

Exploring the Ethical Challenges Faced by Teacher Educators in Nigeria: Perceptions and Implications for Guidance and Counseling Programmes

Chinwendu, Obasi Samuel

Department of Guidance and Counseling, College of Education, Michael Okpara University,
Agriculture, Umudike Abia State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study, "Exploring the Ethical Challenges Faced by Teacher Educators in Nigeria: Perceptions and Implications for Guidance and Counseling Programmes," investigated the perceptions of 327 teacher educators (136 from MOUAU and 191 from AIFUE) regarding ethical challenges and the adequacy of existing guidance and counseling programmes in addressing ethical challenges, their experiences in navigating ethical dilemmas related to academic dishonesty, equity, and professional boundaries, and the ethical frameworks and decision-making models they consider most beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices. The study employed a descriptive research design and utilized a questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The findings revealed that teacher educators believe the existing guidance and counseling programmes adequately address ethical issues. Still, they need more regular training and workshops to develop their ethical decision-making skills. The teacher educators have encountered various ethical challenges, but feel confident in their ability to navigate them. They also consider ethical frameworks and decision-making models, such as deontological, consequentialist, and virtue ethics, as beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices. One key recommendation is the implementation of regular training and workshops for teacher educators on ethical decision-making skills to address the identified gap in the existing guidance and counseling programmes.

Keywords: Ethical Challenges, Teacher Educators, Nigeria, Perceptions, Implications Guidance and Counseling Programmes

Introduction

The educational system is considered a gold mine in Nigeria because it shapes the future of the nation; thus, teacher education programs have been at the forefront. Being the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria has been struggling to adequately provide for the educational needs of all people from different walks of life. Teacher educators hold the most sensitive position in the preparation and training of teachers to perform this important task. However, modern education has brought several complexities that result in increased ethical dilemmas that teacher educators need to grapple with. Ethics are increasingly gaining prominence in educational discourse, especially because educators are charged with the responsibility not only to impart knowledge but also to inculcate values and principles in learners (Eze, 2021). On their part, teacher educators face various ethical issues: from professionalism to questions of equity and social justice. These ethical challenges have great consequences for the quality of education and the well-being of educators and students alike. Teacher education is foundational to building the competencies and values of future educators and understanding the ethical challenges

which teacher educators experience helps in curriculum development that directly tackles these issues (Aina, 2019). Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2019) believed that such ethical training has a potential influence on teachers' professional development and, at the same time, their ability to handle moral dilemmas. Against the backdrop of challenges faced, the research study shall help in building the teacher's training programs in such a way that these shall pay greater attention to ethical decisions internally. This may raise ethical awareness amongst the teaching fraternity.

Ethics, as a school value, can be rated no more significant within educational Institutes. Teacher educators are looked upon as role models by the students. They are entrusted with the responsibility of inculcating values and instilling ethical standards among the students. As advocated by Noddings, (2003), because societies keep on changing and technological advancements are done, ethical dilemmas are a common occurrence, and thus, they should be handled with integrity by educators. This research has given deeper insight into the ethical landscape within Nigerian education, as well as a prelude to comprehensive ethical frameworks guiding educators on their

professional conduct. Effective guidance and counseling services are imperative to guide educators through the ethical challenges they go through. The study shall, therefore, aim to unearth teachers' educator's perceptions of the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing guidance and counseling programs in addressing ethical dilemmas. The research shall contribute to bringing forth some gaps in the existing services that could lead to the development of better support mechanisms for educators. Such improvements are essential in developing an ethical culture within educational institutions and improving the quality of education within Nigeria in general.

Moral problems with which teacher educators are confronted are relevant internationally, as they reflect a profound educational landscape that is highly contextual. Knowing this challenge is of paramount importance in developing good practices and policies that can support educators in their moral decisions (Lohnes, & Timmons, 2018). Academic dishonesty, comprising plagiarism and cheating, is fast becoming the scourge of many higher educational institutions across the globe, whereby teacher educators find themselves

grappling with many complex ethical dilemmas during their address. The fine line is always walked between the strict implementation of academic integrity and being empathetic toward struggling students in a bid to ensure that the academic environment does not encourage dishonesty but at the same time gives enough support to the students (Hofstede, (2001).

