



Review

Conceptualizing professional ethics, norms and standards for teachers in the twenty first (21st) Century: Lessons from the Cameroon context

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Abstract

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This paper explores the teaching profession and the impact of teachers' conduct on the academic performance of students. It noted that as teaching is one of the oldest and well-respected professions in the world, the role of the teacher in the effective delivery of knowledge and in bringing about a conducive atmosphere for learning cannot be over emphasized. The paper examines the conduct of teachers in line with the expected professional conduct as enshrined within specific laws and decrees in Cameroon. It emphasizes certain ways by which teachers' conduct, styles and attitudes impact negatively on the academic outcome of the students. Some examples include their dressing, quality/qualification, communication and teaching style, guidance, effect of their instructional resources, discipline and motivation. Lastly, the paper advocated for student centered teaching where skills acquisition and learning for life is encouraged and memorizing deemphasized. Furthermore, the strategies for teachers' relationship with the learners as expected in the 21st century and the counselling implications of their misconduct were also discussed.

Keywords: Professional Ethics, Norms and Standards For Teachers In The Twenty First Century, Cameroon Context.

INTRODUCTION

A Professional code of ethics is a guiding principle aimed to assist professionals conduct work with commitment, dedication, sincerity, honesty and with integrity. A professional should follow the specific principles of their profession and do their duties as per the requirements of the profession (Sherpa, 2018). The professional ethics deals with the principles and values that the professional should implement to create a conducive atmosphere in the workplace. Professional knowledge and skills is a key element that every professional should acquire to do their services with determination and commitment. Every profession has its main aims and objectives. To fulfil those aims and objectives, the professional should follow the professional code of ethics. Professional ethics provides the assistance to the professionals in order to

do their work meaningfully (Sherpa, 2018).

It is important to state at the beginning of this paper that the words Ethics and Moral Philosophy are interchangeable. The Word "ETHICS" comes from the Greek word "*Ethos*" which means custom. The Latin word for custom is "mos", Its plural is "mores". It is the equivalence of the Greek "ethos". From "mores" we derived the word moral and morality. Thus Ethics is also called moral philosophy. We may define Ethics as a *normative science of the conduct of human beings living in society. That is, a science which judges its conduct to be right or wrong, to be good or bad or in some similar way.* Ethics is the word that refers to morals, values, and beliefs of the individuals, family or the society. The word has several meanings. Basically it is an activity and

process of inquiry. Secondly, it is different from non-moral problems, when dealing with issues and controversies (Naagarazan, 2006). Thirdly, ethics refers to a particular set of beliefs, attitudes, and habits of individuals or family or groups concerned with morals. Fourth, it is used to mean 'morally correct'. The study on ethics helps to know the people's beliefs, values, and morals, learn the good and bad of them, and practice them to maximize their well-being and happiness. It involves the inquiry on the existing situations, form judgments and resolve the issues. In addition, ethics tells us how to live, to respond to issues, through the duties, rights, responsibilities, and obligations. In religion, similar principles are included, but the reasoning on procedures is limited. The principles and practices of religions have varied from time to time (history), region (geography, climatic conditions), religion, society, language, caste and creed. But ethics has grown to a large extent beyond the barriers listed above. In ethics, the focus is to study and apply the principles and practices, universally (Naagarazan, 2006).

Industry and Society are the two systems which interact with each other and are interdependent. Society requires industry/business system which provides manufacturing, distribution and consumption activities. It needs investment (capital input), labor (input), supply (raw materials), production (industries, business organizations), marketing and distribution (transport), and consumption (public, customer). A lot of transactions (and interactions) between these sub-systems involving people are needed for the welfare of the society. It is here, the work ethics plays an essential role. Work ethics is defined as a set of attitudes concerned with the value of work, which forms the motivational orientation. The 'work ethics' is aimed at ensuring the economy (get job, create wealth, earn salary), productivity (wealth, profit), safety (in workplace), health and hygiene (working conditions), privacy (raise family), security (permanence against contractual, pension, and retirement benefits), cultural and social development (leisure, hobby, and happiness), welfare (social work), environment (anti-pollution activities), and offer opportunities for all, according to their abilities, but without discrimination.

To work (job), is not for monetary considerations only. Human beings believe that it is good to work. Work is good for the body and mind. It promotes self-respect, self-esteem, well for the family, and obligation to the society and allows the world to prosper. Work lays a moral and meaningful foundation for life. That is why, work ethics affirm s that, the work per se is worthy, admirable and valuable at personal and social levels. It improves the quality of life and makes life purposeful, successful, and happy. By work ethics, duties to the self, family, society, and nation are fulfilled. Rights of the individuals are respected and nourished. Values and virtues are cultivated and enjoyed by all human beings. Further, the quality of life is improved and the environment protected. On the other hand,

unemployment and under-employment lead to frustration, social tensions, and occasional militancy. For a developing economy and society, like ours, we need to promote work ethics, at all levels, to flourish as developed nation.

Professional ethics entails service learning which is learning the service policies, procedures, norms, and conditions, other than 'the technical trade practices'. The service learning includes the characteristics of the work, basic requirements, security of the job, and awareness of the procedures, while taking decisions and actions. It helps the individuals to interact ethically with colleagues, to effectively coordinate with other departments, to interact cordially with suppliers as well as the customers, and to maintain all these friendly interactions.

Theoretical foundations of professional ethics (Lawrence Kohlberg)

As one means of classification, everyone on earth falls into one of two categories: those who hold with moral absolutes and those who do not. Those who believe in moral absolutes have a moral core articulated by various core values. When those values are mutually consistent, the individual then, by definition, has integrity. Those who do not hold with moral absolutes can have no moral core and no corresponding core values or integrity. Those individuals behave according to moral relativism; responding to issues as if they are disconnected, discrete items to be evaluated in a vacuum. "Open-minded" is the term sometimes referenced in describing this approach; and as such the term is misused.

