

Islamic Ethical Principles and The Administration of Higher Educational System in Nigeria

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Abstract

Educational leadership and decision-making in Nigerian higher institutions have increasingly been characterised by moral decline, administrative inefficiency, and the politicisation of authority. This paper examines these challenges through an Islamic ethical framework, arguing that the integration of Islamic moral and spiritual principles into leadership practice is essential for sustainable reform. Drawing on key Islamic concepts such as *‘adl* (justice), *amānah* (trust), *shūrā* (consultation), and *taqwā* (God-consciousness), the paper redefines leadership as a moral responsibility and a sacred trust rather than a means of personal aggrandisement. Using a qualitative and interpretive approach, the study explores how these principles can guide ethical governance, participatory decision-making, and transparent administrative processes in Nigerian higher education. The paper recommends value-based leadership training, establishment of ethics committees and adoption of consultative decision-making systems as practical steps toward institutional renewal. It concludes that Islamic ethical leadership provides not only a moral compass but also a pragmatic model for addressing leadership crises, restoring public trust and enhancing the overall performance of higher institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Islamic ethics principles, Nigerian higher institutions, educational leadership,

Decision-making, Islamic leadership

Introduction

Educational leadership and decision-making form the foundation of a functional higher education system, shaping institutional direction, values, and policy implementation. In Nigeria, however, challenges such as inadequate funding, insufficient qualified personnel, weak infrastructure, corruption, and political interference have eroded academic standards, institutional effectiveness, and overall morale (Ebisi, 2022:463), highlighting the urgent need for morally grounded leadership. While current administrative practices prioritise technical and managerial efficiency, they often overlook the ethical and spiritual values essential for fairness, trust, and accountability; consequently, Islamic leadership principles, rooted in divine guidance, justice, and responsibility, offer a viable framework for strengthening governance and restoring integrity in Nigerian higher institutions.

Persistent leadership crises, marked by poor decision-making, nepotism, and weak consultation, continue to plague Nigerian higher institutions despite regulatory interventions, reflecting a lack of value-based leadership rooted in ethical and spiritual accountability. This study therefore examines educational leadership and decision-making in Nigerian higher education through an Islamic ethical lens, with focus on identifying relevant principles, exploring their applicability to administrative practice, and assessing their role in enhancing transparency, accountability, and participatory governance. Accordingly, it investigates the foundational Islamic ethical guidelines for leadership, how they can be integrated into higher-education governance, and the extent to which they may improve institutional integrity and decision-making efficiency.

2. Conceptual Clarification

2.1 Educational Leadership

Educational leadership involves guiding an institution toward its goals through vision-setting, motivation, resource management, and a positive learning environment, supported by strategic planning and effective communication (Nwokocha, Kennedy-Nkwocha & Onyekwere, 2020:599). It promotes shared goals, collaboration, and continuous improvement (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005 in Salendab, 2025). In higher education, leadership extends beyond administration to providing intellectual and moral guidance, as leaders model integrity, fairness, and service (Salendab, 2025:32). Thus, educational leadership is both managerial and moral, ensuring accountability and performance while requiring ethical sensitivity and commitment to institutional values. The success of higher institutions depends on leaders' administrative competence as well as their moral uprightness.

2.2 Decision-Making in Higher Education

Decision-making is the intellectual process of selecting the most appropriate course of action from available alternatives to achieve desired goals by identifying alternatives, gathering information and assessing resolutions. In higher education, decision-making is crucial and includes a wide range of issues, such as academic planning, curriculum design, financial management, staff recruitment, student affairs, and policy formulation (Sucilawati, 2020:22). For this process to be effective, it must be based on rational judgment, consultation, and fairness. However, in many Nigerian higher institutions, decision-making processes are often centralised and influenced by personal or political interests rather than institutional welfare. Political interference, nepotism and

godfatherism are key factors that centralise decision-making and prioritise personal interests in Nigerian higher institutions. This erodes institutional autonomy, undermines meritocracy, and leads to decisions being made outside the university by political elites who may not be competent or interested in the institutions' welfare (Ebisi, 2022:465). A value-based approach rooted in ethical and consultative principles, such as those found in Islām, can help reverse this trend.

