



**Management of Accountability Ethics for 5IR Sustainability Readiness in Public
Secondary Schools in Ohafia LGA, Abia State.**

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Abstract

This study investigated the Management of Accountability Ethics for 5IR Sustainability Readiness in Public Secondary Schools in Ohafia LGA, Abia State, Nigeria. Two objectives and two research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting a population of 378 participants—28 principals and 350 teachers—from 28 public secondary schools. A total census sampling technique was used in selecting 100 percent participants for the study. Data were collected using a validated 20-item instrument titled Management of Accountability Ethics for 5IR Sustainability Questionnaire (MAE5IRSQ), with a reliability coefficient of 0.89. Of the copies of questionnaire distributed, 297 were returned, reflecting a response rate of 78.57%. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that the assessed management system of accountability ethics in place in most of the public secondary schools cannot successfully drive the 5IR sustainability initiatives. So the readiness was not seen clearly based on the cluster mean scores that were below the criterion mean score in both objectives of the study. The study concluded that as schools adapt to rapidly evolving technological innovations, those in Ohafia LGA will greatly benefit like others in other climes if the management system of accountability ethics is effected as discussed in the study. It was therefore recommended among others that school management and stakeholders should establish a collaborative feedback culture that promotes the tenets of 5IR initiatives such as transparency, trust and open communication.

Keywords: School Management, Sustainability, Regular Feedback, Standard Reporting, Fifth Industrial Revolution, 5IR.

Introduction

Management of different administrative ethics – particularly in educational systems – has become a vital area of research in meeting global demands for a more advanced and sustainable model of education. One key aspect is the management of accountability ethics to support Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR) sustainability readiness. In this context, sustainability refers to the



long-term ability of educational institutions to deliver quality, equitable, and adaptive learning environments. Readiness signifies the preparedness of schools—structurally, ethically, and technologically—to respond to the human-centered, innovative-driven demands of 5IR. The 5IR calls for an educational shift from rigid, factory-style models to systems that embrace creativity, technology, and inclusivity, as emphasized by thinkers like Ken Robinson (2015) and Yuval Harari (2018).

In developing nations like Nigeria, where underfunded schools and weak administrative systems persist, the challenge is not just to keep up with global trends but to lay the ethical and managerial groundwork that enables such transformation. Accountability ethics in the context of 5IR sustainability readiness refers to transparent, fair, and responsible governance practices that ensure effective use of resources—human, material, and financial—within educational institutions. Yet, many schools in under-resourced systems lack basic accountability frameworks: administrators often cannot provide accurate data on personnel, student enrollment, or facilities. This deficiency undermines strategic planning and public trust, prompting calls for greater accountability from policymakers and the public alike. Hence, this study investigated how educational leadership can implement and sustain accountability ethics as a foundation for 5IR sustainability.

Statement of the Problem

Inadequate management when it comes to accountability ethics has become a trivial issue over time across the length and breadth of Nigeria. More challenging is that in other climes, the educational system at the secondary level is fast evolving with the instance of the industrial revolution. One of such is what is supposed to be mirrored even in the public secondary schools in Ohafia L.G.A., Abia State. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate how 5IR can be integrated into the public secondary school system in Ohafia LGA of Abia State through the management of accountability ethics for sustainability.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study was aimed at investigating the management of accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability in public secondary schools. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. ascertain the management of regular feedback system as an accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in public secondary schools in Ohafia LGA, Abia State.
2. determine the management of standard reporting system as an accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in Ohafia LGA, Abia State.



Research Questions

1. What are the management practices of regular feedback as an accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in Ohafia LGA, Abia State?
2. What are the management practices of standard reporting system as an accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in Ohafia LGA, Abia State?

Literature Review

Management and sustainability are deeply interconnected pillars essential to the transformation of public secondary education, particularly in the era of the Fifth Industrial Revolution (5IR). As technological and human values converge, school management must evolve from routine administration into ethical leadership rooted in transparency, innovation, and inclusiveness. According to Koontz and Weihrich (2010), management traditionally involves planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources; however, under 5IR, these functions must also support long-term, ethically grounded goals. Principals are now tasked with ensuring 5IR sustainability readiness—embedding human-centered technologies into school systems in ways that uphold justice, equity, and pedagogical integrity (Schwab & Zahidi, 2020). This readiness requires them to lead not just with authority but with moral clarity, ensuring that emerging innovations benefit all learners equitably (Leithwood et al., 2019; Bush, 2018). Accountability ethics thus becomes central, reshaping leadership roles through professional, managerial, moral, and public lenses. School leaders must now account not only for operational decisions but for their ethical implications, serving the interests of students, staff, and the broader community (Ehren, 2016; Adam, 2017).

