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Reviving and Building Moral Education and Ethical Values in Public and Professional Practice in Ghana

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Abstract

Over the years, concerns about unethical behavior and corruption in the public and business sectors have kept growing, with tremendous consequences for national integrity, cohesion, and equitable development within Ghanaian society. These have led to political tensions and debate on the need to hold officials to account and improve national values and ethics in public and professional practice. Although there are national and organizational systems aimed at preventing unethical behaviors such as bribery, corruption, substandard work, and misuse of national resources and confidential information in organizations, these societal ills persist. This study uses historical review and policy analysis, drawing on psychodynamic theory to examine the underlying factors and root causes of such development-limiting tendencies. It calls on professional organizations and policymakers to use the well-established and respected national artifacts and revered religious values to develop a national value framework that can be implemented to solve these perennial ills. The paper reviews progress made in Ghana's educational system, the various reforms made since the post-colonial era, and identifies the embedded weaknesses. It analyses how the uniting themes of the national anthem ("*God bless our homeland Ghana*"), the national pledge, and the widely accepted religious or spiritual values could be integrated into the various levels of the educational curricula and professional training to develop a patriotic spirit and strong ethical and moral citizens needed for national development. Conceptually, we highlight how humane and ethical values can be integrated into the entire educational system, professional standards, codes of practice, the wider organizational culture, and the national consciousness. Key challenges and actionable recommendations are put forward to aid the urgent dialogue on how to develop an acceptable national values charter to guide Ghana's collective development and middle-income aspirations.

Keywords

Education, National Values Charter, Morality, Ethics, Spirituality, Career Guidance, Counselling

1. Introduction

Education undoubtedly plays many critical roles in societal development. It is seen as one of the important public services, particularly in the developing world, as it promotes national integration (Onuoha, 1975). Education provides access to knowledge, improves national socio-economic wellbeing, and is a source of competitive advantage in the globalised world (Poku et al., 2013). In the developed world, expansion in education provision has been largely credited with the shift from agrarian to industrial, and industrial to information economies (Griffin et al., 2011). The authors argued that these shifts have necessitated the development and assessment of 21st Century skills in our educational systems, which prioritise analysing the credibility, evaluating the utility, appropriateness, and intelligent application of information. However, for these utilitarian values of education in national development to be achieved effectively, there must be clearly defined value systems: character, ethical, and moral values that the nation and its educational systems are built upon. The education and training of citizens must therefore balance knowledge and skills development with moral, character, and civic education (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Kaur, 2015). Therefore, the philosophical foundation of the educational system of a nation determines the kind of citizens that are produced for its socioeconomic development. For durable national development, defined sets of values must be cultivated in the citizenry, as they collectively and individually work towards building a just, humane, and prosperous society. We argue that Ghana needs to develop its core moral, ethical, and national values and embed these into an integrated educational curriculum that would train citizens with 21st Century skills whilst preparing them for selfless service that contributes to harmonious national development.

2. Rationale & Methodology

Although recognized as a relatively stable democracy in Africa, recent developments in Ghana, including increased corruption, lawlessness, wanton destruction of the natural environment through uncontrolled illegal mining fueled by high youth unemployment and a "get-rich-quick" mentality, weak accountability, lack of strong deterrence, and declining peace indicators, are eroding its reputation for integrity and transparency. According to Transparency International (2025), Ghana ranks 80th out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index (with a score of 42 out of 100), a decline from its 70th position in 2023, marking its worst ranking in the past five years (Adonu, 2025). Consequently, Ghana is reported as losing an estimated $3 billion annually to corruption, which is twice its yearly foreign

direct investment inflows (Agambila, 2025). Secondly, Ghana slipped out of Africa's top five most peaceful nations on the Global Peace Index to 61st out of 163 countries, now behind Mauritius, Botswana, Namibia, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Madagascar (Global Peace Index, 2025). This marked a continued decline from its position as Africa's second most peaceful country just four years ago (Anyetei, 2025). This decline signals rising concerns over societal safety and governance, public sector integrity, and transparency.

Although there are anti-corruption laws in place, weak enforcement and limited institutional independence due to political meddling undermine accountability and public trust. Osei-Tutu et al. (2023) used limited focus groups in the Accra and Tema metropolitan areas to evaluate changes in perceptions of Ghanaian values. The authors reported continued dominance of traditional values such as religious beliefs, peace, humility, and hospitality. However, hard work, discipline, observance of traditions, and respect for traditional authority were reported as being under threat due to increasing contemporary values such as formal education, material values (money and possessions), and technology. The authors called for a nationwide study to ascertain wider shifts in society. This work uses historical review and policy analysis, drawing on psychodynamic theory to analyse the underlying factors contributing to unethical behaviours and why they have become entrenched in the country. We examine conscious and unconscious mental forces and internal conflicts that drive emotions, behaviour, and identity in the nation. We present illustrative examples from the engineering, medicine, and law professions to highlight the detrimental impact of unethical behaviours and stress the importance of infusing clear national moral, ethical, and cultural values into the education and training of Ghanaian citizens. We argue for the urgent development of a national value system using the respected symbols and artifacts of the state with the hope of establishing an acceptable conceptual framework for functional moral, civic, and ethical education that will produce the good citizens needed for harmonious and sustainable development of the country.

3. Factors Contributing to Unethical Behaviours

Unethical behaviour in public life—manifesting as corruption, dishonesty, and abuse of power—remains a persistent challenge across the political, corporate, and institutional domains. While legal, economic, and sociological frameworks offer valuable explanations, psychodynamic theory provides a distinctive lens by probing the unconscious motives, internal conflicts, and personality structures that drive such conduct. It is widely accepted that ethics and morality are two founding principles of civil and public service (Bellé & Canteralli, 2017). Morality is defined as a system of rules that regulates social interactions and social relationships of individuals within societies. It is simply viewed as the person's or society's view of what is perceived to be the highest good (Kaur, 2015). These are developed from childhood training, lived experiences, societal values, pressures, and accepted norms in the community. Conversely, there are several dimensions regarding the

subject of unethical and immoral societal and organisational behaviours. The conscious mental forces in society that contribute to these unethical behaviours include excessive competition and comparisons, the desire to succeed at all costs that can lead to scheming, dishonesty, discrimination, exploitation, violence and abuse, corruption, and neglect of civic duties. In organisations, conflict of interest, lack of transparency, fraud and embezzlement, harassment, discrimination in hiring or promotion, and unethical leadership are the key elements of self-centred behaviours. These are influenced by the unconscious forces of the mind (i.e., the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*) which are in constant struggle according to Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) psychodynamic theory.

Rooted in the work of Freud and his successors, psychodynamic theory emphasizes the profound influence of unconscious processes, defence mechanisms, early childhood experiences, and the interplay of *id*, *ego*, *and superego* on human behaviour (McLeod, 2025). This report explores how these core concepts illuminate the psychological underpinnings of unethical actions by individuals in positions of power and within societal systems. The psychodynamic theory posits that much of human behaviour is shaped by unconscious drives and unresolved internal conflicts. Unlike approaches that focus solely on conscious decision-making or external incentives, the psychodynamic perspective delves into the hidden motivations and psychological defences that can lead otherwise law-abiding individuals to engage in unethical acts (De Klerk, 2017). This approach is particularly salient in public life, where individuals wielding power are often subject to intense psychological pressures, temptations, and opportunities for moral compromise.

At the heart of psychodynamic theory is the assertion that unconscious motives—desires, fears, and conflicts outside of conscious awareness—profoundly influence behaviour. Freud's model divides the mind into the *id* (our instinctual drives), *ego* (the reality-oriented mediator), and the *superego* (our internalized moral standards). The *id* operates on the pleasure principle; it seeks immediate gratification of desires, which is often in conflict with our *superego*'s moral injunctions. The *ego* strives to balance these demands and may resort to defence mechanisms to manage anxiety and guilt. In childhood development, if these internal drives are not modulated or carefully trained by parental or responsible adult influences, then an unhealthy selfish ambition unconsciously dominates our personality. In the context of political corruption and dishonesty, unconscious motives can manifest as repressed desires for power, recognition, or revenge (Tokunbo & Borisade, 2025). Marcuse (2013), integrating Freudian and critical theory, argued that socially patterned drives become embedded in the unconscious, shaping personality and perpetuating compliance with dominant norms, even when those norms are corrupt or unjust. Individuals may unconsciously participate in their own subjugation or rationalize unethical actions as necessary adaptations to a corrupt system. There is evidence from social psychology that corroborates the psychodynamic view that significant unethical behaviour occurs without conscious intent. Studies on implicit bias and automaticity reveal that individuals often act in ways

that contradict their explicit values, guided by unconscious associations and self-serving rationalizations. For example, political leaders and executives may unconsciously prioritize self-interest over ethical concerns, justifying corrupt actions as necessary for organizational success or personal advancement.

Psychodynamic theory therefore offers a rich and nuanced framework for understanding unethical behaviour in public life and society. By illuminating the unconscious motives, defence mechanisms, early experiences, and internal conflicts that drive individuals and groups, it complements and deepens insights from social psychology and behavioural ethics. Case studies from political, corporate, and institutional contexts demonstrate the interplay of personality structures, group dynamics, and systemic factors in the emergence and persistence of corruption, dishonesty, and abuse of power. While psychodynamic explanations face critiques regarding scientific validity and determinism, their integration with empirical research and behavioural interventions enhances their relevance and applicability in tackling unethical behaviours in society. Addressing unethical behaviour in society and public life requires a multi-level approach that combines individual self-awareness, moral and ethical education, organizational reform, and the strengthening of systemic accountability. By fostering ethical cultures, supporting whistleblowers, and addressing the psychological roots of misconduct, societies can move toward greater integrity, justice, and trust in public officials and institutions.