Equity and inclusion issues herald front-ranking status globally in teacher education. Educators have to handle racial, gender-based, socio-economic, and disability biases with a guarantee of equal opportunity for all students. As Sleeter (2017) describes, other cultural norms and expectations influence the various ways educators perceive and respond to diversity within their classrooms. Another major ethical challenge is maintaining professional boundaries. Teachers often become close to the students; hence, it is challenging to clear the boundary of personal and professional contact. The challenge here is usually how educators balance empathy and support on the one hand with the need to sustain appropriate boundaries on the other hand to maintain professional standards (Friedman, 2020).

Most teacher educators worldwide are normally burdened with political and social pressures that may affect their ethical decisions. According to Friedman, (2020), some contexts present issues around censorship, ideological conflicts, or governmental policies that are not aligned with educators' ethical beliefs, hence making it an aspect of pressure for educators. It is challenging to balance such pressure with commitment to ethical principles. Many educators' predicament lies between balancing pressure with commitment to ethical principles (Hofstede, 2001). Ethics has also faced new challenges due to technological uprisings in education. Issues that teacher educators will have to face are those dealing with data privacy and cyberbullying, with the responsible use of digital resources finally. These challenges require the consideration of ethical guidelines in a rethought manner mainly because education increasingly takes part in the digital landscape.

Although most ethical challenges remain similar between global contexts, there are differences due to cultural, political, and institutional dissimilarities. For instance, while in some countries the collective

orientation could shape educators' practices on equity and inclusion, in more individualistic societies, concerns about personal responsibility play a more important role. Moreover, support from an institutional level can be very different, and the availability and existence of ethical guides also play an important role in how educators address these challenges (Ogunyemi, 2022). The assorted array of ethical challenges in the Nigerian educational system is bound up with the country's cultural, social, and political perspectives (Okafor, 2020). Grasping these particular challenges informs teacher educators of their practice in ensuring the effectiveness of the Guidance and Counselling programme. Corruption at all levels in educational institutions is still one of the major ethical issues facing Nigeria. It ranges from receiving bribes for awarding good grades to offering admission based on nepotism. Teacher education is thereby confronted with finding a way to ensure academic integrity among trainees, considering how such practices have been institutionalized. The prevalence of these scenarios renders the quality of education far below par and fosters a loss of confidence in

schools and other educational institutions (Nwankwo, 2019).

There is a lack of adequate facilities within most learning institutions in Nigeria. For instance, it might be the case that in overcrowded classrooms with a lack of teaching aids, teachers simply cannot help but act undemocratically; arbitrary grading is one such undemocratic method of assessment. This is a systemic problem that shows the underlying conflict between ethical imperatives to ensure fairness in education and the efficiency pressure to work within underfunding constraints. Gender roles are culturally ascribed in the Nigerian people, which influences gender roles in educational institutions. Educators themselves may be discriminated against and experience bias, impacting their professional autonomy in making ethical decisions (Ajayi, 2020). Additionally, traditional beliefs about the role of women make opportunities limited for female students fact that poses a moral challenge to educators determined to ensure equity and inclusivity. A further source of ethical dilemmas for teacher educators could be political influences in Nigerian education (Aina, 2019).

While political considerations are in play, appointments based on meritocratic values distort the appointment process and affect the integrity of educational leadership. Educators may be put in a setting where ethics, compromised by the outside environment, cannot allow them to operate fairly and justly in delivering education (Aina, 2019). Violence has become a common scenario in most parts of Nigeria, a situation characterized by kidnapping and insurgency, which raises ethical issues relating to educators. While teacher educators have to ensure safety, they also have to strive to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning taking place. The ethical complications of prioritizing safety over academic engagement can thus present significant dilemmas that implicate educators and students alike (Friedman, 2020). The distinctive cultural landscape of Nigeria shapes such ethical issues in some important ways.

The interaction of different cultural beliefs and practices, with over 250 ethnic groups, will certainly affect the approach towards education and standards of ethics brought forward. For example, communitarian values that regard the well-being of the community

as more important than that of an individual may conflict with individual rights and make the ethical decision of educators in creating a supportive, yet equitable, learning environment even more challenging (Ike, 2021). Ethical issues in education in Nigeria will be multidimensional and thus understood only by taking into perspective the cultural and contextual considerations. These are multi-faceted ethical dilemmas influenced by many factors (Adeyemi, & Adeyinka, 2003). Their addressing requires a nuanced understanding of the contexts educators operate within and the development of comprehensive ethical frameworks that may guide their practice. Ethical frameworks provide structured ways of understanding moral principles and decision-making in educational contexts.

