

Improving National Values, Professional Practice, and Ethics.

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Abstract

Over the years concerns over unethical conduct within the Ghanaian society in general and the engineering profession, in particular, have led to the resurgence of the debate on the need, and how to improve national values and ethics in professional practice. Although, there are national and organizational systems and structures in place aimed at preventing or mitigating the effects of unethical behaviours such as bribery, corruption, substandard work, misuse of national resources and confidential information in public service organizations, these societal ills persist. There is therefore an urgent need to examine the underlying factors and root causes of such development-limiting tendencies, and help institutions, trainees, entrusted officials and professionals to uphold standards and ethical values in their execution of duties. Referring to the central theme of the Ghanaian national anthem, “God bless our homeland,” this paper empirically examines key lessons that can be drawn in advocating for overhauling the various educational curricula to focus on developing strong moral and nationalistic values in professional training and practice. Conceptually, the paper highlights how humane and godly values can be integrated into the entire educational system, professional standards, the engineer's codes of practice, wider organisational culture and national consciousness. Key challenges and actionable recommendations are put forward for consideration by institutional leaders and policy makers to help realise the sacred ideals of the national anthem.

Keywords: National values, morality, ethics, career guidance and counselling, education curricula

Introduction

Education undoubtedly plays many critical roles in any society. It is seen as one of the important public services, particularly in the developing world as it promotes national integration (Onuoha, 1975); it provides access to knowledge, improves national socio-economic wellbeing and it is a source of competitive advantage in the increasingly globalised world (Poku *et. al.*, 2013). For these to be achieved effectively, there should be clearly defined an understanding of the value system the nation is built upon. These values are therefore cultivated in the citizenry, as they individually and collectively work towards building a just, humane and prosperous society that works for all.

National Values and Identity

There are different interpretations of the concept of values, however the axiological definition of value, which is predicated on the prevailing spiritual culture, and indicates the existence of different human needs and feelings, and provide a basis for the individual's assessment of the events taking place around them is referred in this paper (Valijonovna and Kizi, 2022). According to the authors, although the meaning and significance of value change with time and depends on the content, "value can be divided into logical, ethical, aesthetic and objective." Values can also be divided into 'national and universal,' and 'class or religious.' It depends on age, professional characteristics, place in society, the life of the nation and the nature of the society. There are universal values such as dignity, honour, honesty, self-control and equality that are part of national values.

National values play critical roles in any country's development and its resilience in time of adversity (Komariah *et. al.*, 2020). Valijonovna and Kizi (2022) further assert that national values are a philosophical concept that expresses the specific features, characteristics and signs of each nation, and represents the contribution to the national cultural heritage formed in the process of its social development. They 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." (p.17).

This study proposes the development of a strong 'national identity' and value system in Ghana that would contribute to ethical behaviours using the key national emblems and artefacts that engender national and self-pride, patriotic feelings, and deep respect for our national forerunners, who sacrificed their lives for the freedom and the benefits we enjoy today. This national identity and value system would have to be embedded into the educational and training curricula at all levels. We discuss the effective ways to cultivate these values to achieve the transformative power of education in harmonious nation-building amongst the diverse ethnic groupings of the nation. How could the impact of such national, moral and ethical values be measured in educational establishments, monitored in professional practice and the wider society?

The paper examines the common uniting national values based on the widely accepted

Ghanaian national artefacts (such as the national anthem and pledge), the moral and religious demography of the nation, which if, the broad and common spiritual principles are promoted

could transform the national consciousness and identity to engender positive behaviours that builds a nation. The authors posit that there is an urgent need to define and clearly articulate a set of common national, moral and ethical values into a 'national identity' charter based on the nation's centuries of traditional and communal responsibility values akin to the National Pledge that should be taught throughout the educational system and practiced by all sections of the Ghanaian society including government, the public and private sectors. The theoretical foundations, practical dimensions and challenges of ethical professional practice are discussed. Recommendations for a vigorous and overdue discourse between the wider public, institutional leaders, academics and policy makers towards developing a collective National Identity Charter (NIC) are proposed.

This national identity code of values, behaviour and practice, when agreed should be progressively taught from preschool to tertiary and professional institutional levels. A mindset of communal values that promotes and call for the best self of citizens is proposed to address the damaging and retrogressive individual self-interest mindsets that currently permeates the Ghanaian educational system and society. The use of various instrumentalities including developing a clear NIC, which promotes national values, reviewing Religious and Moral Education (RME) curriculum, Leadership and Teacher Training programmes, Codes of Practice of Professional Organisations and establishing Guidance and Counselling Units (GCU) have been proposed in the development of high performing and morally ethical patriots, who work for the betterment of the nation. Case studies demonstrating the damaging effects of unethical professional behaviours and the positive motivating effects of individual acts of moral courage have been discussed to highlight the need for displaying exemplary ethical behaviours and national values. There is an urgent need for comprehensive approach in the promotion of national and ethical values; transforming the mindset of engineers and allied professionals toward displaying genuine patriotic and ethical values in the effective performance of their sacred operational responsibilities for national development.