In Ghana, there are many underlying factors of unethical behaviours at different levels of society. These include unexemplary leadership (the "big man" syndrome) and lack of accountability, which Wedell-Wedellsborg (2019) described as the "omnipotence" psychological dynamic, where someone feels so aggrandised and entitled that they believe the rules of decent behaviour do not apply to them. Others include lack of moral and ethical training, glorification of "individual material wealth" as the mark of success, weak institutional systems and structures, poor service conditions, poverty, cultural numbness, justified neglect, and capitalising on close connections with high profile and powerful people in society. There is a lack of understanding of the impact of selfish interests on the wider society, and insistence on adherence to policies, deterrence, weak monitoring and surveillance, and the absence of stiffer punishments for miscreants. Jha & Singh (2023) have grouped unethical behaviours into four categories: pro-self, lack of autonomy, pro-organisation, systemic, and negligence categories. On the other hand, Veetikazhi et al. (2022) classified four typologies: unethical pro-self-behaviour-explicit, unethical pro-self-behaviour-implicit, unethical pro-other behaviour-explicit, and unethical pro-other behaviour-implicit. All of these highlight the damaging consequences of self-seeking unethical behaviours due to non-adherence to societal ethics and lack of national values. Other influencing external factors include the extreme polarisation of Ghanaian society, along the two main political parties (the National Democratic Congress and National Patriotic Party) due to the "winner takes all" governance system in the country. This has made the strict enforcement of rules, maintenance of ethical standards, and norms of decency difficult, as any attempts by a "new" government are easily seen through a party political

lens as a witch-hunt against their political opponents. Also, the short (four-year) term of office makes elected officials and government appointees tend to engage in activities that would secure their personal and family's future welfare at the expense of national interests, as they are guaranteed to be removed from office when there is a change in government. Consequently, self-preserving tendencies and disregard for collective norms and rules are on the increase and issues are not looked at from the national collective interests.

4. Developing National Values and Identity

National values play critical roles in any country's development and resilience in times of adversity (Komariah et al., 2020). There are different interpretations of the concept of value. However, we adopt the axiological definition of value, which is predicated on prevailing spiritual culture, which indicates the existence of different human needs and feelings, and provides a basis for individuals to assess the events taking place around them (Valijonovna & Kizi, 2022). According to the authors, although the meaning and significance of value change with time and depend on the context, value can be divided into logical, ethical, aesthetic, and objective components. Values can also be divided into "national and universal," or "class and religious." Values depend on age, professional characteristics, one's place in society, the life of the nation, and the nature of the society. Notwithstanding, there are universal values such as dignity, honour, honesty, self-control, and equality that must be included in any national value system. National values are philosophical concepts that express the specific features, characteristics, and signs of each nation. They represent the contribution to the national cultural heritage formed in the processes of its social development. National values represent the "national identity and self-identity expressed in the culture, literature, art, language, religion, historical memory, way of living, working and thinking, customs, rituals, and celebrations of the nation" (Valijonovna & Kizi, 2022, p.17).

This study asserts that Ghana needs to develop a strong "national identity" and value system that would contribute to nationalistic and ethical behaviours using the key national emblems and artefacts. An identity that would engender national and self-pride, patriotism, deep respect, and a desire to build on the achievements of the forefathers who sacrificed their lives for national liberation and today's freedoms. This national identity and value system needs to be embedded into every facet of Ghanaian society and all levels of the educational and training systems. We discuss effective ways that national values can be cultivated to achieve the transformative power of education in the harmonious nation-building efforts among the diverse Ghanaian ethnic groupings.

We examine common uniting national values based on the widely accepted emblems including "the national anthem, the pledge, and the principles of the prevailing moral and religious beliefs" in the country, which, if promoted, could transform the national consciousness and engender positive behaviours. The authors posit that there is an urgent need to develop a "national identity charter" (NIC)

based on the above-mentioned artefacts. The theoretical foundations, practical dimensions, and challenges of ethical professional practice are discussed. Finally, recommendations for a vigorous and overdue discourse between the wider public, institutional leaders, academics, and policymakers towards the NIC are proposed. The NIC, behaviours, and practices, when agreed, should be progressively taught from preschool to tertiary and professional institutional levels. This is a mindset of communal values that promotes the collective best self of citizens to counter the damaging and retrogressive individual self-interest that currently permeates the Ghanaian social system.

5. Role of Education in Nation-Building

From conceptual and theoretical analyses, Bereketeab (2020) asserts that education plays a decisive role in post-colonial African nation-building. Education has a teleological purpose of producing higher or better outcomes and opportunities for the pursuit, which not only affects the individual and their family network. The author argues that, at the societal level, education is "collective, consensual, and altruistic" (ibid, p.74). At the national level, education is an agency for cultural transmission and change, as it inculcates "national values, norms, social cohesion, unity, belief systems and socio-economic development." Consequently, post-colonial African leaders approached basic, vocational, technical, and academic education provision from the constructivist perspective with the aim of bolstering development projects. Education also has alternative intrinsic values, which are self-fulfilment, personal cognitive achievements, a virtue, a good, and an end. From these, it can be concluded that education positively contributes to personal and, consequently, national development.

However, the unanswered critical question is, "what type of education truly translates values into the public or common good?" This is important because it can be argued that it is the same educated people who use their knowledge to perform deviant behaviours (e.g., dishonesty, spreading of rumours, withholding effort, absenteeism, embezzlement, corruption, theft, fraud, vandalism, and sabotage) that bring incalculable damage to organisations and society, including erosion of confidence in public institutions (Clausen, Kraay, & Nyiri, 2011). Appelbaum, Deguire, & Lay (2005) examined the causes of unethical and deviant workplace behaviours, including organisational ethical climate.

Right from post-colonial independence, Ghana made education the pivotal strategy for national development. The founding president, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, declared to the Old Legislative Assembly that education would serve three goals: "to produce a scientifically literate population, tackle the causes of low productivity, and produce knowledge to harness Ghana's economic potential" (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). The problem is, why has the same educational system and the many reforms failed to instill collective welfare values in the "educated" citizenry in the country? Using the Ghanaian philosophical and symbolic construct: "*Sankofa*," meaning look back to move forward (Addai-Mununkum, 2014),

we present a review of Ghana's educational system, highlight the fundamental weaknesses, and propose the strengthening and teaching of ethical thinking, national and moral values from the primary to tertiary levels of education.

6. Review of the Ghana Educational System

Since independence, despite many educational reforms, instructional delivery in the Ghana Education System is still bedevilled by legacies from colonial British education, characterised by rigid curriculum, timetables, and textbooks that promote rote memorisation and repetition of facts, with classroom layouts that do not promote or limit discussions and interactions (Nkansah, 2021). We provide below an overview of Ghana's education system and the various reforms carried out since independence (see Table 1). We examine the motivations behind each major reform, their implementation strategies, and their impacts. We highlight the common weakness in these reforms that has contributed to the rise of unpatriotic and unethical behaviours that are negatively impacting the nation's development.

Table 1. Educational reforms in Ghana since independence (1957-2025): policy shifts, structural changes, and curriculum reforms.

Reform Initiative	Year (s)	Objectives	Implementation Strategy	Outcomes/Impact
Accelerated Development Plan (ADP)	1951	Expand access to basic education, universal literacy.	School construction, teacher training, fee abolition	Massive enrollment growth, foundational system
Education Act	1961	Legal framework for free, compulsory basic education	Centralized administration, LEAs, fee abolition	Improved access, legal mandate, but uneven implementation
Dzobo Committee/New Structure	1974-1980	Review structure/content, vocational focus	Curriculum restructuring, pilot JSS/SSS	Basis for the 1987 reforms, limited rollout
PNDC Law 42	1983	Legal modifications, governance reform	Adjusted oversight, decentralization	Strengthened GES, legal alignment
1987 Education Reform Programme	1987	Restructure the system, improve relevance and efficiency	6-3-3-4 structure, curriculum overhaul, teacher training	Improved progression, doubled school numbers
Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)	1996	Universal, free, compulsory basic education	Capitation grants, infrastructure, school feeding	Increased enrollment, narrowed gender/regional gaps
Free Senior High School (FSHS) Policy	2017 onward	Remove financial barriers to SHS and promote equity.	Absorb fees, expand infrastructure, double-track the system	Increased SHS access, improved transition/ completion
Education Strategic Plan (ESP)	2018-2030	Improve quality, equity, efficiency, and 21st-century skills.	Standards-based curriculum, teacher reform, decentralization	Sector-wide transformation, focus on learning outcomes

Sources: Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030; Ghana Statistical Service; Akyeampong (2009); UNESCO; NaCCA; various academic and policy analyses.

Ghana has embarked on a dynamic and often challenging journey to reform its educational system since post-British colonial rule. The country's educational landscape has been shaped by a succession of ambitious policies, structural overhauls, and curriculum innovations, each reflecting the prevailing political, economic, and social imperatives of its time. Table 1 summarises these educational reforms.

a) Colonial Legacy and the Foundations of Reform (Pre-1957)

The Portuguese are credited as being the first Europeans to introduce formal Western education in Elmina, Ghana in 1529, with the purpose to "provide reading, writing and religious teaching for African children" (Graham, 1971). A century later, in 1637, the Dutch were reported to have re-started the school, when they seized Elmina Castle, with a similar religious aim of educating children who were "qualified" to advance the Christian faith. The British, however, entered West Africa in the mid-16th century with the goal of trading and seeking unfettered commercial advantage for resources for their national development. The Royal African Company, established by royal charter in 1672 to monopolise English trade with West Africa, set up their first school in the Gold Coast (Ghana) to train the needed literate translators in 1694. The sole purpose was supplying interpreters, clerical subordinates, soldiers to defend the forts, and individuals sympathetic to the company and the British Crown's interests. This practice of educating largely mulattoes and African children "of promise or important connections" continued for over three centuries.

