SANITY CONTROL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF TERTIARY INSTITUTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study was carried out to examine Sanity control and ethical challenges facing the Nigerian educational system especially tertiary institutions and the expected role of administrators as well as the importance of ethic norms and dynamics of corruption. This is because the overall goals of tertiary institutions in Nigeria as enunciated in the National Policy of Education can hardly be achieved without strict conformity and adherence to the rules and regulations and the ideals of the entire society. This paper viewed the ethical issues in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Such issues includes corruption, research, teaching, human relations, academic misconduct among lecturers, laxity in academic control, administrative ethics and other responsibilities. The study that ethical conducts have not been given proper attention by administrators in the Nigerian education sector and suggested that government should enforce strict adherence or compliance to professional ethics as a way to install sanity in our tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Introduction

Ethics is about behaviour and about ways of thinking, especially in situations where our choice can affect the dignity and wellbeing of others. 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 other hand by ethics we mean the disciplined reflection on morality that constitutes the branch of philosophy that studies moral questions (Kayode & Adeyinka 2009**)**.

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 (Kanungo & Mendonca 2016). It could also be referred to as a set of principles relating to morals, especially as they apply to human conduct. In specific terms, work ethics is about what is morally correct, honourable and acceptable to the larger majority of the people of an organization, society or group. It is also the rules of conduct that have become a set of norms of the society, group or organization (Omisore & Oyende, 2015). Ethics deals with the guidelines or rules of conduct by which we aim to live, work and socialize. It connotes what is good or not good, what is morally right or wrong, what is acceptable in a given environment or not, what is expected or not of a person (Kanu & Ursula, 2012). According to Oguleye (2000), in the general administration of higher education, ethical behaviour and standards is expected of all – be it lectures or teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students and likewise their parents and guardians. Ethical behaviour therefore occurs when one acts with equity, fairness and impartiality and respects the rights of others, or simply put, when one does what is morally right. Manuel, Claire, Thomas and Michael (2012), ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.

To Manuel, Claire, Thomas and Michael (2012}, being ethical is also not to be confined to or the same as following the law or religion; neither does it relate to or the same as doing "whatever society accepts" because most times standards of behaviour in society can deviate from what is ethical. Ethics, for example, refers to those standards that impose the reasonable obligations to refrain from rape, stealing, murder, assault, slander, examination malpractices and fraud. Ethical standards also include those that enjoin virtues of honesty, compassion, and loyalty. And, ethical standards include standards relating to rights, such as the right to life, the right to freedom from injury, and the right to privacy. Such standards are adequate standards of ethics because they are supported by consistent and well-founded reasons (Manuel, Claire, Thomas & Michael, 2012). Nevertheless, unethical behaviours occur when decisions enable an individual or organization to gain at the expense of the larger society (Ogunleye, 2000). Ethical issues relates to issues concerning rape, indiscipline, dishonesty, gangterism, staff criticism, gossip, sexual harassment and molestation related to abuse of office, plagiarism, drug abuse, cultism, intimidation, bribery and corruption, embezzlement of funds, greed, stealing, murder, assault, slander, fraud, examination malpractices and any kind of malpractice of sort, kidnapping, among others (Manuel, Claire, Thomas & Michael, 2012; Ogunleye, 2000; TRCN, 2013).

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) has clearly outlined the goals that are expected of the tertiary education to achieve. It should be noted that the achievement of these goals is dependent on strict compliance to professional ethics. Kayode and Adeyinka (2009) affirmed that it is only on strict compliance, conformity, and adherence to rules and regulations and the ideals of the society that the overall goals of the tertiary education as stipulated by the National Policy on Education can be achieved. Gilman (2005) believed that ethics codes become more effective over time. The longer they are in place the more natural they seem to the public service environment. They also become integrated into the overall management structure and

are seen by the public as an effective tool. He demands adequate knowledge of the code and fairness in the management of the system. He also suggested two effective approaches Training of the stakeholders on the rule of the code of conduct because familiarity with regulations would allow public employees to know what is expected of them, and where to look up the rules if they are unclear. The notion of education emphasizes reasoning from principles.