Role of Education in Nation Building

From a conceptual and theoretical analysis, Bereketiab (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 pursuant, which not only affects the individual and his family network in the African context. The author argues that at the societal level, education is “collective, consensual, and altruistic” (p.74). At the national level education is seen as an agency for cultural transmission and change, it inculcates national values, norms, social cohesion, unity, belief system and socio-economic development (Bereketiab, 2020, p.74). Therefore, post-colonial African leaders approached basic as well as vocational, technical and academic education provision from a constructivist perspective to bolster development projects. The alternative is the intrinsic value goals of education, which are self-fulfilment, personal cognitive achievement, a virtue, a good, and an end in itself.

It can be concluded that education positively contributes to personal and consequently national development. However, the unanswered and critical question is what type of education truly translate the value-driven education into public or common good? This question is important because it can be argued that it is these same educated people, who use their knowledge to perform deviant behaviours (such as lying, spreading of rumours, withholding effort, absenteeism, embezzlement, corruption, theft, fraud, vandalism, and sabotage) that brings incalculable damage to the organisation and wider society. Appelbaum, Deguire & Lay (2005) examined the causes including organisational ethical climate and proposed solutions to unethical and deviant work place behaviours.

Right from post-colonial independence, Ghana made education the pivotal strategy for national development. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the founding president 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). Using the Ghanaian philosophical and symbolic construct of “*Sankofa*” meaning look back in order to move forward (Addai-Mununkum, 2014), we present a case for reviewing educational curricula to strengthen the teaching of ethical thinking and moral values education in Ghana.

Current Educational System in Ghana

Despite the many educational reforms since independence, the instructional delivery in the Ghana education system, is still bedevilled by legacies from the colonial British education system, which was characterised by rigid curriculum and timetables, textbooks that promote rote memorisation and repetition of facts, classroom layouts with no or limited discussion and interaction (Nkansah, 2021). The colonial education system was solely designed to produce lower level educated people capable

of administrative and clerical task, and therefore was heavily exam-oriented without avenues to develop independent and critical thinking. This education restricted creative thinking and critical consciousness for both students and teachers. Under the current global challenges and the critical stage of Ghana's development (65 years of post-independence self-rule) it needs an "educational curriculum that will develop the critical human capital relevant to its socio-economic development" (p.59). The tertiary education, in particular need to produce critical and creative thinkers, problem and logical thinkers imbued with consciousness required to social-economic development. There is therefore a call for critical education that produces critical human capital in Ghana.

A Case for Critical Moral Education

Religious and moral education in Ghana has faced challenges and therefore seen many reforms since 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 students who parents do not object (Addai-Mununkum, 2014, p.296). Subsequently, a common curriculum comprising the three main religions in Ghana: Christianity, Islam, and Indigenous African Religion (IAR) was developed in 1978 to give students understanding of other religions and promote tolerance and respect of other faiths. This change moved from character education to pluralism, tolerance and respect for different religions into a subject called Cultural Studies in the major educational reform of 1987 that emphasized vocational education in place of a liberal education regime (p.297). This course had problems with overload, and complaints from religious bodies brought a reintroduction of RE in 1998 as RME. Another educational reform in 2002 withdrew the subject from the curriculum, only to be brought back by executive decree following public outcry lead by religious leaders (Asare-Danso, 2012, p.62).

In a strongly pluralistic and religious society like Ghana, religious education is highly valued.

The key question should be how do we use RE education to train our citizenry, foster moral, ethical thinking and personal values of integrity, honesty and collective wellbeing? The authors agree with (Addai-Mununkum, 2014, p.303) that RME should be used as the platform to teach and promote common human values of care, compassion, common welfare that embedded in all major religions against the secular force of individualism and the widening inequalities in society. Teaching RE on the surface of facts, principles without allowing a critical discourse on the morals and values believe in a higher deity calls on adherents to demonstrate would perpetuate the *status quo* of arguments about, who is right that heightens differences and leads to conflicts. We must teach and promote the cardinal African cultural value of *Ubuntu*, a centuries old philosophy that emphasizes togetherness, communalism, interdependence, and sensitivity towards others (Venter, 2004). An Afrocentric philosophy on education that challenges the western imposition of their individualistic culture is needed in developing citizens would under their African-ness and are fully trained in the *Ubuntu* way of life (Venter 2004, p.152). Our attempts at developing a critical education (Nkansah, 2021) should be rooted in the African transcultural *Ubuntu*

values of critical and moral thinking, reflection on the impact of one's actions, harmony and collective wellbeing.