Ghana's educational system at independence was deeply shaped by its colonial British policy of an elitist, urban-centric system designed primarily to produce clerks, interpreters, and low-level officials. Mission schools, while widespread at that time, often delivered curricula detached from local realities and the developmental needs of the country. This education restricted the creative thinking and critical consciousness of both students and teachers. The 1925 Guggisberg Education Ordinance introduced some progressive principles, such as the establishment of Achimota School and emphasis on aligning school curricula with local health, welfare, and industry. However, these principles were not fully realized, and by the late 1940s, the demand for education far outstripped supply, especially in rural and northern regions.

b) The Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) of 1951

The ADP was introduced by the nationalist government led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1951, even before formal independence (Ghana Remembers, 2025). The plan was motivated by a strong desire to rapidly develop the nation and address the educational aspirations of a newly independent state. Key drivers included the need for a skilled workforce, social equity, economic diversification, and the fulfilment of national development goals. It aimed to achieve universal primary education within 15 years (by 1966). The main strategies included abolishing tuition fees for elementary education and massive expansion of school infrastructure at the primary, middle, and

secondary levels. It embarked on intensive training of teachers through the establishment of Emergency Training Colleges and Pupil Teachers' Centres. The ADP placed emphasis on technical and vocational education, promotion of girls' education, and community involvement. Between 1951 and 1957, it tripled the number of primary and middle school places, and by independence, nearly half a million children were enrolled in primary education, although this was still below the actual need, due to underestimation of the population.

The ADP led to a dramatic increase in access to education: primary schools grew from 1083 (153,360 pupils) in 1951 to 8144 (1,137,495 pupils) in 1966; middle schools increased from 539 (66,175 pupils) to 2277 (267,434 pupils), and secondary schools expanded from 13 (5033 pupils) to 105 (42,111 pupils) (Boakye, 2019). However, the rapid expansion outpaced the availability of trained teachers and infrastructure, leading to concerns about declining educational quality. Resource constraints, disparities in access (especially in the north), and challenges in curriculum relevance persisted.

c) The Education Act of 1961

The Education Act of 1961 (Act 87) was landmark legislation enacted under Nkrumah's administration, which provided the legal basis for compulsory, free primary and middle school education for all children of school-going age and replaced the earlier colonial ordinances. The key provisions included the organization of the public education system into primary, middle, and secondary stages, and the establishment of Local Education Authorities, who were tasked with building, equipping, and maintaining schools (Education Act 87, 1961 (GHALII, 1961)). Amongst others, it included education and service committees for teacher remuneration and policy advice; compulsory school attendance with penalties for non-compliance by parents, regulation and oversight of private educational institutions, and non-discrimination in school admission based on religion, race, or language. The Act led to a further surge in school construction and enrolment. In 1961 alone, 2493 new primary schools were opened, enrolling 219,400 children in first-year classes, and by 1966, primary and middle school enrolment had doubled compared to 1961 figures.

Despite the ambitious goals and successes, the Act faced significant implementation challenges, including resource constraints and inadequate infrastructure, especially in remote and underserved areas. There were persistent disparities in access, with northern regions lagging behind the south, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. Other challenges include limited mechanisms for ongoing feedback, evaluation, and adaptation to changing needs, curriculum relevance, balancing academic with practical skills, and incomplete realization of compulsory education due to economic and logistical barriers.

Nkrumah's vision for education was deeply intertwined with his broader agenda for national development, industrialization, and social transformation. He viewed education as a tool for nation-building, economic growth, and the creation of a unified Ghanaian identity. His administration's state-led acceleration and ex-

pansion of educational establishments from primary to tertiary levels included the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute to promote socialist and Pan-African values. However, the rapid expansion also exposed systemic weaknesses, including quality deficits, resource shortages, and regional disparities. The focus on academic credentials sometimes came at the expense of practical and marketable skills, a challenge that persisted in later reforms.

d) Post-Nkrumah and Military Regimes (1966-1981): Policy Shifts and Challenges

The overthrow of Dr. Nkrumah in 1966 ushered in a period of political instability, economic decline, and shifting educational priorities. The National Liberation Council (NLC) and the subsequent military regimes (NRC, SMC, AFRC) grappled with mounting fiscal pressures, teacher shortages, and deteriorating infrastructure. Several reviews and commissions were set up during this period, including the Kwapong Educational Review Committee (1967), which assessed the effectiveness of the ADP. It recommended the introduction of continuation schools, national councils for education, and a more balanced development approach to education. The committee's recommendations influenced educational administration into the early 1970s but were criticised for prolonged schooling without employable skills.

This was followed by the Mills-Odoi Commission and Education Review Committee of 1966. They proposed improvements in teacher remuneration, establishment of a Teaching Service Division, and streamlined education along British lines, emphasizing denominational roles and character building. Structural and policy changes during this period included the abolition of teacher trainee allowances, emphasis on practical and vocational skills, but limited implementation, and the introduction of the 6:4:5:2 structure (six years primary, four years middle, five years secondary, two years advanced level) totaling 17 years of schooling. Unfortunately, a difficult economic crisis in the early 1970s to the mid-80s led to a decline in real earnings, poverty, mass exodus of teachers, and growing dissatisfaction with the system's inability to produce employable graduates and address national manpower needs.

e) The Dzobo Committee—The New Structure and Content of Education (1974-1980)

The mounting criticism of the existing system led the government to establish the Dzobo Committee in 1973 to review the structure and content of education. The committee advocated for a new 6:3:3 educational structure [6 years primary, 3 years junior secondary (JSS) and 3 years of senior secondary (SSS)], which reduced pre-tertiary education years from 17 to 12 years. It placed emphasis on vocational, technical, and practical subjects throughout the pre-university education stages and called for a curriculum relevant to socio-economic and developmental needs (e.g., a focus on environmental issues, agriculture, science and technology). The Dzobo reforms were piloted from 1974, with new syllabuses and curricula introduced in primary schools. However, full implementation stalled due to eco-

nomic recession, lack of funds, and logistical challenges. The envisioned nationwide rollout of JSS and SSS was delayed, and the old system persisted alongside the new, leading to confusion and limited impact.

f) PNDC Law 42 (1983) and Legal Modifications to the 1961 Act

The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government, facing a deepening economic crisis and widespread illiteracy, enacted PNDC Law 42 in 1983, which reinforced the state's responsibility for providing educational facilities at all levels. It established an Education Commission to advise the Secretary for Education, monitor policy implementation, and oversee educational establishments, repealed earlier decrees, and consolidated educational governance under the PNDC. It emphasized the need for comprehensive data collection and evidence-based decision-making. PNDC Law 42 provided a legal and administrative framework for the subsequent 1987 comprehensive reforms. It underscored the paramount responsibility of the state in education and set the stage for a more centralized, yet increasingly decentralized, governance structure.

g) The 1987 Education Reform Programme

By the mid-1980s, Ghana's education system was in crisis. Enrolment had stagnated, quality had declined, and the system was widely seen as elitist and irrelevant to national development needs. The 1987 reforms, which were influenced by the earlier Dzobo Committee and supported by the World Bank and other donors, aimed to expand and make access more equitable, restructure the school system, implement the reduced 12 years pre-tertiary education (i.e. 6-3-3), improve pedagogical efficiency and effectiveness, make education more relevant through problem-solving, increase environmental awareness, provide pre-vocational training, develop general skills, and align education with national manpower and economic development needs (Takyi Mensah, 2023).

It embarked on a nationwide rollout of the 6-3-3 structure, a curriculum overhaul to integrate pre-vocational and academic education at JSS, the introduction of continuous assessment and guidance and counselling services, the phasing out of untrained teachers and emphasis on teacher training. It decentralised education management, with new roles for district and community-based structures, and provided large-scale investment in infrastructure, textbooks, and teacher development, supported by the Education Sector Adjustment Credit and donor funding.

The new JSS curriculum included 13 subjects, including a Ghanaian language and two pre-vocational subjects. The curriculum was designed to provide both a pre-vocational foundation and an academic base, integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Akyeampong, 2009). The successes of the reform include a doubling of primary and JSS schools within two decades, reversal of enrolment decline, improved growth in access, progression rates and curriculum relevance, and the introduction of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) as a transition assessment. Although it remarkably changed Ghana's education system, challenges persisted, including inadequate resources and infrastructure, especially in rural areas, teacher shortages and uneven quality, confu-

sion over the vocational versus pre-vocational focus of JSS, limited provision for lower-attaining pupils and children with disabilities, and fragmented implementation and communication gaps between national, regional, and school levels.

h) Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Initiative (1996)

The 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic mandated the provision of free, compulsory, and universal basic education within ten years. In response, the government launched the FCUBE programme in 1996, with the goal of achieving universal basic education by 2005. FCUBE focused on three main components: improving the quality of teaching and learning through investments in teacher training, instructional time, supervision, and learning materials; improving management efficiency through decentralization of budget and management to district assemblies, introduction of capitation grants, school-based management; and improving access and participation by elimination of school fees, construction of classrooms, school feeding programmes, and targeted interventions for deprived districts. A fourth component, decentralization and sustainability, was later added to strengthen local management structures (Akyeampong, 2009).

