

PROMOTING MORAL PRINCIPLES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

OHAKA, Nyeche Christopher

ohakanyeche1@gmail.com

*Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt*

ABSTRACT

This study was predicated on examining and exploring the Nexus between the application of moral principles in Business Education and the economy of Nigeria. By implication, the study tried to show how the application of moral principles in Business Education can bring about advancement in the economy of Nigeria. In attempt to do this, the researcher carefully explicated the key variables of the study ranging from the concept of morality to the concept of Business Education. The researcher refer to morality as a code of conduct put forward by a society, group or individual and, normatively, to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons. The study noted that teaching moral education in Business Education is aimed at initiating the students into the realm of moral principles that are generally acceptable by members of the society. The researcher further noted that, the goal of Business Education is essentially to build morals, develop skills and develop the intellect of the recipients, and that promoting moral ideologies in Business Education through moral education helps to raise leaders and employees who can promote moral and ethical values in business organizations and specific industries which contributes in boosting the economic state of the nation. Based on the issues raised, the study concluded that, if Business Education as a critical contributor to the development of Nigerian economy by producing sound products, it must adopt relevant codes of conducts through policy formulation that will help to determine the behaviour of the stakeholders in the profession. Based on the conclusion, it was suggested among others that Business Education programme administrators should enact feasible administrative policies that will be predicated on advancing relevant and workable moral principles in Business Education.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'morality' can be used descriptively to refer to a code of conduct put forward by a society, group or individual and, normatively, to refer to a code of conduct that, given specified conditions, would be put forward by all rational persons (Aspin in Thornberg, 2008). It has long been a commonplace in the debate about the definition of morality, that moral terms are used in many different ways at different times and by different people. The search for a definition, therefore, is not a search for the one true definition which expresses all that anyone has ever meant by the term or the "true" meaning of the term. On the contrary, as Darwall (2019) highlights, the search has been for the best definition, the definition that will express the most important or the most useful of the various meanings that moral terms have in ordinary speech. In common terms, morality is the day-to-day practice of a group or individual's view of what is perceived to be the highest 'good'. The definition of 'good' is variable across groups and societies. Cultural, religious, gender, and even generational differences function as lenses through which reality is filtered. Moral or immoral behaviour of an individual does not really exist in a vacuum. There are multilayered cultural influences at play, whether conscious or not, that encourages one to either act morally or immorally. It is important to note that the job of promoting moral behaviours among individuals cannot be left to the compliance or legal function alone. Instead, administrators across the programme must cooperate in order to address the systemic factors in the culture of relevant stakeholders in the programme. However, there is a growing consensus among administrators that legal frameworks, organizational culture, rules and regulations are essential when it comes to promoting moral behaviours within the programme (Clothier & Steinholtz, 2017).

The concept of morality has been variously defined by philosophers and psychologists but in common terms it can be interpreted to mean a person's or society's view of what is perceived to be the highest good. Such a view is based on a set of principles, ideas and norms that are used to distinguish between 'right' and 'wrong'. The 'highest good' is often defined as those actions, behaviours, and mindset that contribute to what Aristotle calls *eudaimonia*, that is human flourishing or happiness. Though the notions of what is 'good' and what constitutes happiness has a definite cultural bias, morality generally refers to attitudes and predispositions that foster respect, responsibility, integrity and honesty. The respect and responsibility are the two core components of morality from which any other principle derives. The term respect includes two aspects that is respect for oneself and respect for others (their beliefs, opinions and culture). Responsibility involves an acceptance for one's own life and deeds and the commitment to the welfare of society generally through an active participation in the socio- economic, political and cultural activities of the community.