Ginott (1972) presents a compelling argument for institutions and teachers to focus on providing humane education in the epilogue of his book *“Teacher and child: A book for parents and teachers”* Here is the excerpt of his core argument for a transformative humane and ethical education:

“Dear Teacher: I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness: Gas chambers were 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.” (p.121)

There is ample evidence in the academic literature about the benefits of spirituality instead of religion. McGhee & Grant (2008, p.61) presents a literature review listing the following benefits: “greater kindness & fairness, increased awareness of other employee's needs, increased honesty and trust within their organisations, higher incidences of organisational citizenship behaviour, and express more servant leader 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 work place ethical behaviours calls for careful examination of the determinants of spirituality and developing these into our moral education syllabus at all levels of education. 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 are weighed against the self-regulatory ‘personal standards and the need for moral excellence’ (Sekerka and Bagozzi, 2007).

Looking at the Ghanaian moral educational and for that matter the wider African system, it can be seen that attempts at moral training has 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 engagement based on reasoning. We need a new engaging character development and civic education that would foster active dialogue, reasoning, self-awareness, self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-control. This new and engaging moral education should incorporate the six stages pre-conventional, conventional and post conventional, autonomous or principled levels of development (Kohlberg, 1973, p.671). The program of education should conjure a sense of personal and national pride that instinctively would make citizens want to do the right thing and exhibit moral courage when faced with ethical dilemmas.

However, there are formidable challenges faced by nationalist leaders in constructing homogenous nations in such distinctively diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic groups in African nations. For instance, Ghana with a population of 30.8 million is a highly multilingual developing nation in West Africa with different ethnic groups and has about 50 indigenous languages, even though only 11 are taught in schools and few are used on the radio and television (Sadat and Kuwornu, 2017). The pedagogical foundation of nation building in such a multi-ethnic and largely pluralistic religious society must clearly lay down the 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 in order to construct a national identity and build the nation. We need to create national and organisational education where the five empirically derived dimensions of ethical climate are: law and code, caring, instrumentalism, independence, and rules are discussed (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

Historical Background of Education Ghana

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 the fifteen century (Graham, 1971). In Ghanaian societies, the child was taught the material and spiritual fundamentals of social life, and trained through the teenage years by the family and local community to take up his/her societal responsibilities; a traditional education of norms, moral values and skills that was culminated by undergoing initiation into adulthood and puberty rites.

The Portuguese are credited to be 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, p.1). A century later, in 1637 the Dutch were reported to have re-started the school, when they ceased the Elmina Castle with a similar religious aim of educating children, who were ‘qualified’ to advance the Christian faith. The British, however are said to have entered West Africa in the last decade of 1800 with the goal of trading and seeking unfettered commercial advantage for resources for their national development. The Royal African Company established their first school to train needed literate translators in 1694, and this practice of educating largely mulattoes and African children “of promise or important connections” continued over three centuries with sole purpose of supplying interpreters, clerical subordinates, soldiers to defend the forts and individuals sympathetic to the Company’s and British crown interests (p.7-9).

The educational development during this era was “sporadic, short-lived, and confined to coastal towns” as they were subsidiary function of the trading companies (Aboagye, 2021). According to the author, the colonial British government established some public school, which expanded by the arrival of the Basel and Wesleyan missionaries in the third decade of the nineteenth century. However, establishment of schools were resisted by the locals, particularly the Ashantis for various rational reasons, and

participation remained low for many decades, as the indigenes did not see their value and the prohibitive cost-benefit analysis made them unattractive (p.371). Increases in wage after the 1930s, improved the appreciation of the value of western education, and therefore many indigenes established schools, which led to increases in enrolment numbers. Therefore, it can be concluded that colonial educational development in Ghana was largely due to the religious mission and private endeavour than to the efforts of the colonial state. The slow development of education in Ghana, particularly, the colonial state prevention of expansion of missional education in the north of the country had lasting consequences.

According to Adu-Gyamfi *et. al.*, (2016) post-colonial education in Ghana has suffered constant changes and at point come to near collapse, as successive military and civilian governments search for a model fitting model to the needs of the country and the expectations of the citizens. There have been several changes due to inconsistencies that was in the different missional and government education. Adu-Gyamfi *et. al* contends that 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 seen also several changes by successive governments which are attributed to “over politicization” (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).

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 (reform that affects only specific areas of the country such Nkrumah’s free school system for the North). It must be acknowledged that although the plethora of reforms implemented by various government all had good intentions of broadening access, improving relevance of education to national development needs, reducing of the burden of educational cost to both parents and government. However, these reforms with the exception of Nkrumah’s 1951 Accelerated Development Plan, which in addition to expanding and making education a key pillar to economic development, focused on removing the western thoughts and cultural influences with the introduction of subjects based on African cultural identity, values and practices at all levels including teacher training. It is sad that this important African collective identity and value system was scrapped soon after the overthrow of the Nkrumah regime in 1966 and the western individual interest and value system has perniciously become entrenched in our educational system to date. This paper contends that the failure to promote nationalism and our African collective identity that have significantly contributed to the erosion of public responsibility, upholding ethical and moral values that work for the collective good in professional practice in the country.