Significant achievements include consistent growth in enrolment across all population groups, with primary enrolment rising fastest among lower-income groups, a narrowed gender gap in enrolment, especially in deprived districts, and an increase in gross enrolment ratios for boys and girls from 78% and 72% in 1999 to 98% and 97% in 2006, respectively. There were reduced financial barriers and improved attendance through the capitation grants and school feeding programmes (Poku, 2022). However, teething challenges remained, such as indirect costs (including uniforms, materials, and opportunity costs) continuing to limit true "free" education; quality improvements lagged behind the access gains with persistent disparities in learning outcomes, and only 50% of BECE candidates qualified for secondary placement in 2009. There were also implementation gaps in making education truly compulsory and universal, especially for marginalized groups.

i) Education Strategic Plans (ESP) and Reforms (2003-2030)

In the past two decades, Ghana has adopted a series of Education Strategic Plans (2003-2015, 2010-2020, 2018-2030) to guide sector-wide reforms, align with international goals (e.g., Education for All, SDGs), and address persistent challenges in access, quality, and equity. The current ESP (2018-2030) sets out a comprehensive roadmap for transforming Ghana into a "learning nation" (Global Partnership for Education, 2019). Its strategic objectives are:

1. Improved equitable access and participation in inclusive education at all levels.
2. Improved quality of teaching and learning of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) at all levels.
3. Achieve sustainable and efficient management, financing, and accountability of education service delivery

The ESP emphasizes standards-based curriculum reform at all levels [Kindergarten, Primary, JHS, SHS, technical, vocational training education (TVET)], teacher

professionalization, licensing, and deployment reforms. The decentralization of education management to district and school levels, the strengthening of TVET and non-formal education, inclusive and special education for children with disabilities and marginalized groups. Others include the integration of 21st-century skills, digital literacy, global citizenship, and alignment with SDG 4 and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Implementation is guided by four-year medium-term plans, with clear monitoring and evaluation frameworks and key performance indicators (Takyi Mensah, 2023). It calls for the introduction of a new standards-based curriculum in basic schools (2019-2021), which focuses on foundational skills, creativity, and problem-solving; the development of a new Senior High School (SHS), Senior High Technical School (SHTS), and STEM curriculum that emphasize 21st-century competencies, character development, and national values. The ESP calls for the integration of Social Emotional Learning, ICT, gender equality, and social inclusion, and the reform of existing assessment systems for more holistic, continuous, and practical assessment models. Although the policy reforms set up in the ESP 2018-2030 are laudable, there is no philosophical foundation, no agreed national values, and the nature and content of these new curricula are yet to be seen, and, critically, it is uncertain whether the new NDC government will continue to implement these policy initiatives as planned.

7. Failures of the Ghana Educational System and Reforms

Although education in the broader sense has always been part of African communal societies, European-style formal education, however, appeared in Ghana as far back as the fifteenth century (Graham, 1971). In Ghanaian societies before colonisation, the child was taught the material and spiritual fundamentals of social life and trained through the teenage years by the family and the local community to take up his/her societal responsibilities. These included traditional education of norms, moral values, and skills that culminated in undergoing initiation into adulthood and puberty rites. The Western formal education in Ghana (for that matter Africa) followed a utilitarian, elitist individual improvement, supply and demand approach (Aboagye, 2021). Western education and its content were used to achieve specific commercial, religious, and political interests of the merchant companies, missionaries, and their colonial governments, contrary to the communal and national development needs of the indigenes. We believe the contrast in the philosophies behind the Western versus the traditional educational systems is very important, as the individual versus communal values embedded in each system affect the moral behaviour of the trainees in society.

It is undeniable that western education markedly improved the life prospects of those "skilled" with literacy and the learning of the metropolitan language over the so-called "unskilled" illiterate Ghanaians (Aboagye, 2021). However, the loss of the strong collective communal and moral values intrinsic to the centuries-old traditional education and the discriminatory low-wage policies perpetuated against

western-educated Africans were precursors to the decline in moral values and unethical behaviours that persist in modern public and commercial sectors of Ghanaian society.

It can be seen from the above educational review that post-colonial education in Ghana has experienced constant changes and, at certain points in the history of the nation, has come to near collapse, as successive military and civilian governments search for a fitting model to meet the needs of the country and the expectations of the citizens (Adu-Gyamfi et. al., 2016). There have been several changes due to inconsistencies that were in the different missional and government education systems. The structure of the education system, including the number of years spent at each of the four stages: primary, junior, senior, and tertiary (currently, 6-3-3-4), has also seen several changes by successive governments, which are attributed to "over politicization" (Adu-Gyamfi et. al., 2016, p. 160). The education system in Ghana has been described as "being under experimentation, without a very clear direction and focus," and the disconnection between curricula and industry has been the singular cause of low productivity and high graduate unemployment in the country (Poku et. al., 2013). What seems evident from the reviews is a lack of clear and consistently followed philosophical foundation for education that guides all successive governments.

The broad educational reforms that have taken place in Ghana can be categorised under *universal* reforms (such as the free compulsory universal basic education) and *sectoral* reforms (that affect only specific areas of the country, such as Nkrumah's free school system for the North). It must be acknowledged that although the plethora of reforms implemented by various governments had good intentions of broadening access, improving the relevance of education to national development needs, and reducing the burden of educational costs to both parents and government, none of these reforms except for Nkrumah's 1951 Accelerated Development Plan, which, in addition to expanding and making education a key pillar of economic development, had a philosophical focus of removing Western individualistic thoughts and cultural influences. Nkrumah introduced subjects based on African cultural identity, values, and practices at all levels, including teacher training aimed at producing proud and patriotic African citizens. Unfortunately, this important African collective identity and value system was scrapped soon after the Nkrumah regime was overthrown in 1966. Consequently, the Western individual interest and value system has perniciously become entrenched in our educational systems to date. We contend that the failure to promote patriotism, ethical thinking, and collective national identity and interests after the Nkrumah regime has significantly contributed to the erosion of public responsibility, upholding ethical and moral values that work for the collective good, particularly amongst the "educated" in public and professional practice in Ghana.

The current educational system, despite many reforms, still faces three significant challenges. First, *structural*—overcrowded curriculum, inadequate instructional time, weak teacher pedagogical content knowledge, and lack of in-service

training opportunities. Secondly, *resources*—lack of adequate infrastructure, teaching and learning materials; and thirdly, *strategic*—unequal access to education and lifelong learning, with weak and ineffective school management systems (Armah, 2017, p.6). Durable and effective educational systems need a clear and convincing philosophical foundation that curriculum and pedagogy are built upon. We believe that what individuals learn through their early and pre-adult years, which are largely spent in formal education, shapes their moral compass and outlook on life. Professionals in all fields of endeavour face challenging situations in their practice, which border on reputational risks and legality that test their internal moral compass, their ethical decision-making abilities, and moral courage to choose to do the right thing (Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007). Although there are laudable attempts to narrow the gap between an organization's ethical standards and informal practice, it requires alignment of systems and processes with organizational values, and the critical role of leaders in creating an ethical culture (Fichter, 2018).

In Ghana, despite these attempts, sadly, unethical behaviours and practices are becoming accepted norms in public life. For instance, the political and professional services like medicine, law, and engineering are fraught with many scandalous and disturbing cases, which raise questions about the adequacy of ethical training in our educational settings (Frisque et al., 2004). Developing organizational capacity for virtue excellence requires more than just rules and standards; there is a need for proactive cultivation of moral strength in employees (Sekerka et al., 2009). It is therefore sad to acknowledge that moral and ethical education is not emphasised in Ghanaian tertiary institutions.

Many dimensions of ethical behaviour have been studied, such as character and strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), virtue-based ethical performance (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003), moral agency (Cherkowski, Walker, & Kutsyuruba, 2015), and professional moral courage (PMC) as a managerial competency (Sekerka et al., 2009). According to the authors, PMC is driven by personal character traits that can be developed. It is a process always characterised by careful, self-directed efforts toward the good and the morally right or necessary, not by rash or overconfident behaviour. Therefore, professional training institutions need to develop a broad ethical training curriculum that cultivates clear thinking, and careful and collective considerations that lead people towards exercising PMC in their day-to-day managerial routines. The key questions worth considering should include: what are the most important elements in the development of ethical behaviour? How can we develop ethical behaviours and moral agencies outside spirituality (McGhee & Grant, 2008)? We should question religiosity, which has been found not to result in ethical behaviour without the mediation of conscience (Sulaiman et al., 2021a, 2021b). This is where a carefully planned and taught national values system comes into play.

Under the current global challenges and the critical stage of Ghana's development (69 years of post-independence self-rule), it needs innovative educational

curricula that will develop the critical human capital relevant for its socio-economic development. The ongoing implementation of the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030, the Free SHS policy, and associated curriculum and governance reforms represent Ghana's commitment to building a learning nation equipped for the demands of the 21st century. However, we contend that the success of the ESP will not only depend on sustained investment, effective decentralization, community engagement, relentless focus on learning outcomes and equity, but also its ability to shape character, instil a strong collective national identity, and produce citizens who uphold ethical values in their day-to-day dealings. As Ghana moves forward, the lessons of past reforms, both their successes and shortcomings, will be crucial in shaping a resilient, inclusive, and transformative education system for generations to come. A clear definition of goals and the expected outcomes of literate, skilled, but patriotic and ethical citizens should be crystallised; measurable indicators and an evaluation framework to assess the successful implementation of these educational policies should be established. There should be a universal commitment to avoid politicisation of education and a collective focus on the long-term human capital development needed by the country. The tertiary education system needs to produce critical and creative thinkers, problem solvers with logical thinking capabilities, and, more importantly, patriotic and ethically conscious graduates. We call for the development and inclusion of a critical moral and ethical curriculum built upon agreed national values at all levels of the educational system, capable of producing the "right" human capital needed for Ghana's development.

8. A Case for Critical Moral Education

Religious and moral education (RME) in Ghana has faced challenges and has therefore undergone many reforms since the post-colonial era. The colonial era Religious Instruction was removed by the Education Act of 1961, allowing school authorities to provide their own religious instructions to students whose parents did not object to religious education (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Subsequently, a common curriculum comprising the three main religions in Ghana (Christianity, Islam, and Indigenous African Religion) was developed in 1978 to give students an understanding of other religions and to promote tolerance and respect for other faiths. This change moved character education towards pluralism, tolerance, and respect for different religions in the subject called Cultural Studies during the 1987 Educational Reform (ibid., p.297). This course had problems with overload, and complaints from religious bodies led to a reintroduction of religious education (RE) as RME in 1998. Another educational reform in 2002 withdrew the RME from the curriculum, only to be brought back by executive decree following public outcry, which was led by religious leaders (Asare-Danso, 2012).

