
Ethical Issues and Teacher Education in Nigeria

By

Musa Ahmed Zarif

Department of Curriculum and Instruction,
School of Education,
Niger State College of Education, Minna
Email: Zarifmusa@Yahoo.Com

ABSTRACT

This paper has highlighted the conceptual framework of ethics, ethical issues and discussed the relationship between ethical issue and teacher education with a view to highlight the gap that existed in the curriculum of teacher education that has affected the production, behaviour of teachers in compliance to ethical standard of tertiary education in Nigeria. Concluded that teacher factor is very significant in the wellbeing of the country and therefore the welfare as well as basic pre-condition for adequate training of teacher education students must be in place to serve as a process of complying to the ethical standard of teaching profession and recommended that the government should make sure that there is adequate funding of teacher education programs and the government should declare state of emergency for teacher education in Nigeria so that we can have the right caliber of teacher that will man our educational system.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education in Nigeria refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills they require to performing their tasks effectively in the school and classroom. Ahmed (2010), sees teacher education as formal process of initiating individuals into teaching profession by means of training, indoctrination and instruction with the ultimate intention of learning and acquiring competencies and skills of teaching for improvement in the quality of teachers for the educational system.

The National Policy on Education (2015 as revised) has stated that teaching in Nigeria shall attain the highest standard possible, since no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. In the same way the National Professional Standard for Teacher India (NPSTI, 2015), reflects and build on national and international evidence that a teacher's effectiveness has a powerful impact on students, with broad consensus that teacher quality is the single most important in school programme which influence student achievement. Effective teachers can be a source of inspiration and equally importantly, provide a dependable and consistent influence on young people as they make choices about further education, work and life. Internationally and locally, education systems are developing professional standards for teachers to attract, develop, recognize and retain quality teachers.

The organization of teacher education in any system can be visualized at two levels. At the systematic level, the positioning of teacher education determines it nature. Teaching is a multifaceted and specialized activity, and therefore, is housed in single purpose institutions in majority of countries around the world. The second level is the structure of curriculum i.e. what should be taught and how it should be taught. At this level Schulman's (1987) conceptualization of teacher's knowledge provides the basis of teacher education curriculum

structure. According to Schulman, a teacher should possess subject content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and the knowledge of educational contexts and goals; and should be able to use this knowledge creatively to deal with ever changing classroom situations. If we analyze teacher education systems in different countries from this perspective we will find majority of teacher education reform efforts centered on reforming the knowledge base of teachers, and similarities can be observed in teacher education curriculum across various societies. However, the problems and methods to resolve these variations are context specific.

Teachers according to Rasmi Ranjan Puhan, Lakshmipriya Malla, Santosh Kumar Behera (2005), are the greatest assets of any educational system. They stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, skills and values. They are accepted as the backbone of education system. Teachers' quality is therefore crucial and has been globally accepted to be significantly associated with the quality of education in general and students' learning outcomes in particular. The Education Commission (1964:66) of India, and the National Policy on Education (2015) Nigeria accepted this influence of teachers in powerful words, "no system can rise above the status of its teacher..." similar sentiments have been expressed by the Delors report (1996) and UNESCO.

Ethics on the other hand, refers to a system of moral principle by which human actions and problems may be judged, good or bad, correct or incorrect, acceptable or unacceptable (Chike Okoli, 2002). Ethics concern the nature of good and evil, the problem of human conduct and ultimate objectives in behaviour. Ethics can be regarded as behaviour and about ways of thinking especially in situations where our choice can affect the dignity and wellbeing of others. Because ethical behaviour implies free choice, it cannot be captured in rule. The standard of reference for what is ethical has to exist "outside human definition" and therefore cannot be open to human negotiation.

Although, the terms morality and ethics are often used interchangeably, however, they could be distinguished. By morality, we mean the tradition of laws, rules and practices that exists in every society and that seeks to describe, persuade and require certain forms of behaviour while proscribing others. On the same vein, by ethics we mean the disciplined reflection on morality that constitutes the branch of philosophy that studies moral questions. Thus, reflection on the rightness or wrongness of a particular act, law or rule is an example of doing ethics.

Ethics is a discipline dealing with the study of what is good and bad, right and wrong and with moral duty and obligation. Consequently, ethical issues are the set of customary principles and practices embodying some sort of a normative code (of behaviour, values) to adhere to them differently.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Ethical: These are moral codes or standard associated with operation, management and schedule of duties, and how these duties are to be performed by each individual within an organization. They are refers to in popular palace as rules and regulations.

