

Proffering Solution to Professional Misconduct among Secondary School Teachers in Nnewi Education Zone

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Abstract: - This study was carried out in the aim of providing solutions to professional misconduct among secondary school teachers in Nnewi Education Zone. To achieve this, the study adopted a survey research design method. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. 280 teachers were studied in the area. Mean rating was used to analyze the data collected. The findings of the study showed that there are several professional misconducts on the side of the teachers; these misconducts have negative effects on the academic development of the schools and the students. The study concluded that if strong measures are not taken by the government and other stakeholders, the schools will end up a place where children receive bad training instead of good one. Based on the findings, the study recommended that government should ensure that teachers are thoroughly screened for academic qualification and otherwise before they are employed for teaching; rules and regulations should be made to guide the school teachers, and must be applied all the time; the quality of teachers performance must be checked at the end of every term through the academic performance of the students. This will help to ascertain the level of teacher's commitment during the term; and there should be regulatory bodies in the school that monitor the activities of the school. The presence of these bodies will make the teacher refrain from unprofessional activities in the school.

Keywords: professional misconduct; teacher; secondary schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Professionalism is the integral part of education at any level: from basic to higher level of education. The advanced learner dictionary defined a professional to be somebody who is connected with a job that needs special training and skill or one that needs a high level of education. While misconduct means unacceptable behaviours by a professional person or bad management. A professional misconduct can be said to be one that practices his profession beyond its authorized scope. Teachers are seen as educational professionals who impart knowledge on the students. A teacher, to a student, especially at the basic level, is the next person after his/her parents who they must listen to and obey their instructions. It suffices to say that a teacher contributes a great percentage of what a child knows and believes; and the child, to a great extent, will surely uphold this training received from the teacher even till adulthood. This makes the job of a teacher to be more than ordinary teaching and writing, but includes good conduct which a child can emulate and which does not negate the golden rules of teacher's

professional conduct. Nwoko (2017) explained that a teacher's job line does not stop at the students who are placed under his care; it extends to the teacher teaching himself the necessary good conducts that will speak for him even in his absence. However, in some schools today, some teachers are found to carry out activities and behaviours that are against the professional etiquette of teaching. This jeopardizes the future of the students who are learning from such teachers, and development of the school which is a training ground for future leaders. Many scholars have clamoured against the continued professional misconduct of some teachers and its reflection in the development of the society. The reflection here is majorly noticed in the habits that are being displayed by some youth today which can be traced to what they learnt during their school days (Hall, 2015). Some of the professional misconducts found in some teachers include absenteeism from school and lesson, lateness, non-preparation of lesson notes, failure to mark students exercise books, non-completion of school records such as diaries, registers, student results, involvement in examination malpractices, illegal collection of fund from parent and students, unapproved study leave, drinking, drug taking and sexual immorality, etc. According to Enamiroro (2018) these are serious threats to all levels in the educational system, because teachers are the professionals, entrusted with the responsibility to conserve the future and destiny of the nation. The need to tackle professional misconduct in the schools, especially in the secondary schools cannot be overemphasized as this is the formation stage of every student; hence whatever misconduct a teacher shows in the school affects the student's academic and moral development.

Statement of the problem

The teacher belongs to a special class (sub-group) saddled with the responsibility of molding the child into a functional adult that will contribute to national development with the following qualities; knowledge of the subject matter being taught far ahead of that of the pupils; professional skill or know-how to awaken a child's interest in what is being taught and to enkindle in his pupils a love of learning and a good moral character. According to Green (2016) teachers are role models as well as educators in the classrooms and even outside the classroom. In other words, a teacher's actions, beliefs, sense of humor, self-discipline, and bearing are all

lessons that are presented to students throughout the education experience (Ebert, 2013). In the school settings and even at the society level, teachers are highly trusted and considered to be role models in school and in the community. Teachers, therefore, are the key element to ensure that learners are supplied with relevant skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes. Therefore, achievement of quality education abides within their maintaining the ethical standards of the teaching profession. Despite all the values, qualities and importance given to teachers, still professional misconduct among teachers is an alarming problem all over the world (Barrett, 2015). For example, Williams and Lebrun (2019) report that in New York state the number of professional misconduct accusations against educators between 2010 to 2017 increased to about 134 cases involving teachers and other school employee into sexual acts and other improper relationship. However, this spate of professional misconduct found in the habit of some teachers today are alarming and contribute immensely to the poor development - both in academic and structure - found in many schools today. This unhealthy situation, by extension, affects the academic achievement of the students and their moral upbringing in the society. Teachers are trusted and given the responsibility of not only teaching students in the classroom, but also shaping appropriate student behavior. This cannot be achieved if teachers themselves behave unethically towards their profession. This study therefore attempts to proffer solutions to professional misconducts in our secondary schools today, using the Nnewi educational zone as a case study.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to provide a solution to professional misconduct among secondary school teachers using the Nnewi education zone as a case study. Specifically, the study intends to:

