



## MANAGEMENT IMPERATIVES OF POST-BASIC EDUCATION THROUGH ETHICAL AND VALUES EDUCATION RE-ENGINEERING FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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### **Abstract:**

*The pursuit of sustainable national development hinges critically on the quality and direction of education beyond the basic level. This paper explores the management imperatives necessary to reposition post-basic education through the re-engineering of ethical and values education. It argues that without a strong moral and ethical foundation, educational outcomes may fail to address the broader societal needs of integrity, accountability, and civic responsibility. This study examines strategic management approaches, policy frameworks, and leadership models that prioritize values education as a core component of curriculum reform. Emphasis is placed on integrating ethics into imbibing of a decent lifestyle and study life, teaching methodologies, assessment practices, and institutional culture. Through a qualitative analysis of best practices and case studies from diverse educational contexts, the paper adopts two theories, Transformational Leadership Theory by Down ton (1973) and Moral Development Theory by Kohl berg (1958) as it identifies innovative strategies for embedding ethics systematically across post-basic education sectors. It concludes that a deliberate and sustained focus on ethical re-orientation is not only essential for the personal development of learners but also pivotal for nation-building efforts. The paper recommends actionable frameworks for policymakers, educational managers, and stakeholders to foster a value-driven education system that propels sustainable development and ensures a more just and equitable society.*

**Keywords:** Post-Basic Education, Ethical Re-engineering, Values Education, Sustainable Development, Educational Management, Equitable society.

### **Introduction**

The pursuit of sustainable national development is intrinsically linked to the quality and direction of education beyond the basic level. Post-basic education, encompassing secondary and tertiary education, serves as a critical platform for inculcating ethical values and fostering civic responsibility. In Nigeria, challenges such as moral decadence, corruption, and social injustice underscore the urgent need to re-engineer ethical and values education within the post-basic education framework. This paper explores the management imperatives necessary to reposition post-basic education through the integration of ethical and values education, aiming to promote sustainable national development.

In a rapidly evolving world faced with complex challenges—ranging from corruption, insecurity, moral decay, to environmental degradation—the role of education in shaping the future of nations has never been more critical. While basic education lays the groundwork for literacy and numeracy, it is post-basic education (senior secondary and tertiary levels) that truly molds the minds and values of future leaders, professionals, and citizens.

Unfortunately, in many developing countries including Nigeria, post-basic education has largely focused on cognitive development and technical skill acquisition, often at the expense of character formation, civic responsibility, and ethical grounding. The result is a knowledge-rich but value-poor society—where intellectual capabilities are not always matched with integrity, patriotism, or social accountability.



This calls for a radical re-engineering of post-basic education through the lens of ethics and values education. The core of this shift lies in recognizing that education is not only about training the mind but also about forming the conscience. A well-educated citizen who lacks a moral compass is a threat to both social stability and national development.

Management imperatives refer to the strategic, policy-driven, and leadership actions needed to bring this vision to reality. First, curriculum reform must embed ethical reasoning, civic education, and national values into all subject areas—not just as standalone moral instruction but as a cross-cutting theme. This calls for collaboration between curriculum designers, policymakers, and education managers.

Second, teacher preparation programs must be recalibrated. Educators must themselves embody and teach by example, using participatory and reflective methods that make ethical issues real and relatable. Leadership in educational institutions should also be transformational, promoting transparency, inclusivity, and justice within their school cultures.

Third, institutional policies must promote an environment that rewards ethical behavior and penalizes dishonesty, indiscipline, and corruption. Management should adopt frameworks that emphasize accountability, mentoring, service learning, and community engagement.

Finally, values education should not stop in the classroom. Parents, religious institutions, traditional leaders, and media must be part of the ecosystem that shapes the moral climate of youth in the post-basic education bracket. It is a collective endeavor.

As we go further in this study, we will come to terms that ethical and values re-engineering of post-basic education is not a luxury—it is a national imperative. A morally grounded education system will not only produce competent graduates but also responsible citizens who will build, not break, the nation. Sustainable development—economic, political, and environmental—begins with the right values. And education remains our most powerful vehicle to instill them.