Morality: Meaning and Conceptualization

Plethora of notable and cerebral scholars and philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle, Kant, John Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Farabi among others have in time past, made intelligent attempt to explicate the concept of morality from their various philosophical and personal standpoints. In their various elucidations, they attempted to take a standpoint on whether or not morality is changeable or not. Their various views can be summarized into two basic conceptions: the first conception is the one shared by scholars such as: Schopenhauer, Lamarck, Darwin, Yusuf-Has Hacıp and Nasreddin-iTusi fact that states that morality is innate and underlies the belief that environmental factors will not bring about any change in human morality. This goes to prove the point that morality is intrinsic and as such, cannot be determined by any modicum of environmental factors. It further implies that an individual's moral principles is not acquired or learned and it is not the values of the society that shapes one's moral life. On the other hand, the other group of scholars such as Socrates, Aristotle, Kant, John Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Farabi among others argued vehemently that morality can be changed. They proposes that morality and human temperament can be formed and reformed consequent upon environmental factors and circumstances (Erden, 2002).

The focal point of this view point is that people can become moral through education, discipline, law and advancement in knowledge. The concept of morality can be described and summarized as follows (Ozge, 2021):

1. Morality is a value that includes intrinsic/personal processes that distinguishes one human being from another.
2. Morality is a basic need which can be expressed as one of the indicators of its existence in human nature and as such, can be compared to some indispensable elements of human life such as; water, mother, etc.
3. Emotions are dominant among the primary causes of morality and concepts such as conscience, choosing the good, sense of responsibility and character are effective in the structuring of morality (Basdemir, 2007).
4. Morality encompasses values and rules that are emphasized by religious teachings (Bloom, 2012).

In almost all periods and in Ancient Greece to Islamic Philosophy, the concept of morality is considered to be one of the ultimate sources of happiness. Achieving happiness is associated with doing the right thing and useful things and is perceived as a pioneer of feeling peaceful (Vatandas, 2017). Morality is construct and practice that can be shielded (preserved) in Business Education (Naderi, 2014). In this instance, ethical codes and legal frameworks are frequently used in the adoption and protection of moral behaviour (Yuksel, 2015). Following the fact that morality can be seen as a value understood from behaviours, it is not enough to keep the knowledge acquired about morality in mind only as thoughts, feelings or judgments but also that these values should be turned into behaviours (Adiguzel, 2017).

Morality deals basically with humans and how they relate to other beings, both human and nonhuman. It deals with how humans *treat* other beings so as to promote mutual welfare, growth, creativity, and meaning as they strive for what is good over what is bad and what is right over what is wrong.

The concept of morality, which is described as temperament, character or manners, expresses the established character structure in humans and the behaviours of individuals that occur under their own will. Although moral perceptions vary by time, society and culture, they also exhibit mandatory unchanging rules of behaviour (Kilic, 2012). This is one of the most emphasized concepts in the field of philosophy. Many philosophers have tried to answer the question of what morality is and associated morality with different concepts. Generally speaking, morality is defined as the group or network of beliefs, values, norms, orders, prohibitions and designs which are involved in the life of a person, group, people, social class, nation or cultural environment in a certain historical period and which guide their actions (Ozlem, 2004). Morality can be used to determine what is seen to be good and what is seen to be bad; what is right and what is wrong in a given society or among a group of people and to also evaluate the status of a particular action and practice in that area (Hitlin & Vaisey, 2010).

Morality is defined as cognition, behaviour and emotions related to the ability to judge right and wrong. It determines whether to accept or reject a behaviour, and guides emotions that motivate intentions and actions consistently (Kochanska in Limbasan et al., 2018; Kohlberg in Limbasan et al., 2018). Moral is a value of choice of an individual, which can also be owned and shared within a culture, religion and society (Vishalache, 2012). According to Hawley and Geldhof (2012) morality should not be measured by solely grading cognitive development but should also involve emotional development and transformation of the students through their ability to develop their sense of morality.

Morality also encompasses the following stages: the punishment and obedience orientation stage – here, moral decisions are made in response to authority; the instrumental/relativist orientation stage – here, individuals are pragmatic, and moral decision making is conditioned primarily by self-interest; the interpersonal concordance or “good boy—nice girl” orientation – here, individuals are “people pleasers.” Being well-intentioned, for Examples, “He/she means well,” carries weight at this stage; the “law and order” orientation – here, people are concerned with maintaining the social order for its own sake or as an end in itself; the social contract orientation stage – here, individuals understand that there are ends beyond the law and that laws are crafted to bring about these ends and *the Universal-Ethical-Principle Orientation For the stage six individual – in this case*, right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency.