Challenges of the Educational System and Professional Practice

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, which were contrary the communal and national development needs of the indigenes. In the view of the authors of this paper, the contrast in the philosophies behind the traditional versus the Western educational is very important to note, as the communal versus individual values embedded in each system affects the moral behaviour of the trainees in the society. It is undeniable that western education markedly improved the life prospects those 'skilled' with the literacy and the learning of the metropolitan language over the so-called 'unskilled' illiterates Ghanaians (Aboagye, 2021, p.387). However, the loss of the strong collective communal and moral values intrinsic to the centuries-old traditional education and the discriminatory low wage policies against western educated Africans are precursors to the decline in moral values and unethical behaviours persistent in modern public and commercial sectors of the Ghanaian society.

The current educational system despite the many reforms still faces significant challenges including structural (overcrowded curriculum, inadequate instructional time, teacher pedagogical content knowledge and lack of in-service training opportunities), resource (lack of infrastructure, teaching and learning materials) and strategic (unequal access to education and lifelong learning, weak and ineffective school management system) (Armah, 2017, p.6).

Professionals in all fields of endeavour face challenging situations in their practice which borders on reputational risks, legality that test their internal moral compass, ethical decision-making abilities and moral courage to choose to do the right thing (Sekerka & Bagozzi, 2007). Even though there are many laudable attempts to narrow the gap between organisations ethical standards and informal practice, particularly in high-stakes businesses, such as financial and health sectors. This requires alignment of systems and processes with the organizational values and the critical role of the leader in creating an ethical culture (Fichter, 2016). In spite of these attempts, sadly unethical behaviours and practices frequently occur with disastrous consequences. For instance, the financial sector has seen mortgage-backed securities fraud, accusations of money-laundering, rigging the Libor lending rate, price-fixing foreign currency and manipulation of energy markets just to mention a few (Fichter, 2016, p.70). The political and professional services like medicine, law and engineering are likewise fraught with many scandalous and disturbing cases raising questions about the adequacy of ethics training in our educational settings (Frisque *et. al.*, 2004). Developing organizational capacity of virtue excellence requires more just rules and standards, there is a need for proactive cultivation of moral strength in employees (Serkeka *et al.*, 2009).

Although many dimensions of ethical behaviour have been studied such as character and

strengths (Peterson and Seligman, 2004), virtue-based ethical performance (Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn, 2003), moral agency (Cherkowski, Walker and Kutsyuruba, 2015), 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 not characterised by rash or overconfident behaviour but careful self-directed efforts toward the good and morally right or necessary at all times.

Professional training institutions need to develop a broad ethical training curriculum that cultivates clear thinking, careful and collective considerations that leads person towards exercising PMC in their day-to-day managerial routines. The key questions worth considering therefore 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 and Grant, 2008) and religiosity, which has been found not to result in ethical behaviour without the mediation of conscience (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b)?

National Constitutional Provision

Articles 41 and 284 of the 1992/1996 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, requires all Ghanaian citizens amongst other things to 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 interests in the execution of their duties. Practically, it is not the letter of the constitution that is the problem but the 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 quick word analysis of important keywords related to developing and promoting a national identity that foster moral and ethical behaviour in the Constitution reveals startling low numbers (Table 1).

Table 1: Analysis of Promotion of National Identity in 1992/1996 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana

Keywords (derivatives)	Number of occurrences	National Value being promoted
civic duties	0 (none)	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

(Author's analysis of 1992/1996 Constitution of Ghana)

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

Moral and national values for development

According to Cam (2016, p.8) 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 goal. Values are desirable traits in persons' behaviour and attitude. They are influenced by family, friends, teachers, coaches, and society. Each person has their own value system which guide his/her daily decisions making. Literature shows that 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 and Richardson, 1994).

National values are beliefs of a nation, guiding the actions and behaviours of its citizen. This is the representation of the paramount values upheld throughout the common cultural experience of the nation. It is a personal measure of worth, such as how important an individual considers certain things; beliefs, principles or ideas people attach to things based on their sense of values. Ghanaians emphasize communal values such as family, respect for the elderly, honouring traditional rulers, and the importance of dignity and proper social conduct. Individual conduct is seen as having impact on an entire family, social group and community; family obligations take precedence over everything else in life. The exercise of these values is influenced by the behaviour of trainers and role models such as political and civic leaders in the society. 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 classes politicization (Komariah *et.al.*, 2020, p.309).

Values are often manifested in various ways for individual and 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 hall. Societal manifestation of values means dictating and influencing group behaviours and interactions in the society 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.