In a strongly pluralistic and religious society like Ghana, RE is highly valued. The key question should be: how do we use RE to train our citizenry to foster moral and ethical thinking and personal values of integrity, honesty, and collective

wellbeing? The authors agree with Addai-Mununkum (2014) that RME should be used as the platform to teach and promote common human values of care, compassion, integrity, and the welfare embedded in all the major religions against the titanic secular forces of individualism and widening inequalities. Teaching RE based on the surface facts and principles without allowing critical discourse on the morals and values that believe in a higher deity calls upon adherents would perpetuate the *status quo* arguments about which religion is right that heighten differences and lead to more conflicts in African societies.

We must teach and promote the cardinal African cultural value of *Ubuntu*, the centuries-old philosophy that emphasizes togetherness, communalism, interdependence, and sensitivity towards others (Venter, 2004). An Afrocentric philosophy of education that challenges the Western imposition of their individualistic culture is needed in developing citizens who value their African-ness and are trained in the *Ubuntu* way of life (ibid., p. 152). African countries' attempts at developing a critical education (Nkansah, 2021) should be rooted in these transcultural *Ubuntu* values of critical and moral thinking, and reflection on the impact of one's actions on societal harmony.

We need an Afrocentric, values-based, innovative educational curriculum in Ghana. Ginott (1972) sums this up in his compelling argument for institutions and teachers to focus on providing ethical and humane education, which challenges individualism. Here is the excerpt of his core argument:

"*Dear Teacher*: *I am a survivor of a concentration camp*. *My eyes saw what no man should witness*: *gas chambers built by learned engineers*. *Children poisoned by educated physicians*. *Infants killed by trained nurses*. *Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates*. *So*, *I am suspicious of education*. *My request is*: *help your students become human*. *Your efforts must never produce learned monsters*, *skilled psychopaths*, *educated Eichmanns*. *Reading*, *writing*, *and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane*." (ibid, p.121)

There is ample evidence in the academic literature about the benefits of spirituality instead of religion. In a literature review, McGhee & Grant (2008) present the following benefits: "greater kindness and fairness, increased awareness of other employees' needs, increased honesty and trust within organisations, higher incidences of organisational citizenship behaviour, more servant leadership behaviour, greater understanding of the ethical nature of business issues, and greater sensitivity to corporate social performance." The enormous benefits of workplace spirituality and the proven link between spirituality and workplace ethical behaviours call for a careful examination of the determinants of spirituality, which should be developed into moral education syllabi. Faced with ethical dilemmas, trained individuals can act with moral courage and do the right thing when their automatic self-regulation instinct mediated by acquired values, traits, and virtues is weighed against the self-regulatory "personal standards and the need for moral excellence" (Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007).

Kohlberg (1975) makes a compelling case that one cannot follow moral principles if they do not understand or believe in them. Moral principles are dictated by moral philosophy, which tells us what the ideal moral development looks like. Therefore, to engender ethical and moral culture, collective values must be developed through careful training, and effective organisational behaviour and monitoring mechanisms must be implemented at all levels of society. The author proposes the liberal or rational tradition of moral philosophy based on accepted universal principles of "adequate morality" instead of "rule-based conventional morality". Moral principles are predicated on the concepts of justice, central to which are the "demands of liberty, equality, and reciprocity." According to Kohlberg, the two alternatives that must be avoided are "indoctrinative preaching" and "values clarification approaches," which do not move people to the cognitive-developmental stage of reasoning.

Looking at Ghanaian moral education, attempts at moral training have followed the indoctrinative rule-based "character education" of teachers telling students "*dos and don'ts*" without a clear understanding of the cognitive development stages that require critical reasoning. We need a new, engaging character development and civic education program that would foster active dialogue, reasoning, self-awareness, self-reflection, self-evaluation, and self-control. This new and engaging moral education should incorporate Kohlberg's (1975) six stages of preconventional, conventional, post-conventional, autonomous, or principled levels of development. Educational programs should foster a sense of personal and national pride that would instinctively make citizens want to do the "right thing" and exhibit moral courage when faced with ethical dilemmas.

However, nationalist leaders face formidable challenges in constructing homogenous nations among such distinctively diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic groups in African nations. For instance, Ghana, with a population of around 35.5 million, is a highly multilingual developing nation with different ethnic groups. It has over 50 indigenous languages, even though only 11 are taught in schools and few are used on radio and television (Sadat & Kuwornu, 2017). The pedagogical foundation of nation-building in such a multi-ethnic and largely pluralistic religious society must clearly lay down spiritual and material foundations based on shared national values. Bereketeab (2020) contends that there should be a continuous renewal of the sociological and mechanistic processes at both the micro and macro levels to construct a national identity in nation-building. We therefore need to create national and organisational education, where the five empirically derived dimensions of ethical climate, namely: law and code, caring, instrumentalism, independence, and rules, are actively discussed (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

9. National Constitutional Provisions on Ethics

Articles **41** and **284** of the 1992/1996 Constitution of Ghana require that all Ghanaian citizens, among other things, promote the "*prestige and good name of*

Ghana" and "*contribute to the well-being of the community*." Trained professionals or public office holders are to avoid any conflict of interest in the execution of their duties. Practically, it is not the letter of the constitution that is the problem, but the lack of strong institutional structures and non-adherence by individuals, groups, professionals, government officials, and even the very agencies that are charged to implement them. It is interesting to note that there are no defined national values in the Ghanaian constitution. A word analysis of important keywords related to developing and promoting a national identity that fosters moral and ethical behaviour in the Constitution reveals startlingly low numbers (see Table 2).

Table 2. Analysis of promotion of national identity in the 1992/1996 constitution of Ghana.

Keywords (Derivatives)	Number of Occurrences	National value Promoted
Civic duties	0	Patriotism, Loyalty
Civic responsibilities	1	Patriotism, Equality
Courage	0	Honour, Integrity
Identity	0	Integrity, Patriotism
Patriotic (sm)	0	Patriotism, Loyalty
Responsibility (ies)	9 (11)	Patriotism, Self-control, Integrity
Values	3	Equality, Integrity

(**Source**: Author's analysis of the 1992/1996 Constitution of Ghana).

The above data show how little emphasis is placed on collective national identity that compels citizens to strive for national development. Contrarily, nations rise and develop when citizens are patriotic and uphold values that build their human and material capital for collective benefit. Since schools and professional institutions are in communities that make up a nation, they are the right places to develop patriotism and national values.

10. Moral and National Values for Development

According to Cam (2016), moral education takes many forms, including "rules of conduct, everyday behaviour management, religious instruction, and character-building activities." Moral education should have ethical behaviour or character development as the goals. Values are desirable traits in a person's behaviour and attitude. They are influenced by family, friends, teachers, coaches, and society. Each person has their own value system, which guides daily decision-making. Literature shows that the ethical decision-making process is influenced by two factors, namely: variables associated with the individual decision maker and those that inform the situation under which the decision is being made (Ford & Richardson, 1994).

National values are beliefs of a nation that guide the actions and behaviours of

its citizens. It is a personal measure of worth, such as how important an individual considers certain things: beliefs, principles, or the ideas people attach to things based on their sense of values. From its long historic roots, Ghanaians emphasize communal values such as family, respect for the elderly, honouring traditional rulers, dignity, and proper social conduct. The individual's conduct has an impact on the entire family name, social group, and community; therefore, family obligations take precedence in Ghana. The exercise of these values is influenced by the behaviour of trainers and role models, such as political and civic leaders. A study in Indonesia showed how moral character education in a multicultural country could be adversely hampered by negative and corrupt behaviour of political actors, government officials, regional leaders, and teachers through tribal, religious, race, and class politicization (Komariah et al., 2020). Values are often manifested in various ways for the individual, societal growth, and development. An individual manifests values by being different no matter what others may be doing. For instance, a student who believes in honesty will vehemently refuse to cheat in an examination. Societal manifestation of values means dictating and influencing group behaviours and interactions through enforcing principles and standards which lead to efficiency and higher productivity, such as time consciousness, honesty, discipline, etc. Clarification, training, and demonstration of national values help individuals to recognize their own values and affirm them publicly.

11. Instruments for Building National Values

11.1. Lessons from the National Anthem

The authors contend that we need to use various cultural and historical achievements, lessons, artefacts, and emblems such as the national anthem as instruments to develop a national value system and identity charter. The official lyrics of the Ghanaian national anthem, "*God Bless Our Homeland Ghana*," read as follows:

God bless *our homeland Ghana*
And make our nation great and strong,
Bold *to defend forever*
The cause of Freedom and of Right,
Fill our hearts with ***true humility***,
Make us cherish ***fearless honesty***,
And help us to resist oppressors' rule
With all our will and might forevermore.
Hail *to thy name*, *O Ghana*,
To thee we make our solemn vow:
Steadfast to build together
A nation strong in ***Unity***.
With our gifts of mind and strength of arm,
Whether night or day, *in the midst of a storm*,
In every need, *whate'er the call may be*,
To ***serve*** *thee*, *Ghana*, *now and forevermore*.

Raise *high the* ***flag*** *of Ghana*
and one with Africa's advance;
Black star of hope and honor
To all who thirst for liberty,
Where the banner of Ghana freely flies,
May the way to freedom truly lie;
Arise, *arise*, *O sons of Ghana land*,
And under ***God*** *march on forevermore*!
Composed by Dr. Philip Gbeho and adopted in 1957.