This approach could begin with general principles that no public employee should descend below and then emphasize the code of conduct. Aduma and Auwal, (2007) identified some common unethical conduct at the tertiary institution which includes lecturers extorting money from students, conduct of armchair research, sexual harassment by both lecturers and students. Others include plagiarism, unduly delay in the marking and release of examination results, and leaking examination questions among others. These unethical practices are largely disturbing the minds of stakeholders as it interfere with the learning of the students.

Importance of Ethics in Higher Institution

Innovative Change in the Society: Indiscipline reported above is ethical issues. It touches on the moral aspects of our live. It is also attitudinal arid behavioral in nature. Education at various levels and in various forms could be employed as an effective tool, if properly planned, to bring about the urgent and required changes in our behaviour as a nation. Thus we need committed and creative individuals as a primary condition for bringing about the required innovative employment of education in the economic and social reconstruction in Nigeria. The innovative individuals are necessary for the development of functionally relevant educational programmes with self-reliance content.

Ogundele and Ojodu (2002) noted that the central requirement of self-reliance in the development of indigenous technology are creative individuals who are to produce new products, new technologies, new service and accumulated stock of wealth. In this demand all levels of educational and moral instruction institutions will be involved.

At the primary and secondary levels down to tertiary levels, there is need for us to go back to the good old days when moral instructions from the Bible and Quran were made mandatory. Strict application of rules and norms on pupils and teachers must be enforced. But the innovative requirement here is that application of rules must be to correct behaviour and not be wicked in intent.

It will be difficult to reconstruct the social and economic decay that we have in Nigeria today without innovative use of education as outlined above. Our education has to be made relevant in solving this major problem of our society. If we agree that technology is the application of knowledge to solve community problem, then our education will be made more technologically useful if it can, through ethical education, help in economic and social reconstruction. Uya (2003) stated that we must fashion out new paradigm for African development which pays heed to African historical specificity and is fully connected to our culture and institutional reality.

Ethics in Organizational Leadership: Ethics is very critical in leadership in any organizational setting. Ethics, as use here, refers to values and principles that guide right and wrong behavior (Menzel, 2007). Lanctote and Irving (2007) remarked that leadership scholars and practitioners have accentuated the link between ethics and leadership. Doble (2018) noted that leadership demands ethics because of the responsibilities it shoulders. Bowman (2008) noted that ethics is

the key to the flourishing of democracy and its administration. Those in leadership positions in a democratic government and, in fact, in all forms of government, need to be ethical as they pilot the affairs of their organizations or societies.

The importance of ethics in organizational leadership was stressed by Kanungo and Mendonca (2016). They observed that the moral quality of individuals living in a society determined the survival of and the flourishing of life in that society. Those in a leadership role, to a greater extent, play a part in determining the moral quality of their followers. Their behavioral influence can positively or negatively impact the moral fiber of society (Kanungo & Mendonca, 2016). The authors noted that leaders do more than physical harm any time their actions and behavior fail to be in congruence with the shared moral values. Such neglect or compromise can cause moral cynicism, which "like a cancer, corrodes the moral health of society". Ethical leadership plays a pivotal and critical role in any group, organization, and society at large.

Northouse (2007) remarked that the leader's influence has significant impact on their followers' lives. He noted that such influence has a great ethical burden and responsibility. Sendjaya (2005) observed that the exercise of authority and power always involves ethical challenges and, as such, no true leadership exists without morality "since all forms of leadership are value-laden". Kanungo and Mendonca (2016) remarked, "Effective organizational leaders need ethics as fish need water and human beings need air". Northouse also observed the centrality of ethics in the leadership phenomenon. Comprehending the place and role of ethics in leadership leads to the conclusion that no true leadership exists without ethics.

