

Managerial Strategies for Ethical Leadership and Mentoring in Nigerian Educational Institutions: A Case Study of Enugu State College Of Education (Technical) and the Institute Of Management and Technology.

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Abstract: The study focused on the managerial strategies for ethical leadership and mentorship in educational institutions with a focus on Enugu State College of Education Technical (ESCET) and Institute of Management and Technology (IMT). A descriptive survey research design was adopted. A questionnaire on "Practices of Principal Officers in Promoting Ethical Leadership and Mentoring", structured by the researchers was used to get the responses of the principal officers of both institutions. The data was analyzed using the mean and standard deviation with a benchmark of 2.50 for acceptance. The findings show that ethical leadership practices are actively present in Enugu State College of Education Technical (ESCET) and Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) mentorship is recognized as a valuable tool for promoting ethical leadership and enhancing professional development and there is a growing commitment to embedding ethical leadership and mentorship into institutional strategies. Based on these findings, the researchers made appropriate recommendations: training programs, teacher induction programs, relevant policies and periodic evaluations. It is anticipated that if implemented by the authorities concerned, things will change for better.

Keywords: ethical leadership, mentoring, educational management, sustainability, value-based practices.

Introduction

Educational leadership in Nigeria plays a central role in shaping institutional culture, professional behavior, and the quality of teaching and learning. Yet, many educational institutions continue to grapple with issues rooted in poor leadership ethics, including managerial inefficiencies, declining academic standards, and low teacher motivation (Ajayi, 2019; Alabi, 2021). The absence of an institutionalized framework for ethical leadership undermines efforts to create sustainable and value-driven educational systems. These challenges are compounded by a lack of accountability structures, limited leadership training, and a disconnect between educational goals and leadership practices.

Ethical leadership, which consists of integrity, fairness, accountability, and inclusivity, has redeemed itself to be crucial in the development of trust and professionalism among educational settings (Oluwaseun, 2020). It requires that school leaders set ethical examples, exhibit openness in decision-making, and develop inclusive settings where all stakeholders are treated with respect and value. Queer such leadership develops the foundation for a good institutional culture where policies and practices go hand in hand with ethical standards and societal expectations.

When implemented with structured mentoring programs, ethical leadership supports the teacher capacity as well as institutional ethics. Through mentoring, there is guidance and role modeling that can also influence the professional identity among teachers and administrators. Studies have found that good mentoring leads to reflective teaching cultures, effective staff morale, and professional values among educators and the learners

(Chukwudi, 2022; Emeka, 2020). Moreover, mentorship enhances career growth, cultivates collaboration, and prepares new teachers to deal with ethical challenges in a school setting.

Several studies (Adeyemi, 2021; Udo, 2023) support the statement that ethical leadership has an impact on academic achievements as well as the learning environment, where students are more likely to feel cooperatively supported. On the other hand, professional standards are eroded, institutional accountability is weakened, and resistance to reform is fostered by a lack of leadership factors. Ethical leadership and mentoring then become instrumental for school effectiveness in conditions where professional ethics are not very tightly prescribed.

Rising education reforms in Nigeria's education sphere (Nwankwo, 2022; Ibe, 2023) tie this analysis together and highlight the necessity to incorporate moral principles in frameworks of leadership. Such reforms require a paradigm shift in how administrative practices are done so that the practices follow global best practices and are responsive to the real situations on ground. However, the reform implementation without practical strategies may result in shallow change. This research fills in that gap by studying the development of a practical and sustainable model that connects ethically leading leadership with mentoring practice.

This research specifically targets Enugu State College of Education Technical (ESCET) and the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT)—two influential institutions in Enugu State. Through studying their leadership and mentoring practices, the study made recommendations for improvement and sustainability to suit the Nigerian educational context. The objective is to develop the discourse on ethical school management and to help in the establishment of stronger, more accountable institutions promoting academic excellence as well as moral integrity.

