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## Editorial Desk

I have the honour of introducing the inaugural issue of the *LASU Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS)*, Volume 1, Number 1 (December 2025). This maiden publication represents a significant step in the commitment of Lagos State University to advancing rigorous, multidisciplinary scholarship focused on Nigerian realities.

LASUJMNS was established to provide a credible academic platform for high-quality research that interrogates the social, economic, political, educational, cultural, and technological frameworks in Nigeria. The journal responds to the growing need for scholarly work that moves beyond single-discipline approaches and offers integrated, evidence-based perspectives capable of informing policy, practice, and public discourse.

As a peer-reviewed, biannual, open-access journal, LASUJMNS is committed to academic excellence, ethical publishing, and accessibility. All submissions undergo a rigorous double-blind peer review process in line with international best practices and the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Only original, methodologically sound, and relevant manuscripts are considered for publication.

The articles featured in this inaugural issue reflect the multidisciplinary scope and scholarly standards of the journal. They address contemporary Nigerian issues across key sectors, which offers insightful analyses, empirical findings, and practical implications that contribute meaningfully to national development discussions.

I sincerely appreciate the dedication of the Editorial and Advisory Boards, the professionalism of our reviewers, and the confidence of the authors who contributed to this first volume. Their collective efforts have laid a strong foundation for the journal. On behalf of the Editorial Board, I invite scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to engage with this issue and to partner with us in building a vibrant platform for multidisciplinary Nigerian studies.

**Prof. M. O. B. Mohammed, FNAEAP**

Editor-in-Chief

*LASU Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS)*

Lagos State University.

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## PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASUREMENTS TO FOSTERING ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG TERTIARY EDUCATION STUDENTS IN LAGOS STATE

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the effectiveness of psychological measurements to promote ethical behaviours among students in tertiary education. As unethical conduct among students raises concerns about future professional ethics, educational institutions increasingly seek evidence-based strategies for instilling ethical values. This study employs a quasi-experimental research design to evaluate the impact of three key psychological interventions: moral reasoning training, value clarification exercises, and behavioural reinforcement strategies. A sample of 200 undergraduate students across three universities was divided into control and intervention groups, each receiving tailored psychological interventions over a 12-week period. Ethical behaviour was assessed using the Ethical Behaviour Scale (EBS), a validated instrument measuring honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. Statistical analysis using paired t-tests and ANOVA revealed significant improvements in the ethical behaviours of students who participated in the interventions, with the behavioural reinforcement group demonstrating the highest mean increase ( $p < 0.01$ ). Findings suggest that psychological interventions grounded in cognitive-behavioural theory can positively influence ethical decision-making and behaviour. These results underscore the potential of structured psychological programs to reinforce ethical standards in higher education contexts. Implications for educational policy include the integration of ethics-focused psychological training into curricula, aiming to cultivate ethical awareness and social responsibility among students. This study is recommended to examine the long-term effects of these interventions and to explore culturally adaptive ethical training for diverse student populations. This study contributes to the understanding of how psychological methods can shape ethical behaviour in educational settings, offering insights into fostering a generation of ethically-minded professionals.*

### Keywords:

Ethical Behaviour,  
Psychological Interventions,  
Moral Reasoning, Cognitive-  
Behavioural Theory

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### Introduction

Fostering ethical behaviour in tertiary education students has gained attention due to increasing incidents of academic dishonesty and ethical misconduct in professional environments. The transition from secondary to tertiary education represents a critical period for moral

development, as students begin to make autonomous decisions in academic and social settings (Mayhew & Engberg, 2021). Researchers suggest that higher education institutions play a vital role in shaping students' ethical standards, which can influence their future professional behaviours and societal contributions (Beauchamp & Childress, 2022).

Psychological approaches have shown promise in encouraging ethical behaviours by targeting underlying cognitive, emotional, and social processes. For example, moral reasoning training, rooted in Kohlberg's theory of moral development, can help students progress to higher levels of ethical understanding by challenging their reasoning about moral dilemmas (Walker, 2023). Additionally, value clarification exercises, often incorporated into cognitive-behavioural interventions, enable students to reflect on and prioritize their personal values, aligning them with ethical standards (Freeman & Brown, 2022). Reinforcement strategies have also been successful in promoting desirable behaviours in educational settings, as positive reinforcement can shape behaviours through reward-based systems (Grant & Schneider, 2023).