Active Participation of Students: Students who have law-abiding teachers as instructors have more opportunity in learning and exhibiting best academic practices. They are also provided with the opportunity of actively participating in the affairs of the school. Ogundele and Ojodu (2002) Ethical standards enable students to emulate the best behaviors and this is also exhibited in their relationship with both teachers and students. Functional school ethical standards are one of the factors considered in identifying a quality University. The value system operated in the University goes a long way in revealing the quality of educational service provided within the institution. Students and members of staff of any University go a long way in projecting the quality of the University through their attitudes both within and outside the University environment. This is why they are regarded as ambassadors of their universities.

Increases Productivity: Russell (2014) noted that ethics in a work environment help the employees to align their abilities with the key values of the organization, thereby increasing the level of effectiveness and productivity. When members of the University staff are guided by policies, it helps to increase their level of commitment and invariably influencing their attitude towards their work and increasing the level of efficiency. For instance, when there is strict penalties for lateness, everyone endeavours to be punctual and productivity is high and regular. In the long run, the level of productivity is increased as a result of compliance with University policies.

Resource Utilization: Ethics helps in the adequate utilization of resources such as time, money, materials, among others. The rules and regulations guiding the University also apply to the

management of resources. Sendjaya (2005) Adequate laws, rules and regulations therefore contribute to the efficient and effective utilization of educational resources.

Ethical Issues in Higher Institution

Corruption is one of the social vices that have eaten deep into all the sectors in Nigeria. The recent report released by the Transparency International rated Nigeria as the 146th least corrupt nation out of 180 countries, according to the 2019 Corruption index. In fact, more than a decade before this report, Eze (2006) lamented that it is no longer news that Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries of the world. This poses serious concern to the stakeholders, especially, when the current administration claims that fighting of corruption is one of the three core mandates or agenda set to achieve. Nevertheless, educational intuitions are expected to be insulated from the endemic corrupt practices, particularly, the institutions of higher learning which serve as custodians of societal values. However, daily reports of corrupt practices do no exonerate tertiary institution from this social evil which permeates every sector.

The behavior transformation is one of the indices of a good education. This is affirmed by Atanda and Itobore (2014) that a major characteristic of the formal educational setting is the high level of objectivity in the emphasis on expected change in behavior, mindset and attitude, and a demonstration of knowledge attained by student. This means that any product from these institutions of higher learning is expected to be of sound mind and should be able to impact on his immediate environment. Thus, this is only achievable is a serene and conducive learning environment. However, it appears the menace of corruption that is affecting the larger society does not spare the tertiary institutions. This might be because these tertiary institutions are sub-set of the entire society.

It is also expressed as an impairment of integrity, virtue or moral principles. Garner (2013) also defines corruption in two ways: At first, corruption means depravity, perversion or taint, an impairment of integrity, virtue, or moral principle, especially the impairment of a public official's duties by bribery. Secondly, corruption is the act of doing something with an intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duty and the right of others; a fiduciary or official's use of station or office to produce some benefit either personally or for someone else, contrary to the right of others. According to the World Bank (1997) "corruption is systemic (pervasive or entrenched) where bribery, on a large or small scale, is routine in dealings between the public sector and firms or individuals" (World Bank, 1997). Corruption therefore, is as an unscrupulous act by individuals in the organisations or society at large which is contrary to moral standards acceptable in such society. Corruption in tertiary institutions can therefore be explained as manifestation of unprincipled acts which involves the breach and gross abuse of academic ethics, norms, values, standards, conventions, rules and regulations, codes of conduct and general laws of the institution. Dimpkpa (2011) pointed that academic corruption is commonplace in the universities as indicated by students and lecturers. The prevalence of academic corruption was found to exist more among male than female lecturers which involves parents, students, lecturers and school administrators. Nwaze (2012) stated that the admission processes in tertiary institutions are characterized by shady deals of irregularities and malpractices as candidates of low quality now flood the institutions. This is affecting the quality of graduates being produced in these tertiary institutions.

Again, Whawo (2015) in his study has indicated that there is a host of corrupt practices in tertiary institutions which objective is to use money, sexual intercourse and cultism to distort the due process of academic pursuit and obtain certificates, diplomas and degrees without serious academic work and the two worst corrupt practices, whose order was simply interchanged in the opinions of staff and students, are examination malpractices and extortion of money from students by staff which by implication brought serious attendant evils to tertiary education, prominent among them are production of half-baked students, lowering of education standard/quality of credentials and moral decadence.

