
MANAGING UNIVERSITIES IN THE 21st CENTURY THROUGH ETHICS AND VALUES EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

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ABSTRACT

In the face of growing ethical challenges, leadership failures, and social fragmentation in the 21st century, the role of universities must be redefined to support sustainable national development. This position paper examines the regeneration of university management through the lens of ethics and values education, proposing that higher education institutions must go beyond academic excellence to foster moral consciousness, civic responsibility, and ethical leadership. It argues that embedding ethics and core values into university governance, curriculum design, institutional culture, and administrative practices is essential for building transparent, accountable, and socially responsive institutions. Through this ethical lens, universities are envisioned as transformative agents capable of driving inclusive development and addressing systemic national issues such as corruption, inequality, and poor governance. Drawing on contemporary ethical leadership theories and guided by global benchmarks in university governance, this paper proposes a dynamic framework for repositioning higher education management in ways that align with national development priorities. It contends that ethics and values education must form the backbone of institutional transformation, fostering a culture of integrity, accountability, and civic responsibility across all levels of the university system. Building on this foundation, the paper offers several suggestions for institutional transformation such as embedding values education across the curriculum; establishing clear ethical policies supported by effective accountability systems; instituting leadership training rooted in ethical principles for university administrators among others. Ultimately, the paper concludes that embracing ethically anchored university management is not only a moral obligation but a forward-looking imperative for navigating the complex demands of the 21st century and achieving inclusive, enduring, and sustainable national transformation.

Keywords: 21st century, university management, ethics, value education, national development.

INTRODUCTION

University education is a vital catalyst for national development, playing a central role in intellectual growth, economic progress, and moral upliftment. In the modern era, universities are expected not only to produce skilled professionals and conduct impactful research but also to embody ethical leadership and social responsibility. Okebukola (2015) emphasizes the role of universities in building human capital and driving innovation, both essential for sustainable development. In addition to academic pursuits, universities are seen as moral institutions with the responsibility of nurturing society's ethical awareness. Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner (2003) further stress that national development depends not just on technological advancement but also on the moral integrity of institutions, especially those educating future leaders. However, in many regions particularly sub-Saharan Africa university governance faces serious challenges due to corruption, inefficiency, politicization, and ethical decline. Eze, Okoye, and Onodugo (2018) argue that such ethical lapses undermine academic integrity, weaken quality assurance, and damage the societal role of universities. Common issues include fund misappropriation, exam malpractice, biased recruitment, and neglect of ethical standards, indicating a deeper value crisis. According to Olojede and Oyesiku (2012), the lack of value-based leadership in universities compromises accountability and transparency. Obanya (2010) also highlights the need for universities to guide society by instilling justice, discipline, and responsibility. Yet, ethics education is often sidelined in university planning and governance. To address these issues, ethics-based university governance is proposed as a strategic solution for sustainable development. Integrating values education into leadership and management practices can restore trust, improve academic standards, and foster national progress. Amadi and Ekekwe (2014) affirm that ethical governance builds public confidence and produces morally upright graduates. Likewise, Etomi (2020) asserts that meaningful development requires universities committed to ethical practices and societal well-being.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

To understand how ethics and value education contribute to university management and sustainable national development in the 21st century, it is important to clarify the key concepts underpinning this discussion:

21st Century

The 21st century is marked by rapid technological progress, globalization, and significant transformations in economic, political, and social spheres, all of which demand a shift in the role of higher education. Universities are now expected to go beyond knowledge dissemination to emphasize its ethical application in addressing real-world problems, becoming more inclusive, interdisciplinary, and globally relevant. Barnett (2004) describes this era as one of “super-complexity,” where traditional knowledge boundaries are blurred, requiring education systems to prepare learners for uncertainty, moral challenges, and civic engagement. Similarly,

the UNESCO (2015) report on the Futures of Education highlights the need for education to adapt to demands such as sustainability, digitalization, inclusion, and lifelong learning. Universities must evolve into centres of innovation and transformation, fostering the ethical and intellectual skills necessary to confront global issues like climate change, inequality, technological disruption, and geopolitical tensions.