Anyone entertaining an appreciation for open-mindedness should make sure that they understand that having an open mind is a passive/potential factor, not an actionable one and has nothing to do with evaluations and decisions. Instead, open-mindedness is the healthy idea that there remains the possibility one does not possess all the information. An open-minded person is ever willing to become better informed and learn more about something, and then allows that new information (filtered by moral, qualitative discrimination) to impact decisions. In the face of whatever information is at hand, however, every decision, evaluation, and requirement must flow from the designer's core values. Without such a basis, his every action and decision will lack credibility and must be regarded with suspicion.

A professional must hold with and operate according to the inviolate principles of his moral foundation and be free to do so. What's more, since professionals trade sovereign value for sovereign value, a so-called professional lacking a capitalist morality is a hypocrite. In any event, only those in the former group those with integrity can be professionals. The latter group cannot be trusted in a professional capacity...or any other for that matter. Common definitions of professionalism reference

ethical codes of behavior. What these definitions invariably omit is that a code of ethics in practice is only as strong as the individual's moral base. When one's core morality is based on relativism, any ethical constraints become impotent because then any behavior or practice can be justified according to its relative value and appropriateness. As should be obvious, such behavior contradicts ethical constraint.

An ethical code is a rational construct built upon a foundation of values. Those in the habit of moral discrimination the practice of automatically comparing issues to their own core values and deciding and/or acting accordingly are people of integrity. But not everyone is practiced at or has disciplined themselves to evaluate and make decisions in this manner. There are many who approach each situation afresh and evaluate based merely on immediate factors and/or emotional primacy. This fact is one reason why so few are suited to a profession. It is probably quite obvious to you that rules and codes of conduct are not made for circumstances where it is easy to do what is right, but rather for when immediate factors might otherwise render the proper move unclear or obscured by ideas of expediency. More to the point, codes of conduct are made to guide us toward consistently proper or ethical choices so that we habitually avoid difficult and ambiguous situations. However, despite rules, constraints, training, or promises, human beings can only be trusted to act in accordance with their morality. Since a professional must unflinchingly adhere to the rules of professional ethics, perhaps you can perceive the potential for problems presented by any allowance for relativism. A code of ethics precludes merely immediate factors in favor of inviolate standards. In order to be of use or relevant to a professional, a code of ethics requires internalization and habitual reference. Specifically, it requires a strong, consistent internal standard; quantifiable, integrated into every element of practice, and each component related to the others. The result of this standard put into practice is known as professionalism. It is therefore important to understand the ethical reasoning that is responsible for human behaviours as these form the guide under which ethical standards are measured in professions in general and teaching profession in particular.

Lawrence Kohlberg expanded on the earlier work of cognitive theorist Jean Piaget to explain the moral development of children. Kohlberg believed that moral development, like cognitive development, follows a series of stages. He used the idea of moral dilemmas—stories that present conflicting ideas about two moral values—to teach 10 to 16 year-old boys about morality and values. The best known moral dilemma created by Kohlberg is the “Heinz” dilemma, which discusses the idea of obeying the law versus saving a life. Kohlberg emphasized that it is the way an individual reasons about a dilemma that determines positive moral development. After presenting people with various moral dilemmas, Kohlberg reviewed

people's responses and placed them in different stages of moral reasoning. According to Kohlberg, an individual progresses from the capacity for pre-conventional morality (before age 9) to the capacity for conventional morality (early adolescence), and toward attaining post-conventional morality (once Piaget's idea of formal operational thought is attained), which only a few fully achieve. Each level of morality contains two stages, which provide the basis for moral development in various contexts.

Kohlberg identified three levels of moral reasoning: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. Each level is associated with increasingly complex stages of moral development.

Level 1: Preconventional

Throughout the preconventional level, a child's sense of morality is externally controlled. Children accept and believe the rules of authority figures, such as parents and teachers. A child with pre-conventional morality has not yet adopted or internalized society's conventions regarding what is right or wrong, but instead focuses largely on external consequences that certain actions may bring.

Stage 1: Obedience-and-Punishment Orientation: Stage 1 focuses on the child's desire to obey rules and avoid being punished. For example, an action is perceived as morally wrong because the perpetrator is punished; the worse the punishment for the act is, the more “bad” the act is perceived to be.

Stage 2: Instrumental Orientation: Stage 2 expresses the “what's in it for me?” position, in which right behavior is defined by whatever the individual believes to be in their best interest. Stage two reasoning shows a limited interest in the needs of others, only to the point where it might further the individual's own interests. As a result, concern for others is not based on loyalty or intrinsic respect, but rather a “you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours” mentality. An example would be when a child is asked by his parents to do a chore. The child asks “what's in it for me?” and the parents offer the child an incentive by giving him an allowance.

Level 2: Conventional

Throughout the conventional level, a child's sense of morality is tied to personal and societal relationships. Children continue to accept the rules of authority figures, but this is now due to their belief that this is necessary to ensure positive relationships and societal order. Adherence to rules and conventions is somewhat rigid during these stages, and a rule's appropriateness or fairness is seldom questioned.

Stage 3: Good Boy, Nice Girl Orientation: In stage 3,

children want the approval of others and act in ways to avoid disapproval. Emphasis is placed on good behavior and people being “nice” to others.

Stage 4: Law-and-Order Orientation: In stage 4, the child blindly accepts rules and convention because of their importance in maintaining a functioning society. Rules are seen as being the same for everyone, and obeying rules by doing what one is “supposed” to do is seen as valuable and important. Moral reasoning in stage four is beyond the need for individual approval exhibited in stage three. If one person violates a law, perhaps everyone would—thus there is an obligation and a duty to uphold laws and rules. Most active members of society remain at stage four, where morality is still predominantly dictated by an outside force.