The following malpractice acts have been reported across tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
➢ Examination malpractice
➢ Cultism
➢ Lack of Accountability/Embezzlement of money from Student's Union pockets by the Union Leaders
➢ God fatherlism/Political Influence on student's union leaders
➢ Riot/Vandalization of school properties
➢ Sex abuse/prostitution/sexuality
➢ Stealing
➢ Drug abuse/smoking
➢ Using girls to sort Lecturers by lecturer boys (students)
➢ Indecent dressing
➢ Abortion
➢ Other forms of indiscipline (Whawo,2015; Dimkpa, 2011; Nwanze, 2012).

Research: Research is unarguably the most important function of any university system. This is the tool that is being used in finding solutions to most of the basic problems confronting the human society. Ethics is required in the area of research in order to develop quality solutions to the problems of the society and also to guide students on how to make meaningful contribution and finding lasting solutions to the problems of their generation. Research is defined by Kim (2006) as a detailed study carried out especially in a University on something in order to discover new facts about it. Research enables an individual to acquire first hand and authentic information about a phenomenon under study. It is therefore important that proper guidelines should be followed in other to carry out quality contributions to the needs of the society. Oghuvbu and Okpilike (2012) pointed out that in Nigerian higher education institutions, an academic as a research supervisor has the following ethical responsibilities in the school system:
(i)   Providing students with a constructive and supportive environment.
(ii)   Attending to students' research and other related needs in a timely fashion.
(iii)   Reading and commenting on the students' progress reports promptly.
(iv)   Holding students to high academic and ethical standards.
(v)   Facilitating students understanding of research ethics and professional developments
(vi)   Positive supervision of students research projects to ensure that results are not fabricated.

Therefore, any deviation from these facts is unethical responsibilities and as such does not promote the standard of research pounding on ethical issues in higher institution.

Teaching: - Ethics play a multi-faceted role in the school system, but with a similar objective (Starratt, 2004). Ethics is also important in the area of teaching as well as the other functions of the university system. Ethical standards in the area of teaching has a direct impact on what the students will be able to achieve in the teaching-learning process. Researchers have pointed out that the technique, vis-à-vis adherence to standards, has a role to play in the standard of students learning.

Teaching as a profession has its ethics which all stakeholders in the teaching profession is expected to guard diligently. The ethics of the teaching profession are the moral beliefs and rules about right and wrongs that influence teachers behaviour, attitude and ideals. Schools (including university system) contain teachers who are workers that are controlled with codes of ethics, codes of conduct and ethics committees, policies and processes to resolve ethical dilemmas (Oke, 2009). The importance of ethical issues in educational institution was also supported by Puhan, Malla, and Behera, (2014) that the ethical dimensions are considered to be important in educational system and are present in several legislative documents, both with regard to the education of pupils and to teacher education, and regarded as important for professional performance.

The teaching-learning relationship maintained between the teacher and students can be greatly affected by the level of ethical standards maintained by the teacher. Hill and Zinsmeiste (2012) noted that ethics in the teaching profession has an influence on the students in the area of discipline, use of proper methodology, content of teaching, respect for the students, academic integrity, fairness, confidentiality and maintaining a good relationship with the students. The students therefore have a lot to benefit through the enforcement of proper ethical standards by the teachers. This has a significant role to play in how the student can grow to become an indispensable member of the society.

Human Relations: The relationship that exists between the teacher and other stakeholders in the school environment; managers, administrators, staff, parents and students also needs to be guided by quality ethical standards. When there is a peaceful relationship among the various educational stakeholders, it makes it easier to make decisions that will affect the students and the entire school positively. Kanungo & Mendonca, (2016).The amount of success recorded in the academic and non-academic activities of the university depends on the level of cooperation that exists among staff, students, and administrators. When there is a healthy relationship among these individuals, more impact will be made in the pursuit of the University's objectives. Proper principles are therefore required to unite all members of the University community for increased productivity.

