

Ethical Teaching Principles and Learning Attitudes of Public Secondary School Students in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria

Uzoije Ihechukwumere Fine, and Ogunji James A

Department of Education, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo

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ABSTRACT

Learning is an individual process that pushes students to venture into new areas. Students' learning attitudes and accomplishments are greatly influenced by several elements, including ethical teaching principles. Although there are still concerns about students' academic performance and learning attitudes in Nigerian public secondary schools, little study has been done on how ethical teaching principles (ETPs) affect students' learning attitudes (SLAs). This study examined the connection between ETPs and SLAs in public secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to choose 330 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students as the sample size from a working population of 1,846 students from seven public secondary schools as part of a cross-sectional study design. A validated adapted standardized questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data from the respondents. The reliability test for the construct yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging between 0.64 and 0.89. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the results at a significance level of 0.05. The results showed that 61.2% of students had positive attitudes towards learning and good overall SLAs ($M = 115.2$). Content competence ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.742$), pedagogical competence ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.851$), student development ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.912$), dual relationship with students ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.991$), and valid student assessment ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.84$) were among the key parameters where teachers showed a high level of adherence to ETPs. There were no discernible gender-based variations in SLAs ($t = 1.618$, $p < 0.05$). With a good and positive attitude towards learning (61.2%), the study concluded that ETPs enhanced students learning attitudes in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria, highlighting the necessity of ethical teaching as a top priority in policies and teacher preparation programs. To improve students' learning experiences and academic performance, it suggests cultivating fairness, respect, honesty, and caring in teacher-student interactions.

Keywords: Ethical Teaching Principles, Learning Attitudes, Public Secondary Schools, Teacher Ethics, Student Performance

INTRODUCTION

Attitude is a powerful determinant of success in almost every aspect of life, and education is no exception. It is well-known around the world that attitudes have an impact on actions in a variety of professional contexts. According to Robbins (2013), attitudes are emotional predispositions shaped by experiences that affect how one reacts to other people and circumstances. Academic achievement among public secondary school students is significantly shaped by attitudes toward learning, teachers, peers, and the school environment. Attitudes impact how students approach challenges, respond to opportunities, and persevere through difficulties; positive attitudes tend to foster motivation, confidence, and resilience, while negative attitudes can result in disengagement, frustration, and poor performance. Jhangiani, and Tarry (2022) opined that an individual's attitude encompasses their emotions, ideas, and actions as well as their ability to communicate who they are in their surroundings. Therefore, "attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference" (Hlalele, 2020).

Students' attitudes toward learning, whether positive or negative, significantly influence their overall perception of learning. Students may exhibit a variety of behaviors and attitudes that hinder their capacity to engage in the educational process as a result of teachers' unethical methods of teaching. These are collectively

referred to as negative learning attitudes. When students harbor negative learning attitudes, it can adversely impact their academic performance and overall educational outcomes. These attitudes may manifest as disinterest, apathy, low self-efficacy, a lack of desire to learn, or a fear of failing (Dewi, & Hashanah, 2018; Steel, & Ferrari, 2013).

The application of ethical teaching principles, which act as the moral compass directing teachers' interactions with students, colleagues, and the larger community, is fundamental to the teaching profession's universal recognition as one of the most influential in forming and molding the minds and character of students (Van Stekelenburg, Smerecnik, Sanderse, & de Ruyter, 2025). Teachers' moral behavior, ethics, and character serve as models for students' development of talent, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making skills. They also help to build a moral culture, encourage self-reflection, foster a sense of responsibility, integrate traditional and modern learning, promote critical thinking, and offer mentoring and support (Icka, & Kochoska, 2024; Heidari et al, 2015). Also, the synergy between students' attitudes and teachers' ethical teaching principles is even more important in public secondary schools, where students frequently face obstacles like limited resources, diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and varying levels of parental support (Chen & Chan, 2022). Therefore, teachers are expected to put into practice ethical teaching principles that will enhance students' learning attitudes.