Instruments for building National Values

I. Lessons from The National Anthem and Pledge

The authors contend that we need to use various national diversity and cultures, 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" was written and composed by Philip Gbeho; and was adopted at independence from the British in 1957 are as follow:

*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** for evermore.*

*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 storm,
In every need, whate'er the call may be,
To serve thee, **Ghana**, now and for evermore.*

*Raise high the flag of
Ghana and one with Africa
advance; Black star of hope
and honour 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 for evermore!*

Composed by Philip Gbeho and adopted in 1957

A careful analysis of the national anthem reveals important national values, which if taught and assimilated by the citizenry could transform how people think, feel, behave in all day-to-day settings. We need the Ghanaian citizenry, including children, students, professionals, scientists, academicians, business folks, politicians and the wider populace to understand and reflect on its importance for nation building. Just knowing and reciting the national anthem on few occasions are not enough, but understanding and practising its values are what matters most. Indeed, what is the significance of a national anthem to a country and why do we need it?

II. Develop Patriotism

The first stanza asks the citizenry to call on God's blessing for the country and develop values such as promoting national development above all else ("*make our nation great and strong*"), courage and conscious determination, humility ("*fill our hearts with true humility*") and fearless honesty ("*make us cherish fearless honesty*") are ethical values developed from religious moral education and training. The content of our national anthem teaches us to have a selfless devotion to nation building, work to unite the citizenry and ignites patriotism among the citizenry.

The second stanza calls for allegiance ("*thee we make our solemn vow*"), collective efforts ("*build together*"), knowledge and power ("*our gifts of mind and strength of arm*"), Commitment and Patriotism ("*night or day, in the midst of storm*") and selfless-service ("*serve thee, Ghana, now and for evermore*") are values critical for national development.

The third stanza calls for national pride ("*raise high the flag of Ghana*"), promotion of Pan-Africanism ("*one with Africa advance*"), self-determination and nationalism ("*arise, arise, O sons of Ghana land*") and divine allegiance ("*and under God march on for evermore!*"). These values are critical for developing strong national identity, collective focus on African

development and an acknowledgement that Ghana honours God's sovereignty and guidance in the nation's growth and future direction.

A look at the National Pledge:

"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!"

Like, the national anthem, the pledge highlights important national values that if truly inculcated into the national education and training curricula in meaningful ways that develop cognitive understanding of its message would lead to the production of faithful and patriotic citizens, who would wholeheartedly serve their fellow countrymen and women in whatever capacities they are able in the society. The pledge talks about honour, faithfulness, loyalty to the motherland. The pledge calls for selfless dedication to hard work, integrity, respect for sacrifices our forefathers and commitment to defend the nation at all times. Again, the pledge clearly acknowledges the nation's belief in God and calls on citizens to draw on divine help in their national duties.

Sadly, in spite of the lofty rhetorics and high level of religiosity, there is very low level of love for the country and selfless devotion to its wholistic development. Similar to what Komariah *et.al.* (2020) reported in Indonesia, the situation in most African nations, national values are not given

primary attention and personal interests go unchallenged leading to corrupt practices by those who are supposed to be the role models and champions of national integrity and collective development. To be patriotic and nationalistic, there is the need to make conscious effort to support the well-being of the country by positioning it to be great and strong. Simply put, our patriotism should be judged by our truthful action and not in words.

It is imperative that all Ghanaian citizens, professionals and public office holders be reminded and held accountable to their national pledge declaration and oath of practice and office obligations. Currently, there are no clearly defined national values nor any effective mechanisms to keep national values in the consciences and consciousness of the Ghanaian citizenry and in particular, public officials when they have to deliberate and make decisions

that affects the nation and the welfare of their fellow citizens. It is proposed that instead of having presidential portraits hanging in offices, the country should develop and disseminate a national identity charter in all places of work and learning across the nation and train the nation in how to uphold would serve as constant reminder to everyone's national moral obligation and conscience.

III. Basis of Invoking Divine Blessings

It is evident that these national artefacts acknowledge and calls divine blessings on the nation. However, there is been a failure to understand the principles that must be adhered to actualise the expected blessings of greatness, growth and vitality. We cannot build a strong and great nation, if we are taking 'double salary', multiple ex-gratia, receiving bribes, using public resources for personal gain, approving shoddy works, selling public assets for personal benefit through proxies and forging documents at the expense of the citizenry. How on earth can the country be blessed when we are paid double salary and consider it as a top-up or as professionals inflate project costs as high as 500% of the actual cost and receive kickbacks afterwards? In the advanced world, it is difficult for such things to happen because of "country first mentality", functioning regulatory systems and structures, and deep pride in service to fellow citizens and thinking of posterity.

As discussed above, there are empirical evidence that mere religious believes do not translate in ethical behaviours and moral decision making (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2021a, 2021b). It must therefore be emphasised just promoting religious knowledge of one faith or the other is not the answer to developing national values and ethical behaviour, as the country is already bursting to the seams with religious activities being practiced in every corner of the country.