Academic Misconduct among Lecturers

Several factors are responsible for academic misconduct among academic staff. Stagnation in career and the need to get promoted are cited by Ijeoma (2012) as contributory factors to the prevalence of academic misconduct among academic staff. There are two dimensions to this promotion related factor. First is the fact that some academic staff have stayed at a particular level/rank for so long owing to their inability to meet the requirements

for promotion namely acquisition of higher degree and particularly publication of quality articles. The second dimension has to do with those that want to beat the system and get promoted by any means. Given this scenario, coupled with the lack of research skills by some academics. The teaching profession in Nigerian higher institutions of learning is made up of individuals with varying degrees of passion for the job. Among the academic staff are those who exhibit greed for money, live above their income and lack the commitment and dedication needed to bring about quality education delivery. In line with this view Ikhariale (2003) observes that Nigerian universities are currently harboring misfits within their belly and that there are those who call themselves teachers but who, due to their intellectual and ethical weakness, ought not to be associated with the ivory tower. Pressures from parents and students as well as the corruption in the society are certainly yielding undesirable fruits in the institutions of learning. It is no longer news that some students in their desperation to pass either entice the academic staff with money, gifts and even their bodies or on the other hand those in cults use threats to obtain their desires.

Laxity in Academic Control

Poor supervision of academic staff, laxity in punishing "culprit" lecturers, faulty employment procedures in academic staff employment and employment of incompetent lecturers were equally advanced by respondents as factors contributing to the increase in academic misconduct among academic staff. These indicated causative factors are administrative in nature and seem to indict the university management. Some of the occurrences in the educational system such as absenteeism of academic staff from duty delay in preparing and release of students" results and the non-formalized means of obtaining feedbacks from students especially about teaching quality. The delay in meting out deserved punishment to offending persons in the system owing to the bureaucratic process involved in the disciplinary procedure, the "man know man" (network of friends or relations) and sacred cow syndrome in Nigerian society which shields culprits often provide the boldness for other academics with weak moral to indulge in academic misconduct, (Ijeoma, 2012).

Administrative Ethics: Administration demands proper and effective performance of the individual responsibilities in an organization according to laid down rules and regulations. The questions may be asked, what are the rules and regulations that guide the performance of administrators? Administration as a profession has standardized techniques of performance, ethical principles and standards of behavior expected of all practitioners, these principles and standards are referred to as ethics.

Scholars like Effiong (2004) strongly argued that administration is related to ethics in as much as ethics sets standards of integrity and honesty in human actions. Ethics has, as pointed out earlier in this paper, to do with moral values of the community and administrators, to which public servants are part of, must take cognizance of these values while enforcing public policy. Work ethics demand loyalty to the system, devotion to duty and a very high sense of integrity, high moral standards, honesty and fairness. No formal punishment can be as effective as the condemnation of an employee by his own sense of dignity and pride and by persons of his own class.

Effiong went further to explain that one of the key areas of concern of administrators and indeed the ultimate challenge of an organization is to enhance productivity. And that code

of ethics and standards are instruments of effective performance and effective performance is since qua non for productivity.

Other Responsibilities: Ethical standard is an important tool needed by any University staff in order to carry out the policies of the University. The ethics guiding the University play an important role in the execution of all the duties of the teacher in the areas of instruction, supervision, evaluation, monitoring and reporting. Every member of staff of the University is saddled with the task of carrying out diverse tasks that will assist in the smooth administration of the University. It is important that in the process of carrying out these responsibilities, great care must be taken to assist the teachers act based on guidelines (Kanungo & Mendonca, 2016).