Socket (2012) argues that the ethical teaching principle is the process of breaking an idea or knowledge into precise, quantifiable, and observable behaviors, practices, and standards that can be evaluated and developed in educational settings, and it was evaluated or measured based on factors such as content competence, pedagogical competence, student development, having a dual relationship with students, and valid student assessments. Meanwhile, the study sees students' learning attitude as the teacher's ability to motivate students' learning abilities, and interest, engagement in the process, and satisfaction with their educational experiences. Therefore, when these principles are practiced by teachers, their students will be motivated; and engaged and they will be satisfied with their learning outcomes. Also, their affect/behavior, as well as cognitive level would be imparted positively.

Research Objectives

The primary goal of the current study is to:

1. determine the learning attitudes of students enrolled in public secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area;
2. assess the extent to which teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools follow ethical teaching principles; and
3. assess the difference in the learning attitudes of male and female students in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools.

Research Questions

1. What is the learning attitude of students enrolled in public secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area?
2. To what extent do teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools follow ethical teaching principles?
3. What is the difference in the learning attitudes between male and female students in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Concept of Ethical Teaching Principles

Ethics, as defined by Adetunji (2016), concerns distinguishing right from wrong and applying moral principles to benefit others. Resnik (2020) reinforces that ethics encompasses human rights and responsibilities, while Winkler (2022) broadens this view to include both professional standards and universal moral norms. Within the educational context—especially in Ikenne Local Government Area—ethical behavior significantly influences student learning attitudes, both in and out of the classroom. Nigeria's educational system reflects global ethical standards through frameworks such as UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which promotes human rights and environmental consciousness. In alignment, the Nigerian government has implemented teacher registration and codes of conduct via the Teachers Registration Council (TRC), initiated in 2004, to reinforce professional and ethical behavior in schools. Below are ethical teaching principles that are necessary for the growth of educational institutions in all ramifications:

1. Content Competence

Teachers must demonstrate deep subject knowledge and advanced credentials to ensure meaningful teaching (Fives & Buehl, 2012; Buabeng et al., 2020). Education Insights (2023) adds that effective teachers are also adept in assessment, creativity, and motivational strategies.

2. Pedagogical Competence

According to Channa and Sahito (2023), ethical teaching incorporates effective classroom strategies that are inclusive and evidence-based. As emphasized by Prasetyono et al. (2021) and Daryanto (2013), such competence reflects professionalism and directly shapes students' academic experiences and attitudes.

3. Student Development

Student growth encompasses emotional, physical, social, and cognitive areas (Caskey & Anfara, 2014). Piaget's cognitive development theory underlines education's role, supported by studies like Resaland et al. (2016) and Chamizo-Neto et al. (2021), which highlighted the positive effects of family engagement and physical activity.

4. Dual Relationship with Students

Teachers often navigate complex interpersonal relationships with students. Ethical guidelines stress the need for transparency, fairness, and clear boundaries to avoid conflicts of interest (American Psychological Association, 2017; Gallagher, 2023; Beauchamp & Childress, 2019).

5. Valid Student Assessment

Rezaie (2022) underscores the importance of fair, valid assessments that reflect students' knowledge. The American Educational Research Association et al. (2014) and Martin et al. (2017) advocate for diverse assessment approaches that yield reliable academic insights.

Code of Ethics for Teachers

The Teachers Code of Conduct (2023), the National Policy on Education, and TRC Act 31 guide teacher conduct, addressing issues like empathy, student rights, confidentiality, favoritism, misconduct, and ideological bias. Elm et al. (2009) assert that teachers are expected to uphold these standards as moral leaders.

Sockett (2012) discusses how teacher integrity influences classroom dynamics and student respect. Gunawardena et al. (2024) reference White (1913), who argued that teachers must be emotionally mature and morally balanced to guide young minds effectively. Van Stekelenburg et al. (2025) examine teachers' perspectives on shaping students' ethical awareness, reinforcing the educator's role in moral development and critical thinking. Ethical teaching fosters academic engagement and personal growth (Suman, 2023; Noddings,

2012; Popovska & Popovska, 2021; Baria & Gomez, 2022; Gimbert et al., 2021; Narvaez, 2023). Activities like service learning enhance resilience, discipline, and a growth mindset.