What is needed is a carefully designed cognitive engagement programme that helps citizens to understand how their faith practices should be applied in their everyday life and decision-making processes with clear understanding of the consequences of their actions on the country and life of their neighbours. There is a need to teach the populace about principles upon which divine blessings are unleashed on a society in spite of the creed being practiced. A revision of the RME has been advocated for that would produce honest, discipline and patriotic citizens, who understand the value of

hardworking and putting country first.

IV. Guidance & Counselling

We hear about allegations and acts of corruption each passing day and reports about shoddy jobs that lead to accidents and disasters in our quest to get rich-quick due to our seared conscience. Many of us are no more selfless but greedily selfish with a voracious appetite to grab everything that comes our way and belongs to Ghana our Motherland, since that there is an engrained unpatriotic Ghanaian syndrome that says “*aban adeɛ sei a, egu epo mu*” (meaning if the property of the government spoils they fall into the sea). This notion sees the government and by extension companies as “foreign entities” that must be exploited at every opportunity, so people in both public service and private companies do not see themselves as privileged patriots, who are given opportunities to serve their nation and its people.

Sadly, trained engineering professionals, technocrats, scientists, academics, and student’s in higher institutions cannot escape blame for these failings in the society. Despite, the high level of education and knowledge of professional code of ethics due to personal and partisanship interests’ national welfare has been relegated to the background in the execution of daily professional responsibilities.

We need education in professional settings about the national values of country first selfless dedication to duties and solemnly uphold professional standards and ethics above all personal interest and gains. Reviving and introducing effective Guidance and Counselling curriculum that is built upon identified national values, professional standards of practice and moral ethics is strategic for national development. Guidance and counselling when they are effectively combined contributes to shapes the whole-person development and helps the individuals with problems solving skills (Nkechi *et al.*, 2016). There a need to establish GCUs in all education and training settings to provide both preventive and developmental guidance as well as supportive and remedial interventions that would ensure that young people, who emerge into the general society are well equipped with confidence, understanding of their sense of place and are ready to make a positive contribution to national life. Such guidance and counselling programs should progressively introduce demonstrable age-appropriate national values from the early years through primary, junior and senior secondary to colleges, tertiary and professional institutions in the country.

Case studies on the benefits of national values

Manifesting national values such as honesty, integrity, loyalty, courage, reliability, respect and godliness brings honour, favour, reward and recognition. For example, Constable Prince Fordjour, a young Ghanaian police officer was heavily rewarded after he found and returned an amount of GHS 2,000 that was left at an ATM by mistake. At a ceremony at the Police Headquarters on July 16, 2021, the police officer was hugely rewarded for his honesty with a total cash price of GHS 11,000 and other souvenirs (Quist, 2021). Recounting the honest gesture on their verified Facebook handle, the Ghana Police Service mentioned that the officer was being

rewarded not only for the amount involved but for his integrity.

It is well known that honest people receive people's favour. Whenever they are in need, they can be helped by people around them. For instance, in a tribute to the late President Nelson Madiba Mandela at the burial service, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi MP, President of the Inkatha Freedom Party 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. On 1 June 1995, President Mandela spoke in the National Assembly about the Shell House Massacre of 28 March 1994, in which eight civilians died when security at the ANC's Headquarters opened fire. In total, 60 lives were lost and 300 were injured. A year later, in the National Assembly, Mandela said, “I gave instructions to our security that if they attacked the house, please you must protect that house - even if you have to kill people. “This admission that he himself had given the order distressed Mandela's comrades. But six days later he stood again in the National Assembly and reminded us all, “For reconciliation to have real meaning, the truth should be brought to light.” As painful as it was for me to hear, President Mandela's honesty about Shell House enhanced my admiration for him. He was a man of truth” (Buthelezi, 2013).

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 recently promoted for his honesty as he turned down a bribe offered by a wanted criminal. Sergeant Abdulrahim rejected an offer of Dh50,000, a luxury car, an expensive watch and a Dh20,000 monthly salaries to release a wanted cybercriminal he had arrested. The promoted officer expressed that promotion was a “badge of honour” and an incentive for more effort, dedication and sincerity to work” (Anon, 2020).

Professional Practice and Ethics

As professionals, engineers have ethical and societal obligations that must be taken seriously. In Ghana, the growing professionalism gave rise to the development of two engineering societies that license engineering practitioners in Ghana. 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 behaviour of a person or group in a business environment. Like values, professional ethics provide rules on how a person should act towards other people and institutions in such an environment. Demonstration of professional ethics include strong character, dedication, punctualism, 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, technical

standards, practicing within an ethical framework, end-of-life care, self-appraisal and self-care, teaching and mentorship, and life-long learning.

V. Disastrous Engineering Failures Due to Ethics

Engineering disasters attributable to ethical failures are not new. From the Johnstown Flood in 1889, the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2011, engineering disasters have been caused by design faults, construction negligence and breaches of safety protocols. We discuss some both international and national case studies that should cause every professional to reconsider their motives, the ethical issues and implications of their decision making.