## **Literature Review**

A comprehensive review of existing literature reveals the significance of ethics and values education in achieving sustainable development. The following studies provide insights into various aspects of this subject. This review encompasses their contributions, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies.

Chikelu, Ahmad, & Arshad (2016) carried out an indept Study on "Examining Ethical Reasoning and Transformational Leadership Style in Nigeria Public Sector". This study explored the relationship between cognitive moral development (CMD) and transformational leadership (TFL) styles among Nigerian public sector leaders. Utilizing the Defining Issues Test and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, the research found a significant positive relationship between CMD and TFL style. The findings suggest that leaders with higher moral reasoning are more likely to exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, which can enhance ethical practices within organizations. The relevance of the study is that it underscores the importance of ethical reasoning in leadership, highlighting the need for educational systems to cultivate moral development to prepare future leaders capable of fostering ethical organizational cultures.

In contributing to the above topic, Ezere, Awoniyi, Edom, & Sule (2021) in their research investigated the influence of edupreneurial practices on the career readiness of post-basic students in Nigerian schools. Through their study, a low level of career readiness among students was revealed, attributing this to a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The authors recommend that educational managers adopt innovative strategies to bridge this gap, thereby enhancing students' preparedness for the workforce.

The study highlights the necessity of integrating practical, value-driven approaches in post-basic education to equip students with the skills and ethical grounding required for sustainable national development. For further insight, Asiegbu & Ikwu (2023) carried out their study in order to access the situation through their own lens. They examined the correlation between principals' transformational leadership styles and teachers' job performance in Delta State's secondary schools. The findings



indicated a significant positive relationship, suggesting that principals who exhibit transformational leadership behaviors positively influence teachers' performance.

The research emphasizes the role of leadership in shaping educational environments, advocating for leadership development programs that instill ethical and transformational qualities in school administrators to promote effective teaching and learning.

Omorewa (1993) opines through his study and provides a historical analysis of educational developments in Africa, emphasizing the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge systems and moral education into formal curricula. He advocates for educational reforms that reflect African cultural values and ethical principles.

He through his study supports the re-engineering of post-basic education to include ethical and values education rooted in African traditions, thereby fostering sustainable development aligned with the continent's cultural context. This shows that the Culture of a people has a lot to do with the ethics and values exhibit by the students.

In discussing the leadership challenges facing Nigeria, Dr. Toye Sobande (2021) proposes strategic solutions to bridge the leadership gap. He emphasizes the need for ethical leadership and the cultivation of values-driven leaders through intentional educational and developmental programs. The insights underscore the critical role of post-basic education in developing ethical leaders, highlighting the necessity for educational systems to prioritize values education as a foundation for effective leadership and national development.

Contributing to the study by looking at decolonisation, Africanisation and the Philosophy Curriculum, Etieyibo (2018) advocates for the decolonization and Africanization of educational curricula, emphasizing the inclusion of African philosophical thought and ethical frameworks. He argues that such integration fosters a more relevant and empowering educational experience for African students. The study supports the incorporation of indigenous ethical perspectives into post-basic education, promoting a values-based approach that aligns with African cultural identities and contributes to sustainable national development.

Further more as Vice-Chancellor, Na'Allah (2023) has been instrumental in implementing policies that emphasize ethical practices and values in university administration and curricula. His leadership reflects a commitment to fostering an academic environment grounded in integrity and social responsibility. Na'Allah's administrative approach exemplifies the practical application of ethical leadership in higher education, reinforcing the importance of values education in shaping institutional cultures conducive to national development.

Another writer, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) in their seminal work differentiate between authentic and pseudo-transformational leadership, emphasizing that genuine transformational leaders possess strong ethical foundations and character. The authors argue that ethical considerations are integral to effective leadership. The study provides a theoretical framework for understanding the role of ethics in leadership, informing the development of educational programs that aim to cultivate authentic, values-driven leaders in post-basic education.

Kohlberg (1958) in his research on moral development outlines stages through which individuals progress in their ethical reasoning. His study suggests that moral education can facilitate advancement to higher stages of moral reasoning.