Level 3: Post conventional

Throughout the post conventional level, a person’s sense of morality is defined in terms of more abstract principles and values. People now believe that some laws are unjust and should be changed or eliminated. This level is marked by a growing realization that individuals are separate entities from society and that individuals may disobey rules inconsistent with their own principles. Post-conventional moralists live by their own ethical principles—principles that typically include such basic human rights as life, liberty, and justice—and view rules as useful but changeable mechanisms, rather than absolute dictates that must be obeyed without question. Post-conventional individuals elevate their own moral evaluation of a situation over social conventions, their behavior, especially at stage six; can sometimes be confused with that of those at the pre-conventional level. Some theorists have speculated that many people may never reach this level of abstract moral reasoning.

Stage 5: Social-Contract Orientation: In stage 5, the world is viewed as holding different opinions, rights, and values. Such perspectives should be mutually respected as unique to each person or community. Laws are regarded as social contracts rather than rigid edicts. Those that do not promote the general welfare should be changed when necessary to meet the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This is achieved through majority decision and inevitable compromise. Democratic government is theoretically based on stage five reasoning.

Stage 6: Universal-Ethical-Principal Orientation: In stage 6, moral reasoning is based on abstract reasoning using universal ethical principles. Generally, the chosen principles are abstract rather than concrete and focus on ideas such as equality, dignity, or respect. Laws are valid only insofar as they are grounded in justice, and a commitment to justice carries with it an obligation to disobey unjust laws. People choose the ethical principles they want to follow, and if they violate those principles,

they feel guilty. In this way, the individual acts because it is morally right to do so (and not because he or she wants to avoid punishment), it is in their best interest, it is expected, it is legal, or it is previously agreed upon. Although Kohlberg insisted that stage six exists, he found it difficult to identify individuals who consistently operated at that level.

In his *Essays of Moral Development*, Kohlberg (1981) presents the following scenario to demonstrate how individuals at different stages of moral development could act differently. A woman was near death from a rare type of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman’s husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$ 1,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, “No, I discovered the drug and I’m going to make money from it.” So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man’s store to steal the drug for his wife. Should Heinz have broken into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?

Using Kohlberg’s stage theory, an individual at Stage 1 may see Heinz’s actions as being unethical. Heinz broke the law and should be punished for his actions, regardless of the motivations of those actions. An individual at Stage 6, however, could argue that Heinz was acting morally despite stealing the medicine from the druggist. Heinz was acting to preserve human life that can be argued ethically to take precedent over an individual’s property values.

In her book *In A Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan presents a different view on ethics and moral development. Gilligan posits that actions are not solely guided by considerations of universal justice but also by views of caring. In her view, individuals develop morally through three different steps of caring. In step one, individuals initially base their ethical decisions on how those decisions care for their own needs. In Gilligan’s next step of development, individuals are guided by how their decisions care for the needs of others. In this step, individuals act to achieve the approval of others, even at the expense of their own needs in the process. Individuals who reach Gilligan’s third step of moral development consider how their decisions care for themselves and others. Their decisions are not motivated by how others may view them. Instead, their actions seek to balance caring for their own needs and the needs of others at the same time.

How do Kohlberg and Gilligan’s theories inform a teacher’s role and actions? While these theoretical approaches to ethics and moral development may seem

to contrast with one another, they actually provide “a multidimensional map of the ethical terrain” for teachers (Starratt, 2004). Despite their contrasting lenses on moral development, when applied to the teaching profession, these two ethical perspectives complement each other. Teachers should be motivated by a universal respect for human life and also be guided by principles of caring. In fact, teachers have a fiduciary duty to act in a way that is in the best interest of their students. Teachers stand in a fiduciary position in relationship to their students. Inherent in a fiduciary relationship is an imbalance of power where the students place their trust /confidence in the teachers, who are responsible for caring for their students and respecting their needs. This overarching responsibility of teachers provides an ethical standard of professional practice to which professional educators must abide and has powerful practical and legal implications for their personal and professional lives.

Professional expectations do not always distinguish between teachers' on or off-duty conduct. Accordingly, teachers must act in their private lives in a way that does not undermine their efficacy in the classroom, demean their employing school entity or damage their position as a moral exemplar in the community. These expectations can be difficult for some new teachers. For some individuals who are fresh out of college, it may mean changing behaviors that may have been acceptable in a university environment. Teachers are held to a higher moral standard and must behave in ways that are consistent with community and professional standards. Besides being moral exemplars, teachers are also expected to model ethical principles through their pedagogy. Ethical lessons are implicitly communicated by the culture of caring and respect that the teacher creates and enforces as well as by his or her academic decision-making and interactions with students, colleagues, parents and community members.

Importance of professional code of ethics for Teachers

The school is considered miniature of society. The school is that formal agency which provides education to students. It has a major role in bringing development in the society. The teaching and teacher is an important key element in the schools. Without it the educational process cannot function properly. The teachers play a crucial and significant role in the educational process to impart education and bring about desirable changes in the behaviour of the students. As having massive responsibility upon his shoulder, the teacher should realise and understand his profession. To fulfil the aims and objectives of teaching is solely dependent upon his/her ability, teaching aptitude, content knowledge, pedagogy and most important is the professional ethics.

Aristotle (1980) states that treating people fairly implies treating equals equally and unequal's unequally. The teachers should be unbiased while teaching and evaluating students. Buber (1970) suggests that teacher-student relationships ought to be characterized by a principle of reciprocity. Since, communication is a key element in the teaching learning process, teachers must emphasize on creating reverential relationship with students.