In the case of the Titanic, over 1,500 people died when the Titanic struck an iceberg and sunk in just over two and-a-half hours because six of the compartments got flooded as the bulkheads were not tall enough to hold the water. Several design errors including failure to consider its size and mobility, the speed the ship was traveling, ignored warnings about the likelihood of icebergs and other factors. One undeniable ethical flaw was the inadequate lifeboats for the passengers on board the vessel. The 20 lifeboats on board would only serve roughly 1,200 people, while over 2,200 passengers and crew were on board the ship. The owners had removed additional lifeboats from the design over worries that they made the ship look unsafe and seemed packed on the deck

In Ghana, a six-storey Melcom Supermarket building collapsed at Achimota, a suburb of the capital Accra in the early morning of November 7, 2012. This building collapsed just at the time when it was about to be opened to the public. In the aftermath, it became apparent that Ghana did not have all the needed technical expertise to carry out rescue operation of that magnitude expeditiously. The nation received technical support from a nine-member rescue team with special equipment and sniffer dogs from the Israeli Government who helped with the search and rescue work. After four continuous days of rescue efforts, 81 victims: 14 fatalities and 67 suffered various degrees of injuries (NADMO, 2014, [www.bbc.com > news > world-africa-20280712](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-20280712)). Investigations conducted later concluded that there was no building permit for the construction to be carried out. This is a major indictment on the internal process and systems in place and also failure of leadership.

The capital city Accra experiences annual floods that are mainly due to 'engineering and construction and statutory regulations enforcement failures'. The professionals entrusted with technical design, award of contracts, implementation advise and the enforcement authorities fail in statutory duties leading to residents building in low-lying areas that are susceptible to flooding, construction of poor open drainage systems that are blocked by refuse dumped by the city's residents.

On June 3, 2015, an explosion and a fire outbreak occurred at a Goil Petrol Station, near the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange in the city's downtown area of the capital city, killing over 150 people(www.gna.org.gh; June 2, 2022). Due to several days of flooding in the city, many people, cars and buses were sheltering from heavy rains at the petrol station when the explosion occurred. The source of the explosion was believed to have occurred in the station's fuel tanks. The investigation reported that a leakage from petrol station tank was ignited by a cigarette and a carried by the flooded water. Amongst others, the report recommended the dredging of drains and the Odaw River, a ban on the

use of plastics carrier bags and equipping of disaster managers with the requisite tools to effectively manage disasters. Unfortunately, seven years on, most of the recommendations have not been implemented. Are we waiting till another disaster?

occurs? The lack of ethically trained leaders leads to these kinds of engineering failures with higher costs.

VI. Expected Ethical Practices of Engineers

Members of the GhIE and all other professional grouping are expected and must be trained to uphold the ethics of the profession irrespective of any pressures from stakeholders to act in an unethical manner. Whilst the GhIE, recognizes that some engineers may have acted unprofessionally and unethically, the organisation is confident that the vast majority of its members are professional and dedicated in their service to the nation.

The GhIE, in accordance with its constitution and code of ethics, must promote ethical behaviours through training and regular recognition of professional practices. It must take steps to discipline any errant behaviour amongst its members and calls members and the general public to report exemplary and as well as misconduct for the appropriate actions. In accordance with the Engineering Council Act, government officials, corporate bodies and the general public must be educated to only engage registered engineering practitioners certified to practice in Ghana.

Engineers must be trained to appreciate the moral and societal impact of their work and commit to serving society, attending to the welfare and progress of the citizens of Ghana. A clear code of professional practice would be needed for completion by all, periodic reflection and evaluation in order to maintain their professional practice licences are needed. The engineer must through these periodic practices demonstrate their efforts at maintaining the prestige of the profession, proper discharge of duties, and professionalism rooted in technical abilities, honesty, fortitude, temperance, modesty, and honesty.

Engineers and their employers must ensure continuous professional development through regular training, updating technical knowledge, sharing knowledge and experiences, provide opportunities for further education and training of workers, provide recognition, moral and material support to the institutions of training through industry-university collaborations, thus returning the benefits and opportunities they and their employers have received. Engineers must ensure compliance with the standards to protect workers as enshrined in the code of ethics and the national constitution as a whole. As professionals, engineers are expected to commit themselves to and exhibit high standards of conduct.

As a first principle, the engineer has an overriding duty to openly communication and report to the appropriate authorities any possible risk to others from a client or employer failing to follow the engineer's directions. basic an engineer may be disciplined, or have their license revoked, even if the failure to report such a danger does not result in the loss of life or health. This may pose an ethical dilemma between an engineer duty to a client and/or employer and upholding professional standards. In many cases, this duty can be discharged by advising the client of the consequences in a forthright matter, and ensuring the client takes the engineer's advice. In very rare cases, where even a governmental authority may not take appropriate action, the engineer can only discharge the duty by making the

situation public. As a result, whistleblowing by professional engineers is not an unusual event, and courts have often sided with engineers in such cases, overruling duties to employers and confidentiality considerations that otherwise would have prevented the engineer from speaking out.

