

**Ethics in Higher Education: African Cultural Economic approach**

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**Abstract**

Every society transmits its knowledge, culture, values and skills from one generation to the other through the process of education. Education in Africa was purely indigenous before the coming of Western culture that culminated in the introduction of formal education. As advocated by Professor Obiora Ike's African Cultural Economics(ACE), the African concept of education was both intrinsically both an ethical process and a potent form of indigenous identity that helped define the African knowledge system and personality. This allowed for adaptability, good morals and positive social relationships in the context of an orderly society. The introduction of western education has alienated the African from his culture, ethics, and indigenous environment leading to loss of identity. An African today is neither wholly indigenous nor totally foreign; he now possesses a split identity through educational culture clash of values. The paradigm shift in the educational system has created a moral crisis in higher education which African cultural economics could solve. Since knowledge and ethics are embedded in African indigenous educational system, there should be integration of Africa's value-based education with the Western model in higher institutions to achieve the rediscovery of true African identity, curriculum balance, curb the moral problems in tertiary institutions and African societies at large. The research methods adopted are philosophical, historical, analytical, expository and critical. African cultural economics should inspire a new set of recommendations that could give a sustainable future to ethics in higher education.

**Keywords:** Ethics in higher education, African cultural Economics(ACE), Omenana, Igbology, Obiology, Obinnwanne,culture, Africa and indigenous.

## **Introduction**

Education is the bedrock of every society. However, the concept is a very difficult one to define and this is due to the fact that it means different things to different people. The West believes that education must be formal, systematic and must be anchored by trained and qualified teachers. This is the reason colonial education was imposed on Africa because there existed in precolonial Africa what the West termed informal education (Ann 115-138). But from the African perspective, education is a wholesome learning process that borders on all aspects of human life. It entails more than going to school and earning a certificate at the end of the process. History reveals that man has always possessed and imparted knowledge from generation to generation (Wilson 101 - 108). Education has always had an intrinsic cultural content and flavor for its sustainable value and impact to be fully felt by societies (Ike, 2016). Etymologically, education is derived from the Latin words *educare* which means 'to rear', 'to guide', 'to direct'; and *educere* which means to 'draw out', 'to lead out', to bring up' or 'to raise up'.

This corresponds to the Socratic understanding of knowledge as drawing out what was already in the student. From the foregoing we can deduce that man is endowed with certain qualities and potentialities and for these to benefit the individual and the society at large, they have to be drawn out (Frere: Sathya Sai: 2009). Education can also be seen as a process through which an individual acquires what it takes to live successfully in the society (Molagun; Babs Fafunwa). It is called the cultural economy of education and values transference (Ike, 2013) and labelled as a "slow and skillful process of extracting the latent potentialities of comprehension and dedication in contradiction with indoctrination" (Adeyemi and Adeyinka 425 - 440) which involves other institutions of the family, economy, religion and the community proving that education goes beyond what is acquired within the four walls of a school.

Today's educational imbalance has resulted in education that destroys the human heart and innocence" (19); thus explaining the moral state of various higher institutions across Africa as it is now the arena for indecent dressing, rape, drug abuse, rampant plagiarism, cultism, exam malpractices and other moral and social vices. The reason is that Western education focuses more on the education of the head leaving out the heart. Education in Africa should promote African ethics, cultural norms and values in her citadels of learning especially in higher institutions. The Consortium of Ethical Universities, in its 2018 global report observed that 'when unethical practices reign uncontrolled in higher institutions quality assurance of teaching, learning, research and product outcomes cannot be guaranteed' (Globethics Geneva Focus report, 2018). This paper investigates Western education and how it has negatively impacted the African way of life especially the behavior of students and staff in higher institutions of learning. It will suggest a unique kind of precolonial strategies that could salvage the situation involving a shift from over-emphasis on passive learning, abstract studies; mechanistic conceptions and memorization of facts to developing the total man and making him a responsible member of the society. This paper will reflect on the model of higher education institutional building known as African cultural economics (Ike: 2016; Stuckelberger, 2021) with a discussion of its implications for the ethical training and reorientation of staff and students with its own unique model of precolonial education.

