

## **Conceptual Review of Decision-making Practices, Teachers' Work Ethics Compliance and Secondary Schools Effectiveness**

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined the extent of teachers' compliance with work ethics and decision-making procedures in public secondary schools. If efficient instruction and service delivery are to be achieved in public secondary schools, the results of the current study have significant implications for effective school administration and management. The efficacy of the school will increase when principals encourage high ethical leadership behaviour through participatory decision-making on the part of the members. The chances of having committed teachers who aid in achieving the goals of the schools are increased by principals who apply sound ethical principles in respecting the rights of their teachers, demonstrate professional competence and responsibility, while fostering honesty and integrity in their professional relationships with teachers, and demonstrate responsibility to schools, families, communities, and society at large. This makes it necessary for public secondary school principals to cultivate and uphold very high ethical leadership behaviours while acting in their instructional leadership roles, making decisions, carrying out their supervisory functions, communicating and working collaboratively with teachers, and holding themselves*

*accountable, in order to foster an environment that will encourage high levels of teacher commitment. It was concluded that teachers who are deeply committed to their jobs develop ethical values and conduct.*

**Keywords:** Code of conduct, Leadership, Decision-making practices, Teachers' Involvement, Work ethics compliance, School effectiveness

**Word Count:** 201

### **Introduction**

Education has been often recognized as a very crucial and veritable instrument for the social, political and economic development of nations. It empowers people with attitude, skills and knowledge for purposeful living in the society. It is the process through which an individual inquires necessary knowledge, competencies and capacities that enable him adapt positively into the society. Whether formal, informal or non-formal, education attempts to pass on to members of the society the latter's culture which is preserved overtime for the enlightenment and strengthening of its citizenry (Onye and Ajuzie, 2018). In her National policy on Education (2014) observes that education in Nigeria is an instrument "par excellence" for effecting natural development. Secondary education is the education children received after primary education and before tertiary stage of education.

Secondary education is of key importance because it is expected that a child who cannot proceed to tertiary level would have acquired enough skills and knowledge at the secondary level to enable him/her contribute meaningfully to the economic growth of his/her society (Kenigheni, 2014). Oku, Emenalo and Okeke (2018) opined that educational institutions, like any other organisation, are set up to achieve a number of goals and objectives using limited human and materials resources available. In the course of realizing the organizational goals through human interactions and actions, there are bound to be problems, difficulties and conflicts in needs, values, interests, ideas and so on. In a situation like this, a school administrator has to find a way of proffering solutions to the problems or situations and this is done through decision making, which some authors believe to be an act of administration or leadership (Wordah and Ekwesianya, 2020; Agi and Edward, 2015).

Leadership is a very important elements of school administration since running schools requires full cooperation of all stakeholders who

need direction and coordination. Meanwhile, the school is a social system which means that individuals are in constant interaction in process of accomplishing predetermined goals and objectives (Agi and Edward, 2015). A leadership position has the onerous responsibility on achieving the goals of organisations. To leaders is entrusted the power to organize the personnel and the materials available in an organization so that they follow to realise the set goals and objectives of the establishment. Their relevance as organizational leaders are to the extent to which they are found capable of utilising the men and materials available to them in achieving the target objectives of the organization. The head or leader of an establishment maintains his relevance by helping the organization stay in business through realizing the motive which might be profit or service oriented (Ogbonnaya, Orbeegbulem, Onwurah and Enyi, 2018).

Wordah (2020) defines leadership as a process whereby a person (the leader) or persons (leaders) intentionally influence(s) (by communication), interrelationships, motivation, and so on, the behaviour of others in a special group or organization. Leadership is a position or ability to lead a group of people in an organisation for the attainment of an objective. A leader is a person with power over the others that exercise this power for the purpose of influencing their behaviours. A principal is the head and leader in a secondary school. Principalship, according to Hornby's *Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English* as cited in Anukam, Okunamiri and Ogbonna (2016) is the highest in the order of importance, the chief person in authority; the most important leader of a school or college". Anukam *et al* (2016) state that the title of principal is an appropriate designation for the administrator of a single school. But in the Nigeria context, the title principal usually refers to the head of a secondary school or a post primary institution. He or she is the first citizen of the institution, the head of the school family, the custodian of the school culture, the mirror of the tone of the school, the personification of the school motto: the architect of the school psyche and the first among equals in the tutorial team (Anukam, *et al.*, 2016). The personality of the principal is the fulcrum around which the totality of the school image revolves. School principalship is one of most important educational leadership positions.