- i. Identify the professional misconducts prevalent in secondary schools school teachers in Nnewi educational zone, Anambra state
- ii. Determine the effects of teachers professional misconduct on the academic development of secondary schools in Nnewi educational zone, Anambra state
- iii. Identify the solutions to the problem of teachers professional misconduct in secondary schools in Nnewi educational zone, Anambra state

Significance of the study

The study will be useful to the government, school management, teachers and future researchers.

To the government, the study will provide them with practical materials on the causes of teachers' professional misconduct and the effect on the school system.

School management will find the study very relevant in that it will educate them on the effects of teacher's professional

misconduct on the academic activities of the school. It will also provide them with solutions to these problems.

The study will also be useful to the teachers in that it will enlighten them on the conducts that are not expected of a teacher. The study will also educate them on the consequences of professional misconduct on the defaulted teacher.

Future researchers will find the study useful in that it will provide them with materials on the solution to professional misconduct among secondary school teachers in Nnewi education zone. The study will also serve as a reference material to those who are carrying out a research on the same topic or any related one.

Research questions

The following research questions will guide the research.

- i. What are the professional misconducts found in secondary schools school teachers in Nnewi educational zone, Anambra state?
- ii. What effects does teachers' professional misconduct have on the academic development of secondary schools in Nnewi educational zone, Anambra state?
- iii. What are the solutions to the problem of teachers' professional misconduct in secondary schools in Nnewi educational zone, Anambra state?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Professional misconduct

Hawa (2016) asserted that misconduct is wrongful, improper, or unlawful conduct motivated by premeditated or intentional purpose or by obstinate indifference to the consequences of one's acts. Misconduct can be considered an unacceptable or improper behavior, especially for a professional person. Two categories of misconduct are sexual misconduct and official misconduct. In connection with school discipline, "misconduct" is generally understood to be student behavior that is unacceptable to school officials but does not violate criminal statutes, including absenteeism, tardiness, bullying, and inappropriate language. Gibson (2018) noted that professional misconduct is unethical or unprofessional behaviour that falls short of the ethical or professional standards, guides or codes of conduct, accepted by a particular profession. Behavior outside the bounds of what is considered acceptable or worthy of its membership by the governing body of a profession.

According to Onichamba (2015) professional misconduct is a violation of the rules or boundaries set by the governing body of a profession. Newton (2017) explained that the term professional misconduct encompasses an unreasonable lack of skill or unfaithfulness in carrying out professional or fiduciary duties

Professional misconduct in education

Misconduct occurs in various forms and ranges in severity from allegations of direct harm to students (such as physical

or sexual abuse) to an act detrimental to the education profession (such as falsifying documentation of continuing education courses or cheating on a professional exam). For the most part, misconduct by educators occurs either on the school campus or with members of the school community, but can also be something that happens outside of the school environment and does not involve students (Nwoko, 2017). According to Jill (2015) misconduct of an educator includes any behavior that breaches the employment contract, such as: Teaching a subject for which she was NOT hired, during school hours; Depending on the subject, teaching against curriculum, or not teaching to grade level; Using school facilities, resources, and students for financial gain. Like selling private tutoring services to your own students; helping students cheat on standardized tests; not reporting suspected child abuse to authorities; Moral misconduct, such as child abuse.

Causes of teachers professional misconduct

According to Amadi (2016) the unprofessional and destructive behaviour of teachers are as a result of the following:

Poor Professional Training: A well equipped professional teacher's attitude cannot be contrary to school development. Some of the teachers since 1976 are the products of crash programmes for production of teachers for the primary schools. Their entry qualifications were lower than other professional training programmes. Also the nature of the crash programme did not give enough time for teaching and learning. These teachers' subject matter are a little if not below that of some brilliant students. Such teachers always give excuses for everything to avoid teaching their lesson periods and other extracurricular activities. Some of sure teachers were involved in other occupations and such treat their teaching job as part time.

