness and productivity.

## **Introduction**

The contemporary issues of effectiveness, productivity and quality services delivery should be of great concern to every right thinking citizen of Nigeria. That the country is experiencing a decline in the standard of education is an assertion that may not be unconnected with the haphazard and ineffective manner in which teachers discharge their duties.

The above concerns stem from the fact that the quality of education in a particular country is a determining factor in the pursuit for a sustainable national development. The quality of teachers and their disposition to work to a greater extent has implication for the quality of education obtainable. That the quality of education is dwindling or has fallen is judged based on the level of attainment of set educational objectives and goals as obtained in the national policy on education. But set educational objectives can only be achieved on the platform of effective teaching which informs productivity.

An effective teaching therefore is one that results in the students learning maximally what is taught them. To be able to do this, the teacher must identify the needs of his or her students and then prepare the materials or learning experiences that best match their needs. The implication here is that; the preparation, the strategies and the medium through which the learning experiences are communicated must be compatible with the needs of the learners. It is in this regard that one can say that teaching is effective.

Regrettably today in Nigeria, teaching cannot be said to be effective due to observable unpatriotic, unprofessional and unethical actions and inactions commonly exhibited by teachers.

Teaching like every other profession has a code of ethics which prescribes the values by which teachers should live and operate.

There are prescribed rules of conduct which those in the teaching profession are expected to adhere strictly to and organize their behavioural dispositions around those ethics. The teaching ethics or code of conduct although it emphasizes on the nature of the relationship between the practitioner and the employers, it is

more emphatic on the nature of relationship between the teachers and their clients. Other areas of teaching ethics border on teachers' relationship with parents, the community and professional colleagues. In a general analysis, the code determines *the* commitment of the teacher to the teaching profession (Mkpa, 1990). The code of ethics is a guide to teachers on the general and specific conduct of their professional duties.

Teaching profession is interesting even where the salary and other conditions of service are less promising. For one to find the teaching career interesting and satisfying, he or she must possess or acquire certain basic competencies. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized here that the possession of the needed competencies is not an end in itself but as one of the pre-requisites to a successful career in teaching. Gorton, (1983) drew attention to the fact that if a person is to be successful in his chosen career, such an individual needs a set of ethical standards for guidance or direction in the appropriate competences. Without such standards, the author stressed further that the individual's competencies may be misused or misdirected, and the school will not achieve its goals and objectives.

The views being expressed in the foregoing is that adherence to professional ethical codes can contribute positively towards recreating teacher education for effectiveness and productivity. Teachers must not only recognize these ethical standards but must also conduct their pedagogical, emotional and social activities in line with their professional ethics.

What are these ethical standards? To what extent are teachers aware of their existence? What practices violate these standards and by what ways can we improve ethical adherence among teachers in schools? These are pertinent issues of ethical concerns to be addressed in this paper. It is assured that by providing answers to these questions, teachers

would be assisted to improve upon their professional expectations and competencies for effectiveness and productivity.

### **Ethics of the Teaching Profession in Nigeria**

The behaviours and conduct of teachers must conform to the stipulations of the Nigerian constitution, the State laws, rules and regulations of the School Management Board and standards set by the teachers' professional body. The general code of conduct for the public servants in Nigeria are clearly outlined in the fifth schedule, part 1, paragraph 1-11 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Besides the code of conduct being spelt out in the constitution, it is necessary that every prospective teacher should become well informed of the code of ethics of the teaching profession.

*The Nigerian Union of Teachers (N.U.T) was founded on 8th July, 1931. As a professional organization, the N.U.T has developed and established for its members a code of ethics. This code, which consists of the basic rules of conduct has been divided into five major areas or principles as explained by Peretomode, (1992) as follows:*

**Principle i :** *Commitment to the students: This entails preparing and developing the Nigerian child to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs that would help him become useful to himself and his society. Teachers by their professional ethics need to show love, respect and tolerance to the children entrusted into their care. They need to attend to students' problems as well as recognize their individual abilities.*

**Principle ii:** *Commitment to the parents: Parents see the school as the last resort for behavioural*

*modification of their children. They have confidence in teachers' ability to shape their children into acceptable personalities. Consequently, teachers need to articulate the desires of parent, establish good rapport and provide enabling environment and equal opportunity for children to learn.*

