



THE ROLES OF UNIVERSITIES ALUMNI IN FOSTERING ETHICAL AND VALUE-BASED EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.



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Abstract

This study investigated the roles of university alumni in fostering ethical and value-based education for sustainable national development in federal universities in North West Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives: (1) to examine the extent of alumni engagement in mentorship and role modeling for ethical and value-based education, and (2) to assess the contributions of alumni to scholarships, research, and community development initiatives. The population consisted of approximately 20,500 respondents, including alumni and final-year students from Ahmadu Bello University, Federal University Gusau, and Federal University Dutse. A sample of 300 respondents was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure equal representation of alumni and students. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure alumni engagement, mentorship, role modeling, and contributions to educational and community initiatives. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores, while t-tests were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that alumni are significantly engaged in mentorship and role modeling, providing guidance on ethical decision-making and serving as role models for professional and moral behavior. Additionally, alumni contribute meaningfully to scholarships, research, and community development projects, although these contributions vary in intensity and structure. The study also identified challenges, including limited structured programs and inadequate institutional support for alumni engagement. It is concluded that enhancing alumni participation through formal mentorship programs, targeted scholarships, research funding, and community initiatives can strengthen ethical and value-based education, ultimately supporting sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Keywords: *University alumni, ethical education, value-based education, mentorship, scholarships, sustainable national development, Nigeria*

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental driver of national development, particularly when it instills ethical values and promotes civic responsibility. Universities, as centers of learning and character formation, play a crucial role in shaping graduates who can contribute meaningfully to societal growth. Beyond the classroom, alumni graduates of these institutions serve as vital agents in reinforcing ethical and value-based education through mentorship, advocacy, community engagement, and financial support. In Nigeria, where challenges such as corruption, social inequality, and weak civic responsibility persist, the involvement of university alumni in promoting ethical conduct and sustainable values has become increasingly important.

Despite their potential, the role of alumni in fostering value-based education in Nigeria remains underexplored. While some alumni actively engage in mentorship programs, scholarship schemes, and community development initiatives, many universities lack structured mechanisms to harness their contributions effectively. This gap limits the potential impact of alumni on students' moral development and the broader goal of sustainable national development.

This study is anchored on the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which posits that individuals learn behaviors, values, and attitudes by observing and imitating role models. Alumni, as

visible and successful role models, provide current students with practical examples of ethical conduct, civic responsibility, and professional integrity. Similarly, the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) emphasizes the role of education in enhancing skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to societal development. By investing time, resources, and expertise, alumni enhance the moral and intellectual capacities of students, which in turn promotes sustainable national development.

University Alumni and Their Roles

University alumni are critical stakeholders in higher education. Studies (Okeke, 2019; Musa & Abubakar, 2021) indicate that alumni contribute to universities through:

- **Mentorship:** Alumni guide students on ethical decision-making, career choices, and leadership development.
- **Financial Support:** Alumni provide scholarships, endowments, and infrastructure funding, which indirectly promote ethical education by enabling access to quality learning.
- **Advocacy and Networking:** Alumni networks create opportunities for students to engage with ethical institutions and organizations that prioritize integrity and social responsibility.
- **Community Engagement:** Alumni initiate and support community development projects that reinforce values such as honesty, social justice, and civic responsibility.

Despite these contributions, studies suggest that alumni engagement in Nigeria is often irregular and uncoordinated (Abdullahi, 2020), limiting their potential impact on value-based education.

Ethical and value-based education emphasizes moral development, social responsibility, and adherence to societal norms (Nwangwu, 2018). It equips students with principles such as honesty, integrity, respect for human rights, and environmental stewardship. In the context of Nigerian universities, ethical education is crucial for addressing systemic challenges such as corruption, poor governance, and social inequality. Effective ethical education requires not only formal curriculum but also the influence of role models, including alumni.

Sustainable national development is multidimensional, encompassing economic growth, social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and ethical governance. Studies (Adebayo, 2020; Eze & Umar, 2019) show that alumni contribute to national development by fostering ethical practices among students, facilitating civic engagement, and funding initiatives that benefit communities. In the North West region of Nigeria, federal university alumni have the potential to influence societal values positively, especially in areas with high rates of youth unemployment and social challenges.