However, it is pertinent to note that what is considered moral varies from one society to another. For instance; in some religion, the practice of polygamy is considered to be immoral while in some religion, it can be seen as been moral. Also, in some cultures, female circumcision is seen as being good practice while in some other related African societies, it is considered to be a very bad practice. Morality can be seen as the reason for the action(s) taken by some individuals. Morality forms human conscience and perception. It helps to develop individual perceptions about issues of life. Morality is essential in curtailing human misdemeanor and determining the objectivity or subjectivity of every man. Morality includes those values, rules, norms, ethics and ethos that are usually emphasized by religious teachings and positive cultural orientations. According to Kropotkin (2005), morality can be categorized into three: religious morality, utilitarian morality and morality resulting from the necessity of living in the society. These categories of morality can be explicated as follows (Kropotkin, 2005):

1. **Religious morality:** It has to do with the behaviour shown as a result of with the expectation of reward or punishment as a result of religious teachings coming through revelation.
2. **Utilitarian morality:** it deals with the determination of moral principles in line with one's own interest.
3. **Morality arising from the necessity of living in a society:** It deals with the evaluation of morality based on whether a behaviour is moral or not according to whether the criterion is appropriate for social life.

Teaching and Promoting Moral Education in Business Education

Moral education refers to the processes through which the relevant knowledge, attitudes, values and skills are transmitted and developed in children. As such, it focuses on the development of the cognitive, social and emotional skills which are necessary for moral thinking, action and feeling. Moral education concerns thus the practices and strategies that socializing agents use to equip children with the resources to address issues about right and wrong in their everyday life. One of the targets of teaching moral education in Business Education is thus to help students become autonomous decision makers but, at the same time, to create an attachment to fundamental values like respect and responsibility (Hamm 2003). Teaching moral education in Business Education remains fundamental and basic. Therefore, ignorance of moral principles and concerns inherent in the teaching business makes the society and corporate world vulnerable to possible and obvious menaces with far reaching implications for people's social, political, economic and cultural development (Boone, 2017; Anangisye, 2015).

Teaching moral education in Business Education is aimed at initiating the students into the realm of moral principles that are generally acceptable by members of the society. These moral principles includes social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual and moral values. Following the fact that in an archetypal African society child upbringing and students training was incomplete without the moral elements, the integration of moral education in Business Education becomes a sure approach. The teaching and incorporation of morality in Business Education remains germane because it involves people (trainee-teachers) who are supposed to teach ethics or exercise direct ethical practice as a prerequisite to their responsiveness in their professional endeavour since the nature and character of their profession is such that makes morality and moral education an crucial element (Anangisye, 2018). For this reason, it can be vehemently argued that ignoring the element of value and norms while teaching a course like Business Education can be considered a less lucrative venture.

The teaching of morality in Business Education arises since students can also be seen as social animals. That is to avow that the social nature of students has created the need for morality and not from a god but from the nature of human self-responsibility and social inter-relations (Herrick in Anangisye, 2018). It is also very imperative to note that sequel to the fact that no human being in this ecosystem is born with positive moral values, humanity must be taught moral values for the sake of advancing social order, social justice, peaceful co-existence, fairness, integrity, purposeful living and equity; Thus, the real reason for the integration of moral education in Business Education programme. Toeing this part, Fenstermacher in Anangisye (2018) noted that promoting moral education in Business Education has become sacrosanct as a result of the fact that no man was born compassionate, caring, fair, loving, and tolerant.