**Principle iii:** *Commitment to the community: the community is the life blood of the existence of the school. In fact, schools exist for the benefit of the community. For schools to maintain its relevance, it must address itself to the needs of the community which established it.*

**Principle iv:** *Commitment to the employer: Teachers must work in accordance with the laid down rules and regulations of their employers as well as ensure mutual employee-employer relationship. Every stipulations or condition of employment or contract of employment should be strictly adhered to.*

**Principle v:** *Commitment to the profession: this entails making the profession attractive so as to attract people into the profession as well as supporting the activities of the body. (p. 86).*

### **Unethical Practices in Teaching Profession**

There are numerous practices in schools at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels which violate ethical standards. These unethical practices can otherwise be referred to as infractions. According to the Federal Ministry of

Education (1990). Infractions by teachers border mainly on the following areas:-

- Lateness to school and assemblies
- Interval absenteeism from school
- Lateness to the classroom for teaching
- Failure to prepare lesson notes
- Failure to make use of chalkboard in teaching
- Examination malpractices (aiding or abetting)
- Indulging in behaviours that tend to degrade the personality of a student, e.g, hair cutting as punishment, cutting shirt to size etc
- Failure to perform duty as housemaster, not keeping appropriate house records.
- Contributing to delinquency of a minor
- Deliberate negligence of duty
- Beating or punishing students in disregard to rules and regulations for punishment
- Stealing of school property e.g. stencils, stationery type writer, stop watches, microscope etc.
- Fighting with colleagues or students
- Rudeness or insubordination to the principal or his representative.
- Corruption or fraudulent practices e.g. collecting illegal dues from students, embezzlement of school fees/funds, e.t.c.
- Failure to keep records of tests and examinations
- Failure to mark class register -as form teachers.
- Aiding students in destabilizing the peace and unity of the school.
- Forgery of certificates and other personal documents, giving false information.
- Engaging in activities or crimes that will jeopardized or bring disrepute to the teaching profession or the school.

- Drinking alcohol while on duty or getting intoxicated in school.
- Sleeping while on duty
- Leaking official and confidential documents to unauthorized persons
- Drug addiction.
- Religious fanaticism
- Male teacher flogging female students on the buttocks
- Going home before the official closing hour.
- Falsification of accounts
- Forging of transfer certificates or results of students.
- Going home before the normal closing hour
- Falsification of accounts
- Forging of transfer certification or results of students

This paper however, will regulate itself to few of these practices that most affect the realization of educational goals and objectives. These practices are fast manifesting and becoming a culture with devastating effects on our national image and professional status. Such practices include the following;

- (1) Lateness to School
- (2) Absenteeism/Negligence of Duty
- (3) Aiding and Abetting Examination Malpractices
- (4) Immorality and Sexual Harassment
- (5) Illegal Collection of Fees and Admission of Students
- (6) Child- Abuse Through Torture:

#### (1) Lateness to School

A significant number of teachers today have adopted the habit of going to school late. Some teachers go to school only when they finish with their morning business activities. Under such situation, students become loosed and often indulge in one problem behaviour or the other. Against this backdrop, Ebere (1998) noted that

many classroom control problems start because the teacher is either late arriving in class or is not ready for class when the students come in. By coming to school on time and starting a class at the appropriate time, the teacher does not allow problem behaviour to emanate. Again, a teacher who comes to school late would not be able to demand punctuality from the students and thus, the enforcement of discipline would be eroded.

#### (2) Absenteeism/Negligence of Duty

A situation where teachers consciously absent themselves from work or are not willing to dispose favourably to work has accounted for a severe set back in curriculum implementation.

#### (3) Aiding and Abetting of Examination Malpractices

Presently, there is emphasis on and high premium attached to the possession of academic certificates for employment and politics. Again, *the-get-rich-quickly-through-every-available-means* is also the order of the day. These twin concepts are accountable for the high rate of examination malpractices.