His framework underpins the importance of structured ethical education in post-basic institutions, supporting the integration of moral development theories into educational curricula to promote ethical maturity among students.

In order to outlay his view on the topic, Downton (1973) introduced the concept of transformational leadership, highlighting the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating followers through vision and personal commitment. His work laid the foundation for subsequent studies on transformational leadership and its ethical dimensions. The concept of transformational leadership is central to the discourse on educational leadership, emphasizing the need for school leaders who can instill ethical values and drive positive change within educational institutions.



For further insights on the literature review, Obijekwu & Obiesili (2021) emphasize that ethics and values are central to sustainable development, advocating for the moral development of children from an early age to combat societal vices.

Ejimogu & Ofoego (2021) discuss the role of ethics and education in human development, highlighting issues such as moral decadence and corruption in Nigeria's education sector. While Gilligan (1982), introduces the "ethics of care" theory, emphasizing interpersonal relationships and compassion as essential components of moral development, particularly among women.

In support for the moral development, Kohlberg (1958) proposes a six-stage theory of moral development, focusing on justice and the progression of moral reasoning from childhood to adulthood. Downton (1973) coins the term "transformational leadership," highlighting the importance of leaders inspiring followers to achieve higher levels of morality and motivation.

While Duda (2022) explores the role of education in promoting sustainable development through co-creation approaches, emphasizing the importance of moral judgments in shaping pro-environmental behavior. Cox (1976) buttresses by analyzing Kohlberg's theory of moral development, providing insights into the stages of moral reasoning and their implications for education. Mind (2021) made his own contribution. He discusses Kohlberg's theory, noting its applications in parenting and education, while acknowledging critiques regarding its Western-centric perspective. Wikipedia (2023) provides an overview of transformational leadership, detailing its origins, effectiveness, and impact on organizational outcomes. Also offers a detailed explanation of Kohlberg's stages of moral development, including critiques and continued relevance in moral education.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the following theories:

**Transformational Leadership Theory** by Downton, (1973), emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating followers to achieve higher levels of morality and performance. In the context of education, transformational leaders can foster ethical practices and values among students and staff.

**Moral Development Theory** by Kohlberg (1958), outlines six stages of moral development, highlighting the progression of moral reasoning. These six stages of moral development, are grouped into three main levels:

#### **Level 1: Pre-Conventional Morality**

(Typically seen in children)

##### **1. Stage 1 – Obedience and Punishment Orientation**

Behavior driven by avoiding punishment.

Right and wrong are determined by what is punished.

##### **2. Stage 2 – Individualism and Exchange (Self-Interest Orientation)**

Behavior guided by self-interest and rewards.

"You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" mentality.

#### **Level 2: Conventional Morality**

(Common in adolescents and adults)

##### **3. Stage 3 – Good Interpersonal Relationships (Good Boy/Good Girl Orientation)**

Behavior driven by social approval.

Emphasis on being "nice" and maintaining relationships.

##### **4. Stage 4 – Maintaining Social Order (Law-and-Order Orientation)**

Emphasis on obeying laws and respecting authority to maintain order.

#### **Level 3: Post-Conventional Morality**

(Less commonly achieved)



5. Stage 5 – Social Contract and Individual Rights

Laws are seen as social contracts that promote the greatest good.  
Recognizes that laws can be changed for societal benefit.

6. Stage 6 – Universal Principles

Behavior guided by internal moral principles that may transcend laws.  
Focus on justice, dignity, and equality for all. This theory underscores the importance of structured ethical education in guiding individuals toward higher moral reasoning.

Ethics of Care Theory by Gilligan, (1982). This Theory challenges traditional male-centered moral development theories by emphasizing care and interpersonal relationships. She emphasizes care and interpersonal relationships by proposing that moral development and ethical behavior are rooted not just in abstract principles like justice and rights (as seen in Kohlberg's theory), but also in the context of human relationships, empathy, and response to the needs of others. It emphasizes on care by:

1. **Relational Context Over Universal Rules**

Gilligan argues that people—especially women—often make moral decisions based on the needs of others and the responsibilities they feel in relationships, rather than impersonal rules or justice-based logic.