A careful textual analysis of this anthem reveals important national values, which, if carefully taught and assimilated by the citizenry, could transform how people think, feel, and behave in their day-to-day interactions. There is a need for the wider Ghanaian citizenry to understand and reflect on the importance of the national anthem and emblems in the flag for nation-building. Just knowing and reciting the anthem on a few occasions is not enough to develop proud patriotic citizens who understand what it means to be a Ghanaian and practise daily the values enshrined in the anthem. Indeed, the question is *what is the significance of the national anthem to the citizens of the country*?

a) Develop Patriotism

The first stanza of the national anthem asks the citizenry to call on God's blessing for the country ("*God bless our homeland Ghana*") and to promote national development above all else ("*make our nation great and strong*"). It promotes values such as conscious determination and humility ("*fill our hearts with true humility*") and courage and honesty ("*make us cherish fearless honesty*"). These are ethical values that can be developed from religious and moral education. The national anthem teaches Ghanaians to develop selfless devotion to nation building, work to unite the citizenry, and ignite patriotism for national progress.

b) Allegiance to Flag

The second stanza calls for allegiance to the national flag ("*thee we make our solemn vow*"), collective efforts ("*build together*"), using our knowledge and power ("*our gifts of mind and strength of arm*"), being committed and patriotic to the nation ("*night or day*, *in the midst of storm*") and providing selfless service ("*serve thee*, *Ghana*, *now and for evermore*"). These are values critical for equitable nation building. The realisation of these values is predicated on unity, a strong sense of belonging to the nation, and the understanding that everyone's needs are being catered for by the government and the collective society.

c) Demonstrate National Pride

The third stanza calls for citizens to show national pride ("*raise high the flag of Ghana*"), promote the Pan-African dream ("*one with Africa advance*"), fight for self-determination and territorial integrity ("*arise*, *arise*, *O sons of Ghana land*"), and acknowledge the nation's divine allegiance ("*and under God march on for evermore*!"). These values are critical for developing a strong national identity, a collective focus on African development, and an acknowledgment that Ghana

honors God's divine sovereignty and guidance in the nation's future direction and growth. However, only the first stanza is sung on national occasions and gatherings, and the majority of citizens do not know the other stanzas of the anthem.

11.2. The National Pledge: A Call to Noble Virtues

Another important artifact that can contribute to the development of a national values system is the national pledge recited in schools:

"*I promise on my honour to be faithful and loyal to Ghana, my motherland.*

I pledge myself to the service of Ghana with all my strength and with all my heart.

I promise to hold in high esteem our heritage won for us through the blood and toil of our fathers, and

I pledge myself in all things to uphold and defend the good name of Ghana. So, help me God!

Composed by Dr. Philip Gbeho.

Like the national anthem, the pledge highlights important national values, which, if carefully inculcated into the national education and training curricula in ways that develop cognitive understanding of its message, would lead to patriotic citizens, who would wholeheartedly serve the country in different capacities. The pledge talks about honour, faithfulness, and loyalty to the motherland. It calls for selfless dedication to hard work, integrity, respect for the sacrifices of our forefathers, and a commitment to always defend the nation. Again, the pledge clearly acknowledges the nation's belief in God and calls on citizens to draw on divine help in fulfilling their national duties. This belief in God permeates every facet of the nation's life, including induction of leaders, national gatherings, giving testimony under oath, marriage ceremonies, weekly religious worship, etc.

Sadly, despite the lofty patriotic rhetoric in the national artefacts and high levels of religiosity in Ghana, there is a very low level of demonstration of genuine love for the country and a lack of selfless devotion to its holistic development. Like what Komariah et al. (2020) reported in Indonesia, in Ghana (as well as in most African nations), national values are not given primary attention by leaders. Therefore, personal interests go unchallenged, leading to corrupt practices by those supposed to be role models and champions of national integrity and collective development. To be patriotic and nationalistic, there is a need to make conscious efforts to support the well-being of the country by positioning it to be great and strong. Simply put, patriotism toward a nation should be judged by the citizens' truthful actions and not their words.

There is an imperativeness to remind and hold all Ghanaian citizens, professionals, and public officers accountable to the values in the national anthem and pledge, and to the obligations of their declared oath of office. Currently, there are no clearly defined national values nor any effective mechanisms to keep ethical values in the consciences and consciousness of the Ghanaian citizenry, in particular, public officials who must make decisions that affect the nation and the wel-

fare of their fellow citizens. It is necessary that the country develop a national identity charter, train the citizenry in how to uphold national values, and, instead of hanging presidential portraits in offices, disseminate the national charter in all places of work and learning across the nation to constantly remind and prick everyone's conscience to their ethical and moral obligations. The charter should make it clear that all selfish acts are harmful to the national interest and would be severely punished.

11.3. Sociological Impact of Religious Values on Public Integrity and Work Ethics

It is evident from the above that the national emblems acknowledge and invoke "divine blessings" on the nation. However, in a pluralistic society, the sociological impact of shared beliefs, religious and moral values needs to be carefully crafted, projected, and the citizenry taught how to practice these positive values for the nation to experience the desired greatness, growth, and vitality. The nation cannot become great and strong if some citizens in responsible positions are taking "double salaries", leaders take multiple ex-gratias, use public resources extravagantly and for personal gain, approve shoddy works, sell public assets for personal benefit through proxies, and forge documents at the expense of the nation. How can a country be successful when individuals paid double salaries consider it as a top-up, or public officers collect bribes to do the work they are paid for, managers bloat payrolls with ghost workers, inflate project costs several times, and receive the kickbacks?

In the advanced world, it is difficult for such things to happen because there are functioning regulatory systems and checks, a "country first mentality," and deep pride in service to fellow citizens. As discussed, empirical evidence shows that mere religious beliefs do not translate into ethical behaviours and moral decision making (Sulaiman et al., 2021a, 2021b). It must therefore be emphasised that just promoting religious practices and education is not sufficient in developing national values and ethical behaviours, as Ghana and, for that matter, all African countries are bursting with religious activities and practices, while corruption remains endemic. Instead, there is a need for carefully designed cognitive engagement programmes that help citizens develop a psychodynamic understanding of their personality and how their practice of faith should be applied in modulating their unconscious tendencies in everyday life and decision-making processes. Citizens need to understand the consequences of yielding to their *id*'s instinctual drives and the consequent actions on others in society. The populace needs to be taught the collective principles that bring societal progress, despite the type of creed they practice or their belief system. A revision of RME that would produce honest, disciplined, and patriotic citizens who understand the value of hard work, collective well-being, and putting country first is imperative.

11.4. Guidance and Counselling

Allegations, acts of corruption, tragic accidents due to shoddy constructions, and

breaches in health and safety regulations that have seared our conscience in the "get-rich-quick" African societies abound. Many citizens are no longer selfless but have developed voracious selfish appetites to grab everything that comes their way that belongs to their nation. In Ghana, this unpatriotic behaviour stems from an ingrained Ghanaian Akan's traditional self-interest syndrome that says: "*aban adeɛ sei a, egu ɛpo mu*" (meaning if the property of the government spoils, it falls into the sea). This notion sees the government and, by extension, companies as "distant and foreign entities" that must be exploited at every opportunity; therefore, some workers in both public and private companies do not have any sense of ownership or accountability. They are not "privileged patriots," who are given opportunities to serve their nation and its people, but "privileged plunderers," who enrich themselves. Sadly, trained professionals: engineers, medics, technocrats, scientists, academics, and students in higher institutions cannot escape blame for these societal failings. Despite the high levels of education and knowledge of professional codes of ethics, personal and partisan interests have relegated patriotism and national welfare to the background.

Ghana needs professional education that places national values of "country first," selfless dedication to duties, and the solemn upholding of professional standards and ethics above all personal interests. Reviving and introducing effective moral education, ethics, and guidance and counselling (G&C) curriculum built upon identified national values, professional standards of practice, and understanding of self would play key roles in the training of the needed skilled people for national development. Guidance and counselling, when effectively combined with skills training, contribute to shaping the whole person's development and equipping the individual with problem-solving skills (Nkechi et al., 2016). G&C units are therefore needed in all education and training establishments to provide both preventive and developmental guidance as well as supportive and remedial interventions that would ensure that young people emerging into the general society are well equipped with confidence, understanding of their sense of place, and are ready to make positive contributions to national life. Such G&C programs should progressively develop demonstrable, age-appropriate national values training from the early years through to the tertiary and professional levels. The singing of the national anthem and recital of the pledge should become mandatory in all educational and training establishments across the nation, as repeating them will challenge and prick the conscious and subconscious minds of the citizenry regarding their obligations to nation-building.

12. Disastrous Impacts of Failures in Professional Practice

Unethical practices by engineering, medical, and legal professionals pose significant risks to individuals, communities, and institutions in Ghana. These practices—ranging from shoddy construction works, medical negligence, corruption, and informal payments in healthcare, judicial corruption, abuse of power, and inefficiency in the legal system—undermine public trust, compromise service deliv-

ery, and perpetuate social and economic inequalities. Professional groups like medics and lawyers, by virtue of the direct impact of their work on the freedoms, health, and safety of citizens, have ethical and societal obligations that must be taken seriously.

For example, the Ghanaian healthcare system, like many in low- and middle-income countries, is characterized by complex interactions among patients, providers, payers, suppliers, and policymakers. This complexity creates multiple opportunities for unethical conduct and corruption at all organizational levels, from government agencies to frontline service delivery (Glynn, 2022). Medical negligence and malpractice are defined broadly as failure to provide the expected standard of care, which results in patient harm, injury, or death. These include petty corruption and informal unofficial payments or bribes for services that should be free or low-cost, often to expedite care or receive preferential treatment; fraudulent billing and claims, theft and diversion of resources, absenteeism from public duties to engage in private practice, improper financial relationships and conflict of interest, where health workers refer patients to private labs or pharmacies for profit, or collusion with suppliers (Ayanore et al., 2023).