The secondary school principal plays a significant role in the school system to achieve its common goals. That is why some scholars describes him as an executive head of the school because of the way he makes decisions and implements decisions and programmes of the

school. He coordinates activities for work to proceed smoothly, quickly and efficiently to achieve the goals of the school. And this aim cannot be actualized by the principal alone (Somech, 2019). He requires the help of other staff. Principals, just like other administrators, plan, stimulate, coordinate, direct and evaluate the work of other staff in the school. That is why it is pertinent that a principal works with other staff to be effective in achieving choice cardinal objectives of the school. Principalship is a shared responsibility or leadership. Participatory decision-making is therefore a *sine quo non* in every organization. It makes provision for workers to assume full responsibility of the organization.

Nwana *et al* (2016) describe decision making as a conscious and deliberate resolve that binds the individual group to taking action in a specific way. Decision making is a conscious process of making choices among one or more alternatives with the intention of moving towards some desired states of affairs (Mmejim, 2018). It is the process of identifying and selecting a course of action to direct a problem or take advantage of an opportunity. Oku, Emenalo and Okeke (2018) define decision making as the selection of a course of action from among alternatives. It is a central job to do it, and when and where to do it and at times how it will be done. Oku, Emenalo and Okeke (2018) also, states that decision making is the process of choosing from among alternative ways of achieving an objective or providing a solution to a problem. It involves choice and entails cost. If one alternative is chosen, the other is lost (cost). Decision making is the process by which managers respond to the opportunities and threats that confront them by analyzing the options and making determinations, or decisions about specific organization goals and courses of action (Agi and Edwards, 2015). Decision making therefore requires careful and concerted efforts to achieve the best result.

The field of education is a living open system of thought that continually deals with fresh issues as they arise out of man's changing actions and experiences (Nwanna, Chukwu, Okatahi, Iwuihukwu, Miyu, Salawu and Isamil, 2016). These educational activities can only be carried out through effective leadership and decision making by the educational manager or leader. It is believed that the success or failure of any school is dependent upon the groups that make it up and effective utilization of the intellectual abilities of these groups or human resources helps the development of such an organization or schools which affects school's administration, job satisfaction, job commitment, productivity, school

administrative efficiency and school discipline in general (Nwanna, *et al.*, 2016). One of such groups and the major human resource is the teaching force.

Teaching is an interaction between a teacher (an instructor) and a student over a subject in a setting (Al-Hothali, 2018). This interaction leads to learning. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour which arises from an organization's interaction with its environment. It is a lifelong process of transforming information and experience into knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes. The success or failure of any educational system can be traced to the performance of teachers. Teachers are the bedrock of any educational system and the nerve of all the programmes and activities taking place in the school (Odunaike, Ijaduola and Epetimehin, 2018). Odunaike, (2018) state that the teacher is that individual who is able to make the learner want to learn and helps same to learn more.

Every system is adjudged by the value of its products and services and in the case of education, the core product is a well tutored learner who processes specific skills and knowledge with refined behaviour that enable him function effectively in the society (Onye and Ajuzie, 2018). Teachers' performance is essential in the school system. Performance is the act of accomplishing or executing a given task (Akinwarere, 2021). Teacher job performance is the duties performed by a teacher in a particular period in the school system in achieving organizational goals (Ayegbusi and Ogunlade, 2020). These authors noted that job performance could be measured through teachers' job satisfaction and job attitudes such as job commitment, feelings of job challenge, job meaningfulness and job responsibility including ethics compliance for enhanced school effectiveness (Nwanna, *et al.*, 2016). No wonder, Umoh, Bailey and Akangbou, (2021) explains that the role of the teacher has a moral dimension, since he/she is the link between the school and the society. He/she teaches and instructs students, organizes educational activities and cooperates with the family in raising children and cultivating morals in them.