## **Ethics**

Ethics as a discipline deals with the fundamental principles of right and wrong, good and bad conduct and the conditions for ascribing moral values to intentions, decisions and actions. And eventually involves the evaluation of human actions and conducts with moral principles as standards of individual and institutional behavior and reflected in ethical policies, codes, duties and expectations that a particular society has for its members (Eneh (29). According to Eneh (30), ethics as a code of values guiding man's choices and actions is a normative science which under which Njoku (3) made a philosophical distinction between acts that proceed from the person without his control and acts that proceed from him over which he has control. The latter is said to be human acts because such acts "proceed freely from a person's will". He therefore defines ethics as "that branch of philosophy that studies human acts, aiming at providing guidance for the actions of the *person*, the *spiritual subject* in whom human nature subsists and to whom, in the final analysis, these actions are attributable" (Njoku 3). The role of the human will is not to understand the world but to change it by making it conform to what the agent wants which is the *end* he aspires, the *good* he desires to accomplish through right conduct (Norman 1. A derivative of ethics is the concept of ethics in higher education(EHE) which, the Consortium of Ethical Universities(Geneva,2016),in an agreement with UNESCO, is the best platform for the sustainable solution to the ills and crisis facing higher education in the new millennium with a proviso that trainings based upon the content of ethical policies and programs must be culturally and institutionally contextualized with a balancing of both global and cultural ethics to be effective(Stuckelberger;Ike,2017).The cultural context from where the content of the ethical trainings is to be drawn is African cultural economics(Ike,2015;Ani C,2016;Ozumba,2017).African cultural economics is based upon African Traditional ethics (Ike,120)

## **African traditional ethics and culture: the basis of traditional education and economy**

African ethics refers to moral beliefs and presuppositions of the African people and the philosophical clarification and interpretation of those beliefs and presuppositions (Gyekye, African Ethics). Since the time of Socrates, the question of what the good life consists in has been put forward. The good life in traditional African society consists in what is cherished and held dear to promote human existence. (Nwala,193).Thus cosmology and ontology are the roots of the culture and tradition of such indigenous peoples which, in precolonial Igbo society is known as the science of 'Omenana or Omenanology(Nwala;Ike:2017)

Wiredu's claim is that African traditional ethics is founded on rational reflection and consideration for human welfare. Whatever promotes human welfare is termed good while anything detrimental to human welfare is considered evil(Uduma,135-136). He believes morality for the Akans is not defined in terms of the will of God but in terms of the conditions of human welfare so if there was nothing like the belief in God for the Akans, there would still be rules for good conduct (Uduma 135-136). This is responsible for the interpersonal and social nature of African ethics and is the foundation on which African communalism and the economy rests – on the principle of concern for the well-being of one's neighbor.

African moral science has built a strong foundation of culture that could be embedded into the process of modern higher education as living heritage(Ani,2020:110).This is what UNESCO's intangible heritage defines as

embedding living heritage of a people into its institutions to achieve sustainable development (UNESCO, 2019). Specifically this is what Professor Ike calls the mandate of culture in higher education: to supply the core values for its sustainable management systems (Ike, 2016). In this context, the good life is always discussed in connection with the practical life of a people. We can then say that morality is a product of culture. "Culture has always remained humanity's form of self-expression on its journey through history." (Obiora and Edozien 7). It is therefore a social, conceptual and normative framework that embodies the people's way of life in its totality. Africa's normative life regulates its economy and assisted her in precolonial times to achieve a sustainable livelihood (Ike, O:ibid). Gyekye defines culture as "an enactment of a community of people, created and fashioned in response to the whole gamut of problems or questions that arise in the context of a people's particular situation" (28). It implies that the ultimate purpose for the creation of culture is for the well-being of humans. Culture is the foundation of our precolonial Igbo economy, seen as the domestic management system of our indigenous peoples' way of life (Omenana)" (Ike, ibid). The key elements of African traditional ethics are customary behaviors (norms), taboos (sanctions) and values.

### **Customary behaviors or norms**

African norms as a body of beliefs or knowledge system can be considered also as a moral order as well as a legal order: "the lore of the land which is beyond the knowledge of many fathers" (Lindfors 141). This is the same as human positive laws. **Sanctions** are penalties and rewards for conduct concerning social norm. Conformity to the norms of the society attracts positive sanctions while negative sanctions involve fines, ostracism, banishment and even death. Sanctions reflect a culture's values and priorities. These prohibitions for Ike and Edozien guide four main areas of human behavior: Life, economy, harmony in the community and respect for ancestors (63-64).

**Values** are broad principles that underlie beliefs influence people's behavior and serve as criteria for evaluating the actions of others. A common value that imbues the African culture is *the joy of life* (Obiora and Edozien 27). Other values include hospitality, egalitarianism, respect for elders, patience, generosity, honesty, peace, order and harmony; communal co-operation, justice, courage and bravery. The underlying factor for these key elements is character building, refinement and stability within the cultural economy. So the moral education of the Igbo culture is the basis of its sustainable economy and sustenance. (Gykye, African ethics) (Gykye, African Ethics).