Ethical Issues: These are problems or reoccurring problems and concern that relate to the operation and management of organization by the individual. In tertiary institution it relates to how the administrator as well as lecturers or teachers perform their duties in conformity or

otherwise with the standard rules and regulations. In addition, it relates to the welfare and condition of service of staff as well as their work habit and relationship with students.

Teacher: This refers to a professional individual who has gone through series of training both in theory and practice via his academic and education courses, qualified, certificated and charged with the responsibility of lecturing/teaching students.

Teacher Education: This is a formal process of initiating individuals into the teaching profession by means of training, indoctrination and instruction with the ultimate intention of learning and covering competencies and skills of teaching for improvement in the quality of teachers for the system.

Ethical Standard: This is the level of performance and compliance to the rules and regulations set for all operators in tertiary institution.

THE ETHICAL STANDARDS

Ethical issues relates to determining what is in the best interest of the student and behaving ethically is more than a matter of following the rules or not breaking the law, it means acting in a way that promotes the learning and growth of students and helps them realize their potential (Parkay, 2004). In addition Mahony (2009) is of the view that ethics deals, amongst other things, with right and wrong, ought and ought not, good and evil.

Some of the ethical principles associated with teaching in Nigeria according to Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT, 2012) include the following; to deal justly and impartially with pupils and students regardless of their physical, mental, emotional, social, racial or religious characteristics, to recognize and respect the difference among pupils and students and to seek to meet their individual educational needs; not entering into any indecent relationship with the students and pupils in the school; to withhold confidential information about a student or his home except that its release is authorized by law; to make proper use of all available information about the student, among others.

The Teachers Registration Council (TRC, 2004) provides a frame for ensuring that teachers perform their duties efficiently by mandating professional standards, through seeking to achieve the highest professional standards in all their works and uphold the honour and integrity of the profession. In addition, teachers should have an enduring absolute commitment to the profession, giving maximum attention and responsibility to the profession, aspiring to make a successful career within the system, and taking pride in the profession. Teachers should render efficient and cost-effective professional service at all times.

However, teachers should evaluate periodically the learners' performance and render all professional assistance likely to enable learners to identify and excel in their skills. Teachers should be dedicated and faithful in all professional undertakings being punctual, thorough, conscientious and dependable.

Ethical Issues in Teacher Education

According to Smith (1995), all teachers do good things some of the time, and all good teachers do bad things some of the time. The differences among teachers lie not only in the proportions of the good and the bad, but also in their awareness of the effects of what they are doing and their readiness to share this awareness with their students.

The major cause of ethical deterioration in education system is rapidly spreading corruption. There was a time when corruption was only in Government offices, private

institutions, police stations etc. But, now a day's corruption has spread its roots in education system also. Corruption in the education sector can be defined as "the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability of and quality of educational goods and services as a consequence on access, quality or equity in education". Singh and Purohit (2011), privatization of education has emerges in several forms in the recent decade. Government allowed to people open self-financing private institutions with recognition, which may be termed as commercial private education institutions. Garg and Kaur (2012), with the mushrooming of these private institutes in the modern era, the education has acquired the status of a marketable commodity, where educational institutes an: the traders and students are the customers.

Bray (2003), teacher absenteeism is one of the most serious causes of ethical declining of education. It greatly reduces the overall effectiveness of the school, diminishes pupils' achievements, damages the school's reputation, and induces pupils' absenteeism. Bala Harish (2011) however the present curriculum makes them perfect money makers, the best politicians, the well-known doctors, the skillful engineers, the greatest musicians, the marvelous actors but fails to make them realize a bit to their identity as human being. Raina (1999) "teacher training programmes have remained procrustean, offering the same menu to all without slightest regard for varying cultural and physical settings, they remained unresponsive to vast cultural, linguistic, regional and geographical diversity".

Other related ethical issues in teacher education include; the quality of students admitted to be trained, as teachers into the Colleges of Education are those who could not get admission into university or have poor results are transferred to the Faculty of Education. The scenario implies that, only the poor or candidates who could not get the admission requirement found their way to the College of Education. Other problem associated with teacher education programme in Nigeria is the lack of adequate funding. This is translated in the non-availability of instructional materials, inadequate teacher-preparation programme, i.e. the conduct of microteaching practicum and teaching practice supervision and general orientation on the art of teaching. However, short period of teaching practice form a minus as far as the provision of teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment in the society is concerned, lack of commitment from teachers, instructors, lecturers and school administrators constitute a major setback in the process of teacher education.