A teacher qualified with moral and scientific competences can create through his practices a new developed generation. Based on the distinctive and serious role played by the teacher in the educational system, he/ she should have a set of characteristics commensurate with the roles assigned to him/ her. Ethics regulate the behaviour of the

professionals and preserve the continuity and survival of the profession (Ayegbusi and Ogunlade, 2020).

Studying teaching ethics is essential for the advancement of moral behaviour that has a favourable impact on both the delivery of instruction and the relationships among all members of the school community. They serve as a foundation for the function of the teacher in the educational process and are mostly based on the existence of a favourable tendency towards the profession (Akinwarere, 2021). Al-Hothali (2018) demonstrates that a code of ethics or norms of conduct that are morally forced on the teacher give a lot of room for the teacher's discretion, allowing the instructor to determine what is moral or immoral in the context of these principles. When these general norms are applied incorrectly, they lose all of their meaning and become empty formalities. Umoh, Bailey and Akangbou (2021) believe that the Code of Ethics of the Teaching profession is required for controlling the educational process and keeping it from deviation. Indeed, the code of ethics seems to bring about school effectiveness. The search for effective schools is one of the main education reform initiatives taking place in many countries today. School effectiveness therefore means 'the school accomplishes its objectives'. School effectiveness can be regarded as a distinct characteristic of an effective school (Okeke and Uwazurike, 2016). Thus, the Code of Ethics represents a necessity for every professional and for educators specifically, because of the seriousness of their profession and its role in building the human personality with its various dimensions.

### **Decision Making Practices: Its Process and Teachers' Involvement**

Therefore, making decisions is a continuous process rather than a one-time task (Wordah and Ekwesianya, 2020). Every successful organisation must make decisions that enable it to accomplish its mission and that address the pressing demands of its constituents (Moran, 2019). Additionally, according to Okeke and Uwazurike (2016), decisions are made every day at school about the conduct of work, the distribution of resources, and short-term goals.

Policies (the specification of goals), resources (people, money, materials, and authority), and execution methods all play a role in decisions (integration and synthesis). The school principal should establish two key principles when making decisions of this type: policy

decisions that seek purposeful action and executing decisions that seek coordination of activity (Wordah and Ekwesianya, 2020). As a result, making decisions is crucial to carrying out tasks, allocating resources, developing short- and long-term plans, and carrying out the goals and activities of the school. This is true for both schools and organisations as a whole. Moreover, a school leader's main job is to lead the school through effective. Decision making, and quite often they have to decide on what is to be done, who to do it, and when and where is to be done. For a number of reasons, teacher decision-making engagement has advanced. Most frequently, participation is believed to promote teacher-administrator communication and the calibre of educational decision-making. It is also believed that involvement may improve the quality of teachers' "work lives" (Somech, 2019). Additionally, participation by teachers in decision-making processes is thought to boost their willingness to put those decisions into practise in the classroom, so fostering educational productivity (Onye and Ajuzie, 2018).

Successful educational management has been shown to be significantly influenced by participatory decision-making. It not only makes decisions easier to implement, but it also makes teachers feel respected and in control. Additionally, such participation increases staff morale, commitment and teamwork while also fostering trust, assisting teachers in the development of new abilities, and improving school performance. It was believed that involving teachers in decision-making would break down communication between administrators and teachers (Sarıkaya, N. and Erdoğan, 2016).

### **Teachers' Work Ethics Compliance**

The phrase ethics, usually referred to as professional behaviour, relates to a person's conduct, particularly in formal organisations. It is characterised by an employee's conduct, demeanour, and the way they plan and carry out a certain task. The term "conduct" can also refer to the methods used by a company to plan, coordinate, and manage its activities, materials, and human resources in order to meet its objectives. Teachers are required to exhibit a complete professional dedication to their official duties, transparency, equity, and accountability in a school context. Teachers are supposed to have solid intellectual ability, communication skill, honesty, respect, trustworthiness, caring, confidentiality, decent dressing habit, and guiding oriented since no educational system can surpass the quality of teachers.