University Management

University management involves the strategic administration of higher education institutions through effective structures, policies, and leadership practices. Traditional bureaucratic models are no longer sufficient for addressing modern challenges. Contemporary university management emphasizes strategic visioning, participatory governance, digital innovation, and outcome-based planning, requiring leaders to cultivate cultures of accountability, integrity, and sustainability (Sifuna, 2012; Okojie, 2013). Effective leadership today must be adaptive and transformational, addressing ethical, financial, and stakeholder demands while promoting academic excellence. University governance should also embody democratic principles and respond to societal needs. As highlighted by Ololube et al. (2013), leaders in Nigeria and other developing contexts must balance institutional autonomy with public accountability, encourage inclusive decision-making, and ensure that education supports national development goals.

Ethics

Ethics in university governance refers to the system of moral principles guiding behaviour and decision-making within the academic community. It encompasses academic honesty, transparency in leadership, equity in resource allocation, and accountability to stakeholders. In an era where universities are under pressure from commercialization, political interference, and marketization, upholding ethical standards becomes even more crucial. Ethical leadership involves modelling integrity, resisting corruption, promoting justice, and creating a fair environment where teaching, learning, and research can thrive. According to Okebukola (2005), academic corruption, favoritism, and lack of accountability remain pressing challenges in many African universities, thereby threatening quality assurance and public trust. Thus, university management in the 21st century must embed ethics into all layers of policy, curriculum, administration, and student affairs. As Ehlers and Barth (2012) assert, ethics are central to transformative education that leads to responsible citizenship and sustainable futures.

Values Education

Values education refers to the deliberate inclusion of moral, civic, and cultural values in the teaching and learning process. It aims at nurturing students who not only excel intellectually but also possess empathy, integrity, tolerance, and a sense of justice. Values education goes beyond classroom instruction; it permeates the institutional ethos, co-curricular activities, and staff-student relationships. In the 21st-century university, values in education is pivotal to countering moral decay, social fragmentation, and youth disengagement. As Owchonda and Ololube (2016) contend, values education in Nigerian universities is crucial for fostering national unity, peacebuilding, and development. It equips students with the ethical reasoning

and leadership capacity necessary for addressing societal problems such as corruption, violence, and inequality. UNESCO (2021) also advocates for values-based learning as a critical element of education for sustainable development (ESD), calling on higher institutions to promote respect for human dignity, cultural diversity, environmental stewardship, and democratic engagement.

Sustainable National Development

Sustainable national development entails the long-term advancement of a nation's economic, social, and environmental systems in ways that are equitable, inclusive, and responsible. It involves meeting the present needs without compromising the capacity of future generations. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlight the indispensable role of education in achieving sustainability. Universities are critical actors in this developmental process. Through ethical governance, research output, innovation, civic education, and human capital formation, universities shape the social and economic fabric of nations. As Le Grange (2011) points out, higher education must now be guided by “ecological thinking” that embraces interconnectedness, ethics, and sustainability. Ethically managed and values-driven universities can foster graduates who are not only employable but also socially conscious and environmentally responsible. When institutional management prioritizes ethics and values, it creates a moral foundation for development that is just, resilient, and future-oriented.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper employs two theoretical frameworks to critically examine the role of university management, ethics, and values education in advancing sustainable national development in the 21st century. These frameworks provide a structured approach to understanding how universities can be effectively managed and ethically guided to respond to the complex demands of contemporary society.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory, originally developed by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), offers a valuable framework for understanding how university leaders can drive ethical institutional change. As outlined by Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders exhibit idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation, which collectively enable them to inspire others toward shared moral and academic goals. In the university context, such leadership goes beyond administrative duties to establish a values-driven institutional culture rooted in honesty, justice, and accountability. This approach fosters inclusive participation among students, faculty, and staff—an especially vital dynamic in developing countries like Nigeria, where higher education often faces challenges such as corruption and mismanagement. Transformational leaders, as Bass and Riggio (2006) emphasize, can create ethical structures that contribute to sustainable national development by nurturing morally conscious graduates equipped to address complex societal issues.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Another critical theory applicable to this discourse is Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development, which offers insights into how ethics and values education can influence personal and collective behaviour. Proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg (1981), the theory outlines a six-stage progression of moral reasoning across three main levels: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. These stages represent increasing levels of ethical maturity, from obedience to authority and self-interest at the lower levels, to universal ethical principles and justice at the higher levels. In the context of higher education, Kohlberg's theory underscores the importance of values education as a deliberate developmental process. Universities play a pivotal role in shaping not only the intellectual but also the moral and civic capacities of students. By integrating ethics and values into curricula, pedagogy, and student engagement activities, universities can facilitate students' progression toward more principled forms of moral reasoning. This approach is particularly relevant in societies plagued by systemic corruption, social inequality, and leadership crises. By nurturing ethical judgment and moral courage, universities become incubators of ethical leadership and national renewal. As Rest (1986) emphasizes in his adaptation of Kohlberg's work, moral development is most effectively cultivated in environments that provide cognitive challenge, moral discourse, and opportunities for principled action conditions that should be intentionally created within the university system. Moreover, applying Kohlberg's theory to university management extends beyond student development; it also involves fostering a culture where institutional policies, codes of conduct, and leadership practices reflect a commitment to ethical principles. When university communities are guided by justice, fairness, and civic duty, they become engines of sustainable national transformation.