### **Education in traditional and pre-colonial Africa**

In African traditional cosmology, education is understood as a wholesome process of human learning that involves the transfer of knowledge, the learning of arts and the acquisition of skills and moral values (Dennis and Chingombe 149). Education in traditional Africa provided the fulcrum around which human activities such as the traditional economy revolved around and was the blueprint for self-realization and actualization; a process of socialization and transmission of what is worthwhile which, according to Fafunwa, consisted in developing the child's latent physical, moral intellectual skills skills; building his character, cultivation of respect for elders and those in authority; the acquisition of specific vocational training; the development of healthy attitude towards

honest labor; the development of sense of belonging and the capacity to participate actively in family and community affairs, and finally, to understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large (Babs 16; Ntamushobora F(2015). This system of education was both formal and informal. Apart from these, the other informal aspect of African indigenous education system was the initiation rites. According to Aja, “these initiations serve as the ‘birth’ of the young people into the state of maturity and responsibility.” (280). It will appear that the whole essence of African indigenous education is to prepare the young for family life for continued existence (Egbeke 279).

Traditional African education laid great emphasis on good morals and social conducts within the society. This is the reason for the inculcation of basic traditional and social values done through the instrumentality of folklore, idioms and proverbs through African oral ethics which provides grounds for intellectual stimulation and training among the children and youths. This is the equivalent of today’s ethical orientation and training of staff and students in tertiary institutions (Stulkelberger,2018; Nwala,218; Ike, *ibid*). Education in pre-colonial Africa was therefore not an end but a means to an end. Fafunwa paints a vivid picture of this truism and views “education in Old Africa was an integrated experience. It combined physical training with character-building and manual activity with intellectual training (Babs 16). From the foregoing, we can deduce the character of African indigenous education. It was a kind of education that was relevant to the environment. According to Rodney, education, under normal circumstances should grow out of the environment; the learning process being directly related to the pattern of work in the society. (Walter 262). It operated a kind of curricula that was dynamic, always changing according to the need of the society and did not conform to Western standards. One can say that pre-colonial education in most parts of Africa trained individuals morally and ethically to fit usefully into their society by learning and producing economic skills for self-sustenance, adapting to the role expectations and contributing to the development of the society. It was a comprehensive system of education that provided physical, moral, intellectual, social, emotional and vocational training that made for individual and societal development (Safiya 55).

### **The nature of colonial education**

“As in other parts of the world, literacy in Africa was connected with religion.” (Walter 263). The advent of white civilization in Africa brought the emergence of new patterns in African system of education. The main purpose of this education was to train Africans who would help the colonial masters in missionary evangelization and local administration that sought to instill a sense of deference towards all that was European and capitalist for colonial schooling was education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment. (Walter 264). There were elaborate “limitations of Western system of Education in Africa such that “the quality of education taught to African was poor by all European standards; the curricula was all about Europe and little or nothing about Africa; English and French language gained social respectability with the gradual recognition of their suitability for business and literature; a system of education that destroyed the African religious and cultural beliefs having assumed the role of arbiter of what was culturally correct and had equated the African culture and religion with the devil.

This is how the European colonial educational system destroyed African communalism and in its place enthroned capitalist individualism. (Walter 264 - 280). This brought about a colonial system undermined some of the virtues prized highly in precolonial African societies such as in Igboland and explains why Africa has somehow lost touch with reality. Values like honesty, fairness, truthfulness, good neighborliness, respect for traditional institutions are relegated today all in the name of civilization and modernization. This has led to the breakdown of social discipline and explains the corruption, violence and brutality experienced in most of our universities leading to irrelevancy of the system of education that created more unemployment, poverty, political instability and unaccountability in the social and political sphere (Agwanreze, 253). If Africa must be recaptured, she must see the negative sides of western education and consider an alternative contemporary system (Ike, 2015).

### **Background of higher education in Africa**

The colonial, neocolonial and post-colonial University System At Independence, the African University was regarded as ‘absolutely essential’ to development as the apex educational system and to the maintenance of ‘tradition’ (Chinweizu, 1974: P. 322). The Universities met the needs of nation building and transformation at the early years after Independence but a decline later set in (Falola: 597). According to him, “the contributions of Universities to nation building and academic careers – have changed considerably in response to nationalism, national and ethnic politics and declining economics” (598). But Obiora Ike disagreed and stated that “this declining economy is not a declining of material goods but the declining economy of our cultural values which have left our economies and institutions bereft and weakened” (Ike, 2019).