Students' Learning Attitude

Learning attitudes encompass motivation, satisfaction, engagement, cognition, and behavior. Self-Determination Theory (Ackerman, 2018) emphasizes that autonomy, competence, and relatedness drive intrinsic motivation. Bandura (2012) and Deci & Artino (2012) identify self-efficacy and past experiences as core influences, while Coristine et al. (2022) stress social connections like peer and teacher relationships. Kunz et al. (2021) explain that students' feelings, beliefs, and actions determine how they interact with their environment. Dev (2023) highlights the importance of attitude as a determinant of learning experience.

Student engagement is categorized into behavioral (e.g., class participation), emotional (e.g., curiosity), and cognitive (e.g., critical thinking), all of which correlate with academic success (Ben-Eliahahu et al., 2018; Gray & DiLoreto, 2016; Tang-Kuok-Ho, 2023; Amuda et al., 2024). Satisfaction is tied to clear communication, feedback, and content relevance (Ikram & Kenayathulla, 2023). Affective elements like enjoyment or frustration influence learning outcomes (Mustafina et al., 2020), while emotional states shape attention and memory, thereby affecting cognition (Tyng et al., 2017).

Behavioral outcomes depend on individual traits (e.g., motivation, self-regulation) and environmental inputs like classroom climate and peer interactions (Gatundu et al., 2023; Saxer et al., 2024). Cognition, involving memory, problem-solving, and metacognition, is shaped by effective instructional design (Paas & van Merriënboer, 2020), Vygotsky's sociocultural approach, and Piaget's developmental theory (Hurst et al., 2013; Oladele, 2023; Jhangiani & Tarry, 2022; Kunwar, 2023).

Attitude defines how individuals perceive and react to educational experiences (Souza-Barros & Marcos, 2010; Hwang & Son, 2021; Getie & Popescu, 2020). Studies show a strong link between attitude and academic success (Veresova & Dana Mala, 2016; Anghelache, 2012, 2013; Adobo & Gbore, 2011). Blazar and Kraft (2017) contend that success requires more than just academic skills—students' enjoyment and confidence are also essential (Munna & Kalam, 2021).

Ethical Teaching Principles and Their Influence on Learning Attitudes

1. Modeling Ethical Behavior

Teachers model ethical conduct, which shapes student behavior and instills academic integrity (Linh & Trang, 2024; Prince-Mitchel, 2023).

2. Fostering Trust and Respect

Strong teacher-student relationships built on respect and trust enhance engagement and academic outcomes (Cushman, 2014; Froiland & Worrell, 2019).

3. Encouraging Critical Thinking

Ethical classrooms promote discussion and analysis, fostering intellectual curiosity and deeper learning (Noddings, 2012; Jordan, 2016).

4. Cultivating Responsibility

Teachers who emphasize accountability help students take ownership of learning (Illumeo, 2023; Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

5. Promoting Empathy and Citizenship

Activities involving ethics and service learning promote social responsibility and meaningful engagement (Narvaez, 2023; Bengic-Colak et al., 2023).

Empirical Review

Kralova and Svetlikova-Martauzova (2017) highlight pedagogical tact and teacher personality as core to successful education. Their 2016–2017 study at Comenius University revealed moderate ethical conduct among faculty and neutral student-teacher relationships, suggesting the need for enhanced interaction. Omojuwa (2023) found that in Lagos, ethical teaching principles significantly influenced secondary and tertiary students' attitudes toward learning, affirming the positive effects of ethical practices in diverse educational contexts.

According to the literature review, encouraging students to have good attitudes toward learning requires ethical teaching principles. Students' academic experiences and general development are influenced by teachers who exhibit high subject and pedagogical ability. Prioritizing equity, openness, and reliable evaluations fosters trust and motivates students to act responsibly. Teachers are guided in upholding their professionalism and moral integrity by the existence of a well-defined code of ethics. Emotional, behavioral, and cognitive factors—all molded by the classroom environment and teacher-student interactions—have an impact on students' attitudes toward learning. Student motivation, engagement, and academic achievement are directly impacted by ethical teaching approaches including encouraging critical thinking and setting an example of good behavior. All things considered, the review emphasizes the close connection between creating a supportive, productive learning environment and providing ethical training.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: A cross-sectional study design was used as the research design for this study to examine the influence of ethical teaching principles on students' learning attitudes among public secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area.