The absence of professional ethics in teachers will impact the development of students. The teachers should be the role model, inspiration, motivator and leader for the students. It is a fact that the students follow the footsteps of their teachers directly or indirectly. The teacher should possess a good behaviour and positive attitude towards their profession and students. The fundamental role of the teacher is to solve the problems, issues and barriers of students that come along in their developmental process. The teachers must have a clear cut vision to foster the potentialities of the students. Many of teachers in practical situations face the problem of adjustment in schools. There could be many factors and reasons associated with it like – Interest, Aptitude, Values, Ethics and Discipline which eventually makes them uncomfortable at the workplace or school. The first and foremost important quality that the teacher should possess is the professional ethics. If they fails to understand and implement it, then they might not be satisfied with their profession and plus it will hamper the performance of students. To make character education successful, we need well-trained teachers. Again, teachers are role models. Teachers play important role in children's character formation. Teachers provide children with a basic but essential moral education. So, teachers should focus on providing the rath path and guidance to students to make them well behaved individuals, and inculcate good attitude within them (Benninga, 2003). Therefore, the teacher must inculcate the fundamental professional ethics and values within them before entering into teaching profession.

Sherpa (2018) discusses some significant professional code of ethics for teachers that will assist the teachers to educate the students efficiently and effectively:

1. Teachers should always be aware of his/her roles and responsibilities. He should actively provide his service to institution and student with happiness and satisfaction. They should provide maximum opportunities to students to excel in diverse aspects of development. Active professionalism is required in teaching profession. They cannot remain inactive or passive in the educational process. That is their fundamental duty for which they are being employed with expectations to serve the school and students.
2. Teachers should have definite vision, how they will fulfil the present needs, requirements and aspirations of the learners. For that they need to be precise about their actions in their educational process. They should

strategies planning and implement it effectively. Proper professionalism should be showcased by the teacher in order to meet the demands and requirements of students.

3. They also should adjust with the professional environment of the school. They have to set an example of professionalism in schools. They must cooperate with the management of institution and be friendly with colleagues. The school works in a system and the teacher should understand that every members of the system is equally important, have their own role to play. Hence, he/she should focus to work together and respect all the members of the school. This will automatically changes the working environment of the school.

4. Being a professional teacher, he/she should demonstrate respect for spiritual and cultural values, diversity, social justice, freedom, democracy and the environment. Teachers should uphold human dignity and promote equality and emotional and cognitive development.

5. Teachers should show affection, care and love with students. Only then they can create a good reverential relationship with students. If the relation of teacher and student is not good, the teaching becomes futile. Therefore, Teachers should communicate with care and affection, so that they can share their difficulties and problems and can give remedial solutions to those problems. Teachers must act wisely and endow with professional judgment and empathy in practice.

6. It is important for teachers to be honest, reliable and dedicated towards school and students. Such actions are embodied in integrity. Therefore, teachers should emphasize on implement integrity through their professional commitments, responsibilities and actions. This will enhance the development of the institution and students as a whole.

7. Teachers should give stress on building a cordial and reverential relationships with all the stakeholders of schools. Teachers should intent to win the trust of pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and the public at large. As a result, it will lead towards - fairness, openness and honesty.

8. Teachers should respect the privacy of other members of their own school and maintain confidentiality of information gained in the course of professional practice, unless a legal imperative requires disclosure or there is a legitimate concern for the wellbeing of an individual.

9. Teachers should always stay away from conflict between their professional work and private interests because it could plausibly be crash unenthusiastically on pupils/students. It could demoralise the students and affects their perception towards school and teachers.

10. Teachers should not be biased while imparting and evaluating the students' performance related with academic and co- curricular activities. They must respect all the students and treat them uniformly irrespective of caste, creed, gender, civil status, family status, religion, age, disability, race, ethnicity, region, community and

socio-economic status. Following these equality will motivate and reinforce the students to perform well in their academics and curricular activities. It will boost the morale and confidence of students. Inferiority complex starts reducing, if the teachers follow the principles of equality in the educational process.

It is based on the necessity of a professional code of ethics for teachers that a joint ILO and UNESCO committee adopted in 1966 some recommendations and guidelines for concerning the status of teachers. UNESCO in 1997 further brought out more recommendations concerning the status of teachers in higher education. It is important to look at these recommendations in detail because these often serve as foundations of country practices in drawing up professional codes of ethics for teachers.

Professional Ethics for Teachers: International Standards

ILO/ UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and The UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997)

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and The UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) are international instrument which set out principles concerning the rights and responsibilities of educators, ranging from the pre-school level through university. Drawing on a large body of international standards on labour and education, these two instruments provide guidance for governments, employers, teacher unions, and other stakeholders in the crafting of effective teacher policies.

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers was adopted on 5 October 1966 at a special intergovernmental conference convened by UNESCO in Paris in cooperation with the ILO. It sets forth the rights and responsibilities of teachers, and standards for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employment, teaching and learning conditions. It also contains numerous recommendations for teachers' participation in educational decisions through consultation and negotiation with educational authorities (ILO/UNESCO, 2016). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its Goal 4, has recognized the importance of qualified teachers in achieving inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Indeed, there is no better measure of national capacity to deliver education outcomes than the quality of a nation's teaching corps. Quality teachers are the sustainable element of the development goal on education (ILO/UNESCO, 2016)

One of the key issues addressed by the 1966 Recommendation is responsibilities of teachers. The document states that "Professional standards relating to the teacher performance should be defined and maintained with the participation of teachers' organizations[...] Codes of ethics should be established by teachers' organizations, since such codes greatly contribute to ensuring the prestige of the profession and the exercise of professional duties in accordance with agreed principals." (VIII.71 & 73).