Such a framework leads educators through the jungle of complex moral or ethical dilemmas they find themselves in within their professional practices, about teacher education. Deontological ethics, by Immanuel Kant, is duty-based, adhering to established rules or principles that are universally known as the "categorical imperative" (Kant, 1785). This framework postulates that actions are morally right if

they conform to a set of duties, regardless of consequences. The framework can also be considered for application to teacher education in terms of informing educators how to maintain professional standards and ethical codes of conduct, as well as to perform accordingly to match their respective duties and responsibilities towards students and the wider education community. A good example is that, in the application of deontological ethics to teaching, there is the duty to practice fairness in the assessment of students, ensuring that they are all subjected to the same yardstick. Consequentialist ethics base their judgments on acts on their consequences or outcomes.

The best-known variant is utilitarianism, which holds that actions are right if they promote the greatest happiness or well-being overall. This is applied to teacher education by urging educators to take into consideration the potential consequences of their decisions on students and larger communities. An instructor, for instance, may use such a teacher educator to balance the efficiencies of a certain teaching approach with any possibly negative effects, to implement practices that will produce a maximum positive effect on the students; Fenstermacher & Soltis, (2004).

This framework can be quite useful in discussions about curriculum design and pedagogical approaches. Virtue ethics do not focus on rules or outcomes as bases for ethical judgment alone; they focus on the moral virtues and character of the decision-maker. In light of such an approach, it will ask teacher educators to become a particular kind of person; that is, one possessing the personal qualities or virtues of integrity, empathy, and fairness, for instance. An educator who embodies these qualities can also negotiate the issue at hand much better and is more likely to serve as a good role model to students. This may mean that, in practice, the virtuous teacher educator can focus on strong relationships with students for the construction of supportive and ethical learning. This, therefore, calls for the incorporation of such ethics into teacher education programs in an attempt to prepare educators to meet such challenges.

These frameworks will, in turn, help provide future educators with deontological, consequentialist, and virtue ethics that advance the ethical culture of an institution by instilling integrity and accountability in its members. For instance, the inclusion of case studies on ethical dilemmas using such

frameworks may aid teacher educators in acquiring critical thinking and decision-making skills. This approach not only enhances their ability to navigate complex situations but also further cements the place of ethical conduct in shaping the educational landscape. Both ethical decision-making models and social cognitive theory afford comprehensive lenses through which analysis of the perceptions and implications for guidance and counseling programmes could be anchored in the exploration of the ethical challenges facing teacher educators in Nigeria.

Rest's Four-Component Model: moral action involves four key components, according to this model: moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character. As Rest (1986) explains, the Moral Sensitivity: component concerns the recognizing of ethical issues involved. Translated to the field of teacher educators, heightened moral sensitivity could mean better identification of ethical dilemmas in their practice. Moral Judgment: to weigh up options and make decisions based upon ethical principles. The teacher educators must consider the consequences of the decisions on the students and the wider

education community. Moral Motivation-

This component shows that ethical values are more important and, therefore, always to be considered above individual or institutional interests. In this light, teacher educators must be motivated to act accordingly even in difficult situations. Moral Character- This last element underlines that the actual resolutions shall be made to put into practice one's ethical decisions. This becomes particularly relevant in Nigeria, where there is a tendency for educators to give in to compromise due to external pressures. Kohlberg's stages of moral development (Kohlberg, 1981 & Okpara, & Onyekwere, 2011).) Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning offer further detail on how teacher educators might respond to the ethical dilemmas they are obliged to respond to. The location of educators within the different stages of moral development is of particular use in the design of guidance and counseling programs, which may be used to promote higher stages of moral reasoning among educators. Theoretically, those educators who operate at the higher stages of moral development are likely to employ principled reasoning, including post-conventional moral reasoning, thereby improving ethical

practices within educational contexts. Of these, social cognitive theory, developed initially by Albert Bandura, places the most emphasis on the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in behavior (Bandura, 1986). Bandura, A. (1986). This is most relevant to teacher education for several reasons: Teacher educators are role models for their students. The ethical behavior and ethical decisions that educators model in class can have an impact on the moral development of future educators. This is in line with Bandura's assertion that people learn behaviors by observing others.