Population of the Study: The working population for this study consisted of 1,846 students from seven public secondary schools out of 11 public secondary schools with a population of 15,211 students in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. The students were to evaluate 459 teachers concerning how they apply ethical principles in the schools. The sample size of this study was 330 Senior Secondary Two (SS 2) students determined using Taro Yamne's (1967) formula. The formula assumed a 95% precision or error level. A multistage sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. In the first stage, the simple random sampling technique was used to select seven (7) out of eleven (11) public secondary schools based on the five political demarcations in Ikenne Local Government. Two public secondary schools were selected in Ikenne and Iperu political demarcations respectively, while one each was selected in Ilisan, Ogere, and Irolu. In the second stage, Senior Secondary Two (SS 2) students were selected purposively to be the study's working population because they have spent about 5 years in the school, therefore, they are acquainted with the ethics of the school. Because all students in the targeted grade level have an equal chance of being included in the study, selection bias is reduced and the results' generalizability is enhanced. Lastly, a simple random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size. The simple random sampling method was used to allow every student in the targeted grade level to have an equal chance of being included in the study, to reduce bias, and to enhance the results' generalizability.

Validity of the Instrument

A copy of the instrument was examined by the study supervisor and two more lecturers in the Education Department who are specialists in research methodology before it was printed and administered. Their suggestions, modifications, and comments were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument. Guaranteeing that the instrument measured the items it was intended to measure, greatly helped to ensure the face validity of the instrument.

Respondents from outside the demographic who have similar characteristics to those under study were used for a pre-test of the questionnaire. This pre-test assisted in assessing the hypotheses' suitability and appropriate comprehension in addition to the research questions. In addition, a pilot study was conducted to ascertain the respondents' desire to participate in the research, to apprise the researcher of the primary respondents' expected

responses beforehand, and to confirm the validity of the questions before they were given to the study's population.

Reliability of the Instrument

For all of the instrument's sub-scales, the pilot study approach of reliability evaluation was applied to make sure the instruments consistently measured the things they claimed to measure. To find out if the study's variables consistently measured the factors intended, a Cronbach's Alpha statistical technique reliability test was conducted. A reliability study was also performed to ascertain whether the internal consistency of measures reveals the homogeneity of the items in the measure that taps the variables.

Thus, 10% of the original sample size was used for the pilot study drawn from Senior Secondary Two (SS 2) students from Isanbi Comprehensive High School, Ilisan, and United High School, Ikenne, both in the Ogun State LGA of Ikenne, participated in the pilot project. The exercise was beneficial since it strengthened the questionnaire, improved its applicability, and reduced the possibility of misunderstandings. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test in conjunction with exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to statistically quantify the concept valency.

An analysis of the scores obtained yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .865, .807, .815, .814, .642, and .885, for the Influence of Ethical Teaching Principles (Content Competence, Pedagogical Competence, Student Development, Dual Relationship with Students, and Valid Students Assessment). Meanwhile, Students' Learning Attitudes (Motivation, Engagement, Satisfaction, Affect/Behaviour, and Cognitive) yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of .810, .784, .861, .840, and .803.

These indicate that the instrument had good internal consistency and that the items on the instrument were internally consistent with one another, and it also measured a unidimensional construct.

Every one of these variables had its dependability assessed starting at a value of 0.7 and higher (Keith & Taber, 2018). This reliability test's adoption and implementation are justified by the fact that they will lower data-collecting errors and yield consistent data-collection outcomes.

Instrumentation: The data-gathering instrument for this study titled "Ethical Teaching Principles Questionnaire (ETPQ)" was a validated adapted standardized questionnaire from Alkharusi's (2016) work and revised by the researcher. The reliability test for the construct yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging between 0.64 and 0.89. The questionnaire consisted of three different sections, which are sections A to C.

SECTION A – Demography

This section was titled "Demographic Data Inventory of Respondents (DDIR)" and it was used to gather information on the bio-data of the respondents, which included gender, religion, state, age, class, and qualification.

SECTION B – Teachers Ethical Teaching Principle Questionnaire (TETPQ)

This section measured teachers' ethical teaching principles in Ikenne LGA. It contained five parameters with 30 items on a Four-Likert style response ranging from "0-1.49 – Very Low, 1.5-2.49 - Low; 2.5-3.49 - High; 3.50-4.00 - Very High"

SECTION C – Students' Learning Attitudes Scale (SLAS)

This section was used to collect data on the students' learning attitudes in Ikenne LGA. It contained five parameters with 42 items on a Four-Likert style response ranging from "1 SD = Strongly Disagree, 2 D = Disagree, 3 A = Agree, and 4 = SA = Strongly Agree."