2.3 Leadership in Islām

Although Islamic leadership shares features with conventional models, it is distinguished by its religious and moral foundations, rooted in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and early Muslim practice. It is built on God-consciousness and ethical service, exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the four rightly guided caliphs, whose leadership embodied strong moral and spiritual values (Khaliq & Ogunsola, 2011:293). Leadership in Islam is a sacred trust (*amānah*) requiring justice (*ʿadl*), sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*), and *taqwā*, and every leader will be accountable before Allāh, as emphasised in the hadith: "each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be accountable for his subjects..." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Hadith 893). This highlights that leadership, including educational leadership, is a moral duty demanding fairness, sincerity, and accountability.

Educational leaders are entrusted with the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of learners and will be accountable to Allāh for this responsibility. In Islām, leadership is a form of service rather than privilege, as affirmed by the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying, "*the leader of a people is their servant*" (Al-Daylamī, n.d:9418), which reflects the essence of servant leadership. In education, this model demands humility, empathy, and commitment to the welfare of students and staff, fostering justice, cooperation, and ethical excellence that support lasting institutional and moral development (Atobatele, 2025:127).

2.4 Comparative Insight: Secular and Islamic Leadership Ethics

Islamic leadership aligns with secular qualities like competence and efficiency with moral and spiritual principles, integrating them with a vision grounded in divine accountability and service. While secular transformational leadership inspires followers toward a shared vision, Islamic leadership frames this vision within the context of fulfilling a divinely-ordained mission and the leaders' role as a trustee (*amānah*) accountable to God (Abbas & Tan, 2019:82). This approach requires leaders to exhibit qualities such as justice, trustworthiness, and patience (*ṣabr*) alongside professional skills.

Secular vs. Islamic Leadership

Feature	Secular Leadership	Islamic Leadership
Core Motivation	Driven by results, organisational goals, and followers' well-being.	Driven by fulfilling divine command, accountability to God and serving humanity.
Vision	Aims to inspire followers toward a vision that aligns with organisational goals and self-interest.	Grounded in divine accountability and moral service, with a vision to fulfil a divinely-ordained mission.
Accountability	Accountable to stakeholders, the organisation, and legal/ethical frameworks.	Accountable to God and followers, viewing leadership as a sacred trust (<i>amānah</i>).
Moral Dimension	Focuses on integrity, fairness, equity, social justice, and respect for diversity.	Encompasses a broader ethical framework based on Islamic tenets, emphasising justice, righteousness and care for the needy.
Key Qualities	Competence, efficiency, charisma, and strategic decision-making.	Consciousness of God, competency, consultation, consideration and patience (<i>ṣabr</i>).

In essence, Islamic leadership is holistic; it balances intellectual, ethical, and spiritual dimensions. It is not only about achieving institutional goals but also about cultivating moral character, ensuring justice, and upholding trust.

3. Theoretical and Islamic Framework

3.1 Theoretical Foundation of Leadership and Decision-Making

Leadership studies have developed through different theories, notably transformational, servant, and ethical leadership. Transformational leadership describes a process in which leaders and followers grow morally and work toward shared goals through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and personalised support, encouraging creativity and innovation (David & Omeoga, 2023:1389). This approach, which highlights mentoring and leading by example, closely aligns with Islamic leadership principles that emphasise moral influence and exemplary conduct. Servant leadership, introduced by Greenleaf (Greenleaf, 1977) aligns with Islamic teachings, which regard leadership as *'ibādah* (worship) and *amānah* (trust) from God, requiring accountability and service to the

community (Khaliq & Ogunsola, 2011:295). Both frameworks emphasise moral duty, the common good, and prioritising others' welfare over self-interest. Servant leadership stresses humility, empathy, attentive listening, healing, and building community, asserting that true leaders place followers' needs above personal ambition. Its core idea is that serving others is the most effective path to individual and organisational success.

Ethical leadership centres on integrity, fairness, and moral decision-making, with leaders serving as moral role models who encourage ethical behaviour through their actions and relationships (Noibi & Atobatele, 2020:118). Like Islamic ethics, it stresses justice and integrity, though Islamic thought adds the key concept of *taqwā*, requiring leaders to act consistently, uphold fairness, and inspire ethical conduct (Atobatele, 2025:125). Thus, this paper highlights the shared foundations between modern leadership theory and Islamic ethical principles, particularly their mutual focus on morality, service, and accountability.