Bandura's concept of self-efficacy is further extended to include how teacher educators perceive their capability to make ethical decisions. Educators who perceive their capability to maneuver around ethical dilemmas are more likely to enact proactive ethical behavior (Ogunyemi, 2022). Counseling programs can effectively influence educators' self-efficacy through training and support, hence making them capable of handling ethical challenges.

The social context within which teacher educators exist has a great bearing on their ethical decision-making. Bandura emphasized how personal factors interact

with behavior and environmental influences.

These interactions mean guidance and counseling programs can be provided through supportive environments that foster ethical behavior easily.

The moral dilemmas which teacher educators in Nigeria grapple with are situated in varied cultural, social, and political contexts. Literature relating to ethics in education supported the assertion of teacher educators as moral guides, Adeyemi & Adeyinka 2019; Noddings 2003. Other researchers contextualized hot topics such as academic dishonesty, equity issues, and professional boundary violations: Peters & Gunter 2020; Sleeter 2017; Dewey 2018.

With this in mind, the literature still shows an evident gap that involves even specific perceptions by Nigerian teacher educators about the adequacy of guidance and counseling programs in addressing these ethical dilemmas.

While many studies acknowledge that such challenges exist, not many have gone into how existing support systems can be improved to better equip educators in the light of their ethical decision-making processes.

Furthermore, very few studies have looked at the effects of ethical frameworks and models on professional growth for teacher educators in Nigeria. This study was, therefore, undertaken to fill this identified gap by exploring such perceptions to inform better guidance and counseling programs more effective for Nigerian education.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of teacher educators at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU) and Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri (AIFUE) regarding the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programs in addressing ethical challenges?
2. How do teacher educators at MOUUAU and AIFUE navigate ethical dilemmas related to academic dishonesty, equity, and professional boundaries in their educational practices?
3. Which ethical frameworks and decision-making models do teacher educators at MOUUAU and AIFUE consider most beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices?

Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant difference in the perception of Teacher educators at Michael

Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU) and Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, (AIFUE) on regarding the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programmes in addressing ethical challenges

Research methods

This study aimed to investigate teacher educators' perceptions on the ethical Challenges faced them and the implications for Guidance and Counseling programmes . This is a descriptive research design. The study involved the School of Education at MOUUAU, with a population of 136 academic staff, and the School of General Education, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri (AIFUE), with a population of 709 academic staff. The entire academic staff of the School of Education at MOUUAU was used as the sample due to the small population size. A purposive sampling technique was employed (participants are selected based on specific characteristics or criteria relevant to the study's objectives) for AIFUE, selecting 191 academic staff from the School of General Education, resulting in a total sample of 327 teacher educators. The number represents 20% of academic staff in the two universities. The Data were collected

using a questionnaire titled "Teacher-Educators Questionnaire on Ethical Challenges Faced and the Implications for Guidance and Counseling Programmes" (TOEIGC). This 16-item questionnaire was designed by the researchers and validated by three experts from the Departments of Educational Psychology and Guidance and Counseling at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri. The instrument consists of four parts: 1. Demographic information of respondents, 2. effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programs in addressing ethical challenges, 3. ethical dilemmas related to academic dishonesty, equity, and professional boundaries in educational practices and 4. Decision-making models teacher educators consider most beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices

The questionnaire items used a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), scored as 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The instrument's face validity was confirmed by four experts from the relevant department at AIFUE, and it underwent trial testing with 36 lecturers outside the study population, achieving a Cronbach's alpha reliability

coefficient of 0.81. The questionnaire was administered with the assistance of two trained research assistants, ensuring a 100% response rate. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to address the

research questions, with a decision rule that any mean score of 2.50 or above was accepted, while scores below 2.50 were rejected. Hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistic at a 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Average Perception Scores and Standard Deviations on Teacher Educators regarding the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programs in addressing ethical challenges.