That there is general outcry over the state of examination malpractices in Nigeria is one thing, but who is responsible? is yet an important question. Teachers collect bribe to inflate examination scores as to assist students in passing external examinations especially at the secondary school level. Ekanem, (1998) lamented over this, and attributed these unethical behaviours to teachers' desire to improve their economic status.

#### (4) Immorality and Sexual Harassment

There is a high spate of sexual immorality at the secondary and tertiary level of our schools. Ekanem, (1998)

was sharp to recognize that it is responsible for the high rate of teenage pregnancy and school drop outs. Often, teachers become lust to their female students and engage in sexual relationship with them. Sometimes, in order to gain their victims acceptance, teachers either leak their papers before examination or award higher scores to the students. These behaviours are unethical especially as teachers are custodians of children entrusted into their care. Many female students find it difficult to approach their teachers for one problem or the other. The fear stem from the fact that they would not want to be used by the teacher. It is equally obvious that some female students by their acts and dressing do seduce teachers but an ethical teacher must try to suppress their temptations.

**(5) Illegal Collection Of Fees And Admission Of Students**

Some parents out of trust have handed their wards fees to the child's teachers for payment to the school. Oftentimes, some teachers have betrayed this trust by the simple fact that they have embezzled such money or diverted it with the intention to pay later. Many teachers also impose unnecessary levies using one nomenclature or another.

In matters of admission, it is the sole responsibility of the school head (in the secondary school) to admit students in the school. In the tertiary institutions, there is usually the admission unit which administratively handles all matters of admission. Undoubtedly, today some teachers admit students out of the official process. These practices are unprofessional and violate the ethical code of conduct.

**(6) Child Abuse Through Torture**

Inhuman treatment or torture meted out to students in the form of grooming amount to a violation of human rights and it is unconstitutional. Some teachers are harsh and often bully students who are not submissive to their self-desires. Peretomode, (1998) expatiated on the legal implication of inhuman torture and warned that teachers should be careful and possess the knowledge of education law to contend their actions or inactions in the school setting.

The point of emphasis is that, the children entrusted into a teacher's care need his love and acceptance. He or she should not be treated as an enemy. Even when the child commits an offence against school rules and regulations, your action should be in line with the school's litigation procedure and stipulation.

**Issues in Teachers' Work Attitude**

Work attitude has been identified as the pre- disposition to work, arising from concepts, feelings, beliefs, habits and motion. An employee may have positive or negative attitude to work (Alport, 1975).

The general attitude to work of an average Nigerian measured in terms of his productive performance is very low. Omolauoke, (1983) observed that one of the biggest factors retarding productivity in Nigeria is bad attitude to work and general indiscipline in relation to work. The author went further to state that if we succeed in achieving positive work attitude among teachers, our educational productivity would improve. Poor attitude to work is unethical. There are however certain factors other than biological but administrative which may account for poor work attitude among teachers. These include the following:

- (1) Bad management

- (2) Poor salary and untimely payment of teachers' salary
- (3) Inadequate functional educational materials
- (4) Low status of teachers
- (5) Lack of proper supervision.

**(1) Bad Management**

Some school heads are autocratic and normative-oriented and constitute a threatening environment of personality to teachers. The work becomes uninteresting due to the leadership style of the school administrator. By ethical standard, the school administrator and the teachers are professional colleagues. The former is to help the later develop professional competencies needed for the job through human relations and supervision. The later is expected to respect the former and submit to his supervision.

**(2) Poor Salary and Untimely Payment of Teachers Salary**

This is yet another factor which accounts for poor teachers attitude towards school work. Nwachukwu (1988) has expressed a positive correlation between an employee's remuneration and work attitude. Apart from the fact that teachers' salary is poor comparatively with some other professional fields, the salary is not paid timely. This situation is not encouraging but teachers should see themselves as more of service - oriented professionals.

**(3) Inadequate Functional Educational Facilities**

Teachers may become unethical, not showing full commitment to the profession when they are not provided with enabling facilities for professional practices. Castaldi, (1977) stated that a good school plant without a corresponding functional facility is not complementary for effective delivery of

the school curriculum. Therefore, for teachers to deliver the school curriculum more effectively, they require functional materials.