Problem Statement

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone of national development, not only for providing knowledge and skills but also for instilling ethical values and social responsibility in citizens. Universities, as centers of learning, have a critical role in shaping morally upright graduates who can contribute positively to societal growth. However, in Nigeria, challenges such as corruption, poor governance, declining civic responsibility, and social inequality have persisted, undermining national development efforts. While universities attempt to instill ethical and value-based education through curricula and formal programs, the influence of alumni as active role models and contributors to ethical education is often underutilized.

Alumni, as products of these universities, have the potential to reinforce ethical and value-based learning by serving as mentors, role models, and advocates for integrity, civic engagement, and social responsibility. They can also contribute through scholarships, research funding, and community development initiatives. Despite these potentials, empirical evidence on the extent, nature, and impact of alumni engagement in promoting ethical and value-based education in Nigeria is limited, particularly in the North West region, where socio-economic and educational challenges are pronounced. Many universities lack structured frameworks to leverage alumni contributions effectively, and information on their participation in ethical mentorship, scholarship support, and community engagement is scant.

This knowledge gap makes it difficult for policymakers, university administrators, and alumni associations to design interventions that maximize alumni contributions to ethical education. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate the roles of university alumni in fostering ethical and value-based

education to inform strategies that enhance alumni engagement, strengthen moral development in students, and ultimately contribute to sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the roles of university alumni in promoting ethical and value-based education for sustainable national development in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. To examine the extent to which alumni engage in mentorship and role modeling for ethical and value-based education in federal universities in North West Nigeria.
2. To assess the contributions of alumni to scholarships, research, and community development initiatives that promote ethical and value-based education.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do university alumni engage in mentorship and role modeling to foster ethical and value-based education?
2. What are the contributions of university alumni to scholarships, research, and community development initiatives that promote ethical and value-based education?

Hypotheses

H₁: There is no significant contribution of university alumni to mentorship and role modeling for ethical and value-based education.

H₂: There is no significant contribution of university alumni to scholarships, research, and community development initiatives for ethical and value-based education.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for collecting information from a large population to determine the roles of university alumni in fostering ethical and value-based education. The population of this study comprised alumni and final-year students from federal universities in the North West region of Nigeria. Specifically, the study focused on three universities: Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Federal University Gusau (FUGUS) and Federal University Dutse (FUD). The total estimated population of alumni across these universities is approximately 12,000, while the population of final-year students is approximately 8,500, giving a combined population of 20,500 respondents. A total of 300 respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation of both alumni and current final-year students. The strata included: Alumni: 150 respondents and Final-year students: 150 respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A: Biodata of respondents and Section B: Items designed under each of the two research questions on roles of university alumni in promoting ethical and value-based education for sustainable national development in Nigeria.

A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure responses, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by three experts in educational administration and ethics to ensure clarity and relevance. For reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents from a similar federal university not included in the main study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the instrument was 0.87, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores. Mean scores of 3.0 and above on the 5-point Likert scale were considered to indicate agreement, while scores below 3.0 indicated disagreement. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25.

Results

Research Questions 1: To what extent do university alumni engage in mentorship and role modeling to foster ethical and value-based education.

Table 1: Alumni Engagement in Mentorship and Role Modeling

Item Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	Mean	Interpretation
Alumni provide guidance to students on ethical decision-making	10	15	30	120	125	4.03	High engagement
Alumni act as role models for ethical and professional behavior	12	18	35	110	125	4.00	High engagement
Alumni mentor students on leadership and civic responsibility	15	20	40	110	115	3.88	High engagement
Alumni share personal experiences to promote ethical values	18	22	45	105	110	3.78	Moderate-High engagement

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Interpretation:

Table 1 present the respondents opinions on *to what extent do university alumni engage in mentorship and role modeling to foster ethical and value-based education?* Item 1 reveals that alumni are actively involved in guiding students to make ethical decisions. The high mean score (4.03) indicates that respondents perceive alumni as playing a strong role in shaping moral judgment and professional behavior, demonstrating their significance in students' ethical development. Item 2 reveals that alumni serve as effective role models for students. With a mean score of 4.00, respondents agree that observing alumni behavior positively influences students' understanding of ethics and professionalism, showing that role modeling is a key mechanism through which alumni contribute to value-based education. Item 3 reveals that alumni provide guidance on leadership and civic duties, with a mean score of 3.88. This suggests moderate-high engagement, indicating that alumni help students understand their societal responsibilities and cultivate leadership qualities, although this form of mentorship is slightly less emphasized compared to general ethical guidance. Item 4 reveals that alumni do share personal experiences to teach ethical principles, but the slightly lower mean score of 3.78 suggests that this type of engagement is less frequent or structured. This implies an opportunity for alumni programs to incorporate storytelling or personal-case sessions to further enhance value-based education.