Methods of Data Analysis: The IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 was used to carry out all analyses for this study. Research questions one and two were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages).

Tables and figures were then used to display the data. Also, on students' learning attitudes, it is important to state that "the higher the score, the better the attitude. Therefore, scores between 131 and 196 reflect positive learning attitudes, while scores below 131 reflect negative learning attitudes.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted under the supervision and guidelines of the Babcock University Health Research Ethics Committee (BUHREC), which granted the researcher an authorization certificate. Before the distribution of the questionnaire, the ethics committee of Babcock University gave its approval and obtained the signed consent form from the respondents. The researcher made sure that no names or other identifiable information about the respondents was collected or recorded during the study to protect their anonymity.

Analysis According to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the learning attitudes of public secondary school students enrolled in Ikenne Local Government Area?

Table 4.1a: The degree of learning attitude of students enrolled in public secondary schools

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
learning attitude of students	330	52.00	168.00	115.20	13.31

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Table 4.1a reveals the degree of learning attitude of students enrolled in public secondary schools with a mean score of 115.2 (68.57%), which is good. This is because it is higher than the minimum score of 52 which is 15.7%. It could then be deduced generally that the learning attitude of students enrolled in public secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area is good and encouraging, which may be a result of some factors inherent in the students or the school environment.

Table 4.1b further shows the attitudinal disposition of the learning attitude of students enrolled in public secondary schools

Table 4.1b: Learning attitude mean score of public secondary school students

The learning attitude	Category of scores	Frequency	Percent (%)
Positive	131 above	202	61.2
Negative	Less than 131	128	38.8
Total		330	100.0
Mean		115.20	
Percentage (%)		68.57	
Standard deviation		13.31	

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

The result presents the attitudinal disposition of students toward learning in public secondary schools. Their attitudinal disposition was categorized as positive (131-196) and negative (1-130). The majority 202 (61.2%) of the respondents had positive learning attitudes and the remaining 128 (38.8%) had negative attitudes.

Research Question Two: To what extent do teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools follow ethical teaching principles?

Table 4.2.1: The extent to which teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools follow ethical teaching principles (Content competence)

Item	Very Low (%)	Low (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Content Competence						
My teachers maintain a high level of subject matter knowledge.	13 (3.3)	24 (6.2)	201 (51.5)	152 (39.0)	3.26	.719
My teachers ensure course content is current and accurate.	7 (1.8)	20 (5.1)	212 (54.4)	151 (38.7)	3.30	.649
My teachers ensure course content is representative by reflecting different opinions and points of view on topics discussed.	16 (4.1)	35 (9.0)	192 (49.2)	147 (37.7)	3.21	.768
My teachers ensure that the course content is appropriate by teaching what is consistent with the course objective and students' programme of studies.	20 (5.1)	42 (10.8)	194 (49.7)	134 (34.4)	3.13	.800
What is taught adequately prepares me for my course of study.	15 (3.8)	31 (7.9)	166 (42.6)	178 (45.6)	3.30	.775
Grand Mean					3.25	0.742

Rule of Decision =0-1.49 –VL, 1.5-2.49-L; 2.5-3.49-H; 3.50-4.00- VH

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Table 4.2.1 reports a grand mean score for content competence of $M = 3.25$ ($SD = 0.742$), indicating that teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area maintain a high level of content competence grounded in ethical teaching principles. Specifically, respondents noted that their teachers demonstrate strong subject matter expertise ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.719$); ensure course content is current and accurate ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.649$); present content that reflects diverse viewpoints ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.768$); align course content with learning objectives and students' academic programs ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.800$); and deliver content that adequately prepares students for their field of study ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.775$).