**(4) Low Status of Teachers**

The professional status of teachers in Nigeria is comparatively very low to that of other profession such as medicine, law etc. Teachers do not gain public recognition. Those who come into teaching job accept it as *hang loose* and thus exhibit very low attitude. It is believed that with improved teachers' status, attitude to work of teachers would improve and adjustment towards ethical standards would also improve.

**(5) Inadequate Supervision**

There is extremely poor and irregular supervision of teachers. This has created room for shoddy performance, absenteeism, lateness to school and general lack of commitment to work.

Work Attitude of the Nigerian Teacher:

**(An Overview)**

Within the past few decades, Nigeria and indeed several other countries the world over have experienced a serious set back in the attainment of educational goals and objectives. It will therefore not be an understatement to state that educational system has failed in its sole responsibility of bringing about desirable changes, socially, economically, politically and otherwise. On a more critical look into the heart of this problem, one cannot but notice a significant poor attitude to work displayed by the Nigerian teacher and a total ethical and value decay.

This poor attitude to work by the teachers proves anti-ethical to sustainable national development and should be of great concern to every right thinking citizen. This assertion draws inference from the fact that the

nation's hope for political, social, and economic emancipation hinge on education. Expanding further on the deteriorating attitude to work of the Nigeria teacher, (Usen, 2001:189) posited thus:

*Simply put, teachers of the past few decades were symbols of altruism as against what is obtained today: a situation where the dead consciences of our today's teachers, the get rich quick syndrome, laxity, absenteeism, absentmindedness or lackadaisical attitude towards one's work, indulging in examination malpractices like sorting and abetting, immorality embezzlement, sabotage, selfishness and other vices have reduced the status quo of teachers, the teaching profession and indeed the entire educational system to a mere bargaining, lottery, a game of chance or luck.*

This invariably is to assert that teachers play an indispensable role in achieving educational objectives. Thus teachers' importance in determining the tempo of teaching and learning, which is at the heart of education, cannot be overemphasized. In line with the above assertion, Mgbodile, (2000) stated that:

*Plans and policies can be beautifully laid down on paper; the implementation strategies can also be laudably outlined and the organizational structure well set in terms of who carries out what assignment task, how and when the tasks should be executed. Equally, resources, human and material could be made available and adequate funds for running the*

*programme provided while evaluation modalities are prescribed, but it is the teacher factor (attitude) that stands out as the deciding factor in terms of whether or not the desirable goals and objectives which had informed all these efforts will be achieved. (p. 96)*

To Ejobi (1991:1), the functions of teachers are seen as the ultimate key to educational changes and improvement. To this end, teachers who uphold the ethics of the profession are seen as the executors of educational policies and curriculum. This is because teachers have the requisite knowledge, skills and ability to convert the idle human resources to useful human capital resources. Teachers are the foundation upon which growth and development of the society depends. In furtherance of the indispensable role of teachers, Etuk 2002 posited that *the teacher is the engine of car, the hub of a wheel and the change agent in every nation*. Teachers are the number one audio-visual aid and human contact with students. They have the potential for enhancing the quality of education by bringing life to curriculum and inspiring students to learn. Teachers with poor attitude to work can degrade the quality of education through error, laziness, cruelty or incompetence, (Glauck, 1995). Teachers work attitude is a combination of his effective behaviour and cognitive reactions to his work which determines positive or negative disposition to his work. Unfortunately, within the Nigerian environment, teachers tend to exhibit increasing negative attitude to work and the consequence has been lowered standard of education and status of the Nigerian teacher.

This paper therefore sees ethical and attitudinal re-orientation for teachers as a panacea to the rising trend of teachers ethical and attitudinal decay which is viewed as one of the



major constituent of ineffective curriculum implementation.

### **Reinforcing Ethical Standards in the Teaching Profession for Effectiveness and Productivity**

Misconduct occurs in a situation whereby a member of a particular profession violates the code of ethics governing his profession. Acts or behaviour specified as professional misconduct are often considered to be more serious offences. They are varied but also similar in a number of cases and are often listed in the education laws of a state.