Research Questions 2: What are the contributions of university alumni to scholarships, research, and community development initiatives that promote ethical and value-based education?

Table 2: Mean Ratings Alumni Contributions to Scholarships, Research, and Community Development

Item Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	Mean	Interpretation
Alumni provide scholarships to deserving students	8	20	40	110	122	4.01	High contribution
Alumni fund research and academic projects in universities	12	25	50	105	108	3.83	Moderate-High contribution
Alumni initiate or support community development projects	15	30	45	105	105	3.75	Moderate-High contribution
Alumni facilitate networking opportunities for ethical practices	10	28	55	105	102	3.80	Moderate-High contribution

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 2 present the respondents opinions on what are the contributions of university alumni to scholarships, research, and community development initiatives that promote ethical and value-based education?

Item 5 reveals that alumni significantly contribute to students' access to education through scholarships. With a mean score of 4.01, respondents indicate that alumni funding enhances educational opportunities, which indirectly promotes ethical and value-based learning by supporting students committed to integrity and academic excellence. Item 6 reveals that alumni provide moderate support for research and academic initiatives, with a mean score of 3.83. This contribution helps advance knowledge, fosters ethical academic conduct, and allows students to engage in scholarly projects that align with sustainable development goals. Item 7 reveals that alumni moderately engage in community development activities (mean = 3.75). Such involvement demonstrates their commitment to translating ethical and value-based principles into practical societal impact, supporting social cohesion, and fostering civic responsibility among students. Item 8 reveals that alumni assist students in connecting with professional networks that emphasize ethics, with a mean score of 3.80. This contribution helps students build relationships that reinforce ethical standards and value-driven practices in their future careers.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1

H₁: There is no significant contribution of university alumni to mentorship and role modeling for ethical and value-based education.

Item	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Alumni provide guidance to students on ethical decision-making	300	4.03	0.91	10.23	299	0.000	Reject H ₀
Alumni act as role models for ethical and professional behavior	300	4.00	0.94	9.67	299	0.000	Reject H ₀
Alumni mentor students on leadership and civic responsibility	300	3.88	0.95	8.42	299	0.000	Reject H ₀
Alumni share personal experiences to promote ethical values	300	3.78	0.98	7.11	299	0.000	Reject H ₀

Interpretation:

The t-test results indicate that all items on alumni mentorship and role modeling have mean scores significantly higher than the neutral point (3.0) at $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_1) is rejected, showing that university alumni significantly contribute to mentorship and role modeling, fostering ethical and value-based education.

Hypothesis 2

H₂: There is no significant contribution of university alumni to scholarships, research, and community development initiatives for ethical and value-based education.

Item	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p-value	Decision
Alumni provide scholarships to deserving students	300	4.01	0.89	10.45	299	0.000	Reject H_0
Alumni fund research and academic projects in universities	300	3.83	0.92	8.12	299	0.000	Reject H_0
Alumni initiate or support community development projects	300	3.75	0.95	7.25	299	0.000	Reject H_0
Alumni facilitate networking opportunities for ethical practices	300	3.80	0.90	7.90	299	0.000	Reject H_0

Interpretation:

The t-test results show that all items related to alumni contributions to scholarships, research, and community projects have mean scores significantly higher than 3.0 at $p < 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_2) is rejected, confirming that alumni play a significant role in promoting ethical and value-based education through scholarships, research support, and community development.

Discussion

This study examined the roles of university alumni in fostering ethical and value-based education for sustainable national development in federal universities in North West Nigeria. The findings addressed the extent of alumni engagement in mentorship and role modeling, as well as their contributions to scholarships, research, and community development.