EMERGING TRENDS IN 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

University management in the 21st century faces complex ethical and administrative challenges, particularly in an increasingly globalized and knowledge-based world. Leaders are expected to demonstrate integrity, accountability, and fairness while dealing with funding shortages, political pressures, and eroding moral standards. In many developing countries, chronic underfunding of higher education has led to infrastructural decay and weakened global competitiveness. Salmi (2009) notes that this financial neglect, often influenced by political interests, threatens both institutional autonomy and sustainability. Additionally, ethical lapses such as examination malpractice, plagiarism, sexual harassment, and financial corruption have become prevalent, damaging public trust in universities. Ede (2014) stresses the importance of moral education to restore institutional credibility. Administrative inefficiency further compounds these problems, with outdated systems fostering favoritism and poor responsiveness. Akpan and Undiyaundeye (2016) advocate for ethical leadership that promotes transparency, justice, and inclusiveness. Globalization, while offering avenues for collaboration and innovation, brings its own ethical challenges such as cultural erosion, unequal access, and the commodification of education. Teferra and Altbach (2004) caution that universities must balance global ambition with local responsibility. Ultimately, university

leadership must integrate ethical values with strategic governance to drive national development. As Ajayi and Haastrup (2020) argue, ethical renewal and value-based education are vital for universities to fulfill their transformative societal role.

THE ROLE OF ETHICS AND VALUES EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

The management of universities in the 21st century demands more than administrative proficiency and technological adaptation; it calls for a deep moral foundation rooted in ethics and values education. The challenges confronting higher education institutions ranging from corruption, examination malpractices, and cultism to leadership failure underscore the urgent need for values re-orientation. Ethics and values education serve not merely as academic constructs, but as vital instruments for institutional governance, leadership accountability, and the development of responsible graduates capable of contributing meaningfully to sustainable national development. **Ethics and values education plays a central role in cultivating moral and visionary leadership within the university system.** As Onuka and Akinyemi (2012) observe, ethical leadership is the cornerstone of sound educational administration. Leaders in universities are often at the helm of policy implementation, resource allocation, and staff-student welfare. Without a strong ethical foundation, managerial decisions are vulnerable to manipulation, favoritism, and exploitation. When ethics education is systematically embedded in the professional development of university leaders, it shapes their moral compass, enhances their capacity to lead with fairness, and fosters a governance culture anchored on integrity and service. Moreover, **ethics education strengthens the institutional structures of accountability and transparency.** According to Edeh (2020), the prevalence of administrative malpractices in many Nigerian universities is partly due to the erosion of ethical standards in public life. Ethics education offers a framework for inculcating values such as honesty, respect for due process, and social responsibility among administrative personnel. By creating and enforcing codes of conduct for both academic and non-academic staff, universities can promote a culture where rule-based governance is respected, and ethical breaches are appropriately sanctioned. This aligns with the views of Okebukola (2015), who emphasizes the necessity of ethical frameworks in ensuring quality assurance and effective institutional performance in Nigerian tertiary education.

A critical dimension of ethics and values education in university management is the **promotion of academic integrity and the fight against intellectual dishonesty.** Higher education is tasked with producing knowledge and fostering innovation, but this mission is compromised when cheating, plagiarism, and research fraud are tolerated or inadequately addressed. As Nwaoku and Umezulike (2019) argue, a lack of ethical awareness among students and lecturers contributes to a decline in the quality of academic outputs and undermines public trust in the university system. Integrating ethics education into general studies courses, academic advising, and research training equips students and staff with the principles necessary to uphold intellectual honesty and scholarly discipline.