2. **Empathy and Compassion**

Instead of asking, “What is fair?” the Ethics of Care asks, “How can I help?” or “What does the other person need?” This promotes moral reasoning centered on empathy, compassion, and emotional responsiveness.

3. **Responsibility and Response**

The theory values the responsibility to care for others, especially those who are vulnerable or dependent. Ethical action involves being responsive to the needs and suffering of others.

4. **Moral Maturity as Nurturance**

While Kohlberg saw moral maturity as reaching abstract principles, Gilligan sees it as the ability to maintain and nurture real, caring relationships, even when facing ethical dilemmas.

5. **Voice and Inclusion**

The theory also stresses listening to the voice of others, valuing different perspectives, especially those that might be marginalized in traditional ethical systems.

This perspective advocates for incorporating empathy and compassion into ethical education.

**Empirical Studies**

Several empirical studies have examined the integration of ethics and values education in promoting sustainable development:

Obijekwu & Obiesili (2021) in their work, *Ethics and Values Education: A Panacea for Sustainable Development*, conducted a qualitative study highlighting the erosion of moral values in Nigeria and advocating for the incorporation of ethics and values education to address societal challenges.

Ejimogu & Ofoego (2021) equally in their work, *Ethis, Education and Human Development* analyze the impact of ethics and education on human development, identifying issues such as corruption and moral decadence in Nigeria's education sector.

The work by Duda in 2022 is titled "Building the Learning Environment for Sustainable Development: a Co-creation approach." This study explores how education can promote sustainable development through co-creation methods, emphasizing the role of moral judgments in fostering pro-environmental behavior.



### **Summary of Literature Review**

In this study, the reviewed literature collectively underscores the critical role of ethical and values education in post-basic educational settings. Studies highlight the positive correlation between ethical reasoning and transformational leadership, the necessity of integrating indigenous ethical perspectives, and the practical implementation of values-based leadership in educational institutions. The integration of ethical principles into post-basic education is essential for cultivating responsible citizens and addressing societal challenges. The theoretical frameworks provided by scholars like Kohlberg and Downton offer foundational insights into moral development and leadership, informing strategies for educational reform aimed at sustainable national development.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing a case study approach to explore the integration of ethics and values education in post-basic education institutions in Nigeria. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with educational managers, policymakers, and educators. Analysis of theories was conducted to identify key themes and patterns related to ethical education practices and their impact on sustainable development.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

In this section, we will look into the analysis of the theme of study. These include :

The Rationale for Ethical and Values Education in Post-Basic Schools,

Management Imperatives For Re-engineering Education

The Role of Ethics and Values in Achieving a Sustainable Education

The education sector is a powerful engine for national transformation. At its core, education is meant to enlighten the mind, shape the conscience, and prepare individuals to contribute meaningfully to the development of society. In Nigeria, the focus of much educational reform has been on literacy, science, and technology, particularly within post-basic education. Yet, even as cognitive competence increases, the nation grapples with alarming moral failures—corruption, indiscipline, intolerance, and civic apathy.

These societal challenges reveal a dangerous gap: a knowledge-rich but values-poor educational outcome. This disconnect underscores the urgent need to re-engineer post-basic education with a strong emphasis on ethics and values. It is not enough for students to learn what to think—they must also learn how to think ethically, act responsibly, and live with integrity. The key to achieving this lies in the deliberate, strategic management of educational systems and institutions. Let's discuss the sub- titles mentioned above.

### **The Rationale for Ethical and Values Education in Post-Basic Schools**

Post-basic education—comprising senior secondary and tertiary institutions—represents a critical stage in identity formation and value consolidation. At this level, students are exposed to diverse influences and develop long-lasting perspectives on society, leadership, and service. Without a moral framework to guide them, academic advancement alone may lead to the production of graduates who are intellectually capable but ethically indifferent.

Integrating ethics and values into the curriculum is not about religious indoctrination or abstract moralizing. It is about teaching young people to respect life, uphold justice, reject corruption, embrace diversity, and serve the common good. Ethical education develops self-discipline, emotional intelligence, empathy, and critical moral reasoning—qualities essential for personal growth and national development.