Professional misconduct may attract both administrative and legal consequences depending on the type, nature or gravity of the offence. Therefore, to reinforce ethical standards among teachers is to monitor, discover and apply administrative or legal punishment on teachers who violates teaching ethical standards. Usen, (2001) noted that a number of disciplinary measures ranging from, warning, interdiction, suspension, demotion, revocation of certificate, termination, outright dismissal and compulsory retirement, can be taken against a teacher for violation of ethics or professional misconduct.

Depending on the nature of a professional misconduct committed by a teacher, his case may be settled within the schools, the School Management Board or the law court. In severe cases, a teacher after receiving administrative punishment by appropriate school authorities, may still have to face legal actions in the court. Cases which may attract legal litigations include rape or having carnal knowledge of a pupil, fighting or subjecting a student to severe corporal punishment leading to death or permanent disfigurement of the pupil or student, certificate forgery and examination malpractice.

Some of the means by which teachers excessive could be addressed to ameliorate the rate of violation of ethical conduct include the following:

- 1) **Warning:**  
There is need to warn a teacher either through verbal cautioning or written query for a professional misconduct especially when such acts are initially noticed. Depending on the member of warnings a teacher has been given, he may lose his promotion to the next higher grade or may even be demoted or retired from the service. This is not to say that school heads should threaten teachers with caution and queries, but if properly administered, such would help redirect teachers' steps to professional conduct
- 2) **Suspension:**  
Suspension which could be definite or indefinite is a temporary prohibition of an officer from carrying on his duties. An officer on suspension ceases to receive his salary pending the time his case is fully investigated. If he is found not guilty, he is paid arrears of his salary not paid during his suspension (Usen, 2001).
- 3) **Demotion**  
A teacher found guilty of professional misconducts, such as embezzlement of school fees, development fees, examination fees or collection of illegal school fees or development levies may be demoted in rank; reduction in status may also affect his salary in some cases. Demotion may take the form of reduction from the rank of a principal to that of a classroom teacher or that of a senior teacher to a lower status.
- 4) **Compulsory Retirement**  
Compulsory retirement is a disciplinary action against an act of professional misconduct by an officer. It serves as a deterrent to officers on the job. When properly administered on an erring teacher,

it would help shape the behaviour of professional colleagues from engaging in similar acts.

5) **Dismissal**

This is an outright removal or termination of a staff appointment without any service benefits such as gratuity or pension rights. Outright dismissal occurs when a teacher commits a serious professional misconduct considered unethical.

**Recommendations and Conclusion**

There is a general low opinion from the public over the attitude of teachers towards schoolwork. Today, teachers exhibit low attitude and lack of commitment to their work. Moreover, unethical practices are very much pronounced among our teachers today. Such acts as lateness to school, absenteeism, sexual relationship between teachers and students, aiding and abetting of examination malpractices, illegal collection of fees and abuse of admission procedure, and other immoralities are very prevalent among teachers. These impair quality delivery of work and productivity is at the lowest ebb, whereas the educational system of any nation is the fulcrum upon which sustainable national development hinges.

The public today has lost the confidence imposed on teachers and the school as the ground for moral and intellectual development largely due to noticeable unprofessional behaviours of teachers. There is therefore the need to reinforce ethical values among teachers by inflicting 'legal and administrative consequences for every professional misconduct.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made;

i) Value orientation. One of the best ways of propagating ethical standards is through constant orientation. It is not only into pupils and students alone that morals should be inculcated,

teachers actually need such training. Value orientation should come through seminars and conferences. Issues of ethical concerns should appear and reappear in conference and seminar themes for discussion.

Many teachers do not know and have not seen the pamphlets containing ethical codes. There is need to make copies available for teachers in schools and in teacher education institutions. Government should open up chances for in-service training programme for teachers. The need for such training becomes even more important considering the fact that a number of teachers in our school are not specialist or experts from the colleges of education, institutes and faculties of education. Through in-service programme, such teachers would gain a wide experience and rudiments of teaching that would make them dispose favourably to their assigned duties for improved quality of education.

There is need also for full recognition and implementation of teaching as a profession. Those who do not possess professional qualification in education should not be allowed to practice. In so doing would the status of teaching be recognized and this will influence those in the field to respect not only their profession but also the ethics of the profession for the overall development of the individual and the nation as a whole.

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