In Africa, the state has overwhelmed the Universities in many ways: creating them for specific ends; creating them to curb the political rascality of staff and students; and manipulating them to establish ideologies of political and cultural legitimation. The colonial and neocolonial origins of most Universities in Africa have created ethical challenges and problems of reproducing selfish national elites which have had a vicious cycle of negative impact on our Universities today. The need arose to “establish an African University in order to train Africans on ethics drawn from arguments drawn from several African cultural grounds: “the students would retain their cultural traditions and avoid the risk of being exposed to different environment and morality in Europe; poor people would have opportunities; and the final products would be good citizens different from these Africans who had assimilated European cultures and who were deficient in the qualities of courtesy, intelligence, and honesty” (Eric Ashby, 1966: 457).

According to Falola, “the first modern University was created in tropical Africa in order to create an African elite that would accept the notion of civilization as conceived by European missionaries” (p. 600). The Universities were expected to fulfill the European expectations of a University, rather than meet the developmental needs of Africa or adapt to African conditions” (Falola: p. 608). The administration of African Universities believed the institutions existed to transmit only western ideas and values to Africans and “that the new system had nothing to borrow from the previous. . . indigenous education system” (Eric Ashby: Ibid, 147-148).

The African University system, defined as ‘the African Academy, has rejected this imposed colonial, neocolonial and post-colonial politics of University education which from Independence till today, has overshadowed the sustainable ethical and social development of higher education in Africa. The concept of African Studies, Institutes of African Studies, African philosophy particularly, African Identity, African personality started producing scholarships that documented the existence of age-old Indigenous African culture rich with values, ethics and a moral framework that was part and parcel of the African indigenous educational system. As recognized by Falola, “S.O. Biobaku, the guru of University Administration in Nigeria, declared that university education should entail the transmission of what is best in African culture” (Biobaku, S.O: p 22). “Another University administrator declared that all programs are meaningless unless they are integrated into African culture, and the main ingredients of culture should be integrated in the students” (Wande Abumbila, 1983). The decline of the African academy results from the fact that University education has been perceived as a personal and selfish elitist promotion of individual interests and not about the promotion of the interests of common good, about the development of Africa.

### **Why is this so?**

The answer lies in the fact that the African academy has lost touch with the ethical and noble motivation behind the African indigenous cultural purpose of using education for the common good and the transformation of the African society. Regaining lost indigenous scholarship and disconnecting from the unwelcome western experience will be two ethical challenges for African Universities (Falola: 629). This will compel us to consider this concept of African cultural economics (ACE) as the model of transformation in higher education in Africa as proposed by Monsignor Obiora Ike. In all his writings and presentations, Professor Ike has always emphasized that “the only way African higher education can record sustainable progress and development is through the revitalization of Africa’s lost pre-colonial indigenous values which should be integrated into educational policy, curriculum, the people and the environment of education based upon the power of these values to bring about transformation. He observed that “the core values of each University’s founding fathers always captured the tenets of ACE with an example of what we have found in the core values of the founding fathers of the University of Nigeria” (Ike, Focus Report:2016). The successful transformation of people and the environment of education leads to the production of wholesome and value integrated citizens Ogbunweze (2016).

This transformation will lead to the environment of higher education with the ethical attributes of guaranteed quality assurance such as ethical and transparent management systems; people empowerment and participation with the core values of the founding fathers and driven with African indigenous values mixed with the best from Europe; mutual respect for human rights and humane values; collective responsibility of all for the common good of the institutions; fairness and justice in the pursuit of the goals of faculty and the departments; rule of integrity and respect for academic honesty; reward based upon hard work and merit for all promotion of staff and students; multi-cultural identity based upon multi-disciplinarity, multi-raciality and multi-sexuality, multi-religiosity, multi-culturality and human diversity; respect for time and deadlines by all stakeholders in carrying out academic duties, intellectual tasks and social responsibilities in the institution; production of graduates with character, dignity and leadership abilities; application of dialogue, peace and non-violence in the resolution of all

disagreements on and off campus; establishment of an ethical policy with a code of ethics and conduct for all stakeholders to guide the formation of ethical behavior in the environment and to achieve the twin balance of quality education and dignified graduates with good character (Obiora Ike :Pioneer African cultural economist and his educational ethics,2016: p34).

### **Ethical challenges facing higher education in Africa.**

Many ethical challenges face higher education in Africa today. We shall identify them summarily using projections drawn from current studies by scholars. In 2016, at the University of Nigeria, Globethics.net Geneva carried out a survey of 500 postgraduate teachers and supervisors under a training program to identify the ethical problems faced by the post Graduate Faculty in the school (Globethics Focus Report,2018). Between the year 2000 and 2016, before the commencement of the Globethics training, complaints were raised by stakeholders concerning issues faced by the Post Graduate Faculty of the University. These challenges were identified in a structured pre-training analysis carried out by the School Board under the supervision of the Dean of the School in 2015(Osadebe<sup>1</sup>).As identified, the issues raised were as follows:

- Lack of Teaching and supervision Ethics
- Poor work ethics/Need for Improved Work Ethics
- Poor Staff-Student relationship (mentoring approach)
- Intellectual dishonesty and other unethical research practices
- Lack/inadequacy of research collaboration skills
- Urgent need to improve and increase the quality of academic publications
- Unsatisfactory Service delivery and standards of prepared lectures/ lecture notes
- Delays in reading students submitted works, leading to delayed graduation
- Transcript issues vis a vis University ethical policy

Prevalence of intellectual fraud, dishonesty and plagiarism among academic staff and students. According to Professor Cristoph Stuckelberger(2020;Ike,2021;Anieke 2019) the goals of targeting this special group of teachers/supervisors in the training were to ensure the achievement of “ethics-oriented transformation of post-graduate faculties/programs; improvement in the global and national rating and competitiveness of the University of Nigeria as an academic institution; and to increase the capacity of the Post Graduate Teachers/Supervisors to deliver a value-added and timely supervision and quality teaching to students. From the survey reports, the objectives of the training, focused on achieving quality assurance and character transformation of the Postgraduate Faculty were meant to address the concerns raised in the pre-training survey by the Post graduate school viz:

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Amaka Osadebe was the immediate Dean, Postgraduate Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. It was under her tenure that the Globethics Focus/survey was carried out and the workshops on ethical orientation for Lecturers and Supervisors of the School were done as part of the Golbethics/University of Nigeria technical cooperation agreement on EHE.

Mitigate reputational risk of University of Nigeria within the global academic context

- Ethical transformation of PG Faculties
- Quality of Research Findings & Publications
- Global Rating of UNN as a University
- Achieve global competitiveness
- Positive mentoring and prompt graduation of students
- Quality control standards for appointment of PG supervisors
- Improvement of number and quality of publications

The relationship between the teachers and the students of the Faculty were also problematic as there were issues of lack of professional teaching, supervision and non-availability of the supervisors for supervision. The students were also identified to be disrespectful, noncommittal and not available when needed for classes and regular supervision. These unethical attitudes on their parts led to a strained and poor relationship between them. The University of Nigeria, at the end of the training, adopted the mentor-mentee relationship model to smoothen communication between the teachers and students not only in the Postgraduate Faculty but also in the undergraduate programs of the University. The mentor-mentee program was officially adopted as a basic component of the proposed ethical policy of the University( The ethical policy came into force in 2019<sup>2</sup>). Thus ethics leads to an improved culture of teaching, learning, research, relationships through the transformation of character and quality assurance. The training in ethics in higher education at the Faculty has led to solid outcomes identified by both the academic planning unit and the quality assurance departments of the University (Kammler,2020). Other training outcomes and impacts were also recorded in the behavior of both teachers and students of the Faculty viz:

- Acquisition/updating of research Leadership skills
- Improved communication skills
- Appreciation and integration of Integrity issues related to publication ethics and productivity
- Team spirit and improved collaborative skills at personal and group levels of research
- Improved personal life skills for overall success in life endeavors
- Improved ethical teacher/student relationship
- Improved and faster logistics for transcript management/policy
- Reduction in the incidence of sexual misconduct, sorting for marks and cultism.

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<sup>2</sup> The ethical policy work started under Professor Benjamin Ozumba as Vice Chancellor with informal inputs by other predecessors but it was under Professor Charles Igwe, the 15<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor that the Committee rounded it's work formally.

### **Theoretical foundations and clarifications of African Cultural Economics**

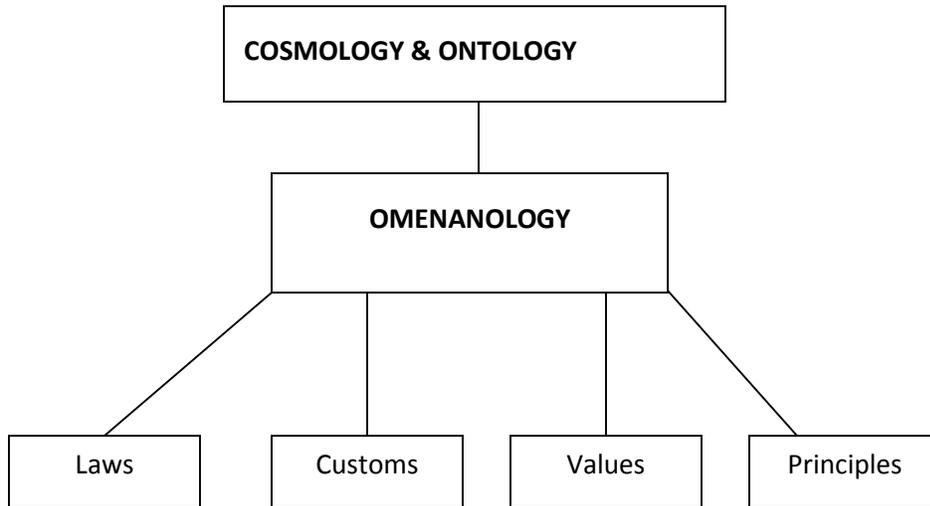
African cultural economics(ACE) is first and foremost a cosmological, ontological and ethical extraction from the Igbo people of the South East Nigeria which makes for harmonious, equitable, fair, value oriented, peaceful and sustainable living among them before the precolonial period(Ike,2005;2016;Ani 2018).Obiora Ike(2015) equates African cultural economics as a mechanism for institutional and societal discipline with equal moral integrity and force as Ubuntu(Ike,21) that seeks to understand the core values that were drawn from the culture and philosophy of indigenous African peoples everywhere before the colonial period.