Sections VIII of the Recommendation deals specifically with the rights and responsibilities of teachers. Four main recommendations in relation to professional ethics are highlighted, namely, professional freedom; responsibilities of teachers; relations between teachers and the education service as a whole and rights of teachers. Specifically, it is recommended as from recommendation 61-84 that:

Professional freedom

61. The teaching profession should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties. Since teachers are particularly qualified to judge the teaching aids and methods most suitable for their pupils, they should be given the essential role in the choice and the adaptation of teaching material, the selection of textbooks and the application of teaching methods, within the framework of approved programmes and with the assistance of the educational authorities.

62. Teachers and their organizations should participate in the development of new courses, textbooks and teaching aids

63. Any systems of inspection or supervision should be designed to encourage and help teachers in the performance of their professional tasks and should be such as not to diminish the freedom, initiative and responsibility of teachers.

64. (1) Where any kind of direct assessment of the teacher's work is required, such assessment should be objective and should be made known to the teacher.

(2) Teachers should have a right to appeal against assessments which they deem to be unjustified.

65. Teachers should be free to make use of such evaluation techniques as they may deem useful for the appraisal of pupils' progress, but should ensure that no unfairness to individual pupils results.

66. The authorities should give due weight to the recommendations of teachers regarding the suitability of individual pupils for courses and further education of different kinds.

67. Every possible effort should be made to promote close co-operation between teachers and parents in the interests of pupils, but teachers should be protected against unfair or unwarranted interference by parents in matters which are essentially the teacher's professional

responsibility.

68. (1) Parents having a complaint against a school or a teacher should be given the opportunity of discussing it in the first instance with the school principal and the teacher concerned. Any complaint subsequently addressed to higher authority should be put in writing and a copy should be supplied to the teacher.

(2) Investigations of complaints should be so conducted that the teachers are given a fair opportunity to defend themselves and that no publicity is given to the proceedings.

69. While teachers should exercise the utmost care to avoid accidents to pupils, employers of teachers should safeguard them against the risk of having damages assessed against them in the event of injury to pupils occurring at school or in school activities away from the school premises or grounds.

Responsibilities of teachers

70. Recognizing that the status of their profession depends to a considerable extent upon teachers themselves, all teachers should seek to achieve the highest possible standards in all their professional work.

71. Professional standards relating to teacher performance should be defined and maintained with the participation of the teachers' organizations.

72. Teachers and teachers' organizations should seek to co-operate fully with authorities in the interests of the pupils, of the education service and of society generally.

73. Codes of ethics or of conduct should be established by the teachers' organizations, since such codes greatly contribute to ensuring the prestige of the profession and the exercise of professional duties in accordance with agreed principles.

74. Teachers should be prepared to take their part in extra-curricular activities for the benefit of pupils and adults.

Relations between teachers and the education service as a whole

75. In order that teachers may discharge their responsibilities, authorities should establish and regularly use recognized means of consultation with teachers' organizations on such matters as educational policy, school organization, and new developments in the education service.

76. Authorities and teachers should recognize the importance of the participation of teachers, through their organizations and in other ways, in steps designed to improve the quality of the education service, in educational research, and in the development and dissemination of new improved methods.

77. Authorities should facilitate the establishment and the

work of panels designed, within a school or within a broader framework, to promote the co-operation of teachers of the same subject and' should take due account of the opinions and suggestions of such panels.

78. Administrative and other staff who are responsible for aspects of the education service should seek to establish good relations with teachers and this approach should be equally reciprocated.

Rights of teachers

79. The participation of teachers in social and public life should be encouraged in the interests of the teacher's personal development, of the education service and of society as a whole.

80. Teachers should be free to exercise all civic rights generally enjoyed by citizens and should be eligible for public office.

81. Where the requirements of public office are such that the teacher has to relinquish his teaching duties, he should be retained in the profession for seniority and pension purposes and should be able to return to his previous post or to an equivalent post after his term of public office has expired.

82. Both salaries and working conditions for teachers should be determined through the process of negotiation between teachers' organizations and the employers of teachers.

83. Statutory or voluntary machinery should be established whereby the right of teachers to negotiate through their organizations with their employers, either public or private, is assured.

84. Appropriate joint machinery should be set up to deal with the settlement of disputes between the teachers and their employers arising out of terms and conditions of employment. If the means and procedures established for these purposes should be exhausted or if there should be a breakdown in negotiations between the parties, teachers' organizations should have the right to take such other steps as are normally open to other organizations in the defense of their legitimate interests.

The UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) highlights the duties and responsibilities of higher education teaching personnel in relation to professional ethics. Accordingly in sections 33 to 36, the document recommends that:

33. Higher-education teaching personnel should recognize that the exercise of rights carries with it special duties and responsibilities, including the obligation to respect the academic freedom of other members of the academic community and to ensure the fair discussion of contrary views. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base research on an honest search for truth. Teaching, research and scholarship

should be conducted in full accordance with ethical and professional standards and should, where appropriate, respond to contemporary problems facing society as well as preserve the historical and cultural heritage of the world.

34. In particular, the individual duties of higher education teaching personnel inherent in their academic freedom are:

(a) to teach students effectively within the means provided by the institution and the state, to be fair and equitable to male and female students and treat those of all races and religions, as well as those with disabilities, equally, to encourage the free exchange of ideas between themselves and their students, and to be available to them for guidance in their studies. Higher-education teaching personnel should ensure, where necessary, that the minimum content defined in the syllabus for each subject is covered;

(b) to conduct scholarly research and to disseminate the results of such research or, where original research is not required, to maintain and develop their knowledge of their subject through study and research, and through the development of teaching methodology to improve their pedagogical skills;

(c) to base their research and scholarship on an honest search for knowledge with due respect for evidence, impartial reasoning and honesty in reporting;

(d) To observe the ethics of research involving humans, animals, the heritage or the environment;

