Integrating Business Ethics In Business Education Programme For The Promotion Of Sustainable Development In Nigeria

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Abstract
The study investigated the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria. One research question guided the study and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The research design for the study was the descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 109 business educators from tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Two rating scale was used to collect data for the study. The reliability test on the rating scales using Cronbach Alpha reliability method yielded coefficient values of 0.85 and 0.80. Mean, standard deviation and t-test was used for analysis of data. Findings of the study revealed that integrating business ethics modules or courses into the basic curriculum of business education programmes, providing business educators with resources to effectively teach business ethics courses, providing business educators with training to effectively teach business ethics courses and implementing leadership development initiatives that emphasise ethical leadership attributes like integrity among students are the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria. The finding of the study further revealed that integration of business ethics in the business education programme would promote sustainable development in Nigeria. The researcher recommended among others that administrators of business education programme should prioritise the inclusion of ethical ideas and practices into all parts of business education programmes. It was also recommended that administrators of business education programme should collaborate with industry stakeholders to adapt to changing business demands,

Keywords: *Strategies, Business Ethics, Business Education, Sustainable Development*

Introduction

Business education encompasses the teaching of foundational principles, theories, and practices relevant to the business world. Business education as an academic programme is designed to equip individuals with practical skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values necessary for effective operation within various business environments. Business education, according to Azuka and Nwosu (2018), involves a multifaceted approach aimed at equipping individuals with essential skills, competencies, attitudes, and knowledge pertinent to navigating the complexities of the business world. This education is divided into different components, including Office Education, General Business Education, and vocational training, all of which serve the overarching goal of preparing individuals for effective participation in various aspects of business and economic activities (Enyi, 2020).

The essence of business education lies in its capacity to foster personal development, enhance employability and nurture entrepreneurial abilities (Igwe, 2017). It empowers individuals to effectively manage personal business affairs, utilize business services, and thrive as entrepreneurs or employees within diverse sectors of the economy (Madu, Okanazu and Anorua, 2020). Furthermore, it instills creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and adaptability, essential attributes for success in a

rapidly evolving business environment (Ikelegbe, 2020; Ogbaga et al. 2021). The relevance of business education extends beyond individual empowerment to encompass broader societal benefits, particularly in the context of sustainable development. In today's globalized world, where economic, environmental, and social challenges are interlinked, businesses play a pivotal role in driving sustainable development.

Sustainable development includes the whole improvement of individuals and extends beyond personal growth to nation-building efforts. It goes beyond basic infrastructure projects like bridge building, road networks, and urban skyscrapers to address a larger range of societal requirements and environmental preservation aims. Sustainable development requires progress that does not harm the environment. This notion centres on a comprehensive approach to improving quality of life, recognising the intrinsic connection of economic development, social equality, and environmental protection (Umezuluike, 2015). It emphasises the idea that improvements in one area would inevitably affect others. Sustainable development requires managing resources in such a way that current human needs are addressed while protecting the environment so that future generations may meet those needs as well. In consonance, Nwabufo and Ezeani (2020) opined that sustainable development involves maintaining a balanced environment where resources, investments, technological development, and institutional change align to meet human needs and aspirations. Nwabufo and Ezeani stated that sustainable development entails living within the boundaries of physical, environmental, and social resources to sustain the living system in which humans exist. In essence, sustainable development seeks to achieve a balance between environmental conservation and socioeconomic advancement, striving to improve living conditions for all members of society while

protecting the planet for future generations. It incorporates the notion of responsible stewardship, advocating for behaviours that enhance both environmental sustainability and human well-being (Petcu & Dinu, 2014). Ensuring sustainable development promotes ethical decision-making to address pressing sustainability issues such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality (Maumako, 2017). Thus, it becomes imperative that business education students who are potential business leaders are equipped with the right business ethics for business leadership. Adler in Zafar (2017) found that many schools fail to prioritise ethical training for graduates. Emphasising ethics in business education is crucial given the global reduction in ethical corporate practices.