Table 4.2.2: The Extent to which teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools follow ethical teaching principles (Pedagogical Competence)

Item	Very Low (%)	Low (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Pedagogical Competence						
My teachers communicate the objectives of the subject to	27 (6.9)	44 (11.3)	183	136 (34.9)	3.10	.855

students.			(46.9)			
My teachers select effective instructional methods that help students in learning.	16 (4.1)	51 (13.1)	163 (41.8)	160 (41.0)	3.20	.817
My teachers provide opportunities for practice and feedback on skills to be tested.	14 (3.6)	68 (17.4)	167 (42.8)	141 (36.2)	3.12	.817
My teachers can handle individual differences of students and various styles of teaching accordingly.	31 (7.9)	68 (17.4)	162 (41.5)	129 (33.1)	3.00	.908
My teachers provide equal educational opportunities for diverse groups.	28 (7.2)	47 (12.1)	184 (47.2)	131 (33.6)	3.07	.860
Grand Mean					3.09	0.851

Rule of Decision =0-1.49 –VL, 1.5-2.49-L; 2.5-3.49-H; 3.50-4.00- VH

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Table 4.2.2 presents a grand mean score for pedagogical competence of $M = 3.09$ ($SD = 0.851$), indicating that the teachers of the respondents demonstrate a high level of pedagogical competency. The findings further show that teachers uphold ethical teaching principles by clearly communicating subject objectives ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.855$); selecting effective instructional methods that support student learning ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.817$); providing practice opportunities and feedback on assessed skills ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.817$); addressing individual learning differences and using varied teaching styles ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.908$); and ensuring equal educational opportunities for diverse student groups ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.860$).

Table 4.2.3: The extent to which teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools follow ethical teaching principles (Student Development)

Item	Very Low (%)	Low (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Student Development						
Teachers design instructions that facilitate learning and encourage autonomy and independent thinking in students.	34 (8.7)	71 (18.2)	177 (45.4)	108 (27.7)	2.92	.896
Teachers treat students with respect and dignity.	43 (11.0)	91 (23.3)	149 (38.2)	107 (27.4)	2.82	.959
Teachers do not make racially discriminatory, derogatory comments towards students.	68 (17.4)	94 (24.1)	146 (37.4)	82 (21.0)	2.62	1.004
Teachers take seriously the responsibility of contributing to the intellectual and moral development	27 (6.9)	41 (10.5)	187 (47.9)	135 (34.6)	3.10	.848

of students.						
Teachers challenge students enough in their studies	17 (4.4)	62 (15.9)	144 (36.9)	167 (42.8)	3.18	.855
Grand Mean					2.928	0.912

Rule of Decision =0-1.49 –VL, 1.5-2.49-L; 2.5-3.49-H; 3.50-4.00- VH

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

The results from Table 4.2.3 indicate a grand mean score for student development of $M = 2.928$ ($SD = 0.912$), suggesting that teachers in Ikenne LGA uphold a high level of ethical teaching principles that promote student development. Specifically, teachers demonstrate a high level of ethical conduct by designing instruction that fosters learning and supports student autonomy and independent thinking ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.896$); treating students with respect and dignity ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.959$); avoiding racially discriminatory or derogatory remarks ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.004$); contributing to students' intellectual and moral development ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.848$); and challenging students adequately in their academic pursuits ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.855$).

Table 4.2.4: The extent to which teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools follow ethical teaching principles (Dual Relationship with Students)

Item	Very Low (%)	Low (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Dual Relationship with Students						
My teachers keep a relationship with students focused on pedagogical goals and academic requirements.	38 (9.7)	33 (8.5)	191 (49.0)	128 (32.8)	3.05	.896
My teachers do not exploit students nor compromise academic standards.	37 (9.5)	88 (22.6)	163 (41.8)	102 (26.2)	2.85	.919
My teachers do not engage in excessive socializing with students outside the classroom.	45 (11.5)	88 (22.6)	139 (35.6)	118 (30.3)	2.85	.984
My teachers do not receive gifts, give gifts to students, or favours any student unduly.	69 (17.7)	85 (21.8)	127 (32.6)	109 (27.9)	2.71	1.060
My teachers do not engage in any sexual or close personal relationship with students.	63 (16.2)	55 (14.1)	111 (28.5)	161 (41.3)	2.95	1.096
Grand Mean					2.88	0.991

Rule of Decision =0-1.49 –VL, 1.5-2.49-L; 2.5-3.49-H; 3.50-4.00- VH

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

The analysis of dual relationships with students, as presented in Table 4.2.4, reveals a grand mean score of $M = 2.88$ ($SD = 0.991$), indicating that teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area uphold a high level of professional conduct in their interactions with students. Specifically, teachers demonstrate ethical teaching

principles by focusing on pedagogical goals and academic requirements ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.896$), avoiding exploitation or compromise of academic standards ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 0.919$), refraining from excessive socializing outside the classroom ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 0.984$), not engaging in gift exchanges or favoritism ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.060$), and avoiding any sexual or close personal relationships with students ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.096$).