(e) to respect and to acknowledge the scholarly work of academic colleagues and students and, in particular, to ensure that authorship of published works includes all who have materially contributed to, and share responsibility for, the contents of a publication;

(f) to refrain from using new information, concepts or data that were originally obtained as a result of access to confidential manuscripts or applications for funds for research or training that may have been seen as the result of processes such as peer review, unless the author has given permission;

(g) to ensure that research is conducted according to the laws and regulations of the state in which the research is carried out, that it does not violate international codes of human rights, and that the results of the research and the data on which it is based are effectively made available to scholars and researchers in the host institution, except where this might place respondents in peril or where anonymity has been guaranteed;

(h) To avoid conflicts of interest and to resolve them through appropriate disclosure and full consultation with the higher education institution employing them, so that they have the approval of the aforesaid institution;

(i) To handle honestly all funds entrusted to their care for higher education institutions for research or for other professional or scientific bodies;

(j) To be fair and impartial when presenting a professional appraisal of academic colleagues and

students;

(k) to be conscious of a responsibility, when speaking or writing outside scholarly channels on matters which are not related to their professional expertise, to avoid misleading the public on the nature of their professional expertise;

(l) To undertake such appropriate duties as are required for the collegial governance of institutions of higher education and of professional bodies.

35. Higher-education teaching personnel should seek to achieve the highest possible standards in their professional work, since their status largely depends on themselves and the quality of their achievements.

36. Higher-education teaching personnel should contribute to the public accountability of higher education institutions without, however, forfeiting the degree of institutional autonomy necessary for their work, for their professional freedom and for the advancement of knowledge.

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) are two international instruments which set out principles concerning the rights and responsibilities of educators, ranging from the pre-school level through university. These two instruments provide guidance for governments, employers, teacher unions, and other stakeholders in the crafting of effective teacher policies. These two recommendations form the bases of our subsequent discussions on the various codes of conduct and relationships that constitute ethical norms and standards for teacher profession.

Codes of Conduct (American Association of Educators and National Education Association)

Based on the above standards set by ILO/UNESCO (1966) and UNESCO (1997) we can highlight the following codes of conduct for educators and professional relations. The following codes are developed by the distinguished Association of American Educators (AAE) Advisory Board and by the Executive Committee of AAE and the National Education Association. They contain basic principles relating to the rights of students and educators. The professional educator strives to create a learning environment that nurtures to fulfillment the potential of all students. The professional educator acts with conscientious effort to exemplify the highest ethical standards. The professional educator responsibly accepts that every child has a right to an uninterrupted education free from strikes or any other work stoppage tactics. The educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of the democratic principles. Essential to these

goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards. The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards by which to judge conduct.

Professionalisation of Education (Practice and Performance)

The professional educator assumes responsibility and accountability for his or her performance and continually strives to demonstrate competence.

The professional educator endeavors to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, and by demonstrating personal integrity.

1. The professional educator applies for, accepts, or assigns a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications, and adheres to the terms of a contract or appointment.
2. The professional educator maintains sound mental health, physical stamina, and social prudence necessary to perform the duties of any professional assignment.
3. The professional educator continues professional growth.
4. The professional educator complies with written local school policies and applicable laws and regulations that are not in conflict with this code of ethics.
5. The professional educator does not intentionally misrepresent official policies of the school or educational organizations, and clearly distinguishes those views from his or her own personal opinions.
6. The professional educator honestly accounts for all funds committed to his or her charge.
7. The professional educator does not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.
8. Shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
9. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
10. Shall not assist any entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.
11. Shall not knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a

- professional position.
12. Shall not assist a non-educator in the unauthorized practice of teaching.
 13. Shall not disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.
 14. Shall not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or action.

Relationship with colleagues

The professional educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, accords just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession.

1. The professional educator does not reveal confidential information concerning colleagues unless required by law.
2. The professional educator does not willfully make false statements about a colleague or the school system.
3. The professional educator does not interfere with a colleague's freedom of choice, and works to eliminate coercion that forces educators to support actions and ideologies that violate individual professional integrity.
4. Shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague.

Relationship with learners

The professional educator accepts personal responsibility for teaching students character qualities that will help them evaluate the consequences of and accept the responsibility for their actions and choices. It is strongly affirm that parents are the primary moral educators of their children. Nevertheless, all educators are obligated to help foster civic virtues such as integrity, diligence, responsibility, cooperation, loyalty, fidelity, and respect-for the law, for human life, for others, and for self. The professional educator, in accepting his or her position of public trust, measures success not only by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her personal potential, but also as a citizen of the greater community of the republic. The educator strives to help each student realize his or her potential as a worthy and effective member of society. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

1. The professional educator deals considerately and justly with each student, and seeks to resolve problems, including discipline, according to law and

school policy.

2. The professional educator does not intentionally expose the student to disparagement.
3. The professional educator does not reveal confidential information concerning students, unless required by law.
4. The professional educator makes a constructive effort to protect the student from conditions detrimental to learning, health, or safety.
5. The professional educator endeavors to present facts without distortion, bias, or personal prejudice.
6. Shall not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning.
7. Shall not unreasonably deny the student's access to varying points of view.
8. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress.
9. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
10. Shall not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement.
11. Shall not on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, unfairly. Exclude any student from participation in any program, Deny benefits to any student and Grant any advantage to any student
12. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
13. Shall not disclose information about students obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

Relationship with Parents/Guardians/Society

The professional educator pledges to protect public sovereignty over public education and private control of private education. The professional educator recognizes that quality education is the common goal of the public, boards of education, and educators, and that a cooperative effort is essential among these groups to attain that goal.

1. The professional educator makes concerted efforts to communicate to parents all information that should be revealed in the interest of the student.
2. The professional educator endeavors to understand and respect the values and traditions of the diverse cultures represented in the community and in his or her classroom.
3. The professional educator manifests a positive and active role in school/community relations.