Ethics is sometimes stated as a fundamental concept that encourages individuals or organisations to take activities that prevent major harm to others when they have the option of acting in their own self-interest (Fadeyi et al., 2015). There is broad agreement on the substantive meaning of business ethics. corporate ethics addresses ethical concerns regarding what acts and behaviours should or should not be carried out in various corporate environments. Ethics, in essence, is adhering to standards, values, and behavioural norms, which are especially important in diverse professions (Ita, 2020). It also includes the standards for conduct and behaviour that we expect individuals and professionals to follow, which are closely related to personal morality and individuals' everyday activities (Adegbuyi et al. 2015). Gautschi and Jones in Zafar (2017) found that business students who completed an ethics course performed better in detecting ethical issues compared to those who did not. To achieve ethical behaviour, it's important to include business ethics in the curriculum, prepare faculty in moral philosophy, and include ethical themes into all courses. In a

more recent study, Okoli and Okeke (2020) suggested that for business ethics courses should be integrated into tertiary education curricula. However, it is not clear if the integration of business ethics in the business education programme would promote sustainable development in Nigeria. It is therefore necessary to empirically investigate the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The world is currently facing numerous environmental hazards that threaten the very foundation of sustainable development. Instances of environmental degradation, such as deforestation, air and water pollution, and climate change, are rampant globally. These environmental crises highlight the urgent need for comprehensive measures to mitigate and address these issues. Nigeria, like many other countries, is not immune to these environmental challenges. The country grapples with issues such as flooding in Anambra State, oil spills in the Niger Delta region, deforestation, air pollution from industrial activities, and inadequate waste management practices. These environmental problems not only pose significant threats to public health and natural ecosystems but also impede the nation's progress towards sustainable development. One underlying factor exacerbating these environmental issues in Nigeria is the lack of business ethics among business leaders and stakeholders.

Greed, corruption, and disregard for environmental regulations are pervasive within the business community, leading to exploitative practices that prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability. Irresponsible disposal of hazardous waste, unchecked pollution, and illegal resource extraction are just a few examples of unethical business practices that contribute to environmental degradation in Nigeria. The impact of the absence of business ethics extends beyond environmental concerns to encompass broader socio-economic ramifications. Communities bear the brunt of environmental pollution, experiencing adverse health effects and loss of livelihoods. Moreover, unethical business practices undermine trust in institutions, hinder economic growth, and perpetuate social inequalities. It is therefore against this backdrop that the researcher sought to empirically investigate the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Research Question

What are the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of strategies for integration of business ethics in the business education programme to promote sustainable development in Nigeria.

Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 109 business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (16), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaria Campus (5), Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze (71), Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (10) and Madonna University, Okija (7) in the State. The instruments for data collection were two rating scale questionnaires developed by the researcher. The first instrument was titled "Strategies for Integrating Business

Ethics in Business Education Programme for the Promotion of Sustainable Development Scale (SIBEBEPPSDS)". The instrument was structured on a 4- point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The second instrument was titled "Sustainable Development Scale (SDS)." The instrument was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instruments were validated by three experts in the Department of Technology and Vocational Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Further the instruments were subjected to a pilot test on 10 business educators in Enugu State. The application of the Cronbach Alpha reliability test on the returned data yielded coefficient values of 0.85 and 0.80 for SIBEBEPPSDS and SDS respectively.

The researcher administered the questionnaire by sending copies of the questionnaires to the e-mails and Whatsapp messages of the business educators. In cases where it was difficult administering the instrument electronically. An appointment was made and the instrument was administered on the spot and retrieved. Out of the 109 copies of questionnaire administered, 88 copies were returned in good condition. Amounting to 81 percent return rate. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The mean values were employed to address the research questions, while the standard deviation was used to determine the level of homogeneity among the respondents' ratings. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 or higher was considered as agree, while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was regarded disagree. For the hypothesis, t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. If the p-value is equal to or greater than the alpha value of 0.05, it means that there is

no significant difference. The null hypothesis was accepted. Consequently, if the p-value is less than the alpha value of 0.05, it means that there is a significant difference, therefore the null hypothesis was not accepted.

Results
Research Question
What are the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria?