Poor Condition of Service: Before 1999, the only difference between a local farmer and a teacher was a merging monthly salary which was not regularly paid. Allowances paid to other workers were not paid to teachers. As a result, teachers compete with farmers in the farms, traders in the market and contractors in companies. These sources of extra incomes by teachers which are acts of indiscipline resulted from poor condition of service and irregular payment of salaries.

Teacher Relationship with School head and Social Status: Majority, especially female teachers who are wives of politicians intimidate school heads with their husband positions. Some have personal relationships or affairs with school heads. Such teachers are not regular in school and in lessons. They use school period for their personal business and political affairs at the detriment of the students. Most of them do not take active part in extra-curricular activities of the school and are not instructionally effective and efficient.

Lack of Professional Cooperation among Teachers: Teachers like other professional bodies do not adapt group effort in the

performance of their instructional duties. There are teachers who do not cooperate with their colleagues. They stir up confusion and disorganized every programme proposed in the school under religious ideology or traditional beliefs. Such teachers usually fail to carry out most committee assignments.

Inadequate Supervision by Ministry of Education Personnel: Frequent visits to schools by officials of the Ministry are inadequate. School heads also do not carry out daily classroom observation of teachers. This leads to an increase in the number of teachers who do not effectively perform their instructional duties. It also increases the frequency of teachers who put up bad behaviour, snubbing, cursing, insulting their colleagues, disrespecting parents and other members of the public.

Theoretical framework

Virtue Ethics Theory

Virtue ethics was propounded by Hursthouse, R. (2013). It is a broad term for theories that emphasize the role of character and virtue in moral philosophy rather than either doing one's duty or acting in order to bring about good consequences. A virtue ethicist is likely to give you this kind of moral advice: "Act as a virtuous person would act in your situation." A virtue is generally agreed to be a character trait, such as a habitual action or settled sentiment. Specifically, a virtue is a positive trait that makes its possessor a good human being. A virtue is thus to be distinguished from single actions or feelings. According to Hursthouse (2013) a virtue such as honesty or generosity is not just a tendency to do what is honest or generous, nor is it to be helpfully specified as a "desirable" or "morally valuable" character trait. It is, indeed a character trait—that is, a disposition which is well entrenched in its possessor, something that, as we say "goes all the way down", unlike a habit such as being a tea-drinker—but the disposition in question, far from being a single track disposition to do honest actions, or even honest actions for certain reasons, is multi-track. It is concerned with many other actions as well, with emotions and emotional reactions, choices, values, desires, perceptions, attitudes, interests, expectations and sensibilities. To possess a virtue is to be a certain sort of person with a certain complex mindset.

Empirical Review

Mabagala (2017) carried out a study on the prevalence of professional misconduct among public secondary school teachers in Nzega District, Tanzania public secondary schools. This study employed descriptive survey research design. The sample consisted of 403 respondents in which teachers and students were randomly selected, while heads of schools and Teachers Services Department (TSD) officials were purposely selected based on their administrative roles. Data for this study were collected through questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics using SPSS version 20. Findings revealed that teachers' professional misconduct was low. However,

financial mismanagement, negligence of duty, and absenteeism were among the common professional misconduct acts in secondary schools in Nzega District. Findings also revealed that poor remuneration, failure to fulfill teachers' needs, and lack of motivation were among the sources of teacher's explanations for misconduct. Based on the findings, the government through the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVC) should respond to teachers' needs in a timely manner, and conduct regular seminars on teacher professionalism. Moreover, a similar study should be conducted to assess teachers' misconduct at primary school and higher institution levels. A study was carried out by Shah (2016) on Impact Of Teacher's Behaviour on the impact of teacher's behaviour on the academic achievement of university students. All the teachers and students of public sector universities constituted the population. From the 15 public sector universities, 375 teachers and 1500 students from five departments were selected as a sample. Two questionnaires were developed and validated through pilot testing and administered to the sample for the collection of data. The researcher personally visited respondents, thus 100% data were collected. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed by using chi-square and Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation (r). The major conclusions of the study were that teachers felt proud to be teachers, they adjusted themselves with the prevailing situation and circumstances, and they used different motivational techniques for teaching. Students were found to be satisfied with the positive behaviour of their teachers. The relationship between the teachers' behaviour and corresponding academic achievement (marks) revealed a highly positive significant correlation.