Additionally, **ethics and values education nurtures responsible student behaviour and civic consciousness.** In many Nigerian universities, student misconduct such as cultism, examination malpractices, and violent protests often stems from moral disengagement and value disorientation. According to Akinpelu (2005), education devoid of values cannot foster holistic human development. When students are exposed to values such as discipline, patriotism, empathy, and justice, they are more likely to embody positive attitudes both within and outside the university setting. Values education thus functions as a transformative tool for character development, leadership grooming, and peaceful coexistence in diverse campus environments.

Furthermore, **values-based management contributes to the development of institutional identity and shared vision.** In universities that deliberately integrate ethics into their mission statements, policies, and daily practices, there tends to be greater cohesion, clarity of purpose, and resilience in the face of systemic challenges. As Obanya (2010) argues, African universities must reclaim their moral voice by embodying the values they seek to instill in students. This requires a holistic institutional commitment to ethical living one that involves students, staff, administrators, and governing councils alike.

In sum, the role of ethics and values education in university management is multifaceted. It fosters ethical leadership, enhances transparency, strengthens academic integrity, promotes responsible citizenship, and shapes institutional culture. For universities to fulfill their mission as agents of sustainable national development, they must go beyond rhetoric and deliberately entrench ethical values in every facet of their governance and academic life.

ETHICS AND VALUES EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ethics and values education is increasingly recognized as a fundamental pillar for national transformation, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. The persistent socio-economic and political challenges such as corruption, poor leadership, and social injustice are symptomatic of a broader ethical crisis, which technological or economic interventions alone cannot resolve. A reorientation of national consciousness through structured ethics and values education is essential to build a sustainable society (Oladipo, 2009). Ethics encompasses the moral principles that guide human behavior, while values are enduring beliefs that shape individual and collective conduct. Together, they form the foundation for responsible citizenship and sustainable development. According to the Brundtland Commission (1987), sustainability encompasses not only economic growth but also social equity, environmental stewardship, and cultural integrity—all of which depend on ethical commitment. When ethical standards are weak, education falters, governance becomes compromised, and development stagnates. Leadership and governance are areas where ethics education is particularly transformative. Many leadership failures in Africa can be traced to a lack of moral orientation. Ogbujah (2013) emphasizes that ethical education fosters accountability, justice, and empathy—qualities critical to sustainable governance. Similarly, ethics positively impacts economic development by promoting trust and integrity. As Akinpelu (2005) notes, economies

flourish where ethical practices reduce corruption and foster long-term investments, while unethical behavior fosters inequality and social instability.

Ethics and values education also plays a key role in fostering national unity in culturally diverse countries like Nigeria. By cultivating virtues such as tolerance, patriotism, and mutual respect, ethics education addresses deep-seated ethnic and religious divisions (Nduka, 2006). This is especially important for youth, who are often vulnerable to manipulation and violence. A structured moral education empowers them to pursue peaceful change and responsible citizenship. To be effective, ethics and values education must be deeply institutionalized in the entire education system. This involves more than curriculum changes—it requires rethinking educational objectives and modeling ethical behavior within schools. Omoregbe (2003) stresses that ethics should be taught through real-life experiences and demonstrated by educators and public leaders. Furthermore, a successful ethics program should blend global human rights with local cultural contexts, making it both relevant and impactful. In conclusion, ethics and values education is not merely supplementary to national development; it is foundational. It cultivates ethical leadership, promotes social and economic integrity, enhances unity, and builds a morally resilient nation. For Nigeria and similar nations, investing in ethics education is a strategic necessity for sustainable and inclusive development (Oladipo, 2009; Ogbujah, 2013; Akinpelu, 2005; Nduka, 2006; Omoregbe, 2003; Brundtland Commission, 1987).

CHALLENGES TO EMBEDDING ETHICS AND VALUES IN UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Universities are expected to be citadels of integrity, ethical leadership, and social transformation. However, the process of embedding ethics and values in their management systems is fraught with numerous challenges, especially in developing contexts like Nigeria. These challenges are multi-layered and often systemic, undermining the role of higher education in promoting sustainable national development.