### **Management Imperatives for Re-Engineering Education**

To successfully mainstream ethics and values education into post-basic institutions, several management imperatives must be addressed:



### **Curriculum Reform and Policy Alignment**

National education policies must mandate the integration of values education across disciplines—not as isolated moral instruction, but as a thematic thread throughout learning. Core values such as honesty, tolerance, civic duty, and justice should be contextually woven into literature, sciences, business, and social studies.

#### **Teacher Capacity Building**

Teachers must be trained not only to deliver academic content but to model and mentor ethical behavior. Pre-service and in-service training programs should equip them with tools for values-based instruction using storytelling, case studies, role play, and reflective dialogue.

#### **Transformational Leadership in Education**

Educational leaders must move beyond administrative functions to become visionaries who inspire moral excellence. Transformational leadership—grounded in trust, fairness, and transparency—should be cultivated among principals, deans, and academic heads.

#### **Assessment and Evaluation Systems**

Evaluation criteria in schools should go beyond cognitive testing to include affective domains: behavior, teamwork, community service, and ethical conduct. Reward systems should recognize not only brilliance but also integrity and social responsibility.

#### **Stakeholder Engagement and Whole-School Approach**

Ethical education cannot be the sole responsibility of schools. Parents, religious institutions, local leaders, alumni associations, and media must be engaged as partners in shaping learners' character. A whole-community approach will amplify moral messages and ensure consistency across learning environments.

#### **Institutional Culture and Governance**

Schools and universities must operate as ethical communities. From procurement practices to student discipline, from staff relations to admission processes—integrity must be visible. Policies and governance systems should reflect transparency, justice, and accountability.

#### **The Role of Ethics and Values in Achieving Sustainable Development**

Sustainable national development is not merely an economic issue—it is fundamentally a human issue. A country that develops infrastructure without developing character will eventually collapse under the weight of its moral contradictions. Ethical education contributes to sustainability by fostering:

Peace and Social Cohesion: Reducing tribalism, hate speech, and extremism.

Accountable Leadership: Cultivating leaders who serve rather than exploit.

Environmental Stewardship: Instilling a sense of responsibility toward nature.

Entrepreneurial Integrity: Promoting honest business practices.

Without these pillars, sustainable development will remain a theoretical ideal, not a lived reality.

It's good to note that, Nigeria and other developing nations stand at a critical crossroads. The call for reform in education must now go beyond pedagogical innovations and technical skills training. It must embrace the moral re-orientation of our youth as a matter of urgent national interest.

Managing post-basic education in the 21st century requires a values-driven approach that places ethical development at the heart of educational strategy. Only then can we raise a generation of Nigerians who are not just educated but enlightened, not just skilled but principled, not just successful but significant. This is the path to a just, peaceful, and sustainably developed nation.



This analysis has revealed several themes as follows:

1. Leadership Commitment: Educational leaders play a pivotal role in promoting ethical practices by modeling integrity and fostering a culture of accountability.
2. Curriculum Integration: Incorporating ethics and values education into the curriculum enhances students' moral reasoning and civic responsibility.
3. Teacher Training: Professional development programs focusing on ethical education equip teachers with the necessary skills to impart moral values effectively.
4. Community Engagement: Collaborating with community stakeholders reinforces the relevance of ethical education and promotes societal buy-in.
5. Policy Implementation: Clear policies and guidelines support the institutionalization of ethics and values education within educational institutions.

### **Summary of Findings**

Through a thorough research carried out in this study, the following findings have been made :

1. Ethical and values education is crucial for addressing moral decadence and promoting sustainable development.
2. Transformational leadership positively influences the integration of ethical practices in educational institutions.
3. Curriculum reforms that embed ethical education foster students' moral development and civic engagement.
4. Teacher training and community involvement are essential components of effective ethical education programs .

### **Conclusion**

Re-engineering post-basic education through the integration of ethics and values education is imperative for sustainable national development. Educational leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders must collaborate to implement strategies that promote moral development and civic responsibility among learners. By fostering a value-driven education system, Nigeria can cultivate responsible citizens equipped to address societal challenges and contribute to national progress.

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