These core values include, but are not limited to, knowledge, communication skills, respect, integrity, care, trust, and confidentiality. They also include dressing habits, guidance, assembly time books, environmental sanitation, lessons, lesson notes, and sandwich courses. They also include use of school facilities, guidance and counselling unit exams/release of results/certificates, continuous assessment, and national curriculum.

Teachers must carry out instructional responsibilities as required by the curriculum in order for students to meet the established academic objectives in the classroom. In the end, great teaching and learning processes depend on teachers' ability to use instructional resources effectively (Akinwarere, 2021).

### **The School Effectiveness**

The effectiveness of the teaching-learning process depends on the teacher's capacity to exhibit sound professional qualities like scholarship through sufficient study, critical thinking and problem solving. Teachers' subject-matter expertise and pedagogical abilities are clear indicators of the quality of the instruction they deliver. This implies that the true teacher must be aware of what, how and whom he is to educate. The goal is to successfully deliver the curriculum in order to meet the established educational goals and standards in schools (Somech, 2019).

To produce and enhance expected learning outcomes, teachers are expected to provide crucial inputs like adequate planning of lesson notes, effective delivery of lessons, proper monitoring and evaluation of students' performance, providing regular feedback on students' performance, improvisation of instructional materials, adequate keeping of records, and appropriate discipline of students (Umoh, Bailey and Akangbou, 2021).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In order to improve school performance, this article conceptually evaluated the relationship between decision-making strategies and teachers' adherence to professional ethics. Leadership in every organisational environment places a high value on participatory decision-making. As a result, it is crucial for principals of public secondary schools to include other staff members in decision-making to increase their motivation to truly contribute their share to accomplishing the system's objectives. Effective decision-making procedures are essential to



managing the educational system successfully. Any decision that is made incorrectly has a detrimental impact on the school's efficient operation. Review of the literature reveals that, in addition to decision-making procedures, teachers' work ethics have a significant impact on the efficacy of secondary schools. This suggests that, in secondary schools, the majority of teachers adhered to professional ethics and displayed the desired commitment to task performance. In public senior secondary schools in Nigeria, teachers exhibited a high level of adherence to professional ethics in terms of timeliness, good communication skills, positive human interactions, effective time management, adequate subject knowledge, and good clothing habits.

However, the following recommendations were made.

1. Principals should encourage teachers to actively participate in decision-making because this will have a significant impact on how committed teachers are to their jobs in secondary schools. Effective policies that direct principals of public secondary schools in fostering highly ethical instructional behaviour and enhancing teachers' dedication to their jobs are needed. In order to encourage teachers' commitment to their jobs, principals should also demonstrate a strong sense of instructional responsibility while acting in leadership roles in the classroom.
2. In order to give principals, the chance to become familiar with ethical instructional leadership, decision-making, instruction supervision, communication, collaborative, and accountability behaviours that will support teachers' job commitment in schools, the State government should organise leadership training programmes in conjunction with the educational districts within each State.
3. To encourage the dedication of competent teachers, principals should greatly improve their methods of communication in the classroom. By encouraging moral leadership behaviours that will greatly enhance successful communication methods in schools for teachers' devotion to their jobs, this will ensure that they maintain an open-door policy. Principals' should ensure that they apply mechanisms which will highly foster ethical behaviour and conducts in order to boost and improve collaborations of staff members in schools for strengthening teachers' job commitment.
4. The conduct of school principals should be held to a higher standard of ethics. When handling financial matters, they must act in a way that fosters transparency, a feeling of responsibility, and integrity in order

to depict ethical accountability that will encourage teachers' commitment to their jobs in the classroom. Principals should always make sure that they effectively comply with decision-making, ethical instructional leadership, instructional supervisory, communication, collaborative, and accountability leadership behaviours in their dealings with teachers in the school in order to have a positive impact on teachers' job satisfaction. This is because teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Nigeria could be predicted on the basis of the ethical leadership behaviours fostered by principals.

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