III. METHOD

Survey research design was used in carrying out this study. This is chosen because the study is set to study people, their attitudes, belief system, opinions and other behavioral manifestations. The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Nnewi Education Zone of Anambra State. Nnewi Education Zone is located in Anambra South Senatorial District. Nnewi Education Zone is made up of four Local Government Areas; namely: Nnewi North, Nnewi South, Ihiala and Ekwusigo. The Lingua Franca of the area is Igbo and English language. Altogether there are 50 public secondary schools in the zones (Post Primary Schools Service Commission, Nnewi Zone, 2020). In connection with this study, the population of study is made up of teachers in the study area. The teachers in the 50 public schools are 2952 in number (Anambra State Ministry of Information, 2020). Stratified random sampling was used to select 295 teachers from the zone which represents 10% of the entire population. Questionnaire was used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire contains 15 items grouped in 3 clusters which were used to seek the response of the respondents on the subject matter. The data collected will be analyzed using

mean scores. Four point rating scores will be assigned numerical values as shown below:

Strongly Agree (SA) 4, Agree (A) 3, Disagree (D) 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.

Decision Rule:

Mean rating of any item ranging from 2.5 and above will be regarded to be agreed, while those below 2.5 will be regarded as disagreed.

IV. RESULT PRESENTATION

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S/N	ITEMS DESCRIPTION	Σfx	X	REMARK
Cluster 1: Respondents mean ratings on the professional misconducts found in secondary schools school teachers in Nnewi educational zone, Anambra state				
1.	Absenteeism to school	957	3.4	Agree
2.	Child abuse	906	3.2	Agree
3.	Fighting	966	3.5	Agree
4.	Lateness to school	840	3.0	Agree
5.	Encouraging examination malpractice	820	2.9	Agree
	Grand Mean		3.2	Agree
6.	Poor performance in the overall school result	638	2.2	Not agree
7.	Lack of interest in teaching	825	2.9	Agree
8.	Disregarding the school curriculum	849	3.0	Agree
9.	Students lost of interest in learning	771	2.8	Agree
10.	Students withdrawing from the school	774	2.8	Agree
	Grand Mean		2.7	Agree
11.	Employment of qualified teachers	787	2.8	Agree
12.	Implementation of rules and regulations	643	2.3	Agree
13.	Reviewing the quality of teaching through students' end of the term performance	835	3.0	Agree
14.	Instituting a regulatory body	805	2.9	Agree
15.	Punishment for offenders	717	2.6	Agree
	Grand Mean		2.7	Agree

V. MAJOR FINDINGS

Data in cluster one showed that the respondents agreed that professional misconduct such as absenteeism, child abuse, lateness to school, exam malpractice, etc. are found in the study area. This suggests that there is a need for regulatory

bodies to find a lasting solution to teacher's professional misconduct.

Data in cluster two also showed that the respondents agreed that teacher's professional misconduct has effects such as lack of interest in teaching by the teachers, teacher disregarding school curriculum, students lost of interest in learning, parents withdrawing their children from school, etc on the academic development of schools.

Data in cluster three showed that the respondents agreed that solutions such as employment of qualified teachers, implementation of rules and regulations, Reviewing the quality of teaching through students' end of the term performance, punishing offenders, etc can be used to proffer solutions to teacher's professional misconduct in secondary schools.

VI. CONCLUSION

There is gross professional misconduct in the secondary schools in the present time. This ranges from child abuse to absenteeism, encouraging exam malpractice, complacency on the assigned duties, etc. These misconducts have in numerous ways affected the academic development of secondary schools, especially the public schools, where little or absolutely no attention punishment is given to those found in these dastard acts. In so many ways, these professional issues have negatively affected both the academic achievement of the students. If not strong measures are taken by the government, the schools will end up a place where children receive bad training instead of good one.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should ensure that teachers are thoroughly screened for academic qualification and otherwise before they are employed for teaching. Rules and regulations should be made to guide the school teachers, and must be applied all the time. The quality of a teacher's performance must be checked at the end of every term through the academic performance of the students. This will help to ascertain the level of the teacher's commitment during the term. There should be regulatory bodies in the school that monitor the activities of

the school. The presence of these bodies will make the teacher refrain from unprofessional activities in the school. Government should work on the teachers' living and/or working conditions since such variables bring much influence on teachers' professional behaviour.

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