Statement of the Problem

The current Nigerian educational institutions are hindered by a shortfall in well articulated strategies for ethical leadership and mentoring. Basic virtues such as respect and honesty are not exercised by the students. It is common that students do not greet the staff they meet on the campus in their daily activities. Many students would not give their teachers preference to use the walk way first if they meet in a narrow path. Even the language they use speaking to the staff are not always courteous. On the part of the teachers, there are some signs of low commitment to duty, inadequate commitment to duty, many teachers and lecturers late and in severe cases, absent without permission from the relevant authority. Similarly, when students are not properly mentored, they graduate without actualizing their lives dreams. They are unable to fit into the life in the outer society. Some have the opportunity get into politics to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses. All these contrary to the objective of education of the youths as in the National Policy on Education by the federal government of Nigeria. One therefore wonders whether the educational institutions are inculcating ethical leadership and mentoring practices to their students and staff. In summary, this study therefore went out to satisfy this curiosity. It is believed that the would be better if the appropriate strategies are applied.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to investigate managerial strategies for ethical leadership and mentoring in Nigerian educational institutions. Specifically the study sought:

1. To investigate existing ethical leadership practices within ESCET and IMT.
2. To examine the impact of mentoring on ethical conduct and leadership development in educational institutions.
3. To identify a sustainable framework for integrating ethical leadership and mentoring into school management.

Research Questions

1. What are the prevailing ethical leadership practices in ESCET and IMT?
2. How do mentoring initiatives contribute to ethical leadership and professional development?
3. What strategic framework can be developed to embed ethical leadership and mentoring into educational management?

Literature Review

Ethical Leadership in Educational Institutions

Ethical leadership involves decision-making from principles, transparency, and value for justice and equity (Chikezie, 2020). It nurtures trust between stakeholders in an educational environment, promotes coalition governance, and increases the credibility of the institutions (Adeyemi, 2021). Research indicates that ethical leadership has a huge effect on teacher effectiveness, learner outcomes, and institutional integrity (Okoro, 2022; Anuforo, 2023). In Nigeria, where educational corruption and systemic inefficiencies continue to exist, ethical leadership is not only acceptable but necessary (Ajayi, 2019; Nwosu, 2021).

The Role of Mentoring in Promoting Ethical Behavior

The sharing of professional values, instruction on making ethical decisions, and the growth of reflective practices in education constitute mentoring (Chukwudi, 2022; Ikemefuna, 2024). Practical mentorship gives teachers the ability to pass through ethical challenges, but it also promotes a culture of accountability and self-control. Findings indicate that in this context of mentor modeling ethical conduct, mentees tend to internalize similar conduct, thereby leading to institutional reform (Nnamdi, 2021; Onwuka, 2022). Moreover, students are ethically exposed to mentorship that enhances academic integrity and social behavior (Ibe 2023).

Toward a Sustainable Educational Model

Sustainability in education describes leadership practices and institutional systems that can survive over time without losing either ethical or professional standards (Emeka, 2023). There is a need for sustainable models for ethical leadership and value-driven policies, but there is also a need for capacity building, especially in environments like Nigeria, where there are not enough resources (Eze, 2021; Nwosu, 2024). An adaptive, inclusive, local, educational context-based, sustainable, ethical leadership model should be availed (Opara, 2022; Chikezie, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Transformational Leadership Theory

According to Bass (1985), the Transformational Leadership Theory describes the importance of visionary leaders in effecting change, working together, and supporting integrity. This theory is especially applicable to educational leadership, which transformational leaders may set an example for, provide workshops for, such as for mentoring support, or even implement institutional goals in line with ethical standards (Oluwaseun, 2020; Ajayi, 2019). By motivating stakeholders to transcend self-interest for the collective good, transformational leaders lay the groundwork for sustainable educational reform. The theory supports the development of ethical, innovative, and people-centered leadership in institutions such as ESCET and IMT.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was employed to gather data from principal officers at ESCET and IMT. A structured questionnaire, validated through a pilot study, was used to assess perceptions of ethical leadership and mentoring practices. Quantitative data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with a cutoff point of 2.5 set as the minimum threshold for acceptance. This statistical approach ensured that only findings of substantial significance informed the proposed framework.

Results

Analysis of Data in Tables

Table 1: Prevailing Ethical Leadership Practices in ESCET and IMT

Item	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Decision (≥ 2.5)
1. School leaders consistently model ethical behavior.	3.1	0.77	Accepted
2. Policies guiding ethical conduct are clearly communicated.	2.9	0.85	Accepted
3. Leadership decisions are transparent and accountable.	2.7	0.91	Accepted
4. Teachers and staff are included in ethical policy discussions.	2.6	0.80	Accepted
5. Leaders demonstrate fairness in conflict resolution.	3.2	0.73	Accepted
6. Ethical breaches are addressed promptly and justly.	2.8	0.82	Accepted

Table 2: Contributions of Mentoring to Ethical Leadership and Professional Development