Despite the potential benefits, empirical research on structured psychological interventions to promote ethics in higher education is limited, particularly in diverse cultural settings. Recent studies emphasize the need for culturally adaptive ethical training to address the varied backgrounds of students in globalized educational environments (Lee et al., 2022). This study, therefore, aims to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of targeted psychological approaches in fostering ethical behaviour among tertiary students, contributing to a nuanced understanding of ethics education in diverse educational contexts.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite increased focus on academic ethics, incidents of unethical behaviour, including cheating, plagiarism, and disregard for academic integrity, remain prevalent in tertiary education institutions. This persistent issue not only undermines the educational process but also raises concerns about the ethical standards students will carry into their professional lives. While several institutions incorporate ethical guidelines into their policies, these approaches often lack the psychological support necessary to foster genuine ethical behaviour. Psychological approaches, including moral reasoning training, value clarification, and behavioural reinforcement, offer promising avenues for cultivating ethical attitudes in students by addressing the underlying cognitive and emotional factors that influence decision-making. However, empirical research on the effectiveness of these interventions in a tertiary education context is limited, particularly within culturally diverse student populations (Lee et al., 2022). This study seeks to address this gap by examining the effectiveness of structured psychological interventions in promoting ethical behaviour among tertiary students. The findings aim to provide evidence-based insights into the development of effective ethics education strategies that support students in not only understanding ethical principles but also in applying them consistently, thereby preparing them to uphold ethical standards in their future professional roles.



## Research Question

1. To what extent do psychological interventions (moral reasoning training, value clarification, and behavioural reinforcement) influence ethical behaviour in tertiary education students?

## Hypotheses

1. **H0<sub>1</sub>:** Psychological interventions (moral reasoning training, value clarification, and behavioral reinforcement) will not significantly improve the ethical behavior of tertiary education students compared to students who do not receive any intervention.
2. **H0<sub>2</sub>:** There will be no significant difference in the effectiveness of behavioral reinforcement, moral reasoning training, or value clarification in promoting honesty and responsibility in ethical behavior among tertiary students.

## Literature Review

The study of ethical behavior in tertiary education is essential, as universities are instrumental in shaping future professionals' moral standards and integrity. In recent years, researchers have explored various psychological approaches to enhance ethical behavior among students. These approaches—moral reasoning training, value clarification, and behavioral reinforcement—have been shown to effectively address the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of ethical development (Freeman & Brown, 2022; Walker, 2023).

Moral reasoning training is grounded in Kohlberg's theory of moral development, which posits that individuals progress through stages of moral reasoning, from basic self-interest to principled ethical thinking. By engaging students in structured exercises that challenge their moral assumptions, moral reasoning training helps them reflect on ethical dilemmas and develop higher-level moral reasoning skills (Beauchamp & Childress, 2022). Research has shown that students who undergo moral reasoning interventions exhibit improved ethical judgment and decision-making, suggesting that such training can significantly contribute to ethical growth (Freeman & Brown, 2022).

Value clarification is another effective psychological approach. This technique involves helping students identify, examine, and affirm their core values, thus enabling them to align their behavior with ethical standards (Rokeach, 2022). Value clarification interventions allow students to reflect on their personal values in the context of broader ethical principles, which fosters self-awareness and moral consistency. Studies suggest that students who participate in value clarification programs show greater ethical awareness and a stronger commitment to integrity (Mayhew & Engberg, 2021).

Behavioral reinforcement, rooted in operant conditioning theory, uses rewards and consequences to promote ethical behavior. Positive reinforcement, such as recognition for ethical actions, encourages students to adopt desirable behaviors and discourages unethical conduct (Grant & Schneider, 2023). Research has shown that when students are rewarded for behaviors that reflect honesty, respect, and responsibility, they are more likely to internalize

these values and exhibit ethical behavior consistently (Walker, 2023). Additionally, this method has been effective in reducing instances of academic dishonesty and promoting a culture of ethical accountability in academic institutions (Lee et al., 2022).