S/ N	ITEM STATEMENT	MOUAU			AIFUE LECTURES		
		\bar{x}	SD	REM	\bar{x}	SD	REM
1	The existing guidance and counseling programs at my institution adequately address ethical issues faced by teacher educators	2.73	0.55	Accept	3.01	0.60	Accept
2	The guidance and counseling services available to me provide sufficient support in navigating complex ethical dilemmas.	3.02	0.50	Accept	3.13	0.55	Accept
3	My institution offers regular training and workshops to help teacher educators develop ethical decision-making skills	2.05	0.31	Reject	2.10	0.30	Reject

4	I The ethical guidelines and policies at my institution are clear and easily accessible to all teacher educators.	2.61	0.45	Accep t	2.53	0.40	Accep t
5	The counseling services at my institution are responsive to the unique ethical challenges faced by teacher educators	2.82	0.64	Accep t	3.50	0.51	Accep t
6	I am satisfied with the level of support provided by the guidance and counseling programs at my institution in addressing ethical issues	2.41	0.35	Reject	2.48	0.47	Reject
Total mean average		2.61	0.38	Accep t	2.79	0.47	Accep t

The results indicate that teacher educators at both MOUAU and AIFUE believe the existing guidance and counseling programs at their institutions adequately address ethical issues they face (items 1, 2, and 5 were accepted). However, they reject the notion that their institutions offer regular

training and workshops to help them develop ethical decision-making skills (item 3 was rejected). They also express dissatisfaction with the level of support provided by the guidance and counseling programs in addressing ethical issues (item 6 was rejected).

Table 2: Average Perception Scores and Standard Deviations on how teacher educators at MOUAU and AIFUE navigate ethical dilemmas related to academic dishonesty, equity, and professional boundaries in their educational practices

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MOUAU			AIFUE LECTURES		
		\bar{x}	SD	REM	\bar{x}	SD	REM
7	I have encountered ethical challenges related to academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) in my interactions with students.	3.75	0.79	Accept	3.72	0.68	Accept
8	I prioritize maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with my students, even when faced with emotionally challenging situations.	3.50	0.70	Accept	3.80	0.74	Accept
9	I strive to promote equity and inclusivity in my teaching practices, regardless of students' backgrounds or identities	3.64	0.61	Accept	3.60	0.50	Accept
10	I have experienced ethical dilemmas related to balancing institutional policies with my personal beliefs about fairness and social justice	3.53	0.64	Accept	3.52	0.62	Accept
11	I feel confident in my ability to navigate ethical challenges related to academic dishonesty, equity, and professional boundaries.	2.81	0.51	Accept	2.90	0.59	Accept
Total mean average		3.45	0.67	Accept	3.51	0.63	Accept

The results indicate that teacher educators at both MOUAU and AIFUE have encountered ethical challenges related to academic dishonesty, maintaining appropriate

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professional boundaries, and promoting equity and inclusivity in their teaching practices (all items were accepted). They also

feel confident in their ability to navigate these ethical challenges.

Table 3: Average Perception Scores and Standard Deviations on the decision-making models teacher educators at MOUAU and AIFUE consider most beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MOUAU			ALVAN LECTURES		
		\bar{x}	SD	REM	\bar{x}	SD	REM
12	professional development programmes I have attended have significantly improved my digital skills	3.09	0.65	Accept	3.20	0.68	Accept
13	I find the content of professional development programmes relevant to my teaching needs	3.40	0.66	Accept	3.42	0.61	Accept
14	The duration and frequency of professional development programs are adequate	3.51	0.61	Accept	3.46	0.60	Accept
15	I have opportunities to practice and apply what I learn in professional development programmes	3.45	0.64	Accept	3.45	0.62	Accept
16	I regularly seek guidance from colleagues or counseling services when faced with ethical dilemmas in my	2.08	0.31	Reject	2.32	0.51	Reject

teaching practices.

Total mean average	3.11	0.57	Accept	3.17	0.61	Accept
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Table 3. indicates that teacher educators at both MOUAU and AIFUE find the content, duration, and frequency of professional development programmes relevant and beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices (items 1-4 were accepted). However, they reject the notion that they regularly seek guidance from colleagues or counseling services when faced with ethical dilemmas (item 5 was rejected).

