IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' ETHICAL LEADERSHIP ON EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT IN SENIOR SECONADARY SCHOOLS IN JEMA'A LGA, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study is undertaken to investigate the impact of ethical leadership among Principal of Senior Secondary Schools in Jema'a Local Government Area, kaduna state. Three objectives and three research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 284 Principals and Teachers in five (5) selected secondary schools. A sample size of 120 was drawn using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a Questionnaire called "Impact of Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (IELQ)". The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Educational Foundations and Measurement and Evalution and internal consistency reliability carried out using the Cronbach Alpha and yielded an index of 0.88. Mean and Standard deviation were used to answer research questions. The findings revealed, Principals employed different ethical leadership styles in secondary schools in Jema'a LGA. The findings also revealed that ethical leadership if practiced by Principals can have significant impact in fostering unity, integrity, enhance students' outcome and boost teachers' morale amongst others. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Principals of secondary schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State should prioritize ethical leadership practices to improve teachers morale and student outcomes.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, Principals, Secondary School, Effective Managemen

Introduction

Ethical leadership is a critical aspect of effective school management, especially in secondary schools where principals play a pivotal role in shaping the academic environment, influencing the behavior and development of students.Ethical leadership is a vital component of effective school management, as it promotes a positive school culture, improves students outcomes, and enhances teachers morale (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2018). Principals as school leaders play a

crucial role in fostering ethical leadership, which is essential for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment (Bush, 2020). However, the lack of ethical leadership among principals can lead to a decline in student achievement, teacher turnover, and a negative school climate (Harris et al., 2021).

Given the difficulties facing the Nigerian education system, the significance of ethical leadership in secondary schools cannot be emphasized (Adeyemi, 2019). This is also the case in Kaduna State's Jema'a Local Government Area (LGA), where secondary schools face a number of difficulties, such as inadequate resources, and infrastructure, and teacher shortages (Kaduna State Government, 2022). Principals' ethical leadership philosophies have a big influence on a school's general culture, output, and success. In the Jema'a Local Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna State, Nigeria, secondary school principals' ethical leadership is crucial to guaranteeing the students' overall development.

Ethical leadership according to Bush (2020) is a leadership style that highlights the significance of moral values and principles in behaviour and decision-making. It entails fostering an ethical culture that promotes the growth and well-being of all stakeholders as well as leading with honesty, integrity, and transparency. Harris, Mujis and Chapman (2023) viewed ethical leadership as the process of encouraging and motivating people to realize a common goal while advancing an ethical, trustworthy, and respectful culture. It involves leaders setting a standard of ethical conduct, promoting a sense of belonging and purpose, and making choices which strike a balance in the interests of the organization and people.

In secondary schools, ethical leadership is more than just following the rules; it also entails leading by example for students as well as staff. A supportive learning environment that encourages cooperation, respect, and trust among all stakeholders is produced by principals who demonstrate ethical leadership qualities like honesty, equity, openness, and accountability. According to research, morale among teachers, parental involvement, student outcomes, and overall school performance are all positively impacted by ethical leadership (Brown &Treviño, 2019).

Even though ethical leadership is important in secondary schools, principals frequently encounter a number of hurdles which render it harder for themselves to lead ethically. These difficulties could include juggling complicated power dynamics within the school community, conflicts of interest, pressure to meet academic goals at the expense of moral principles, and a lack of support from higher authorities. As noted by Johnson et al. (2020), overcoming these obstacles calls for moral decision-making, the guts to maintain moral principles even under trying circumstances, and a strong dedication to acting in the best interests of both staff and students.

Different ethical leadership styles can be adopted by secondary school principals in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State, depending on their individual values, beliefs, and experiences. Certain principals can exhibit transformational leadership traits by encouraging and inspiring others to pursue a common goal of moral rectitude and academic success. By putting the needs of their employees and students ahead of their own, others may demonstrate servant leadership traits. In order to encourage inclusivity and transparency, some principals may also adopt distributive leadership techniques by including a range of stakeholders in decision-making procedures (Smith & Brown, 2022). In order to better understand how ethical leadership affects teacher morale, student outcomes, and school climate, this study will look into the ethical leadership of secondary school principals in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State.

Concern over the lack of moral leadership among principals in Kaduna State's Jema'a Local Government Area (LGA) is growing, despite the fact that principals play a critical role in establishing the academic and moral climate of secondary schools. This has caused students' values to erode, their academic performance to suffer, and their level of indiscipline to rise. In addition, low teacher morale, poor resource management, and a lack of accountability and transparency in school administration have all been caused by unethical leadership. Additionally, the absence of moral leadership has made it more difficult for schools to create a positive learning environment, which has a negative impact on the region's overall educational quality. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine how ethical leadership affects the effectiveness of principals of secondary schools in Jema'a LGA of Kaduna State.