Institutional Corruption

Corruption is one of the most significant impediments to ethical university management. It manifests in various forms ranging from bribery in admission processes, procurement fraud, to academic dishonesty and sexual exploitation. According to Transparency International (2019), educational institutions in many developing nations have become breeding grounds for unethical practices due to weak enforcement of anti-corruption policies. In Nigeria, these practices are so entrenched that they often appear normalized within the academic culture (Aluko, 2009). When administrators, lecturers, and non-academic staff engage in unethical conduct without consequences, it erodes trust in the university system and hinders moral development among students.

Weak Ethical Leadership

Leadership is a critical determinant of institutional ethics. However, many university leaders lack the vision and moral courage to drive value-based management. Edewor, Aluede, and

Egbochuku (2020) assert that ethical leadership, characterized by transparency, accountability, and integrity, is essential for transforming universities. Yet, in many institutions, administrative decisions are shrouded in secrecy, favoritism, and political manipulation. The absence of leaders who model ethical behavior weakens the moral tone of the university and discourages subordinates from adhering to ethical codes.

Cultural Relativism and Ethical Pluralism

Nigeria's diverse socio-cultural landscape presents both opportunities and challenges for value integration. Cultural relativism the belief that morality is culturally defined often complicates the development of shared ethical standards in universities. Oyeshile (2006) warns that cultural biases can obscure universal ethical principles such as justice, fairness, and human dignity. For instance, nepotism may be justified as loyalty to kin, while patriarchal norms may hinder gender equity efforts within university communities. Such cultural clashes often result in resistance to institutional codes of conduct and ethical reforms.

Inadequate Training and Professional Development

Embedding ethics in university management requires continuous training and sensitization of staff and students. However, many institutions lack structured professional development programs focused on ethical leadership, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Ogbogu (2011) notes that most academic staff development programs prioritize research output and pedagogical efficiency, often neglecting ethical competence. Without deliberate efforts to build ethical capacity, university personnel may be ill-equipped to confront moral dilemmas or promote ethical standards within their departments.

Political Interference and Weak Autonomy

Political interference in the affairs of universities undermines institutional autonomy and ethical governance. Appointments of vice-chancellors and council members are often influenced by political patronage rather than merit, leading to the imposition of leaders with compromised ethical standards. Ololube (2013) emphasizes that politicization of university governance erodes accountability and fosters a climate of impunity. When university leaders are beholden to external political actors, they are less likely to uphold values such as justice, fairness, and transparency.

Weak Enforcement and Monitoring Mechanisms

The effectiveness of ethics and values education depends heavily on the existence of robust institutional enforcement mechanisms. Unfortunately, many universities either lack ethics committees or have committees that are poorly funded and without the power to sanction infractions. Aluko (2009) observes that in the absence of clear reporting channels, grievance redress systems, or ethics audits, many violations go unpunished. This leads to cynicism and further weakens the moral authority of the institution.

STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING ETHICS AND VALUES EDUCATION INTO UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

The incorporation of ethics and values education in university systems is central to shaping morally responsible graduates and building institutional credibility in the 21st century. As universities grapple with corruption, declining moral standards, and governance issues, it becomes crucial to embed ethics structurally and systematically across educational and administrative processes. The following strategies represent core pillars for embedding ethics and values in higher education, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, where moral and systemic challenges persist.

Curriculum Integration

The integration of ethics and values across university curricula is essential for nurturing a culture of integrity and moral responsibility. Rather than confining ethical instruction to philosophy or religious studies, ethics should be embedded within all academic disciplines, including medicine, engineering, law, business, education, and the sciences. Rest et al. (1999) argue that students enhance their ethical reasoning more effectively when moral issues are presented within their specific fields. Similarly, Bebeau (2002) highlights the value of context-based ethical instruction, particularly in professional training. In Nigeria, Ololube (2013) stresses the necessity of incorporating civic and ethical education into university programs to combat societal issues like corruption, tribalism, and ineffective leadership. Institutions such as Covenant University and the University of Ibadan have begun integrating ethics into their curricula; however, sustained impact requires supportive policies, instructor training, and regular curriculum updates to address evolving ethical challenges.