When accountability ethics are properly implemented, they reinforce transparency, ethical decision-making, and effective performance monitoring—cornerstones of 5IR sustainability readiness. Among the key mechanisms are the regular feedback system as an accountability ethics and the standard reporting system as an accountability ethics, both of which are critical to sustainable, ethical school management. Regular feedback systems go beyond evaluation; they foster reflective practice, guide continuous improvement, and support inclusive leadership when grounded in ethical intent (Hattie & Timperley 2007). When used effectively, they inform professional growth and empower students and staff, strengthening participatory school cultures aligned with 5IR ideals (Harari, 2018). Similarly, standard reporting systems provide structured, replicable frameworks for documenting academic, financial, and operational data, ensuring that decisions are transparent, data-driven, and aligned with institutional values



(Floridi, 2018; Robinson, 2015). These tools support ethical leadership by enabling consistent oversight, improving trust, and safeguarding institutional integrity. By integrating these accountability systems, school principals can lead ethically, manage effectively, and ensure that 5IR technologies contribute to inclusive, sustainable educational transformation..

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Ethical Leadership Theory (Brown et al., 2005) to explain how school leaders ethically guided public secondary education toward 5IR sustainability readiness. The theory posited that ethical leaders model normatively appropriate behavior through their personal conduct and relationships, and actively promote such behavior among followers through open communication, ethical reinforcement, and value-based decision-making. In the context of the 5IR—characterized by human-centered innovation, AI, and global sustainability—principals moved beyond routine administration to influence both classroom practices and school activities through ethical conduct. Tools such as regular feedback systems and standard reporting systems becomes essential criteria in measuring the accountability ethics, helping school administrators establish commendable and sustainable performance.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design to investigate the management of accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in public secondary schools. The target population included 28 principals and 350 teachers, making a total of 378 participants. A stratified total census sampling technique was used to ensure comprehensive representation of both groups. Data were collected using a self-developed instrument titled Management of Accountability Ethics for 5IR Sustainability Questionnaire (MAE5IRSQ), consisting of 20 items organized into two sections. Responses were captured using a four-point likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was subjected to expert face and content validation and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.89 using Cronbach's Alpha. Out of the distributed questionnaires, 297 were completed and returned—13 from principals (46.43%) and 284 from teachers (81.14%)—resulting in an overall response rate of 78.57%. The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to address the research questions.



Results

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the management practices of regular feedback as an accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in Ohafia LGA, Abia State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the management practices of regular feedback as an accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in Ohafia LGA, Abia State (n = 297)

S/N	Test Items –Management of Regular Feedback	Principals (n = 13)		Teachers (n = 284)		Mean Set (\bar{x})	Remarks
		\bar{x}	sd	\bar{x}	sd		
1	Our regular feedback aligns with ethical standards that support inclusive, human-centered learning for the 5IR era.	2.46	0.16	2.40	0.16	2.43	Disagreed
2	Regular feedback in my school builds a culture of trust and transparency essential for sustainability and future-readiness.	2.44	0.19	2.42	0.17	2.43	Disagreed
3	Receiving constant feedback in our school encourages ethical behaviour suited for collaborative and tech-integrated environments.	2.49	0.17	2.46	0.12	2.47	Disagreed
4	When our school leaders provide constructive feedback, it promotes accountability needed for 5IR-driven innovation.	2.43	0.13	2.41	0.13	2.42	Disagreed
5	Feedback sessions are conducted regularly in my school to guide ethical and adaptive learning practices.	2.50	0.18	2.51	0.14	2.51	Agreed
6	I feel comfortable giving honest feedback, which fosters ethical communication for inclusive 5IR school culture.	2.41	0.12	2.39	0.11	2.40	Disagreed
7	My school holds staff accountable through feedback outcomes that reflect fairness, transparency, and sustainability principles.	2.48	0.20	2.45	0.09	2.47	Disagreed
8	Regular feedback helps my team stay accountable to responsibilities aligned with future-focused educational goals.	2.53	0.10	2.49	0.15	2.51	Agreed
9	In our school, feedback is valued as a tool for continuous improvement toward 5IR-aligned educational goals.	2.39	0.15	2.38	0.08	2.39	Disagreed
10	I feel motivated to improve my work after feedback that emphasizes growth, ethics, and global-readiness.	2.52	0.14	2.50	0.18	2.51	Agreed
Cluster Mean/SD		2.47	0.05	2.44	0.05	2.46	Disagreed



Table 1 revealed a generally low perception of regular feedback as an ethical management practice for 5IR sustainability readiness among both principals ($\bar{x} = 2.47$, $SD = 0.05$) and teachers ($\bar{x} = 2.44$, $SD = 0.05$), resulting in a mean set score of 2.46, which fell below the benchmark for agreement. Although three items (5, 8, and 10) scored slightly above the threshold ($\bar{x} \geq 2.50$), indicating some isolated positive views, the overall trend showed a prevailing disagreement. This suggested that the feedback mechanisms in place were insufficiently structured to support accountability, ethical growth, and inclusive, tech-aligned practices, thereby hindering institutional readiness for 5IR-driven educational transformation in Ohafia LGA.

Research Question 2: What are the management practices of standard reporting system as an accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in Ohafia LGA, Abia State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the management practices of standard reporting system as an accountability ethics for 5IR sustainability readiness in Ohafia LGA, Abia State.