Table 4.2.5: The extent to which teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools follow ethical teaching principles (Valid Student Assessment)

Item	Very Low (%)	Low (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Valid Student Assessment						
Teachers select assessment techniques that are consistent with the objectives of the subjects and also reliable.	23 (5.9)	47 (12.1)	207 (53.1)	113 (29.0)	3.05	.803
Assessments and grading standards are communicated clearly to students at the beginning of the course.	22 (5.6)	49 (12.6)	191 (49.0)	128 (32.8)	3.09	.820
Teachers do not deviate from announcing grading standards and systems.	23 (5.9)	75 (19.2)	194 (49.7)	98 (25.1)	2.94	.823
Students' exams, papers, and assignments are graded carefully and fairly and communicated to students.	25 (6.4)	68 (17.4)	162 (41.5)	135 (34.6)	3.04	.881
Students are provided with prompt and accurate feedback on their performance at regular intervals.	22 (5.6)	60 (15.4)	153 (39.2)	155 (39.7)	3.13	.873
Grand Mean					3.05	0.84

Rule of Decision =0-1.49 –VL, 1.5-2.49-L; 2.5-3.49-H; 3.50-4.00- VH

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

The results on valid student assessment variables, as shown in Table 4.2.5, indicate a grand mean score of $M = 3.05$ ($SD = 0.84$), suggesting that teachers in public secondary schools in Ikenne LGA consistently apply ethical teaching principles when evaluating students' academic performance. Specifically, teachers select assessment methods aligned with subject objectives and reliability ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.803$), clearly communicate grading standards at the start of the course ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.820$), avoid deviating from announced grading systems ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.823$), grade exams, papers, and assignments fairly and transparently ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.881$), and provide students with timely and accurate feedback on their academic progress ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.873$).

Table 4.2.6 Grand Mean Summary of Ethical Teaching Principles

Ethical Teaching Variables	Mean (m)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Content Competence	3.25	0.742
Pedagogical Competence	3.09	0.851
Student Development	2.928	0.912
Dual Relationship with Students	2.88	0.991
Valid Student Assessment	3.05	0.84

Rule of Decision =0-1.49 –VL, 1.5-2.49-L; 2.5-3.49-H; 3.50-4.00- VH

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Table 4.2.6 presents the grand mean scores for variables related to ethical teaching principles in Ikenne LGA, Ogun State. The results indicate that teachers demonstrate a high level of content competence ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.742$), pedagogical competence ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.851$), support for student development ($M = 2.928$, $SD = 0.912$), professional boundaries in dual relationships with students ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.991$), and valid student assessment practices ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.84$). These scores suggest that teachers in Ikenne LGA consistently uphold ethical teaching principles across these key areas of their professional responsibilities.

Research Question Three: What is the difference in the learning attitudes between male and female students in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools?

Table 4.3 t-test showing the mean differences in the learning attitude among genders

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	P
Learning attitude	Female	188	136.0163	15.82848	1.618	321	.107
	Male	142	133.0647	16.74584			

Source: Field Survey, (2024)

Results from the t-test in Table 4.3 show that there is no significant difference in the learning attitude of male and female students in Ikenne Local Government Area's public secondary schools ($t = 1.618$, $p > 0.05$). Meanwhile, female students (mean = 136.0163, $SD = 15.82848$) have a better learning attitude compared to males though the difference is insignificant (mean = 133.0647, $SD = 16.74584$).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of the first research question showed that students in public secondary schools in Ikenne LGA agreed that ethical teaching principles positively influence their learning attitudes. Most respondents expressed a strong academic drive, enjoyment of learning, determination to overcome challenges, ability to focus, and optimism about the usefulness of their education for future careers. This positive learning attitude may stem from their academic ambitions. Supporting this, Adegboyega, (2018) noted that students' learning attitudes are influenced by their desire for success, although levels of motivation may vary among individuals. Likewise, Yassen et al. (2023) found that supportive teacher-student relationships enhance students' learning attitudes, which aligns with the present study's conclusion that ethical teaching principles foster positive attitudes by promoting motivation and a sense of belonging. However, Blazar and Kraft (2017) emphasized that while social-emotional teaching practices impact students' behaviors and attitudes, the direct effect of ethical teaching principles on learning attitudes is less clear.