3.2 Core Principles of Islamic Leadership and Decision-Making

Islamic leadership is fundamentally guided by divine injunctions and prophetic traditions. It embodies a moral philosophy that governs how authority is exercised and how decisions are made. The following principles form the bedrock of Islamic leadership ethics:

i. **Justice (‘*Adl*)**

Justice is one of the cardinal principles of Islam and a key requirement in leadership at all levels, including higher institutions. In Islam, justice means fairness, equity and giving everyone their due right without discrimination or favouritism. It is the foundation of good governance, moral integrity and institutional harmony (Attahiru, 2021:216). In Islam, justice is a divine command from Allāh as He says:

Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded (Q16:90).

This *āyah* (verse) explains that justice must guide all actions, decisions and policies of leaders. In the Prophet's teachings, justice is a condition for successful leadership and accountability before Allāh. In this context, justice is essential for peace, productivity, and academic excellence. Islamic leadership requires university authorities, such as vice-chancellors, rectors, provosts, deans, and heads of departments, to treat staff and students fairly by making impartial decisions on admissions, promotions, and discipline. They must avoid favouritism, tribalism, and nepotism in appointments and resource distribution while ensuring transparency and accountability. The Prophet (ﷺ) exemplified perfect justice, treating all people equally regardless of social or tribal background. He said:

The most beloved of people to Allāh on the Day of judgement and the closest to Him will be just a leader (Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1329).

Leaders in higher institutions who follow this prophetic model will inspire trust, unity and academic growth. This is because, when justice prevails in higher institutions, staff and students feel respected and motivated. Conflicts, strikes and corruption are minimised.

(ii) Trust and Accountability (*Amānah*)

In Islam, *amānah* refers to trust, responsibility, and accountability, and is a key moral and spiritual foundation of leadership. Leaders are expected to carry out their duties faithfully and justly as a trust from Allāh (Abbas & Tan, 2019:83). In higher institutions, *amānah* guides leaders to uphold integrity, honesty, and fairness in administrative, academic, and moral duties. Allāh likewise stresses the importance of trust in leadership thus:

Indeed, Allāh commands you to render trusts to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, judge with justice (4:58).

Prophet Muhammad (ṢAW) also said:

When a man governs over ten people, he will be brought shackled on the day of Judgement until justice brings him to deliverance or injustice brings about his ruin (Musnad Ahmad, Hadith 23498).

The *āyah* and hadīth above show that leadership is a trust, not a privilege, requiring honesty and accountability. Leaders must avoid using their positions for personal gain, favouritism, or oppression, and instead serve with sincerity (*ikhhlās*), competence (*kifāyah*), and justice (*‘adl*). Thus, *amānah* in higher-institution leadership embodies integrity, accountability, and responsible stewardship, urging leaders to act as role models and ensure their institutions promote both intellectual and moral excellence (Abbas & Tan, 2019:83).

(iii) Consultation (*Shūrā*) and Decision-Making

Shūrā represents a fundamental principle of Islamic governance. It refers to the process of consultation and collective deliberation before making decisions. It is based on verses in the Qur’ān that command leaders to consult with their people on matters of public interest before making a final decision. The *Majlis al-Shūrā* (consultative council), is a common institutional form that embodies this principle (Sucilawati, 2020:19). Thus, a leader in Islām is not autocratic but participatory relying on the wisdom of the community and the moral compass of the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Allāh says:

And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affairs are conducted by mutual consultation among them.... (Q42:38).

The Prophet (ṢAW) practised *shūrā* with his *ṣahābah* (companions) on crucial matters such as military strategies and community welfare, despite being divinely guided. A very good example of this happened in the battle of the trench, where the suggestion provided by Salman Al-Farsi saved the Muslim ummah from the plot of the Quraysh and their allies (Al-Mubārakpūrī, 2001). This practice institutionalises participation and accountability, ensuring that decisions are not made based on personal whims. In higher education, *shūrā* promotes teamwork, inclusiveness, and transparency through collaborative decision-making. By integrating diverse perspectives and

encouraging shared responsibility, it fosters community, ethical governance, better learning outcomes, and innovation, while helping institutions avoid groupthink. *Shūrā* values the varied experiences and talents of all stakeholders, including staff and students, creating equitable environments where everyone can succeed (Ahmed, Nasiru & Abdullah, 2022:41). University councils, senates, and committees can adopt *shūrā*-based processes to ensure participatory management, decentralisation, and decisions that reflect collective wisdom.