In Obiology<sup>3</sup>, the principles are applied to humane sustainable living and organization of human societies as core ethical principles drawn from “Obi-Nwanne”- Love and care for one another, fairness to all, compassion for the suffering, selfless commitment of all to the common good; non-stealing of other’s goods and placing others before self. In downtown South of Africa, people identify indigenous ethical system as ‘Ubuntu’. Over here in uptown West African Igboland, in Nigeria, we identify it as Obinnwane or Obiology drawn from the broader theory of African cultural economics. From these cultural principles for organizing the pre-colonial African society our economy, household, organizations and human institutions come under the morphology of a value stream known as Igbology and Obiology. Igbology is seen as the philosophy that practices sustainable living among the Igbos in precolonial and contemporary times while ‘Obiology’ is the practice of compassionate and values oriented living in extant relationships that compel the strong not to take advantage of the weak and poor among them in the society(Ike,2015) The theory and practice of ethical principles and values drawn from pre-colonial African society, specifically in the economy of Igboland lead to the existence and prevalence of obinwanne-love and service of all as brothers and sisters without discrimination(Ike,ibid).With the training of ethics in higher education based on the principles drawn from Obinwanne the University system will not exploit those within and outside the system such as teachers,non-academic staff, students and the surrounding communities. Such ethics in higher education with African cultural economics as its drivers will achieve its primary mandate of producing quality products as ethical leaders and transform the environment of higher education both in the short and long run.

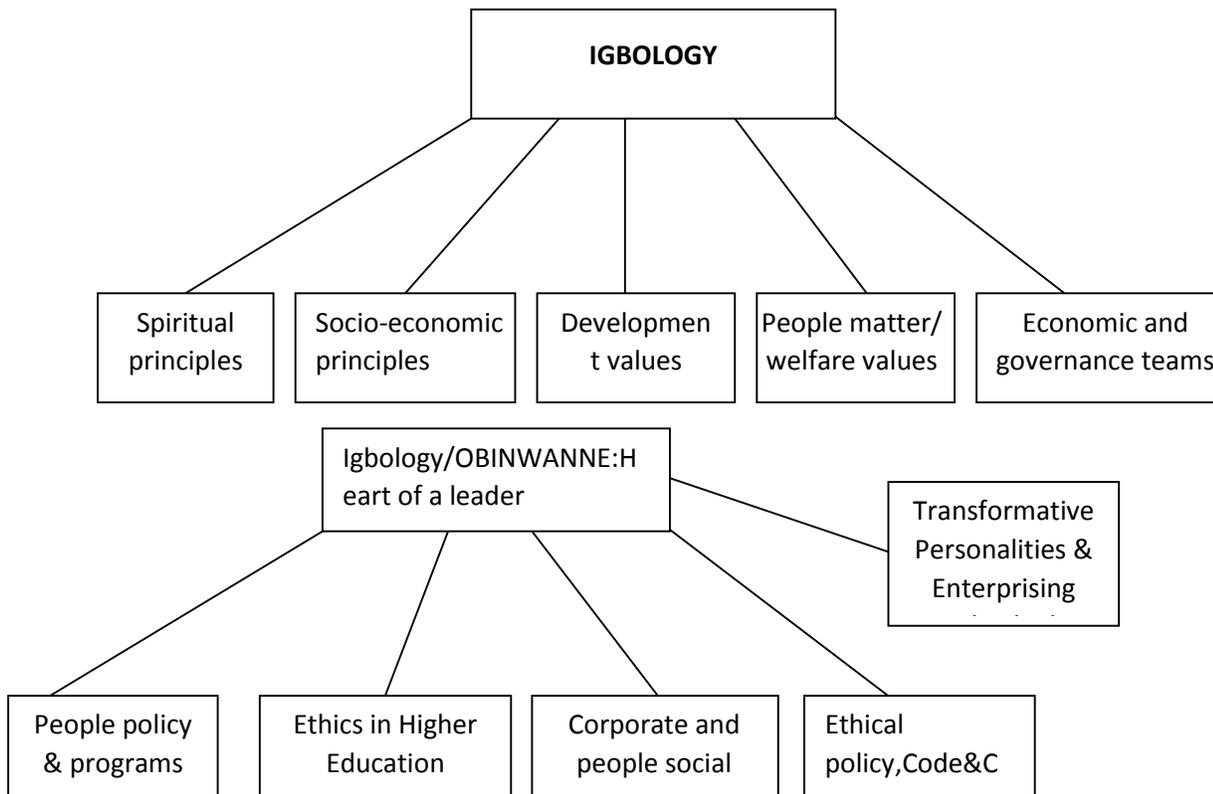
This exposition of African Cultural economics has been mainly based upon a mixture of social science methods. In the main, dialectical, historical, holistic and political economy approaches have been used to study the existing literature coupled with the pre-training analysis of the ethical crisis facing higher education during the training of postgraduate teachers and supervisors at the University of Nigeria in 2016 (Globethics;see Diagrams 1,step 1 and step 2)