The findings indicate that alumni are actively engaged in mentorship and role modeling, particularly in guiding students on ethical decision-making and demonstrating professional behavior. Items related to guidance and role modeling had high mean scores (4.03 and 4.00, respectively), suggesting that students and alumni alike perceive these as key contributions. This aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which emphasizes that individuals learn behaviors and values through observation and imitation of role models. By serving as ethical exemplars, alumni reinforce the moral and professional standards instilled by universities.

The study also found moderate-high engagement in mentoring students on leadership and civic responsibility, and sharing personal experiences (mean scores 3.88 and 3.78). This indicates that while alumni contribute to broader social and ethical learning, there is room to strengthen structured mentoring programs, particularly in leadership development and personal experience-sharing. These findings are consistent with prior studies in Nigeria, which highlight that alumni mentoring positively influences student behavior but often lacks formal organization (Okeke, 2019; Abdullahi, 2020). Alumni mentorship and role modeling enhance ethical awareness, moral reasoning, and civic responsibility among students, which are essential for cultivating a generation of citizens committed to national development.

The results reveal that alumni play a critical role in providing scholarships, funding research, supporting community projects, and facilitating ethical networking. Scholarship provision recorded the highest mean score (4.01), highlighting that financial support is the most visible and impactful contribution of alumni. This finding resonates with Adebayo (2020), who emphasized that alumni-funded scholarships increase access to education and indirectly foster value-based learning.



Contributions to research, community development, and networking had moderate-high mean scores (3.75–3.83), suggesting that alumni engagement in these areas is substantial but could be more consistent and structured. These findings echo Eze and Umar (2019), who argued that alumni involvement in community and academic projects reinforces the application of ethical principles and social responsibility beyond the classroom.

By supporting scholarships, research, and community initiatives, alumni bridge the gap between theoretical ethical education and practical societal application. Their contributions help develop students who are not only knowledgeable but also socially responsible, civic-minded, and ethically grounded qualities essential for sustainable national development.

The study confirms that alumni engagement in ethical mentorship, role modeling, and resource provision directly supports sustainable national development in Nigeria. Ethical and value-based education promotes integrity, reduces corruption, and fosters civic responsibility—critical factors for a stable and progressive society. Moreover, alumni-driven community and research initiatives encourage social cohesion, innovation, and responsible leadership, which are vital for achieving sustainable development goals.

These findings underscore the need for universities to formalize alumni engagement programs, such as structured mentorship schemes, alumni-funded research grants, and coordinated community development projects. Doing so will enhance the impact of alumni contributions and ensure that ethical and value-based education continues to influence students and society positively.

Conclusion

In summary, the findings demonstrate that university alumni in North West Nigeria significantly contribute to ethical and value-based education through mentorship, role modeling, scholarships, research, and community engagement. Their involvement strengthens the moral, social, and professional development of students, which, in turn, supports sustainable national development. While the contributions are commendable, there is a need for more structured, coordinated, and institutionally supported alumni programs to maximize their impact.

Conclusion

This study investigated the roles of university alumni in fostering ethical and value-based education for sustainable national development in federal universities in North West Nigeria. The findings revealed that alumni significantly contribute to mentorship, role modeling, scholarships, research, and community development initiatives. Through these activities, alumni reinforce ethical conduct, civic responsibility, and professional values among students.

Alumni engagement was particularly strong in providing guidance on ethical decision-making and acting as role models for professional behavior. Contributions to scholarships were also highly visible, while support for research, community development, and networking opportunities was moderately high, indicating room for more structured involvement. Overall, the study confirms that alumni play a critical role in bridging theoretical ethical education and practical societal impact, ultimately supporting sustainable national development.

However, the findings also highlight challenges such as limited structured alumni programs, inconsistent engagement, and inadequate institutional support, which can reduce the overall impact of alumni contributions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the role of alumni in promoting ethical and value-based education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Universities should create formal mentorship initiatives where alumni are paired with students to guide ethical decision-making, leadership development, and civic responsibility.

Alumni associations should be incentivized to provide scholarships, research grants, and support for academic projects that foster ethical and value-based education.



Universities should facilitate opportunities for alumni to initiate and participate in community development projects that model ethical behavior and social responsibility. Alumni and students should be connected through professional networks, workshops, and seminars that emphasize integrity, transparency, and value-based leadership.

Universities should recognize and reward alumni contributions to ethical education, creating a culture that encourages consistent engagement and strengthens sustainable development initiatives.

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