Cultural considerations are increasingly recognized as an essential factor in ethics education, as students from diverse backgrounds may interpret ethical values differently. Lee et al. (2022) highlight that culturally adaptive ethics training can enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of ethical interventions, as ethical principles are often understood through cultural lenses. Thus, an approach that considers cultural diversity is more likely to resonate with a broader student population and foster a more comprehensive understanding of ethics.

However, empirical studies on these psychological interventions, especially in the context of culturally diverse tertiary education settings, remain limited. By examining the effectiveness of these psychological approaches across varied student backgrounds, this study aims to fill a crucial research gap, contributing valuable insights into the implementation of effective ethics education in tertiary institutions.

## Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative experimental design to evaluate the effectiveness of psychological interventions, moral reasoning training, value clarification, and behavioural reinforcement, in promoting ethical behaviour among tertiary education students. A pretest-posttest control group design was used. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups: three intervention groups (moral reasoning, value clarification, and behavioral reinforcement) and one control group, which received no intervention. This design enables the comparison of changes in ethical behaviour across groups, helping to determine the effectiveness of each intervention. The sample consisted 200 undergraduate students from three universities, representing diverse cultural backgrounds. Participants were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across academic disciplines and year levels. Ethical guidelines, including voluntary participation and confidentiality, was strictly followed, with informed consent obtained from each participant. The primary instrument for measuring ethical behaviour is the Ethical Behavior Scale (EBS), a validated tool designed to assess dimensions of ethical conduct such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. The EBS has been shown to have high reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.85$ ) and was administered before and after the interventions to evaluate changes in participants' ethical behaviour.

## Data Analysis

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do psychological interventions influence ethical behavior in tertiary education students?

**Table 1: Comparison of Mean attitude rating and Standard Deviation Scores of Students in the Experimental and Control Groups.**

Method of instruction	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Mean Difference
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		N	Mean	Std.dev	Mean	Std.dev	
Ethical Behavior interaction		100	3.08	0.34	4.14	0.19	<b>1.06</b>
Conventional Method		100	3.06	0.3	3.64	0.41	0.58

Table 1 revealed the results on the differences in the mean attitude ratings of students that used interactive simulation strategy and those taught using conventional method/strategy. The results indicated 3.08 and 4.14 as mean ratings for Ethical Behavior interaction students' attitude to those that used conventional method/strategy respectively. This gave a mean gain of 1.06. In the category of students using conventional strategy, 3.0 and 3.64 values were recorded as students' attitude ratings toward NR before and after the lesson which gave a mean gain of 0.58. Thus, it showed that students taught using Ethical Behavior interaction have better average attitude than their counterparts taught using conventional strategy.

### Hypothesis Testing:

1. Psychological interventions will significantly improve the ethical behaviour of tertiary education students compared to those who do not receive any intervention.

**Result:** Supported. All intervention groups showed significant improvement in ethical behaviour compared to the control group ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 1: Analysis of Covariance on the Mean Intervention Ratings of Students using ethical behavior Strategy and those that do not receive any intervention**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
		2					
Corrected Model	2.00a		.49	4.53	.00	.12	
Intercept	10.71	1	10.71	98.28	.00	.43	
Pre-EBS	1.19	1	1.19	10.95	.00	.08	
EBS and NI	.58	1	.58	5.28	.02	.04	
Error	14.17	130	.11				
Total	1861.63	135					
Corrected Total	16.14	134					

Dependent Variable: Post-EBS, a. R Squared = .12 (Adjusted R Squared = .10)

The results in Table 1 revealed that  $F(1, 130) = 5.28$  at  $P = 0.02$ , Since  $P = 0.02 < 0.05$ . The null hypothesis of no significant difference is therefore rejected. Also, Table 1 revealed the interaction effects of EBS on Intervention was significantly different. This is given by F-value of 5.28 and a corresponding P-value of 0.02 which was less than the value of 0.05 level of significance. That is, there is a significant difference between EBS and NI. The Eta-square

(0.04) was reported. This indicated that about 4% of attitude's improvement noticed at Post-EBS (dependent variable) is contributed by independent variable EBS.

**2:** Behavioural reinforcement will be more effective in promoting honesty and responsibility than moral reasoning or value clarification.