Moral education curriculum in Business Education should be mapped out in such a way that emphasis can be made on spirituality, family, environmental, social relationship and humanity for a holistic development of students. In Business Education, the focus on moral education for economic growth is a conscious attempt to establish moral and spiritual strength through the experiences and values gained from religion, tradition and culture. There are several areas of learning in the moral education syllabus that form the basis for nurturing good values among students. These learning areas focus on efforts to foster students' spiritual and moral strength through the appreciation and the practice of actually utilizing moral values and moral principles. Moral education syllable emphasize the shaping of the individual's good character and high moral standards. Moral education is a subject in the form of a programme that educates students to become a respectful and responsible citizen. This is achieved through inculcating, appreciating, reasoning and practicing certain identified values (Limbasan, Ling & Pang, 2018).

Since the understanding of morality is largely based on the development of persons within a particular social setting, moral education has been largely construed as part of the socialization process generally meant to prepare the students for a happy and productive life as a member of the community.

However, it is pertinent to note that the moral education in Business Education programme must also encompass four pivotal pillars of teaching and learning; character and morality; the individual and the community; civic studies and cultural studies. The moral education programme should also merge academic content with an exploration of character and ethics. Thus, moral education in Business Education has become increasingly needful consequent upon the fact that it is progressive in nature; designed to deliver meaningful lessons to all age groups. It encourages students to build on their own learning and experiences over the course of their schooling.

Conceptualizing Business Education

Business Education can be conceptualized as a laboratory for academics which seeks opportunities for providing the richness the workplace environment attracts to classroom learning experiences. Business Education as a programme set apart, is a critical component of vocational education specially designed to equip students with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes that is geared towards making them employable in the world of work, and fitting into various available office occupations. The course developed at this programme are usually aimed at exposing the recipients to various career opportunities like teaching, holding administrative offices, becoming self-employed and embarking on advanced Business Education programme (Ohaka, 2017).

It was in light of the above explication, that Osuala in Egberanmwon (2014) saw Business Education as consisting of two distinctive component parts such as: office education which is a vocational programme for office careers and general education which is a programme that provides information and competencies needed for managing and using business. Osulala in Egberanmwon (2014) also posited that Business Education is a broad based education which prepares individuals for teaching business subjects as well as providing them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for successful business. Business Education can also be seen as that aspect of vocational education that has skill acquisition, character moulding and knowledge development for business and administrative competence as its integral elements. Business Education develops in the recipients both industrial and educational competencies and efficiency (Akpomi & Ohaka, 2019). Business Education is the sum total of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required for successful promoting and administering of business enterprises (Akpomi, 2019).

Ohaka (2017) in his opinion, defined Business Education as a field of study that deals with training for the acquisition of lifelong and sustainable skills, gaining of sound knowledge and the development of good attitudes requisite for its recipients to feature professionally and competently both in the educational environment and in the business world. In the same vein, Business Education can be defined as a programme of study designed to prepare people to be gainfully employed and at the same time encourages the development of skills that are manipulative for being self-employed. The consequence of this is that, Business Education prepares the recipients for employment for office occupation as a whole, distribution and marketing occupations, teaching of business and the understanding of macro and microeconomic principles. Thus, Business Education being that programme of instruction which consists of both office education and general education will be of less value if it does not comply with the needs of time (Ibe & Nwosu, 2014).

Nigerian Economic System Ex-Rayed

The Nigerian economy, first and foremost, has been marked by massive changes over the past several centuries. While modern Nigeria is dominated by agriculture and petroleum, there were periods in history when many West African states were receiving almost all of their income from palm oil and enslavement.

The Pre-colonial Economy of Nigeria: The area that is now Nigeria was once home to numerous different states who were often rivals with each other.