There are several other ethical issues that engineers may face. These apart from technical practice, largely relates to operational conduct. These include:

- Relationships with clients, consultants, competitors, and contractors
- Ensuring legal compliance by clients, client's contractors, and others
- Avoiding conflict of interest
- Bribery and kickbacks, which also may include: gifts, meals, services and entertainment
- Treatment of confidential or proprietary information
- Consideration of the employer's assets
- Outside employment/activities (moonlighting)

Many engineering institutions in existence have adopted independent values. For example, the Volta River Authority's statement of core corporate values is based on accountability, commitment, trust, integrity and teamwork ('ACT IT'), which is used annually in staff evaluations. Staff further development and growth are then built upon identified challenges or shortfalls with respect to these corporate values. It is used as salutations. This is a worthy example as usually most organisational appraisals largely focus on economic achievements that fails to questions relating contributions to key corporate moral and ethical practices that foster sustainable social corporate responsibilities.

The Way Forward - Recommendations

It is undeniable from the above discourse the important roles that national, ethical and moral values play healthy societal and economic development. There is an urgent need for Ghana and other African countries to focus tackling the endemic unethical and harmful behaviours that permeates all levels of society. Various measures and dialogue needed to define national identity and value systems have been discussed. The authors propose that comprehensive strategy to address the perennial problems of lack of patriotism, self-interest and economic damage to both organisations and national development be developed. This strategy requires institutional collaboration and civic education of the benefits of developing individual and collective humane and ethical value systems, harm caused by self-centred and unethical decision making in societies.

The following recommendations are put forward for national stakeholder discussion and engagement to identify national values, improve professional practice and ethical behaviours in the quest for collective development of the country, and recognition within the Pan African and global community of nations:

1. Develop national identity charter based on important national artefacts e.g., *national anthem* and *pledge*. The nation needs to develop a unified and broadly accepted identity and value system that should be taught and promoted at levels of the society.

2. Educate Ghanaian citizens and ensure professionals, in particular are being guided by the identified national values and the ethical principles stated in the Articles 41 and 284 of the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana. We need to conduct growth and development workshops in emotional intelligence, transactional analysis and relational enrichment etc.
3. Review Religious and Moral Education curriculum in taught in schools to focus on the spiritual, ethical and moral values espoused by the main religions practiced in the county. Ghana and Africa for that matter is a deeply multicultural and pluralistic religious societies, where there are strong attachment and sometimes dogmatic adherence to the tenets of the main religions. The empirical evidence points to the fact that religious believes themselves do not lead to ethical decision making rather the cognitive understanding of the values and consequences that is mediated by conscience that positive contribute to ethical decision making. It is imperative that RME focuses on cognitive understanding and reflection on impact of religious values on society.
4. Revive and establish career guidance and counselling units in schools, academic and professional institutions. The critical roles of CG&C including emphasis on lifelong learning and active employment for all citizens (Sweet, 2001) are imperative for human capital development. Setting up work place counselling desk: Counselling helps the employee to share and look at his problems from new perspectives, help himself and to face and deal with the problems in a better way. Counselling at workplace is a way for the organisation to care of its employee's welfare.
5. Review Leadership and Teacher Training programmes ensure they inculcate strong national and ethical values into the thinking of teachers who have the national responsibility for training young people in the country. Train Managers and Supervisors in ethical decision-making models (Fitcher, 2016), basic coaching and counselling skills.
6. Review institutional values and codes of ethics to ensure they incorporate national values, and appraise and monitoring their implementation. We need to train organisational leaders about humane and ethical behaviours that led 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 and exercise (Tripathy, 2019). These have been found to motivate employees, lead to satisfaction and promote value-based organisational culture that emphasize on self-governance, encourages informal experiential learning and “consistency between policies and actions” (Fitcher, 2016, p.76). Intentional actions such as mentoring, and coaching should be promoted. Leaders must model moral agency to encourage others to engage their own moral agency in the best interests of all stakeholders (Cherkowski *et al.*, 2015).

Victor & Cullen (1998) identified sociocultural environment, organizational forms, and organization-specific history as determinants of the ethical climates in organizations. These determinants largely hold true regarding influences of ethical behaviours in societies and nation states.

We need a comprehensive and concerted approach to building the moral, national and ethical values in the Ghanaian citizenry, as the country has poor global corruption perception index (below 50

percent) and has not experienced significant improvement in its ranking for the past five years (Transparency International, 2022). If we are to realize the expected middle-income development goals then improving ethical behaviour through the promotion and teaching of national values from pre-school throughout all level of education and society is indispensable. Beginning with schools, professional institutions, training of local and national leaders, who demonstrate ethical decision making are the right places to start.

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