The current trends of overcrowded teachers education classes do not give adequate and sufficient opportunity for both the teacher-facilitators and teacher education students to exchange ideas, provide adequate training and instruction that would make the be teachers to thoroughly been through various training stages of teacher education in the form of teaching observation, micro-teaching and teaching practice.

Indeed if the teacher education students can or are not seen these stages during their training, it is most likely that, they would not be competent and capable of discharging their responsibilities as classroom teachers, school administrators and specialist. Another very critical issue in education today, is the uncertain future of most teacher education students, since before graduation most student teachers, and teachers are aware of the fact that, the society would not recognize them, provides employment and treat them as equals with other professionals. These would be teachers have to contend with non-payment, poor salary, and couple with non-implementation of teachers special salary scale. In holistic frame, all teachers

and educators do not have enhanced condition of service, which is the foundation to motivation and high or improve productivity.

CONCLUSION

No country would aspire to be great without the significant contribution of the teachers and teacher education. Thus, there must be adequate training, exposure and improved condition of service for teachers as a precondition for sustainable adherence to the teachers' professional ethics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It should be noted that teacher education is the foundation of wholesome development of the country, because state for example, do not have natural and mineral resources, but heavenly rely on teachers for its development. Thus, the government should as a matter of urgency declare state of emergency, on teacher education through periodic review.

- Academic programmes and accreditation procedures. Adequate funding of teacher education programmes at both the Nigeria Certificate in Education, Bachelor's Degree, Masters and Ph.D.
- Selection and admission of students into the teachers' education programmes should be on merit, so that the students with high JAMB & Post UME would be selected.
- Specialist teachers and lecturers should be trained to war the various stages of teacher education programme.
- There should be well designed and built micro-teaching laboratory with all the facilities, equipment and operators that would make the micro-teaching practicum a worth-while experience for teacher education students.
- There should be right sizing admission of teacher education students – so adequate attention, training and experiences would be given to the students, in order to guide against the popular saying “Garbage in Garbage out”.
- Teacher educators must relate them to the basic classroom realities of the schools.
- There should be adequate regulatory of framework that would ensure that private operators of teacher education institutions operate and strictly abide by the minimum standard set by rationale commission of colleagues of Educational and National University Commission, this is to guard against making the institution or marketable venture or commodity.
- Teachers should take a pledge to follow the code of ethics which may bring credit to the entire profession.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, M.Z. (2010). *The fundamentals of subject methods*. Printed and Published by Alheri Concepts. SW 157 Ibo/Mekera Road Minna.
- Bala, H. (2011). Challenge of teacher education in 21st century. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 2(6) 78 – 81 www.lister.org
- Bray, M. (2003). Adverse effect of private supplementary tutoring: Dimensions, Implication and Government Responses, Paris, HEP. UNESCO.
- Chike, O. (2002). *The concept of ethics and its applications: Randa Primers Kaduna Nigeria*.

- Dolor Report, UNHSCO, Parkay, R. (1996, 2004, 2006). Teacher and educational quality: Monitoring global needs for 2015. *A Report on Teacher and Educational Quality*.
- Mahony, P. (2009). Should 'ought' be taught? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(7), 983 – 989.
- National Policy on Education (NPE, 2015). Abuja Federal University of Education. Nigeria Educational Research Council, Kwali Abuja Nigeria.
- National Professional Standard India (2015). Condition of service for pre and in-service teachers. The Commission of Education, India.
- Nigeria Union of Teacher (NUT, 2012). Teachers' ethical standard. National Headquarter Abuja.
- Rasmi, K.P, Lakshipriya, M., Suntosh, K.M. (2005). Current ethical issues in teacher education: A critical analysis on pre-service and in-service emerging teachers. *American Journal of Educational Research* 2.12A (2014). *Research Article* 2, Retrieve 10/3/2015.
- Schulman, I.S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundation of new reforms. *Harvard Educational Review*. 57(7) pp 4 – 14.
- Smith, F. (1995). Let's declare education a disaster and get on with our lives. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 584 – 590.
- Teacher Registration Council (TRC, 2004). The Teachers Registration Council Manual for Teachers. Abuja.