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<sup>3</sup> Obiology stands,according to Professor Ike,as the ‘heart of love and human values’ or the principles that demonstrate what parallels Ubuntu as we know it’(Ike,2015;87)



**Diagram 1 First Step- cosmology & ontology= omenanology**



**Diagram 1 -Igbology Explicated in the economic, governance and developmental fields; Igbology embodied in a person or in an institution to deliver wellbeing, relive suffering or give a better future(Source: Authors)**

### **Scope, limitation and hypotheses of the paper**

The scope of the study is limited to an analysis of this source and original works combined with other related areas of study in the social sciences to portray and demonstrate the logical and dialectical cogency of the solutions embedded in the theory of African cultural economics and the achievement of sustainable development. The purpose of the paper is therefore to generate greater understanding, and debates of the ethics of African cultural economics for higher education and evaluate Monsignor Ike's pioneering contributions by global and regional scholars interested in bringing about authentic and sustainable solutions to Africa's endemic development crisis. Culture, as a way of life of an organized social and cultural groups, has been proven to be positively influential to economic, educational and development outcomes (Dahir,2017; ). Without ethical orientation processes in higher education taking into cognizance the cultural values and behavior patterns of thought and behavior of cultural groups, graduates from our Universities that emerge as a result have led the groups backward in distorted growth, unemployment and corrupt standards (African Center for Economic Transformation,2016; Safiya,2012) African cultural economics is a credible social science worthy of further study as an alternative panacea to Africa's underdevelopment crisis, especially in higher education (see diagram 1, first step).

Principles of ACE and their exposition in the Social Sciences portray African cultural economics as an emerging discipline: twin concepts of Igbology and Obiology as a Monsignor Professor's burden of theoretical exposition and practice. The recommendations for the transformation of the crisis in higher education in Africa flow necessarily and logically from the theory. According to the African cultural economic pioneer, the major problem facing economics in Africa is an abiding absence of African cultural values and principles in way our state leaders manage state economies, educational institutions and the private sector businesses. The language of Ethics ACE in higher education is inclusion, not exclusion'' (Ike,O,2012. Accordingly, Omenalogy, as the study of omenana, gives rise to African cultural economics a structured synthesis of the sustainable ways of living among the Igbos with values, norms and morality. These values, norms and ethics are understood as Igbology (the concentrated value-oriented corpus of managerial systems of the Igbos that informed and guided precolonial relationships. The purity and integrity of Igbology give rise to the spirit of love, brotherhood and kindness in each person known as 'obinwanne'. Thus people with obinwanne attitudes in higher institutions at every cadre are considered to be the panacea not only to the solution of ethical problems of universities but the sustainable answer to the leadership crisis faced by Africa.

### **Discussion**

According to Aidon Msafiri (2018), human resources are defined as individuals who constitute the ethical and efficient work force of an organization, society, business or a nation (Ozumba,& Ani:2017) define the business of the University as the production of quality and ethical leaders as citizens who would build the nation and the world. The training of human beings with ethics and excellence constitute the best means of refining them into human capital that could add value to their societies. Ethics in higher education helps Universities to achieve the

goals of ethical and quality human capital that can serve the world and make it a better place to be for all (Stuckelberger, 2016; Obiora Ike, 2016). According to Obiora Ike, in the Pioneer Inaugural lecture given at the Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu in 2012 “We can only succeed in the objectives of higher education with our culture as the sources of our higher education training since our people are more familiar with our Omenani (culture and tradition), its values and its sanctions”. To produce the requisite human capital needed for nation building in Nigeria and the construction of a better world free of violence, hate and corruption, we need to train and retrain our people, especially our undergraduates and postgraduates with a curriculum, teaching and learning materials infused with the cultural values of the land.