(iv) Sincerity and Integrity (*Ikhlās*)

In Islām, sincerity (*ikhhlās*) signifies purity of intention and freedom from ulterior motives, i.e. doing all actions solely for the pleasure of Allāh and the welfare of the people, not for worldly recognition or personal benefit (Al-Ghazālī, 2019). To this, Allāh says: “*And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, sincere to Him in religion...*” (Q98:5). Prophet Muhammad (ṢAW) also emphasised sincerity when he said: “*actions are judge by intentions, and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended*” (Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī, 1:1). In leadership, *ikhhlās* ensures that every decision and action is motivated by a sense of divine duty, moral integrity, and commitment to service (Abbas & Tan, 2019:83). Higher institutions are centres of learning, research, and moral formation. Their success depends largely on the ethical quality of their leadership. When leaders demonstrate sincerity and integrity, they can create an atmosphere of trust, fairness and accountability that supports institutional excellence.

(e) God-Consciousness (*Taqwā*)

God-consciousness (*Taqwā*) is the moral compass that guides a leader’s actions and decisions. It cultivates self-discipline and deters corruption and injustice. A God-conscious leader recognises the spiritual dimension of authority and acts with humility, knowing that ultimate accountability lies with Allāh (Atobatele, Zubair & Odeniyi, 2024:199). This inner awareness promotes ethical governance and deters abuse of power.

3.3 Qur’anic and Prophetic Foundations of Leadership Ethics

The Qur’ān and Sunnah provide explicit directives on the nature of leadership. Prophet Muhammad (ṢAW) demonstrated exemplary leadership characterised by consultation, justice, humility, and compassion. Allāh instructs leaders to judge with fairness, uphold trust, and act with sincerity (Q4:58; Q16:90). The Prophet’s (ṢAW) leadership of the early Muslim community offers a practical model of participatory decision - making (Ahmed, Nasiru & Abdullah, 2022:41). For instance, during the Battle of Uhud, he consulted his companions on whether to defend Madīnah within its walls or meet the enemy outside, a classic demonstration of *shūrā* in governance (Al-Mubārakpūrī, 2001:167). These textual and historical examples serve as the normative foundation of Islamic educational leadership. They highlight that moral integrity, justice, and shared responsibility are not optional virtues but divine obligations.

3.4 Relevance of the Islamic Framework to Nigerian Higher Institutions

The Nigerian higher education sector can benefit significantly from integrating Islamic leadership ethics into its governance structures. The principles of ‘*adl*, ‘*amānah*, ‘*shūrā*, ‘*ikhhlās*, and ‘*taqwā* collectively foster moral discipline, participatory management, and accountability. In a context where corruption, favoritism and weak decision-making processes often hinder progress

(Salendab, 2025). Islamic ethics provide a corrective framework that emphasises spiritual responsibility and institutional justice. By applying these principles, educational leaders in Nigeria can nurture integrity-driven institutions that balance administrative efficiency with moral purpose, ultimately contributing to national educational reform and societal development.

4. Educational Leadership and Decision-Making in Nigerian Higher Institutions

4.1 Overview of Leadership Structures in Nigerian Higher Education

Nigeria's higher education system, comprising universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, has distinct leadership structures. Universities are led by the Vice-Chancellor (CEO), supported by the Registrar (chief administrator and secretary to major councils) and the Bursar (financial head) (Nwokocha, Kennedy-Nkwocha & Onyekwere, 2020:598). Polytechnics and colleges of education have similar arrangements headed by the Rector or Provost, assisted by governing councils and committees (National Board for Technical Education, NBTE, 2023:2-4). Although these structures are intended to encourage participatory governance, authority in practice is often centralised, allowing top officials or political actors to dominate decision-making, thereby weakening collective participation and accountability.