The second research question revealed that teachers in Ikenne LGA public secondary schools actively apply ethical teaching principles. They demonstrate subject expertise, present accurate content, and clearly communicate learning objectives. These findings align with Jiang, Lee, Wan, and Chen (2021), who found that students are more motivated and engaged when teachers are perceived as fair and supportive. Similarly, Sakiman and Yasin's (2023) study confirmed that ethical practices like fairness, respect, and supportive environments significantly enhance students' intrinsic motivation and learning attitudes.

The third research question showed that female students exhibited higher learning attitudes than male students. As-Sabiq et al. (2021) also found that females value education more and tend to be intrinsically motivated, whereas males are more driven by external rewards. Eccles and Wang (2016) found that males had more favorable views of STEM subjects than females, a gap attributed to cultural stereotypes and the lack of female role models, which can affect girls' confidence and interest in STEM.

Collectively, these findings highlight the crucial role of ethical teaching principles in shaping students' learning attitudes and overall educational experience. By fostering a morally sound and supportive learning environment, teachers can significantly enhance students' motivation, trust, and engagement, underscoring the need to reinforce ethical principles in teaching.

CONCLUSION

Public secondary school administrators and policymakers are increasingly looking for evidence-based solutions to enhance students' learning attitudes and, in turn, their academic success, as the world continues to struggle to provide high-quality education. This study examines how ethical teaching principles affect students' learning attitudes, offering insightful information on one such tactic. The results highlight the important impact that ethical teaching has on students' attitudes toward learning and show how important moral values are in creating an atmosphere that supports academic success. These findings imply that incorporating ethical teaching principles into school administration and educational policies can be crucial in raising student involvement and motivation, which will ultimately lead to better educational performance globally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion of this study led to the following suggestions:

1. Integrating ethical teaching principles into curriculum creation and instructional frameworks should be a top priority for educational policymakers and secondary school management boards. Clear rules regarding moral behavior, justice, decency, accountability, and honesty in teaching methods should be part of this strategy. Schools can establish an ethically sound learning environment that improves students' academic motivation, engagement, and general learning attitudes by incorporating these ideas into teacher preparation programs, classroom management techniques, and subject-specific teaching. Setting ethical education as a top priority benefits students' character development, social-emotional health, and long-term success as responsible global citizens in addition to improving academic achievement. Therefore, to guarantee its successful implementation and sustainability at all levels of education system, especially in secondary school, ethical teaching needs to be institutionalized through policy, professional development, and ongoing evaluation.
2. The provision of sufficient resources, ongoing professional development opportunities, and institutional support required for teachers to successfully implement ethical teaching principles in their classrooms should be the responsibility of legislators, educational authorities, and school administrators. This entails providing organized training courses, workshops, and seminars with an emphasis on inclusive teaching methods, cultural sensitivity, student-centered pedagogy, and ethical decision-making. Deliberate efforts should also be made to establish collaborative learning communities where educators may exchange experiences, reflect on their methods, and get guidance on moral dilemmas in the classroom. Education systems may foster a culture of integrity, equity, and accountability by supporting teachers' professional development and ethical competency. This will enhance teaching quality and have a beneficial impact on students' moral development and learning.

Suggestions for Further Research

Drawing from the results and constraints of the present investigation, several suggestions for additional research might be put forth:

1. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine how providing teachers with ethical leadership training affects their methods of teaching and, in turn, the attitudes of learners.
2. Examine why, in comparison to male students, female students demonstrate higher positive attitudes towards learning.
3. Study the long-term ethical teaching principles on students' attitudes and academic performance.
4. Analyze how different learning styles are accommodated by ethical teaching principles and whether there are gender differences in the distribution of these types.
5. Investigate how students' attitudes towards learning are impacted by the gender of the teacher and how they behave when putting ethical teaching principles into practice.

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