Likewise, the legal system in Ghana, while grounded in a hybrid of common law, customary law, and constitutional provisions, faces persistent challenges related to unethical conduct among legal professionals and judicial officers. These include bribery and corruption, in which judges and court staff accept inducements to influence case outcomes, and abuse of judicial power through bias, malice, or personal animus influencing judicial decisions. Others include political interference through executive influence over judicial appointments and decisions that undermine independence, inefficiency and case backlogs caused by bureaucratic delays that create opportunities for rent-seeking and extortion, access barriers and discrimination in justice through high costs, bias against vulnerable groups, and lack of transparency in legal processes (Ashantibiz, 2024; Asunka, 2025).

Although not limited to, unethical professional conduct in the highlighted fields can lead to disastrous consequences for many people and the individuals directly involved. We provide illustrative examples to emphasize the need for national ethical values and standards in all aspects of societal life. These examples should cause every professional to consider their motives and the implications and impact of their work decisions.

a) The Melcom Supermarket Building Collapse

In Ghana, a six-storey Melcom Supermarket building collapsed at Achimota, a suburb of Accra, in the early morning of November 7, 2012, just at the opening hours, resulting in 81 casualties: 14 fatalities and 67 people sustaining various degrees of injuries (BBC News Report, 2012). Later, the accident investigations concluded that the building had no construction permit. This was a major indictment of the internal regulatory building controls and processes, and a clear demonstration of the failure of engineering and regulatory leadership. This highlighted the

importance of adhering to professional standards and practices in nation-building to keep the public safe.

b) Flooding Disaster Due to Poor Drainage

Likewise, Accra, the Ghanaian capital, experiences annual floods that are mainly attributed to failures in enforcing statutory engineering and construction regulations. The professionals entrusted with city planning, technical design, award of contracts, building regulations, and the enforcement authorities have failed in their statutory duties, allowing residents to build in low-lying areas that are susceptible to repeated flooding. There are also constructions of poor and open drainage systems that are regularly blocked by refuse dumped by residents due to poor waste management. On June 3, 2015, an explosion and a fire outbreak occurred at a Goil Petrol Station, near the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange in the downtown area of Accra, which killed over 250 people, who were sheltering from flooding due to prolonged heavy rainfall. This remains one of Ghana's worst urban engineering and planning failures, showing how infrastructural neglect can amplify natural hazards. The accident investigation revealed petroleum leakage from the petrol storage tank at the petrol station was ignited by a cigarette butt, and the fire was carried by the floodwater. Among others, the report recommended dredging of drains and the Odaw River, a ban on the use of plastic carrier bags, and equipping disaster managers with requisite tools. Unfortunately, 10 years on, most of the recommendations have not been implemented. The question worth answering is: Are the authorities waiting for another disaster before taking action? The lack of ethically trained leaders leads to these kinds of predictable engineering failures with catastrophic human costs.

c) Rana Plaza-Style Building Collapses (in Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania)

On April 24, 2013, the Rana Plaza, an eight-story structure with illegal floors, built on poor soil and containing vibrating heavy machinery, collapsed just outside Dhaka in Bangladesh, killing over 1100 garment workers and leaving nearly 2600 more with life-long debilitating injuries. Despite obvious structural defects, thousands of workers were ordered by their garment manufacturing owners to work in the cracked building, which eventually collapsed. Similar building collapses have occurred in other African countries with fatal consequences. In Nigeria, the lack of a structural engineer was a reason given for the collapse of the Synagogue Church of All Nations that left 115 people dead on 12th of September 2014 (Mackay, 2016; Mnia et al., 2018). Similarly, on 17th of November 2024, the collapse of a four-story building in Kariakoo, the bustling commercial hub of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, resulted in the deaths of 29 people. Mackay (2016) reported that after the collapse of a six-storey residential building in Nairobi, Kenya, which claimed the lives of 21 people, the Deputy Governor of Nairobi said seventy percent of buildings in the country are erected without proper certification and highlighted engineering ethics as a problem in Africa.

d) Systematic Review of Medical Malpractice Cases

A 2022 systematic content analysis of Ghanaian medical malpractice case law identified nine landmark cases decided by courts or quasi-judicial bodies, span-

ning from 1962 to 2018 (Ghana Law Hub, 2025). The majority (seven out of nine) involved negligence, with others concerning access to medical records and refusal to treat. The most frequently implicated specialties were obstetrics and gynaecology, surgery, and paediatrics. A prominent recent case of medical malpractice led an Accra High Court to award GHC 3 million in damages to Mohammed Mustapha, whose wife died following a caesarean section at the Ridge Hospital. The court found that the hospital's failure to administer a critical post-surgical drug (prophylactic anticoagulant) constituted negligence, directly contributing to the patient's death. Several other cases, including patients denied treatment unless cash was paid, leading to death, childbirth negligence that resulted in the preventable death of a young woman, and the "missing babies" scandal—where several infants pronounced stillborn were unaccounted for at the Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi—reveal recurring patterns of negligence, unauthorized practice, refusal to treat, and denial of access to medical records. Studies show that patients affected by negligence face a 20% higher risk of prolonged hospitalization, complications, or death compared to those not exposed to negligent care (Glynn, 2022).

e) "Medical Kalabule"-Unethical Conduct at Ridge & Korle Bu Hospitals, Accra

In March 2026, the Ministry of Health in Ghana received the final report of an investigative committee tasked with probing allegations of unethical conduct levelled against staff of two top hospitals: the Greater Accra Regional Hospital and Korle Bu Teaching Hospital (Adu-Owusu, 2026). The committee reported acceptance of money by a medical officer directly from a patient as payment for a surgical item in contravention of the medical code of conduct, improper payment in foreign currency to a private account, and systemic supply chain weaknesses in the hospitals that force patients to purchase items from private suppliers, thereby exposing them to financial and ethical risks. To address the identified gaps, the committee proposed a series of reforms, including strengthening complaint management systems within hospitals, introducing orientation programmes on legal and ethical standards for medical staff, and improving documentation of neurosurgical procedures and implants.

f) Judicial Corruption: The Anas Exposé and Its Aftermath

In 2015, a Ghanaian investigative journalist, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, released a landmark exposé revealing widespread bribery and misconduct among over 34 judges and 180 judicial staff. The footage showed judges accepting bribes in cash, livestock, and foodstuffs in exchange for favourable rulings, including the acquittal of criminals and the manipulation of land cases (Egyir, 2024; Atigah, 2024). The scandal led to the suspension and removal of several judges, but the damage to public trust was profound and enduring.

g) High-Profile Judicial Controversies: Anas vs. Ken Agyapong and Justice Kulendi's Dissent

The defamation case between Anas and the influential politician, Kennedy

Agyapong, highlighted further concerns about judicial bias and abuse of power. In 2018, Anas Aremeyaw Anas filed a defamation action at the High Court against Kennedy Agyapong, praying for damages worth 25 million cedis for slanderous comments made against him. The judge, Justice Baah, a High Court judge who heard the case in 2023, ruled that Anas was not entitled to his claims and reliefs and accordingly, against judicial impartiality, went on to describe the plaintiff as a blackmailer, extortionist, investigative terrorist (Spyda, 2025). Dissatisfied with the judgment, Anas filed a "*certiorari*" (a court order issued by a superior court to a lower court, requiring them to deliver the record of a case for judicial review) at the Supreme Court of Ghana. In a 2024 Supreme Court ruling heard by five judges, three judges dismissed the plaintiff's case that the High Court judge acted with actuated bias against him. One other judge concurred with the three but for different reasons. However, Justice Emmanuel Kulendi reportedly issued a scathing dissent, accusing the trial judge of being "actuated by ill will and malice" and of using "toxic, caustic, and unsavoury descriptions" of Anas, the plaintiff, a conduct he described as a "violent abuse of judicial power" that could deter citizens from seeking legal remedies. Anas subsequently filed a similar case for damages of up to 30 million dollars on the grounds of five counts of defamation made by the same Kennedy Agyapong in a New Jersey court in the United States. It is interesting to note that the 8-member jury and the Court upheld all counts but awarded a lower damage of 18 million dollars. This is a case that highlights how without transparent and strong ethical code, institutions tend to protect their own, and the powerful work against the powerless in society.

13. Expected Ethical Practices

It is undoubted that people, especially individuals and professionals entrusted with societal responsibilities, face wide-ranging ethical challenges in their private lives and in the discharge of their duties. As discussed, there is always going to be a battle between a person's *id*, *ego*, and *superego* when it comes to ethical dilemmas. The human tendency is to default to self-interest instead of defending the collective interest. Fulfilling this innate human self-interest at the expense of doing what is right necessitates the clear definition of accepted group or societal norms, the systematic training and reminder of ethical and moral values, and the devastating consequences of ethical failures. All professional fields, apart from technical competencies and standard operational practice, need to carefully address unethical behaviours related to operational misconduct such as having inappropriate relationships with clients, consultants, competitors, and contractors, and not ensuring legal compliance by clients, colleagues, and others. Behaviours that undermine professional judgement and impartiality, such as taking bribes and kickbacks, including accepting gifts, meals, services, and entertainments, trading confidential or proprietary information, misappropriation of employer's assets, conflicts of interest, and engaging in outside employment activities (referred to as "moonlighting"), which impact commitment and quality delivery, must be con-

fronted.

To address these unethical dilemmas, many professions and institutions have developed their own value systems. For instance, in Ghana, growing professionalism gave rise to the development of two engineering societies that license engineering practitioners. These are the Ghana Institution of Engineering (GhIE), established in 1968, and the Institution of Incorporated Engineers (IIE) in 1986, which together form the Engineering Council under Act 819. Professional ethics are principles that govern the behavior of a person or group in a business environment. Like values, professional ethics provide rules of engagement with people and institutions. Demonstrations of professional ethics include strong character, dedication, punctuality, reliability, high productivity, high quality of work, cooperation, and efficient use of work resources. The professional and ethical considerations cover a broad range of topics such as duty of care, operational boundaries, maintaining technical standards, practicing within an ethical framework, end-of-life care, self-appraisal and self-care, teaching and mentorship, and life-long learning.