Professional Ethics, Norms and Standards for Officials in Cameroon Educational Bodies

Provisions of 1998 law to lay down the orientation of education in Cameroon

Chapter III of 1998 law to lay down the orientation of education of education in Cameroon deals with issues concerning teachers. This is captured in articles 37, 38 and 39 of the law. Accordingly:

Article 37

1. The teacher is the main guarantor of the quality of education. As such, he/she is entitled, within the limits of available means, to suitable living conditions, as well as to appropriate initial and continuous training.
- 2, The State ensures the protection of the teacher and guarantees his/her dignity in the exercise of his/her functions
3. A decree of the President of the Republic fixes the special status of the personnel of the education bodies.

Article 38

The teacher enjoys, within the framework of academic franchises and in the exercise of his/her functions, a complete freedom of thought and expression, in the strict respect of the freedom of conscience and opinion of the pupils and students.

Article 39

1. The teacher is subject to the obligation of teaching, education, pedagogical supervision, scientific promotion, evaluation and moral rectitude.
2. He/she is also subject to the respect of the texts in force, in particular the rules of procedure of the establishment where he/she exercises the functions of teacher.

Provisions of DECREE N° 2000/359 OF 05 DECEMBER 2000 bearing special status of the officials of the bodies of the National Education

The decree deals with specific rights and obligation of officials of the bodies of the national education. This is contained in Title VI of the decree, which includes four chapters dealing with specific rights and obligations.

Chapter 1: Specific Rights

Article 61

1. The remuneration of civil servants of the National Education bodies includes the following additional elements:
 - a. For the bodies of Maternal, Primary and Normal Education, Secondary Education General and Technical and Professional Education:
 - The technical bonus;
 - The teaching and evaluation bonus;
 - The documentation and research bonus.
 - b. For the body of Counselors of School, University and Professional Orientation:
 - The technical bonus;
 - Thepsych pedagogical supervision and evaluation bonus;
 - The documentation and research bonus.
2. The amounts of the premiums enumerated above and the methods of their allocation are fixed by a specific text.

Article 62

1. Officials of the National Education Corps with at least fifteen (15) years of effective service may be eligible for academic palms.
2. The methods of awarding the honors mentioned in paragraph 1 above are fixed by a specific text.

Chapter 2: Specific Obligations

Article 63

In addition to the obligations provided for in the General Statute of the Public Service of the State, any official of the National Education Corps shall be subject to the common obligations of pedagogical supervision and promotion provided for in this Particular Statute.

Article 64

The officials of the National Education bodies are also subject to the following specific obligations:

1. For the Teaching Corps provided for in Article 2 (1, 2 and 3):
 - Attendance at school to teach;
 - Participation in educational renovation;
 - The preparation of courses and their adaptation to the evolution of knowledge

- Permanent control of students' knowledge.
2. For the body of Counselors of School, University and Professional Orientation:
 - The assessment of the content of curricula and teaching methods in relation to the psychological characteristics of students and the skill requirements of the national economy;
 - help with the choice of studies, professions and life in general;
 - Psycho - pedagogical monitoring of pupils;
 - Advice to students in the management of their various school problems, socio-occupational integration5 personal and relational; research in applied psychology.
 3. Officials of the National Education bodies are required, when required, to participate in any official examination: under the Ministry of National Education.

Article 65

Every official of the National Education Corps in the performance of his/her duties is obliged to:

- Behave in accordance with the teacher's ethics and morality;
- To respect the principle of the secularity of the State;
- Refrain from any demonstration or political meeting on the premises of a school.
- Serve wherever needed.

Article 66

1. Every official governed by this Decree shall be required to provide a fixed weekly teaching and / or performance service as follows: Teachers of Normal Schools of Teachers: 14 hours to which are added the hours of supervision of trainees

- Principal Teachers of Primary and Maternal Teaching: 32 hours;
- Teacher of secondary schools of general secondary education: 18-hours;
- Professor of Secondary General Secondary Schools; 20 hours;
- Professor of Technical and Professional Education High Schools; 18 hours
- Professor of Colleges of Technical and Professional Education: 20 hours;
- Principal Teachers of Technical and Professional Education: 32 hours
- Teachers of Technical and Professional Education: 32 hours.

2. The educational services included in the account of the service due are provided in one or more school education establishments under the Ministry of National Education.

3. Officials in the corps of School, University and

Professional Counselors assigned to schools are required to provide thirty (30) hours of service including: Six (06) hours in the classes; twenty-four (24) hours reserved for advice and consultation.

Article 67

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 66 above, the officials of the bodies of the National Education may be placed at the disposal of the establishments not belonging to the public education according to the modalities fixed by an order of the Minister in charge of National Education.

Article 68

Any breach of the specific obligations set out in articles 63, 64, 65 and 66 above, automatically entails for the teacher, without prejudice to the sanctions provided by the General Statute of the Public Service of the State, sanctions below:

- the partial or total cancellation of the premiums provided for in Article 61 of this decree;
- suspension of salary in accordance with the regulations in force;

Chapter 3: Career Profile

Article 69

The appointment of officials of the National Education bodies to functions of administrative responsibility is carried out in accordance with the career profile which takes into account the grade, additional qualifications, seniority, administrative notes and pedagogical functions, responsibilities already occupied.

Article 70

Without prejudice to the discretionary nature of any appointment to a position of responsibility, no official of the National Education Corps may claim a position of responsibility within the Ministry of National Education if he does not fulfill the conditions set out in the following Agent Profile:

Article 71

Except for serious professional misconduct, sanctioned accordingly, a National Education official may not be appointed to a position of responsibility of a lower rank than the one previously occupied.