4.2 Challenges of Leadership and Decision-Making in Nigerian Higher Institutions

Nigeria's higher education system continues to struggle with leadership challenges that undermine its effectiveness and credibility, despite having a structured administrative framework. Key problems include highly centralised, top-down decision-making that limits stakeholder input; political interference in appointing vice-chancellors, rectors, and provosts, which weakens institutional autonomy; and persistent corruption and mismanagement, such as financial irregularities, nepotism, and favouritism, which erode public trust (Audu, 2023:235). Leadership training often neglects ethical and spiritual values, leading some administrators to view their positions as personal privileges rather than sacred trusts, while poor consultation and lack of transparency mean committees often function only in name, resulting in weak *shūrā*, communication gaps, and industrial tensions (Audu, 2023:237).

4.3 The Need for Ethical Leadership in Nigerian Higher Education

Leadership and decision-making in education are not purely administrative but deeply moral acts that affect the lives and futures of many. The failure of leadership in Nigerian higher institutions has often been linked to the erosion of moral values and the absence of accountability. Erosion of integrity, a culture of corruption, and a lack of accountability are seen as key drivers of this failure (Masorong, 2025:25). This situation calls for a paradigm shift toward a value-driven leadership framework that integrates moral, spiritual, and intellectual competence. Islamic leadership principles, if properly applied, can fill this ethical vacuum. By emphasising justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), and trust (*amānah*), they provide leaders with a sense of divine accountability that transcends personal interest. Moreover, the focus on *taqwā* (God-consciousness) ensures that decisions are made not merely for administrative convenience but in accordance with moral and ethical responsibility (Khaliq & Ogunsola, 2011:294).

4.4 Islamic Ethical Response to Leadership Challenges

Applying Islamic principles to the leadership challenges in Nigerian higher institutions provides practical solutions against the following:

Centralisation of Power: The principle of *shūrā* promotes inclusive decision-making through collective deliberation (Attahiru, 2021:219). This can be achieved by empowering academic and administrative committees to play active roles in governance.

Political Interference: The Islamic principle of *‘adl* demands fairness and meritocracy in leadership appointments (Atobatele, Zubair & Odeniyi, 2024:201). Universities should strengthen internal selection processes to ensure that only qualified and morally upright individuals assume leadership positions.

Corruption: The value of *amānah* (trust) and *taqwā* (God-consciousness) discourages misuse of public resources (Noibi & Atobatele, 2020:120). Leaders who recognise their accountability before Allāh are less likely to engage in unethical conduct.

Moral Decay: The principle of *ikhhlās* (sincerity) fosters integrity and service-oriented leadership (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1:1). Administrators should view their roles as acts of worship and stewardship rather than opportunities for personal enrichment.

5. Integrating Islamic Ethical Principles into Leadership Practice

5.1 Institutionalising *Ikhhlās* (Sincerity) and *Taqwā* (God-Consciousness)

Sincerity (*ikhhlās*) and God-consciousness (*taqwā*) elevate leadership from mere professionalism to moral and spiritual stewardship. They remind leaders that their authority is not self-derived but a divine trust for which they are answerable. To integrate these principles into higher education management, institutions can introduce regular ethical and spiritual leadership training sessions for administrators and academic heads. They can encourage reflection on ethical obligations through retreats, seminars, and mentorship programmes. Institutional cultures should also be established to reward honesty, transparency, and service-oriented leadership. When leaders act with sincerity and God-consciousness, they make decisions based on moral conviction rather than political or material gain (Khaliq & Ogunsola, 2011:294). Such leaders cultivate institutional integrity and serve as moral exemplars for staff and students alike.

5.2 Developing Leadership Training Based on Islamic Ethical Values

To achieve long-term transformation, leadership training programmes should incorporate Islamic ethical principles as part of their curricula. This can be achieved through collaboration with Islamic scholars and ethics experts to design leadership modules that blend professional management skills with Qur’anic values. Establishment of Centres for Ethical Leadership and Governance (CELG) within universities to promote research and training in value-based leadership. There should also be inclusion of Islamic ethical leadership courses in postgraduate programmes in education, management, and public administration. Similarly, Partnership with professional bodies like the Association of Vice-Chancellors and Colleges of Education administrators to institutionalise ethics as a benchmark for leadership selection and evaluation. These measures will not only raise the moral quality of leaders but also cultivate an enduring culture of ethical governance across

Nigeria's higher education system. The integration of Islamic ethical principles into leadership practice is expected to yield several positive outcomes, such as enhanced moral accountability and reduced corruption. Strengthened institutional cohesion through participatory governance and improved transparency in decision-making and resource management (Atobatele, Zubair & Odeniyi, 2024:201). Ultimately, Islamic ethical leadership provides a holistic approach that addresses not only the administrative but also the moral dimensions of governance.