For example, the Volta River Authority's corporate values statement is based on accountability, commitment, trust, integrity, and teamwork (acronym "ACT IT"), which are used in staff annual evaluations and appraisals. Staff continuous development and growth targets are set based upon identified challenges or shortfalls with respect to the corporate values. This is a worthy example, as usually organisational appraisals largely focus on economic achievements that do not include the important contributions of corporate culture, moral, and ethical behaviours in corporate success. The above examples emphasise the importance of ethical, moral, and spiritual values education and practice in national development and rejuvenation.

14. Benefits of Upholding National Ethical Values—Illustrative Examples

a) It is well known that honest people receive favour from others

For instance, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi MP, President of the Inkatha Freedom Party, South Africa, in a tribute to the late President Nelson Madiba Mandela, said:

"*Let us also remember his honesty. Mandela's old-style honesty was a value that my generation admired. I respected him for an admission he made in April 2002. He said,* \" *We have used every ammunition to destroy Buthelezi and we failed. He is still there. He is a formidable survivor. We cannot ignore him.*\" *That admission made many in his organization unhappy. But that was the kind of brutal frankness that positioned Mandela as a leader among his peers. Even as a Head of State, his honesty drove him to make admissions that few others at the helm of their country would dare... He was a man of truth*" (Buthelezi, 2013).

b) Acts of honesty can raise a person's position in society

For example, Sergeant Raed Qaid Abdulrahim, an officer from the Bur Dubai

Police Station, was promoted for his honesty in turning down bribes offered by a wanted criminal. He rejected offers of Dh50,000, a luxury car, an expensive watch, and Dh20,000 monthly payments in exchange for the release of a wanted cyber-criminal he had arrested. At the promotion ceremony, the officer expressed that the promotion was a "badge of honour" and an incentive for more effort, dedication, and sincerity to work" (Staff Writer, 2020).

c) Manifesting national values such as honesty, integrity, loyalty, courage, reliability, respect, and godliness brings honour, favour, rewards, and recognition

In Ghana, Constable Prince Fordjour, a young police officer, was heavily rewarded after he found and returned an amount of GHC 2000 that was mistakenly left at an automatic teller machine. At the award ceremony at the Ghana Police Headquarters on July 16, 2021, Constable Fordjour was rewarded with a cash prize of GHC 11,000 and other souvenirs for his integrity (Quist, 2021). Developing ethical values in the citizenry is a government and educational leaders' responsibility that must be taken seriously because of the damaging impact of unethical behaviours of professionals and those entrusted with responsibilities. On the contrary, as shown above, unethical professional behaviours can lead to disastrous consequences with incalculable costs to life and society.

15. Recommendations

There is an urgent need for Ghana and other African countries to focus government and institutional attention on tackling endemic unethical and harmful behaviours that permeate all levels of society. In addition to reviewing the penal sentencing structure to deter corrupt practices and strengthening the judicial systems to expedite the dispensation of justice, we propose comprehensive short- and long-term strategies to address the perennial problems of lack of patriotism and self-interest that contribute to acts of economic damage to both organisations and national development. These strategies require strong government leadership, institutional collaboration, and civic education on the benefits of developing individual moral characters and collective humane and ethical value systems that address the harm caused by self-centred and unethical decision-making behaviours.

15.1. Short Term Strategies

In the short term, the following strategies are recommended to address unethical behaviour and develop positive moral and national values in Ghanaian society.

a) Education and Training

Moral and ethical education curriculum based on the agreed national values charter should be taught across the nation. All professional bodies should follow the example of the Engineering Council, 2011 (Act 819), to license all qualified practitioners and firms. The government and the professional bodies should educate their members and the public to only engage with licensed practitioners. All professional groupings must be trained to appreciate the moral and societal im-

pact of failures in their work and pledge to faithfully serve society by upholding professional standards while paying attention to the national welfare and progress agenda. Professional bodies and employers must ensure continuous professional development by offering regular training and further education that update technical know-how, encourage the sharing of experiences, and institute rewards and recognition systems that promote responsible behaviours.

b) Whistleblowing

All organisations, institutions, and professional bodies, including the Ghana Institute of Engineers, should institute whistleblowing policies and encourage members and the public to report any misconducts for appropriate disciplinary actions to be taken against errant members. Primarily, all professionals have an overriding duty to openly communicate and report any possible risks to clients or employers failing to follow the professional's directions. For engineers, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action against the person or have their license revoked, even if the incident does not result in loss of life or damage to health. This requirement may pose an ethical dilemma between the engineer's duty to a client and/or employer versus upholding statutory professional standards. Consequently, whistleblowing policies must be promoted and strengthened in workplaces to encourage prompt reporting for the necessary actions to avert negative impacts.

c) Appraisal of Professional Practice

A clear professional code of practice needs to be enforced in all fields, with periodic reflections, reviews, and evaluation required for each practitioner to maintain their operational licences. Engineers (or other professionals) must periodically be asked to demonstrate and show evidence of their personal efforts at maintaining professional standards in the proper discharge of their technical duties and adherence to common core ethical professionalism rooted in honesty, integrity, modesty, temperance, fortitude, and patriotism to the nation.

15.2. Medium- to Long-Term Strategies

The following strategies are outlined for national stakeholders' dialogue and engagement to identify common national values, establish a national identity charter, and improve professional practice and ethical behaviours in public life and collective development. Achieving these ethical behaviours for harmonious living will enhance the country's recognition within the Pan-African and global community of nations.

a) Develop a national identity charter

Based on the values enshrined in the important national artefacts discussed above, e.g., the national anthem and pledge, Ghana needs to develop a unified and broadly accepted national identity charter and value system that should be taught in all educational establishments and promoted at all levels of society.

b) Civic education curriculum

A presidential commission is needed to develop a comprehensive civic and moral education curriculum that places integrity, patriotism, devotion, and com-

mitment to serve the nation as the prime responsibility of every citizen. The curriculum should ensure the Ghanaian citizenry know and practice their civic responsibilities, and insist that professionals in all fields are guided by identified national values and ethical principles implied in Articles 41 and 284 of the 1992 constitution. The curriculum should be rooted in a clear understanding of the nation's history and developmental aspirations. It should include training in emotional intelligence, transactional analysis, and relational enrichment. This education should train citizens on how to respond when they are faced with unethical demands from any professional practitioner.

c) Review the religious and moral education curriculum

A new RME curriculum that focuses on the spiritual, ethical, and moral values espoused by the main religions practiced in the country is needed in schools. Although Ghana, and Africa for that matter, are multicultural and pluralistic religious societies, empirical evidence suggests that deeply engrained religious beliefs themselves do not lead to ethical decision-making; instead, it is the cognitive understanding and practice of the values taught by these religions and their consequences, mediated by conscience, that make a positive contribution to ethical decision-making in public life.

d) Establish Guidance and Counselling units

The critical roles of G&C, including emphasis on lifelong learning and active employment for all citizens, are imperative for national human capital development (Sweet, 2001). Each school and workplace needs to set up counselling desks that help students and employees to share and look at ethical problems from new perspectives that allow them to face and deal with problems in better ways. Counselling or mentoring schemes in the workplace are ways that organisations demonstrate care and welfare for employees.

e) Review leadership and teacher training programs

Nationwide leadership and teacher training programmes need to inculcate strong national and ethical values into the thinking of leaders and teachers, who have the national responsibility for leading and training young people in the country. Organisational managers and supervisors need training in basic coaching and counselling skills in ethical decision-making models (Fichter, 2018).

f) Review institutional values and codes of ethics

All institutions need to review their value systems and code of ethics to ensure they incorporate national values, appraise and monitor their implementation as part of their reporting systems. There is a need to train organisational leaders about humane and ethical behaviours that lead to transformation in organisational culture. Ethical values of honesty, courage, fairness, accountability, and patience are some of the workplace ethics that leaders and followers need to practice (Tripathy, 2019). These have been found to motivate employees, lead to satisfaction, and promote value-based organisational culture that emphasizes self-governance, encourages informal experiential learning, and ensures "consistency between policies and actions" (Fichter, 2018). Organisational leaders must model moral agency to encourage others to do the same in the best interests of all stake-

holders (Cherkowski et al., 2015).

16. Conclusions

Several determinants influence ethical behaviours in societies and nation-states (Victor & Cullen, 1988). We need a comprehensive and concerted approach to building the national moral and ethical values system in Ghana that would improve patriotism, honesty, and commitment to national development. Unfortunately, Ghana has a poor global corruption perception index (below 50 percent), which has not significantly improved in the past five years (Adonu, 2025; Transparency International, 2025). Recent reports indicate that Ghana loses about USD$3 billion annually to corruption (Agambila, 2025). It is undeniable that corruption slows down growth, particularly in countries suffering from a weak rule of law and inefficient governments (Méon & Sekkat, 2005). Increasing perceptions of corruption lead to disaffection, unrest, and have the potential for lawlessness and conflicts that disrupt peaceful and harmonious environments crucial for development. Although considered a peaceful country in West Africa, Ghana has declined three places in the latest Global Peace Index, marking a continued decline from its position as Africa's second most peaceful country just four years ago (Anyetei, 2025). It ranks 61st worldwide and 7th in Africa according to recent data from the Institute for Economics and Peace (Global Peace Index, 2025). Therefore, if Ghana wants to realize its middle-income aspirations, reviving and improving ethical behaviour based on identified national values and moral education that create a sense of equity and belonging in the citizenry at all levels of society is indispensable for peaceful nation-building.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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