Chapter 4: Retirement

Article 72

Notwithstanding the provisions of the General Statute of the Public Service of the State, the age limit for the admission to retirement is set at sixty (60) years for all categories. However, the officials of the National Education bodies may, at their request, be admitted to early retirement

- after 20 years of service;
- at the age of 55, mutatis mutandi, under the conditions provided for by the civil pension scheme.

Recommendations for Professional Code of Conduct for Teachers Based on the Provisions of the above Law and Decree

Based on the provisions of 1998 law to lay down the orientation of education in Cameroon and of DECREE N ° 2000/359 OF 05 December 2000 bearing special status of the officials of the bodies of the National Education, the following professional code of conduct can be set for Cameroonian teachers. These recommendations are divided into general duties, professional duties and confidentiality.

General Duties

- The Teacher must not in any way alienate his professional independence.
- He/she must abstain, even outside the exercise of his profession, from doing any act likely to bring the latter into disrepute.
- He/she must refrain from any direct or indirect advertising or advertising and any public event relating to the profession and not having exclusively a scientific or educational purpose.
- The practice of the profession is incompatible with any other activity that may result in the loss of dignity.
- The Teacher must practice his profession in conditions allowing him the regular use of a facility and the technical means necessary for the practice of his art.
- He/she must possess knowledge, know-how, know-how and know-how.
- He/she must be open to technological, scientific and methodological advances.
- He/she must prepare and update his courses.
- He/she must participate in continuing education activities.
- He/she must research, produce and disseminate the results of his research.
- Any deception that would bring the profession into disrepute is prohibited.
- In the exercise of his art, the Teacher may issue

certificates, certificates or documents in the prescribed form. Any certificate, certificate or document issued by a teacher must include his signature, as well as the mention of his name and address.

- Any teacher in the exercise of his functions, must ensure the continuity of public service.
- The Teacher shall serve with the same conscience all whatever his condition, his nationality, his religion, his reputation, his ethnicity and the feelings he inspires.
- He/she shall in no circumstances practice his profession in the conditions that could compromise the quality of its services and actions.
- The Teacher must also serve the users without consideration of their political, religious, ethnic, trade union, racial, cultural, gender
- The Teacher shall avoid any situation of conflict of interest likely to compromise the independence, impartiality and transparency necessary for the performance of his duties.
- The Teacher who has a direct or indirect interest in a case which he deals with in the course of his service and which puts his personal interest in conflict with that of the service, must use common sense and communicate his interest in his superior.
- The Teacher uses the resources available to him as part of his service in priority and in all circumstances in accordance with the purposes for which they are intended. It should not confuse the goods of the service with its own and should in no way divert their use for other purposes.
- He/she cannot use the attributes of his function to gain an undue advantage to the detriment of the service and users.
- The teacher responsible for a position or for a task, has the obligation to report on the management and administrative acts that he/she takes in the performance of his/her duties.

Professional Duties

In the exercise of his duties, the Teacher is:

- to serve the general interest with disinterestedness;
- to respect the equality of all before the public service;
- to provide exclusive and personal functions;
- to ensure free public service and avoid preferential treatment;
- to serve effectively, appropriately and efficiently;
- act with prudence and diligence so as to maintain public confidence;
- to show respect, civility, fairness in its relations with users and colleagues;
- to observe the texts and regulations of the Republic;
- to abstain from any fraudulent maneuvers that may affect the proper functioning of the public service.

Confidentiality

- The teacher is bound to professional secrecy. Regardless of the rules established by the Penal Code regarding professional secrecy, it is bound by the obligation of professional discretion.
- He must not use information of a confidential nature to the detriment of a user or to obtain, directly or indirectly, a benefit for himself or for others.
- The active or retired teacher remains subject to professional secrecy.

CONCLUSION

Teachers at all levels of education should focus on imparting quality education. It is the prime duty of the teacher to bring optimum development among the students. Teachers' should show an equal level of dignity to his profession, institution, students, colleagues and parents. Teachers' should specially stress on developing the professional ethics within them. Teachers should take the liability of teaching profession seriously and perform their duties efficiently. Therefore, for successful teaching, the knowledge of professional ethics and its implementation is very essential for teachers.

Professional ethics is becoming the need of the hour. Many institutions are facing lack of professional ethics within their teachers, besides having ample of degrees, achievements, medals, extra qualifications and content knowledge. Since, teaching is not just about imparting the content and subject-matter, it is just beyond that. Teacher has a wider role in the educational course of action, they should give stress in bringing out the potentialities from the learners and nurture it accordingly. The teaching is regarded as a noble and righteous profession, since it contributes in nation building by creating good quality human resources, responsible citizens, socialized individuals and creative personalities. Hence, this profession requires a lot of commitment, dedication and sincerity towards their institution and learners. So, if they do not have the knowledge of professional ethics, it will become a barrier in the development of institution, learners, society and nation as a whole. It will undeniably affects the overall performance of the students (Sherpa, 2018).

The professional code of ethics for teachers is purposely designed to protect the rights of the students and teachers. It becomes crucial and important for the teachers to understand their work ethics and values

before entering in teaching profession. As a teacher, they have a huge role to play in the entire teaching learning process. They should be active in the educational process and encourage and reinforce the students be converted into active learners by using different strategies and techniques. It is also important for teachers to understand the individual differences, intellectual level, interest and aptitudes of the learners. They should also emphasize on proving freedom to all the students so that they can express their problems, feeling and emotions without any fear. Therefore, to put in nutshell, professional code of ethics plays a pivotal role in developing the personality and behaviour of the teachers. It will facilitate and guide the teachers towards successful and meaningful teaching. If the teachers properly implement the code of ethics in the teaching profession, it unquestionably fosters the development of school, children, society, community and nation as a whole (Sherpa, 2018).

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