Purpose of the Study
The general purpose of the study is to examine the impact of principals ethical leadership on effective management of secondary schools in Jema;a LGA, Kaduna state. Specifically, the study intends to:
i.   Identify the Ethical Leadership Styles among Principals in Secondary Schools in Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna State.
ii. Investigate the Impact of Ethical Leadership on School Climate and Teacher Morale in secondary schools in Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna State.
iii. Investigate the Challenges faced by Principals in Implementing Ethical Leadership Practices in secondary schools in Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna State.

Research Questions
The following research Questions are raised to guide the study:
i.   What are the ethical leadership styles among principals of secondary schools in Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna State?
ii. What are the impacts of ethical leadership on school culture and teachers morale in secondary schools in Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna State?
iii. What are the challenges faced by principals in implementing ethical leadership practicesin secondary schools in Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna State?

Methodology
The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The design was fundamentally a non-experimental quantitative design in which a questionnaire was administered to a representative sample of the population to elicit responses on the impact of ethical leadership among principal of senior secondary schools in Jema'a local government, Kaduna State. The population of the study comprised all 284 principals and teachers from five (5) selected senior secondary schools in the local government. A sample size of 120 principals and teachers was drawn through a simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Impact of Ethical Leadership Questionnaire" (IELQ). The instrument has two sections, A and B, respectively. Section A elicits demographic information such as name of school, rank and qualification, while Section B provides information on the topic under investigation. There are 24 items structured in line with the Likert four-point response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) which are divided into three clusters answering one of the Research

Questions. The instrument was subjected to validation by experts in the Department of Educational Foundations and Measurement and Evaluation. To test the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability coefficient and internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.88. This means that the instrument is considered well enough for the study. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyze responses to the research questions. A criterion mean was set so that any item mean of 2.50 and above is accepted and any item mean below 2.50 is rejected.

Results
Research Question One: What are the ethical leadership styles among principals of secondary schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Ethical Leadership Styles among Principals of Secondary Schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State

S/N	Items	No	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Authentic leadership	120	3.38	0.86	Agreed
2	Spiritual Leadership	120	2.75	1.00	Agreed
3	Transformational Leadership	120	3.38	0.86	Agreed
4	Servant Leadership	120	2.83	0.98	Agreed
	Cluster Mean		3.09	0.92	

The data in table 1 showed the mean ratings and standard deviation of responses on ethical leadership styles among principals of secondary schools in Jema'a LGA. Kaduna State. The results indicated that Principal and Teachers accepted all the four items as ethical leadership styles that are being used by principals to a high extent. The results also showed that the mean scores of principals and Teachers responses for item 1, 2, 3 and 4 are 3.38, 2.75, 3.38 and 2.83 respectively. These mean scores are within the benchmark of 2.50 and above; therefore, they are accepted. This is an indication that ethical leadership among principals has varied styles adopted by different principals at different time.

Research Question Two: What are the impacts of ethical leadership on school culture and teachers morale in secondary schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State?

Table Two: Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Impact of Ethical Leadership on School Culture and Teachers Morale

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Enhancing academic achievement and students Well- being	120	3.53	0.45	Agreed
2.	Promoting transparency	120	3.54	0.64	Agreed
3.	Fostering Inclusivity	120	2.96	0.98	Agreed
4.	Preparing students for responsible citizenship	120	2.75	1.0	Agreed
5.	Building trust and credibility with parents and Guardians	120	3.29	0.9	Agreed
6.	Collaborating with teachers and staff for Ethical implementation	120	2.46	1.01	Disgreed
	Nurturing partnership with community and External stakeholders	120	3.17	0.98	Agreed
7.	Ensuring equity and fairness in decision making	120	3.17	1.04	Agreed
8.	Cultivating ethical values and moral development In students	120	3.0	1.0	Agreed
9.	Promoting positive school climate and students Engagement	120	3.48	0.69	Agreed
	Cluster Mean		3.12	0. 87	

Results in table two presented the mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the impact of ethical leadership on school culture and teachers morale in secondary schools in Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna State. The results showed that all item in the cluster are agreed with a mean scores that are greater than mean criterion of 2.50, except for item 6 which is disagreed with a mean ratings of 2.46 which is below the benchmark of 2.50. As shown in the table above, the cluster mean score of 3.12 and standard deviation of 0.87, implies that the respondents agreed that ethical leadership exerted a significant impact on school culture and teachers morale in secondary schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges faced by principals in implementing ethical leadership practices?