**Result:** Supported. Behavioural reinforcement group showed the highest increase in honesty and responsibility scores ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 2: Analysis of Covariance on the Mean Behavioural reinforcements of Students in promoting HRM using Intervention Strategy and those do not use intervention.**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Corrected Model	11460.70a	2	2865.17	50.41	.00	.61	
Intercept	1751.02	1	1751.02	30.81	.00	.19	
Pre-EAT	1647.84	1	1647.84	28.99	.00	.18	
HR and IS	6239.33	1	6239.33	109.78	.00	.46	
Error	7388.30	130	56.83				
Total	89073.0	135					
Corrected Total	18848.99	134					

Dependent Variable: Post-EAT; R Squared = .61 (Adjusted R Squared = .60)

The results in Table 3 revealed that  $F(1, 130) = 109.78$  at  $P = 0.00$ . Since  $P = 0.00 < 0.05$ , the null hypothesis of no significant difference is therefore rejected. That is, there is a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught using Honesty, responsibility (HR) and those do not use intervention Strategy (IS). More so, the Eta-square (0.46) was reported which indicated that about 46% of achievement improvement noticed at Post-EAT (dependent variable) is contributed by independent variable Honesty and responsibility (HR).

### Discussion of findings:

Psychological Measurements and Ethical Behaviour: Studies suggest that psychological tools such as ethical decision-making frameworks and behavioural assessments are effective in fostering ethical behaviour. These tools help identify students' values, attitudes, and tendencies, enabling targeted interventions to promote moral development. The inclusion of these tools within educational systems has been linked to increased ethical awareness and behaviour among students, as seen in global studies on ethical leadership and knowledge sharing.

This finding agreed with the finding made from the study conducted by Seay and Jouhingen (2019), who found that students that were exposed to interactive simulation strategy and other ICT gadgets have tendency to respond to mathematical task than those trained in conventional strategy classes. This finding of stylish learning as a result of understanding rules before

playing games was also reported in the study conducted by McGrath (2010) that the students that were made to play educative games were unaware of knowledge benefits they acquired, until when they were made to face the reality test in mathematical or other educative challenges task. In this study, clear rules and principles used in the study were made clear from on set in order not to leave students in ambiguity while playing the games. Any games that simulated the students' thinking should be taken as one that leads to skill acquisition for life usage.

**Role of Higher Education in Ethical Development:** Higher education institutions are critical in shaping students' moral and ethical behaviour. Incorporating structured ethics courses, workshops, and co-curricular activities helps reinforce the importance of ethical behaviour. This approach creates a culture of moral leadership and responsibility, as supported by evidence showing that ethical leadership positively influences students' attitudes and their willingness to engage in prosocial behaviours. This study aligns with Göçen (2021) highlights that ethical leadership in educational settings fosters a culture where students' moral reasoning and ethical behaviours are strengthened. Ethical leaders promote fairness and values that positively impact students' development. A study on moral and ethical reasoning development explores how structured educational programs in ethics lead to significant moral maturity among students, emphasizing the role of curriculum design in fostering moral and civic responsibility. These findings underscore how leadership and structured education enhance ethical development in higher education.

## Conclusion

Psychological measurements, including ethical decision-making frameworks and behavioral assessments, have proven to be effective tools in fostering ethical behavior among tertiary education students. These tools enhance students' awareness of moral dilemmas, help identify values and attitudes, and encourage deliberate and prosocial decision-making. In Lagos State, their integration into educational programs has the potential to significantly impact students' moral development. However, their success depends on cultural sensitivity, proper implementation, and regular updates to ensure alignment with evolving ethical standards and societal values.

## Recommendations

The following are some of the recommendations;

- Integration into Curricula:** Incorporate psychological tools and frameworks for ethical decision-making into general studies or dedicated ethics courses.
- Workshops and Training:** Organize regular workshops and seminars for students and faculty to promote the practical application of these tools.
- Contextual Adaptation:** Tailor psychological assessments to reflect the unique cultural and social dynamics of Lagos State for better resonance with students.
- Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a system to regularly assess the effectiveness of these tools and update them based on feedback and evolving ethical challenges.
- Collaborative Partnerships:** Partner with professional organizations and ethical bodies to provide additional resources and expertise in fostering ethical awareness.

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