Item	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Decision (≥ 2.5)
1. Mentoring programs are established and functional.	2.9	0.88	Accepted
2. Mentors serve as ethical role models for junior staff.	3.0	0.79	Accepted
3. Mentoring supports professional growth and ethical reasoning.	3.1	0.70	Accepted
4. Mentees report improved ethical decision-making.	2.7	0.91	Accepted
5. Mentoring enhances teacher-student relationship quality.	2.8	0.83	Accepted
6. Mentoring is integrated into staff development initiatives.	2.6	0.86	Accepted

Table 3: Strategic Framework for Embedding Ethical Leadership and Mentoring

Item	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Decision (≥ 2.5)
1. The institution has a plan for ethical leadership development.	3.0	0.68	Accepted
2. Ethical mentoring is part of the leadership strategy.	3.2	0.74	Accepted
3. Staff training incorporates ethics and mentoring modules.	2.9	0.77	Accepted
4. A monitoring system exists to track ethical practices.	2.6	0.85	Accepted
5. Ethical standards are part of staff evaluation criteria.	2.7	0.81	Accepted
6. Stakeholders are involved in the ethical leadership planning process.	2.8	0.79	Accepted

Discussion of Findings

Findings from Table 1 reveal that ethical leadership practices are actively present in ESCET and IMT. A significant number of respondents affirmed that school leaders consistently model ethical behavior (M = 3.1) and resolve conflicts fairly (M = 3.2). The mean scores for items such as transparent decision-making (M = 2.7) and prompt response to ethical breaches (M = 2.8) indicate a positive trend, though they also highlight areas where improvements are needed. While ethical principles are embedded in leadership actions, moderate scores suggest

that communication and participatory decision-making could be strengthened to ensure a more inclusive ethical culture.

These results affirm previous studies (Ajayi, 2019; Oluwaseun, 2020) which emphasize the role of ethical leadership in shaping school values and ensuring accountability in management. They also align with Emeka (2023), who posits that fairness and transparency are cornerstones of ethical school governance.

As shown in Table 2, mentoring is recognized as a valuable tool for promoting ethical leadership and enhancing professional development. Respondents agreed that mentors serve as ethical role models ($M = 3.0$) and support mentees in making ethically sound decisions ($M = 2.7$). Additionally, the integration of mentoring into staff development ($M = 2.6$) and its contribution to teacher-student relationships ($M = 2.8$) received favorable responses.

These findings support Chukwudi (2022) and Onwuka (2022), who emphasize the importance of mentoring in cultivating ethical awareness and guiding professional behavior. The results also corroborate the view of Ikemefuna (2024), who highlights mentoring as a practical framework for ethical capacity building among educators. However, the slightly lower mean scores suggest that mentoring could be more formally structured and better integrated across institutions.

Table 3 illustrates that there is a growing commitment to embedding ethical leadership and mentoring into institutional strategies. The highest-rated items include the incorporation of ethical mentoring into leadership strategy ($M = 3.2$) and having structured plans for ethical leadership development ($M = 3.0$). The existence of monitoring systems ($M = 2.6$) and stakeholder participation ($M = 2.8$) indicate that while structures exist, more robust mechanisms and wider engagement are needed.

These findings reinforce literature that calls for the institutionalization of ethical leadership through strategic planning (Opara, 2022; Eze, 2021). They echo the views of Nwankwo (2022) and Nwosu (2024), who stress the need for sustainable and participatory leadership frameworks that include ongoing training, evaluation, and ethical accountability.

Overall, the responses affirm the feasibility of developing a strategic, sustainable model for ethical leadership and mentoring within Nigerian educational institutions.

Conclusion

The study concludes that ethical leadership and mentoring are indispensable to effective educational management in Nigeria. ESCET and IMT exemplify institutions where such practices can be institutionalized. The development and implementation of a sustainable framework will enhance transparency, strengthen staff capacity, and improve academic standards. Ultimately, the study underscores the urgent need for ethical reform across Nigeria's educational landscape.

Educational Implications

1. Ethical leadership fosters a culture of trust, accountability, and professionalism.
2. Structured mentoring programs support leadership development and ethical behavior among educators.
3. Sustainable models are essential for institutionalizing ethical practices in education.
4. Ethical leadership contributes to improved academic outcomes and organizational resilience.

Recommendations

1. Design and implement targeted training programs for educational leaders on ethical leadership principles.
2. Integrate mentoring into teacher induction and professional development initiatives.
3. Establish institutional policies that prioritize ethical conduct and leadership accountability.

4. Conduct periodic evaluations to assess the impact of ethical leadership and mentoring initiatives on institutional performance.

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