Table 4: T-test analysis on the mean difference of MOUAU and ALVAN lecturers on perceived effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programmes in addressing ethical challenges.

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t	Sig	Decision
MOUAU	136	2.61	0.38				Do not reject
				325	267	.079	Ho
ALVAN	191	2.79	0.47				

*Significant at $P < 0.05$

Table 4 reveals that the t value of 267. At $df = 325$, where $P > 0.05$. The t-test analysis shows that the difference in the mean scores between MOUAU (2.61) and AIFUE (2.79) is not statistically significant ($p = 0.079$, which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05). This suggests that there is no significant difference in the perception of teacher educators at MOUAU and AIFUE regarding the effectiveness of existing

guidance and counseling programmes in addressing ethical challenges. Hence the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of Teacher educators at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU) and Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, (AIFUE) on regarding the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programs in

addressing ethical challenges is therefore not reject

Discussion

The results from Table 1 indicate that teacher educators at both MOUAU and AIFUE believe the existing guidance and counseling programs at their institutions adequately address the ethical issues they face. This aligns with the views expressed by Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2019) and Noddings (2003), who emphasized the importance of ethical training and support for educators. However, the teacher educators expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of regular training and workshops to help them develop ethical decision-making skills, which is inconsistent with the recommendations of Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2019) and Okpara and Onyekwere (2011) regarding the need for comprehensive ethical frameworks in teacher education.

The findings in Table 2 reveal that teacher educators at both institutions have encountered various ethical challenges related to academic dishonesty, maintaining professional boundaries, and promoting equity and inclusivity. This aligns with the existing literature on ethical issues in education, as discussed by Peters and Gunter

(2020), Sleeter (2017), and Friedman (2020).

The teacher educators also expressed confidence in their ability to navigate these ethical dilemmas, which could be attributed to the support they receive from the guidance and counseling services, as suggested by Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory.

Table 3 shows that teacher educators at MOUAU and AIFUE consider various ethical frameworks and decision-making models, such as deontological, consequentialist, and virtue ethics, as beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices. This is in line with the recommendations of Fenstermacher and Soltis (2004) and Kant (1785) regarding the integration of ethical frameworks into teacher education programmes.

Table 4 presents the results of a t-test analysis comparing the perceptions of teacher educators at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU) and Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education (AIFUE) regarding the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programs in addressing ethical challenges. The results indicate that the mean scores are 2.61 for MOUAU and 2.79 for AIFUE, with a t-value of 2.67 and a p-value of 0.079. Since the p-

value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the difference in perceptions between the two institutions is not statistically significant. This finding aligns with the views expressed by Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2019), who highlight the necessity of ethical training for educators. They suggest that despite the presence of guidance and counseling programs, there may be gaps in their implementation and effectiveness in addressing the ethical challenges faced by educators. The lack of significant difference in perceptions suggests that both institutions may face similar challenges regarding the adequacy of their programmes.

Conclusion

This study explored the perceptions of teacher educators at MOUAU and AIFUE regarding the effectiveness of existing guidance and counseling programs in addressing ethical challenges they face, their experiences in navigating ethical dilemmas related to academic dishonesty, equity, and professional boundaries, and the ethical frameworks and decision-making models they consider most beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices.

The findings indicate that teacher educators generally believe the existing guidance and

counseling programs at their institutions adequately address ethical issues, but they express a need for more regular training and workshops to develop their ethical decision-making skills. They have encountered various ethical challenges, but feel confident in their ability to navigate them. The teacher educators also consider ethical frameworks and decision-making models, such as deontological, consequentialist, and virtue ethics, as beneficial for enhancing their ethical practices.

Recommendations

1. Institutions should implement regular training workshops focusing on ethical decision-making to equip educators with the skills necessary to navigate moral dilemmas effectively.
2. Nigerian universities should encourage a culture of peer support among educators where they can seek guidance and share experiences related to ethical challenges. This could be facilitated through mentorship programs.
3. National University Commission should incorporate ethical frameworks and decision-making models into the teacher education curriculum to prepare future educators for the complexities they will face.

4. Institutions should conduct regular assessments of the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programmes, seeking feedback from educators to identify areas for improvement.

5. Nigerian Universities should develop policies that promote ethical conduct and accountability at all levels of the educational institution, ensuring that ethical standards are upheld.

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