Strategies for Mitigation of Ethical Issues in Higher Institution

Eradicate corrupt practices: Notwithstanding, solutions to unethical behaviour must focus on changing people by employing the following approaches as identified by Lawal (2002); Ogundele, Hassan, Idris, Adebakin and Iyiegbuniwe (2010): values related, economics, legal/judicial sanctions, religious, managerial, leadership, family, socio-cultural, educational, training and development, police/armed forces reforms, motivation, modernization, development and multi-dimensional approaches. These are some of the ways of solving several problems created by corruption and bribery in African businesses (Lawal, 2002; Ogundele, Hassan, Idris, Adebakin & Iyiegbuniwe, 2010). In addition, ethical issues in any organization deals with a problem or situation that requires a person or organization to choose between alternatives that must be evaluated as right (ethical) or wrong (unethical) (Business Dictionary, 2015). Here, this requires that every individual within an organization to work towards achieving the goals set by an organization which falls within an established set of moral guidelines or fair business practices. It also requires that individuals should relate with one another in the organization with equitable, fair and just while dealing with people. That is why in most public organization and professions in Nigeria there is code of conduct which are ethical principles that guides people's actions, behaviour and their relationships with other people and their job. Failure to maintain good work ethics in the tertiary institutions have great consequences and influences on the management of tertiary education including colleges of education for future national development and environmental sustainability Ogundele, Hassan, Idris, Adebakin & Iyiegbuniwe, 2010). It is therefore on this note and background that the present study conducted an investigation in order to understudy the ethical issues in Nigerian education.

Set Standards and Procedures: Teachers need clearly defined rules and regulations so as to know the behaviors that are acceptable within the University in the conduct of their responsibilities. Akudo (2018) It is important that work ethics be clearly spelt out in order to assist the members of the University staff with carrying out their duties effectively and with direction. The rules and regulations guiding the University activities must be properly communicated to the University staff and the necessary resources and support for total compliance also need to be provided.

Punishment:- Complying with ethics in the University also requires that punitive measures be put in place for offenders for disobeying or disregarding the ethics guiding the University. When University staff are aware of the consequences of their action, they will be compelled to make all efforts to adhere to the policies of the University. When there are consequences for offensive actions taken by every teacher in the University, more care and precaution would be taken in their various activities (Akudo 2018).

Training and Re-training:- Teachers should be provided with the opportunity for training that will help them become familiar with the rules and regulations enforced in the University. Seminars and workshops need to be organized in order to assist staff of the University, especially the new employees, become acquainted with the rules and regulations guiding the various activities taking place within the University (Akudo 2018).

Evaluation: - In order for the standard of the University to remain valuable over a long period of time, there is need for constant evaluation of the benefits and challenges observed in the process of enforcing the educational policies recommended. Akudo (2018) Evaluating the ethics of the school will help to identify who and why the ethics of the University are being upheld or rejected. This will assist in the formulation of more improved and effective rules for the success of the University.

Motivation: It is also important that rewards be provided for members of the University community who are devoted to the ethical standards operated in the University. Such individuals should be commended for their effort and rewarded for carrying out best practices that enhance the image of the University. Day (2010) summarized the conditions for complying with ethics to include the following: establishing proper standards and procedures that will help to prevent and detect criminal conduct; ensuring that the governing authority and all high-level personnel exercise reasonable oversight in the area of implementation and effectiveness of the program and also assign overall responsibility for the program to high-level personnel; remove from positions of substantial authority any individual that is known to engage in illegal or unethical activities; carry out training on and also offset dissemination of information about the program's standards and procedures; monitor, audit, and evaluate the program, as well as provide a mechanism for anonymous or confidential reporting; promote and enforce the program through appropriate incentives and disciplinary measures and respond appropriately to criminal conduct that is detected and act to prevent further similar occurrence (Kanungo & Mendonca, 2016).

Conclusion

The study concluded that ethical conduct has not been given proper attention by all the stakeholders in the Nigerian education sector. The occurrence of unethical issues is the fault of all the stakeholders. Enforcement of code of conduct will go along with maintenance of professional ethics in the Nigerian educational institution. It is therefore suggested that This is in a bid to ensure that the tertiary education goals in Nigeria are achieved. Those involved in the process must be both knowledgeable of the code and precedents, as well as sensitive to the fact that leaders and administrators have an obligation to do their jobs. Imbibing these values is critical in ensuring that Public Servants render high quality service to citizens.

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