These states were usually formed around ethnic groups or traditional tribal associations and included the Oyo Empire, the Edo Kingdom, the Hausa Kingdoms, and Igboland. The economies of these states mostly revolved around agricultural subsistence (self-sufficiency) and the exportation of palm tree products. They also served as profitable trade routes for other countries. However, we cannot discuss the economic development of West Africa without mentioning the slave trade. Indeed, the slave trade is the main way that various West African nations participated in the international economy. Slavery is when one human owns another human or humans as property. In West Africa, Africans sometimes enslaved each other as a consequence of war, or as a result of being perceived as ethnically or spiritually inferior to a ruling group. As a result, West African nations had long used slaves as a commodity. This was accelerated by the Islamic states in North Africa, which established the trans-Saharan slave trade. Under the trans-Saharan slave trade, slaves were sold and transported from West Africa to North Africa, where they could then be further sold throughout the Middle East and the Mediterranean. In the 16th century, Europeans enlarged the scope and scale of the West African slave trade. To meet the labour needs of their growing colonies in the Americas, Europeans purchased or captured slaves and transported them across the Atlantic as part of the transatlantic slave trade. The transatlantic slave trade increased the wealth of both European and African empires, while countless human beings were involuntarily forced into turmoil, hard labour, and death (StudySmarter, 2023).

The Colonial Economy of Nigeria: The financial success and broad scope of the slave trade attracted the attention of the British, ultimately leading to the Nigeria we know today. Although they had originally participated in the slave trade, the British ultimately declared slavery to be immoral. The British gained prominent influence in West Africa around 1807, when they banned all British subjects from participating in the slave trade. The British also tried to prevent all Europeans and Africans from participating in the slave trade, setting up naval blockades to prevent slave ships from leaving port. The loss of slavery as a viable source of income actually led to the economic collapse of several West African states such as the Edo Kingdom. As they say, 'The road to hell is paved with good intentions.' In place of the slave trade, the British began colonizing parts of West Africa, incorporating territories into the British Empire and exploiting them for resources and labour. Nigeria, as the country we know today, was established by the British Empire in 1900. The British Empire combined several different tribes, countries, and companies to create Nigeria. As the 'Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria,' the British transitioned the economy from revolving around subsistence farming to revolving around wage labour. The British also taxed Nigerians so they could afford to maintain a local military presence. Exports at this time included palm kernels and palm oil. Around 1906, the British also discovered that [Nigeria](#) had a supply of petroleum, an important resource in an increasingly industrializing world. This resource was not explored fully during the colonial period but would prove important for Nigeria

Overview of Nigerian Economy: In 1960, many different ethnic and religious groups came together in the movement to seek independence from the UK, so rather than dividing back into the nations that existed before British colonialism, Nigerians maintained the borders established by the British Empire, creating an independent nation composed of many different West African groups. Because of its cultural ties to the United Kingdom, [Nigeria](#) is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, a group of former colonies of the British Empire. Although Nigeria's politics have been marred by infighting and corruption, its economy has grown substantially since independence. The Nigerian economy is typically classified as an **emerging economy**: an economy that is transitioning toward modernization. Today, Nigeria has the largest economy in Africa. In 2021, Nigeria's gross domestic product was over £400 billion. Based on GDP, Nigeria has the 26th largest economy in the world, putting it nearly on par with nations like Norway and Israel. If this trend continues, Nigeria may breach the top 10 within the next 50-100 years. The Nigerian currency is called the naira. Before and briefly during the colonial period, Nigerians used cowrie shells as a currency, in addition to coins (StudySmarter, 2023).

Structure of Nigerian Economy: Nigeria has a **mixed economy** structured around capitalism. In a mixed economy, private businesses may receive government intervention and some sectors may be regulated or entirely controlled by the government. The name of the game is still fundamentally capitalist in nature: private businesses seek revenue in order to generate personal wealth. Nigeria is home to over 200 million people, making it one of the most populous countries in the world. This allows it to have a proportionately large labour force, which allows it to maintain numerous different economic sectors. Nigeria's economy increasingly revolves around importing and exporting. Today, one of Nigeria's largest exports is, in fact, petroleum. Nigeria is the largest exporter of petroleum in all of Africa. Most of Nigeria's petroleum is purchased by India and the United States. Around 90% of Nigeria's export profits come from petroleum. Nigeria also exports numerous agricultural products, including rubber and bananas. Palm oil, which has played an ever-important role in Nigeria's history, is still a significant export as well. Palm oil comes from the fruit of oil palm trees. Palm oil is a very common ingredient in many modern products, including processed foods, soaps, and cosmetics. It is also a very controversial crop as its production often leads to deforestation. Nigeria is also a big importer. Nigeria primarily imports food; industrial supplies and machinery; chemicals; minerals; and petroleum-based products. Nigeria's largest import partner is China, but several European countries like Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands export products to Nigeria as well (StudySmarter, 2023).