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership plays a critical role in fostering a culture of integrity and accountability within universities, with leaders such as vice-chancellors, deans, and department heads setting the ethical standards through both their policies and personal behavior. Ciulla (2004) defines ethical leadership as one rooted in fairness, transparency, and justice, even amidst institutional pressures. In the context of African universities, challenges such as favoritism, nepotism, and mismanagement highlight the urgent need for morally grounded and courageous leadership (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2019). Ololube (2013) emphasizes the importance of integrating ethical leadership training into the professional development of university administrators. He notes a significant leadership capacity gap in Nigeria's higher education system and advocates for mentoring, ethical audits, and integrity-based performance evaluations.

Codes of Conduct

Developing and enforcing comprehensive codes of conduct is vital for promoting ethical behavior and establishing clear academic and administrative standards. These codes serve as benchmarks for resolving conflicts and maintaining discipline. Kaptein (2011) emphasizes that effective codes enhance ethical awareness and support consistent decision-making but must be

actively applied and regularly updated to retain their relevance. In the context of Nigerian universities, however, enforcement is often inadequate. According to Adebayo and Ogunsanya (2015), although many institutions have well-written ethical codes, they are frequently undermined by weak implementation, administrative bias, lack of awareness, or political concerns. To address these issues, the authors recommend creating independent ethics committees to ensure accountability and transparent enforcement.

Staff Training

The ethical literacy of both academic and non-academic staff plays a crucial role in shaping the moral climate of universities. Ongoing professional ethics training helps staff make principled decisions and act as moral role models for students. Strike and Soltis (2009) emphasize that educators are moral agents whose behavior significantly impacts students' ethical development. Similarly, Adekunle (2018) links ethical lapses in Nigerian universities—such as harassment, absenteeism, and favoritism—to a decline in staff moral standards or lack of ethical awareness. To address these issues, universities should integrate ethics education into staff induction and conduct regular workshops on academic integrity, conflict of interest, ethical research, and student relations. Enhancing staff moral competence strengthens educational quality and institutional trustworthiness.

Student Involvement

Students play a vital role in university ethics as both beneficiaries and contributors to ethical development. To foster this, universities should engage students through initiatives like ethics clubs, student tribunals, peer mentoring, and civic projects. According to Noddings (2002), ethical values are most effectively developed in interactive and empathetic environments. When students are empowered to report misconduct, join policy discussions, and lead anti-corruption efforts, it promotes a sense of responsibility and communal ethics. Omoyibo and Akpomera (2013) also stress that structured student participation helps reduce cultism and exam malpractice in Nigerian universities. Thus, institutions must support and integrate student-led ethics initiatives into governance structures.

Technology for Accountability

In the digital age, technology can be harnessed as a powerful tool to reinforce ethical practices in universities. Digital platforms for staff appraisals, student feedback, plagiarism detection, online examinations, and e-governance foster transparency and reduce opportunities for unethical behavior.

Udo and Udofia (2020) found that the introduction of ICT tools in Nigerian universities has reduced examination malpractices, minimized administrative corruption, and improved staff accountability. However, these systems must be accompanied by data protection policies, digital ethics training, and mechanisms to prevent manipulation or abuse.

CONCLUSIONS

Ethics and values education is indispensable to the mission of universities in the 21st century. Strategic integration—through curriculum reform, ethical leadership, codes of conduct, staff development, student engagement, and digital accountability—can transform higher education into a vehicle for national renewal. In countries like Nigeria, where development is closely tied to institutional integrity, embedding ethics in university systems is both a moral imperative and a pragmatic necessity for sustainable national development.

SUGGESTIONS

The National Universities Commission (NUC) should mandate that all accredited universities incorporate a compulsory General Studies course on Ethics and National Values, which would be assessed during accreditation (NUC). University Governing Councils are encouraged to set up Independent Ethics and Compliance Units to monitor ethical standards and report directly to the Council, thereby promoting transparency and accountability. University management, including Vice-Chancellors and Principal Officers, should organize an annual “Ethics and Integrity Week” featuring lectures, workshops, exhibitions, and awards to commend ethical behavior. Additionally, anti-corruption bodies such as the EFCC and ICPC should collaborate with universities to introduce student ethics certification programs that cover financial integrity, whistleblowing, and responsible citizenship (EFCC; ICPC).

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