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Strategies for Integrating Business Ethics in Business Education Programme for the Promotion of Sustainable Development in Nigeria (N=88)

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Integrating business ethics modules or courses into the basic curriculum of business education programmes.	3.87	.90	Agree
2.	incorporating real-life ethical case studies for students	3.38	.87	Agree
3.	Implementing leadership development initiatives that emphasise ethical leadership attributes like integrity among students.	3.44	1.01	Agree
4.	Working with ethical business organization on students internships..	3.30	.86	Agree
5.	Providing business educators with training to effectively teach business ethics courses.	3.53	1.03	Agree
6.	Providing business educators with resources to effectively teach business ethics courses.	3.60	.80	Agree
7.	Engaging students in community service projects.	3.30	.85	Agree
8.	Create opportunities for self-reflection on ethical decision-making abilities.	3.05	.89	Agree
9.	Create opportunities for peer evaluation on ethical behaviour.	3.10	.76	Agree
10.	Establish ethics committees to promote ethical knowledge in the business education programme.	3.07	.84	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**3.36**		**Agree**

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents rated items 1-10 as the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria with mean ratings between 3.05 and 3.87. The standard deviation scores ranging between .76 and 1.03 indicate that the respondents' opinions were related. The cluster mean of 3.36 indicate that integrating business ethics modules

or courses into the basic curriculum of business education programmes, providing business educators with resources to effectively teach business ethics courses, providing business educators with training to effectively teach business ethics courses, implementing leadership development initiatives that emphasise ethical leadership attributes like integrity among students and incorporating real-life ethical case studies for students among others are the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Hypothesis

Integration of business ethics in the business education programme will not promote sustainable development in Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of t-test Analysis on the significant influence of Integration of Business Ethics in the Business Education Programme on Promoting Sustainable Development In Nigeria.

Variables	Mean	SD	df	α	P-value	Decision
Business Ethics in Business Education Programme	3.36	0.90				
			87	0.05	0.00	Significant
Sustainable Development						

Data in Table 2 showed that the p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance. This means that integration of business ethics in the business education programme promotes sustainable development in Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that integrating business ethics modules or courses into the basic curriculum of business education programmes, providing business educators with resources to effectively teach business ethics

courses, providing business educators with training to effectively teach business ethics courses, implementing leadership development initiatives that emphasise ethical leadership attributes like integrity among students and incorporating real-life ethical case studies for students among others are the strategies for integrating business ethics in business education programme for the promotion of sustainable development in Nigeria. This finding aligns with Okoli and Okeke (2020) claim that integrating ethics courses teaches students about anticipated business practices. Petcu and Dinu (2014) stated that ethics education would incorporates the notion of responsible stewardship, advocating for behaviours that enhance both environmental sustainability and human well-being among students. Zafar (2017) found that business students who completed an ethics course performed better in detecting ethical issues compared to those who did not. Furthermore, findings of the study revealed that integration of business ethics in the business education programme would promote sustainable development in Nigeria. The finding shows that incorporating ethical principles in the business education programmes can have a favourable long-term impact on the country's economic, social, and environmental well-being.

Conclusion

The researcher concludes that integration of business ethics in the business education programme would promote sustainable development in Nigeria. This highlight the necessity of establishing ethical concepts and values in the business education curriculum to provide students with the mentality and abilities needed to constructively contribute to society and

the economy. It is therefore imperative for all stakeholders in the business education programme should promote efforts that reinvigorate ethical values among students for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Administrators of business education programme should prioritise the inclusion of ethical ideas and practices into all parts of business education programmes. This comprehensive strategy may teach principles of integrity, accountability and sustainability in future business professionals, promoting ethical decision-making and contributing to Nigeria's sustainable growth.

2. Administrators of business education programme should collaborate with industry stakeholders to adapt to changing business demands. Collaborative efforts can help to establish relevant curriculum, internship opportunities, and experiential learning programmes, increasing the practical application of education and better preparing students for the realities of the workplace.

3. Administrators of business education programme should invest in continuous professional development for business educators and offer enough resources for teaching and research in sustainable business practices.

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