S/N	Test Items –Management of Standard Reporting System	Principals (n = 13)		Teachers (n = 284)		Mean Set (\bar{x})	Remarks
		\bar{x}	sd	\bar{x}	sd		
1	Our school uses standard reporting to ensure transparent decisions.	2.49	0.15	2.43	0.12	2.43	Disagreed
2	Our school uses standard reporting to ensure ethical decisions.	2.44	0.14	2.43	0.10	2.43	Disagreed
3	My school maintains clear records to support data-based planning for global learning goals.	2.49	0.18	2.46	0.13	2.47	Disagreed
4	We have enhanced our school’s sustainability in academic progress over the years by adhering to standard reporting system.	2.47	0.12	2.42	0.09	2.42	Disagreed
5	Our reporting systems support accountability aligned with innovation of the 5IR era.	2.50	0.21	2.51	0.18	2.51	Agreed
6	I trust our school’s reports because they reflect future-ready practices.	2.46	0.10	2.39	0.08	2.40	Disagreed
7	Our reporting system has the capacity to promote continuous improvement towards 5IR sustainability target.	2.48	0.17	2.46	0.10	2.47	Disagreed



8	Our reporting system can assist school administrators in making decisions that support equity.	2.53	0.20	2.49	0.15	2.51	Agreed
9	Our reporting system helps the principal to make decisions that support 5IR readiness.	2.40	0.13	2.38	0.08	2.39	Disagreed
10	There is an organized in-service training for staff in my school on how to use the standard reporting system for accountability.	2.54	0.15	2.50	0.18	2.51	Agreed
Cluster Mean/SD		2.49	0.08	2.45	0.06	2.48	Disagreed

Table 2 revealed a generally low perception of standard reporting system as an ethical management practice for 5IR sustainability readiness among both principals (\bar{x} = 2.49, SD = 0.08) and teachers (\bar{x} = 2.45, SD = 0.06), resulting in a mean set score of 2.48, which fell below the criterion for agreement. This suggested that the reporting system in place were insufficiently structured to support accountability, ethical growth, and inclusive, tech-aligned practices, thereby hindering institutional readiness for 5IR-driven educational transformation in Ohafia LGA.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings revealed a concerning trend in public secondary schools in Nigeria, with a focus on Ohafia LGA, Abia State where regular feedback management is perceived as inadequate due to a lack of trust culture, non-collaborative feedback structures, and insufficient emphasis on feedback. This is consistent with Hattie and Timperley's (2007) assertion that feedback is a crucial aspect of accountability, and its effectiveness depends on the quality of the feedback and the relationships between the giver and receiver. The lack of trust culture in these schools is a significant barrier to effective feedback management. As Covey (2023) notes, trust is a fundamental aspect of effective relationships, and its absence can lead to defensiveness and resistance to feedback. The non-collaborative feedback structure between school management and other stakeholders further exacerbates this issue, highlighting the need for a more inclusive and participatory approach to feedback management (Candoli et al., 2013). The study also reveals that the reporting system in these schools is non-standard, which can compromise accountability and transparency. Ehren (2016) emphasizes the importance of reliable and valid data in accountability systems, while Kenton (2005) notes that accountability requires transparent reporting and evaluation. The absence of a standard reporting system in these schools undermines the effectiveness of accountability ethics and hinders the



achievement of educational goals. The findings also have implications for the sustainability of education in the 5th Industrial Revolution (5IR). Schwab and Zahidi (2020) highlight the need for educational institutions to adapt to the changing demands of the 5IR, which includes embracing new technologies and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The lack of effective feedback management and non-standard reporting systems in these schools may hinder their ability to adapt to these changes and achieve sustainability.

Conclusion

The integration of regular feedback and standardized reporting systems is vital to the ethical management of accountability in public secondary schools, particularly, in the context of 5IR sustainability. As schools adapt to rapidly evolving technological innovations, such systems serve as foundational tools for ensuring transparency, responsibility and continuous improvement. Regular feedback allows for timely identification of ethical and instructional issues, while standard reporting ensures consistent documentation and evaluation of progress align with 5IR goals. Together they promote a culture of accountability where educators, administrators and stakeholders can make data-driven, ethically sound decisions. Sustaining 5IR in education depends not only on technological adoption but also on the governance structures that upholds ethical standards. Therefore, they promote a culture of accountability systems that enhances trust, support inclusive practices and ensures that innovations serve the holistic development of students and the broader educational community. Embedding ethics through regular feedbacks and standards reporting systems is not optional but essential to achieving long term, sustainable success in public secondary schools in the 5IR era.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:.

1. The school management and stakeholders should establish a collaborative feedback culture that promotes transparency, trust, and open communication by implementing regular feedback sessions, utilizing technology to facilitate feedback, and providing training on effective feedback techniques in school premises, online platforms, and parent-teacher conferences.
2. The school management and administrators should develop and implement a standardized reporting system that ensures transparency and accountability by establishing clear reporting protocols, using digital tools to streamline reporting, and providing training on reporting procedures in school premises, online platforms, and administrative offices.



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