6. Implications for Policy and Practice

6.1 Reorientation of Leadership Philosophy in Higher Education

The persistent leadership and decision-making challenges in Nigerian higher institutions highlight the need for a fundamental reorientation of leadership philosophy. Presently, administrative training emphasises technical management skills, while moral and ethical components receive minimal attention. This imbalance has produced leaders who are efficient in administrative procedures but deficient in ethical and spiritual accountability (Ebisi, 2022:470).

An Islamic ethical framework offers a comprehensive approach to leadership that balances administrative competence with moral consciousness. Educational policies should therefore incorporate value-based leadership training grounded in Islamic ethical principles such as *'adl* (justice), *amānah* (trust), and *taqwā* (God-consciousness). This reorientation would not only enhance moral integrity among administrators but also improve institutional harmony and public trust.

6.2 Policy Recommendations for Ethical Governance

To embed Islamic ethical principles in Nigerian higher education leadership, several policy measures are recommended.

- (i) **Ethical Education in Leadership Training (EELT):** Leadership programmes by NUC, NBTE, and NCCE should incorporate Islamic and moral ethics to promote accountability, humility, and sincerity.
- (ii) **Institutional Ethics Committees (IEC):** Every institution should form an Ethics and Integrity Committee to enforce ethical standards, address misconduct, and ensure fair, transparent decisions.
- (iii) **Merit-Based Appointments:** Guided by *'adl*, leadership positions such as vice-chancellors, rectors, and provosts should be filled based on moral integrity, competence, and service, not politics or personal ties.
- (iv) **Participatory Decision-Making:** Applying *shūrā* encourages inclusiveness and collective responsibility, requiring senates, boards, and committees to serve as true deliberative bodies.
- (v) **Accountability and Transparency Mechanisms (ATM):** In line with *amānah*, institutions should maintain transparent financial systems, conduct periodic audits, and adopt open reporting to uphold ethical governance.

6.3 Strengthening Collaboration between Scholars and Administrators

The successful integration of Islamic ethics into educational leadership requires collaboration between Islamic scholars, educational administrators, and policymakers. Scholars can provide the moral and theological foundation, while administrators translate these principles into actionable policies. Universities can establish interdisciplinary platforms that bring together various faculties,

Islamic studies, and management sciences to develop research-based strategies for ethical leadership and decision-making (Abbas & Tan, 2019:82). Such partnerships will bridge the gap between theory and practice and create a shared vision for moral reform in higher education governance. Therefore, beyond policy formulation, there is a need to institutionalise a culture of integrity across higher education. This can be achieved through; Ethical Mentorship Programmes (ETP), Reward Systems for Ethical Behaviour, Public Accountability Forums (PAF).

7. Conclusion

This study has examined educational leadership and decision-making in Nigerian higher institutions through an Islamic ethical lens. It was established that most leadership crises and administrative inefficiencies in the tertiary education sector stem from a neglect of moral and spiritual values. The dominance of materialistic, politicised, and self-serving leadership orientations has weakened the institutional culture of justice, transparency, and accountability. Drawing from Islamic ethical principles such as *'adl* (justice), *amānah* (trust), *shūrā* (consultation), and *taqwā* (God-consciousness), the study proposed a redefinition of leadership and decision-making frameworks. These values provide a holistic approach that harmonises administrative competence with moral responsibility and spiritual awareness. Adopting this framework by Nigerian higher institutions requires a lot. It requires concrete policy reforms that integrate ethical education into leadership training, establish institutional ethics committees and enforce merit-based systems of appointment and promotion. The paper concludes that the future of higher education leadership in Nigeria depends on conscious moral reawakening anchored on ethical values.

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