Regular exposure and daily practice of the core values of Omenana gives to the Igbological, ethical and managerial principles which transform individuals to personalities with Obinwanne values. Igbological ethical principles in the core values of the University Founding Fathers are *social responsibility, open-mindedness, teamwork, academic freedom, creativity, meritocracy, respect, integrity, accountability and transparency (Ethical policy, 2019: iv)*. By living and practicing these core values in the management, curriculum, teaching, learning and relationships the University become transformed into an environment of love, humane rights, mutual respect, excellence with high quality assurance of its graduates worthy in character and learning. Such an environment of higher education produces graduates that are capable of restoring the dignity of man and woman in nation building (see diagram step 2).

Constant manifestation of these principles give birth to an atmosphere of obinwanne (heart and love for other concerns, values and the common good). University administrations managed by personnel with the hearts of obinwanne not only love to achieve the common good for all stakeholders and place others above self but they are innovators and practitioners of ACE. With ACE such ethical administrators build transformative ethical policies such ethical codes of conduct, sexual misconduct, ethical clearance and anti-plagiarism policies as entrenched in the University of Nigeria.

We recommend the reconnection to the core ethical principles of Igbology and Obiology under Professor Ike’s African cultural economics to balance the best values from Europe and the ones drawn from our indigenous African culture to achieve ‘Obiwanne’ (the heart of Ummunna for others) under Obiology to achieve the sustainable transformation of our higher institutions today. What can we glean from the core values and principles of Igbology and Obiology as applied to ethics in higher education to make it more sustainable in the future? We picked on the trending unethical practices prevalent in higher institutions today such as plagiarism. Plagiarism—stealing and copying somebody’s intellectual property/work and presenting as if it is your original production. Stealing is against the Igbological ethics of Obiwanne. If you have Obiwanne—the ethics of care, respect, recognition and consideration of others and their creative works, intellectual properties, and material goods, you will not steal from or misappropriate what belongs to them and claim they are your own! If you want anything in other people’s possession, you must go to them and take their permission before making use of it (Ike, 2016: 102).

To ingrain this habit of Obinwanne in our ethical orientation of both students and staff is to call plagiarism stealing of what belongs to others. The attendant shock and moral revulsion that attend the sordid labelling of violators and such violations underscore the revulsion that is spontaneously attracted to acts stealing and thieves when they steal what belongs to others under traditional African ethics since today’s society must know that the

gods of the land follow up quickly with punishment such anti-obiwanne acts of seeking unfairly to acquire renown through entropic intellectual behaviors and attitudes. Today, the core values of the founding fathers of the University are considered the foundational cultural boost to reconstruct ethics in higher education in the University and capture the motto of the University ('to restore the dignity of man and woman) in the daily lives of the members of the University community.

Obinwanne, when leveraged upon in the daily academic, non-academic and social conduct of the University results in the transformation of character and the production of excellence in learning. This new spirit and practice of Obinwanne has helped the University to come up with a new ethical policy for the community that will empower stakeholders to checkmate and control some of the identified unethical practices observed during the pre-training poll by Globethics in the University.

The core values of the University belong culturally to the University's founding fathers. According to UNESCO they constitute a living heritage and an intangible source of our cultural and ethical heritage that could guide towards transformation and quality assurance as they also capture the essence and model of precolonial values of the Igbos propounded under ACE (Ike,2016; Ani,2018).They are well applied to define the content of the new ethical policy of the University to achieve transformation in learning, teaching and relationships. They had been used since 2014 for the ethical training and character orientation of the staff and students with good results in character building and good behavior in formation for ethical leadership and productive citizenship (Ozumba,2017; Ani,2018).

## **Conclusion**

The search for a more sustainable ethical solution to the challenges facing higher education institutions in Africa will, obviously, continue in the coming years. But we are more assured that adapting the core values of Igbology and Obiology under the African Cultural economics framework as reflected in the Founding Fathers' principles of restoration will change the architecture of ethics in higher education(EHE) at the University of Nigeria.

On a broader note, enculturation and acculturation of Obinwanne into EHE will assist Universities create a more sustainable platform that will re-define, sustain and benchmark the transformative character of goals of higher education in Africa. As demonstrated during and after the Globethics training of the post Graduate Faculty at the University of Nigeria in 2016.This transformation will take place as tertiary institutions seek regularly to balance African cultural values with what is drawn from Europe and other indigenous cultural value systems globally.

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