

Stakeholders Perception and Attitude Based Framework for Developing Responsible Management Education (RME) Programs: The Case of Master and Doctorate of Business Administration Students in Sudan

Abdalla Khidir Abdalla

Tatweer Education Holding Company, Saudi Arabia

Saud Ben Khudair

EAA Company, Saudi Arabia

Abuzar El Jelly and Ilham Mansour

Khartoum University, Sudan

Abstract. Contributing to the efforts to foster business postgraduate students development toward becoming responsible business leaders is the goal of this study by examining the state of responsible management education in business postgraduate programs in Sudan. We examined perceptions and attitudes toward responsible management and its education among postgraduate-level students and constructed a comprehensive framework appropriate for developing responsible management education programs in under-developed countries. This study's data were gathered via a structured questionnaire answered by 106 postgraduate business students from the largest four Sudanese business schools and facilities. The students were distributed among the management, finance, and marketing fields. The students exhibited affirmative corporate social responsibility (CSR) perceptions and attitudes with a heightened focus on acting ethically and a diminished focus on financial considerations. A key lesson learned from this study is the need for the continued development of CSR and general ethics across business school curriculums in Sudan.

Keywords: responsible management , responsible management education, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, ethics, business schools, perception, attitude, Sudan.

This shortened version of the article is for promotional purposes on publicly accessible databases.

Readers who wish to obtain the full text version of the article can order it via the url

<https://www.neilsonjournals.com/JBEE/abstractjbee17abdallaetal.html>

Any enquiries, please contact the Publishing Editor, Peter Neilson pneilson@neilsonjournals.com

© NeilsonJournals Publishing 2020.

1. Introduction

The business and education world is changing rapidly in response to the needs of various stakeholders. Companies are facing new challenges and risks due to the increase in the level of awareness among stakeholders regarding issues of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Indeed, stakeholders are becoming less and less tolerant in cases where companies continue to focus only on profit-maximization while neglecting their expected contributions to society and the environment. Future company leaders, master and doctoral business administration, {(MBA) and (DBA)}, students are, in turn, expected to realize and appreciate the new challenges and risks facing business organizations. Business and management schools play a crucial role in shaping the skills and mindsets of future business leaders and can be powerful drivers of sustainability and CSR (Edelman 2012).

The number of business and non-business organizations engaged in demonstrating that they are both socially and environmentally good to the world is increasing. Until 2018, 13,420 large organizations worldwide expressed their readiness to be part of this trend. Of these organizations, 7813 have been active across 160 countries in 2018. Eighteen of these organizations are in Sudan, (United Nations [UN] Global Compact 2018).

Recognizing the vital role of education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in 2007, the UN, during the UN Global Compact Leader Summit in Geneva, launched the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). The PRME initiative has become the most substantial organized relationship between the United Nations and business schools.

The mission of the PRME initiative is to transform business and management education, research, and thought leadership globally while promoting awareness about the SDGs and developing the responsible business leaders of tomorrow. PRME are categorized as purpose, values, methods, research, partnership, and dialogue. By the end of 2018, the initiative counted over 745 business and management-related higher education institutions across 85 countries. PRME is governed, alongside the UN Global Compact, by a steering committee comprised of the major accreditation bodies, specialized and regional associations, PRME (2020).

PRME works with the UN Global Compact participants to help advance SDGs in academia and to connect responsible businesses with higher education institutions to help recruit talents with sustainability-related mindsets, skills, and capabilities.

In August 2019, after recognizing the pressure from the community, the United States (US) Business Roundtable announced the release of a new statement on the purpose of a corporation signed by 181 CEOs of the largest 192 business corporations in the US. The CEOs committed to lead their companies for the benefit of all stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers,

communities, and shareholders. The CEOs committed themselves to deliver value to customers, investing in employees, dealing fairly and ethically with suppliers, supporting the communities, and generating long-term value for shareholders. The new statement supersedes previous statements and outlines a modern standard for corporate responsibility. They declared that maximizing shareholder profits no longer can be the primary goal of corporations, US Business Roundtable (2019).

Therefore, business schools cannot just take a spectator role in sustainable corporate responsibility but have to thoroughly prepare their students to assume responsible leadership as soon as they enter the business world. Due to the rotating circle of economic crises, universities, especially business schools, have become pressured to reconsider their management education concepts. Goshal (2005) and Navarro (2008) argue that business schools do more harm than good and ignore the human dimension of businesses and their responsibility towards the social and ecological environment. Business school graduates are regularly characterized as cold-blooded technocrats lacking interpersonal skills, intercultural abilities, emotional and ecological intelligence, trustworthiness, and social responsibility (Mintzberg 2004).

Concerning Sudan, despite the enormous natural resources available in Sudan (Table 1) and due to irresponsible and mismanagement of these resources, indicators reveal that Sudan is far behind many counties when it comes to addressing SDGs (Table 2). Hence, reflecting the living conditions and quality of life in the country.

Table 1: Sudan national resources

Particulars	Amount
Population (2020)	42.6 Million
Gum Arabic	80% of the world production in Sudan
Groundnuts	40% of the world production in Sudan
Agricultural land available	228 million acres
Forest	54 million acres
Water	50 billion cubic meters annually
Livestock	102 million (fed from natural grass)
Copper	150 million tones
Gold	140 tones annually
Oil	115 thousand barrels daily

Source: Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN)- <https://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/collection/epi>