Table three: Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Challenges faced by Principals in implementing Ethical Leadership Practices in Schools

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
i.	Employee Behaviour	120	2.25	1.01	Disgreed
ii.	Employee working Conditions	120	2.25	1.16	Disgreed
iii.	Resistance to change	120	2.92	0.32	Agreed
iv.	Complexity of managing diverse viewpoints	120	2.92	1.12	Agreed
v.	Conflict of interest	120	2.58	1.04	Agreed
vi.	Resources funding allocation making it difficult To make a financial decision	120	2.13	1.17	Disgreed
vii.	Maintaining integrity in a competitive educational Landscape	120	2.75	1.16	Agreed
viii.	Balancing accountability and ethical decision Making	120	2.67	1.03	Agreed
ix.	Fostering a culture of trust and transparency	120	2.67	1.10	Agreed
x.	Attempt to influence followers underlying values And beliefs may be overstepping	120	2.58	1.04	Agreed
	Cluster Mean		2.57	1.02	

The table above showed responses on the challenges of ethical leadership faced by principals of secondary schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State. Items 1, 2, and 6 with the mean score of 2.25, 2.25 and 2.13 respectively were disagreed because they are less than the criterion mean score of 2.50. All other items are agreed and considered as challenges of ethical leadership with the mean score of 2.92, 2.92, 2.58, 2.75, 2.67, 2.67 and 2.58.Therefore it is clear that ethical leadership, despite its impact has a lot of challenges that can thwart its implementation in the educational system.

Discussion of the Findings
The findings of research question one revealed that, authentic, servant, Transformational and Spiritual Leadership styles can effectively be used in ethical leadership to bring about desirable achievement in an organization such as the school.This is agreement with the view of Avolio and Gardner (2019), who opined that Authentic leaders are self-aware, vulnerable and consistent in their words and actions. Fry, Latham and Clinebell (2018) observed that Spiritual leaders foster a culture of compassion, empathy and inclusivity, promoting the well-being of all stakeholders. Servant leadership prioritizes the need followers, fostering a culture of empathy, trust and collaboration. It empowers others and lead with humility (Liden, Wayne and Sparrows, 2019). It is therefore not a coincidence that most principal of secondary schools in Jema'a LGA of Kaduna State are using these different leadership styles to foster and bring conducive school climate in their various schools.
Table two results showed that ethical leadership has significant impact on school culture and teachers morale in Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna state. This is in agreement with the view of Brown & Treviño, (2019) where they asserted that ethical leadership in secondary schools goes beyond just enforcing rules and regulations; it involves setting a positive example

for both staff and students. Principals who exhibit ethical leadership traits such as integrity, fairness, transparency, and accountability create a conducive learning environment that fosters trust, respect, and collaboration among all stakeholders. Research has shown that ethical leadership positively influences student outcomes, teacher morale, parental involvement, and overall school performance

Results in table three showed that, despite the significant impact of ethical leadership in Secondary Schools, Principals often encounter various challenges that hinder their ability to lead ethically. Johnson and Gomez (2020) observed that these challenges may include pressure to meet academic targets at the expense of ethical considerations, conflicts of interest, lack of support from higher authorities, and navigating complex power dynamics within the School community. Overcoming these challenges requires principled decision-making, courage to uphold ethical standards even in difficult situations, and a strong commitment to serving the best interests of students and staff

Conclusion

In conclusion, secondary school principals' ethical leadership is essential to fostering a supportive learning environment that fosters development. The school community can develop a culture of trust, respect, and accountability if principals uphold moral standards in their day-to-day activities and managerial procedures. In order to support educational excellence and develop future leaders with strong moral values, Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State, there is the need to cultivate ethical leadership among secondary school principals.

This study investigated the level of ethical leadership among principals of secondary schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State, and its impact on teacher morale and student outcomes. The findings revealed a moderate level of ethical leadership among principals, with a significant positive relationship between ethical leadership and teacher morale, and a significant positive impact on student outcomes. The study recommends prioritizing ethical leadership practices, providing training and development programmes, encouraging participatory decision-making, and providing adequate resources and infrastructure. Implementing these recommendations can improve the quality of education in secondary schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State, and enhance the overall well-being of teachers and students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals of secondary schools in Jema'a LGA, Kaduna State should prioritize ethical leadership practices to improve teacher morale and student outcomes.
2. The Kaduna State Ministry of Education should provide training and development programmes for principals to enhance their ethical leadership skills.
3. School administrators and teachers should be encouraged to participate in decision-making processes to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility.
4. The Kaduna State Government should provide adequate resources and infrastructure to support the implementation of ethical leadership practices in secondary schools.

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