Major Sectors of the Nigerian Economy: We have an idea of who Nigeria is trading with, as well as where they stand globally. How is the Nigerian economy broken down by sector? There are four major economic sectors, which are grouped together based on types of employment and role in society. These economic sectors include (StudySmarter, 2023): **the primary economic sector** is concerned with raw goods, like food production and mineral extraction; associated careers range from hunters to farmers to lumberjacks to miners; **the secondary economic sector** is concerned with construction and manufacturing; **the tertiary economic sector** is concerned with services, ranging from banking to tourism to retail and **the quaternary economic sector** is concerned with technology, research, and education.

Most developed countries are dominated by tertiary and quaternary economic sectors. That being said, primary and secondary economic sectors usually never fully disappear. The reason that the Nigerian economy is considered an emerging economy, despite being so large and having such a big role in international trade, is because so much of its economy is still concentrated in the primary sector: food production, petroleum extraction, mineral extraction, and so forth. Around 20-25% of the economy revolves specifically around employment in and exportation of agriculture, though ironically, Nigeria also has to import some food to keep up with its expanding population (StudySmarter, 2023).

Moral Principles and Business Education Programme: Harnessing the interconnectivity

The essence of institutionalizing and championing the advocacy of moral principles in Business Education is to ensure that stakeholders especially the recipients of the programme are provided with adequate moral compass with which they can use to navigate through the socio-economic trajectory of Nigeria where immoral acts and corrupt practices both in the public and private sectors appears be order of the day. Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman (2005) were of the view that moral principles essentially tells one what is important and how they can behave towards other people around them (including animals and nature). Moral principles exists for the purpose of guiding human actions and behaviours. It helps to shape human conduct and determine what should be seen as bad or good in line with the values and norms of the given society. It is important to note here that, every moral principles are developed for the purpose of advancing the progress of the society and also build civility and harmony within a given society. According to John Locke in Timucin (2016), moral principles varies according to people, societies and countries. Aertor (2023) identified some specific moral principles that are essential in boosting the professional and ethical conduct of the major stakeholders in Business Education to include the following: do not lie, always stand by your promises, do not profit from someone else's misfortune, do not cheat, do not judge, do not disrespect others and always render help to the helpless.

Considering this perception advanced by John Locke it can however, be emphatically stated that moral principles on itself is not a universal construct, neither is it constant. It shows that moral principle is a function of what is considered generally by a group of people in the society as being right or bad. It further implies that there cannot be any universal or generally acceptable index or indices that can be used to measure morality as it were. But essentially, moral principles are created for the purpose of advancing social justice and order as well as promoting civility among members of a given society. Moral principles are usually associated with some social variables and can be handled within different frameworks.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Business Education plays a significant role in the propagation, internalization and promotion of certain moral principles among its recipients and other individual members of the society (Oral & Coban, 2019). Little wonder, some scholars such as Akpomi and Ohaka (2020); Bupo & Ohaka (2020), Ohaka and Bupo (2019) while defining Business Education, considered character formation and moral development as integral components or elements of the concept of Business Education. This further explains why over the years, Business Education has remained critical and unwavering in the advancement of moral and ethical conducts of the people through its continuous review of its curriculum to include salient elements that seeks to enhance the moral conduct of individuals and corporate organizations. However, the integration of morality and moral principles into the field of Business Education should not just be about the promotion of these principles among individuals and businesses (Stein & Fischer, 2011).

Moral principles have consequential effect on the implementation of Business Education curriculum in terms of what should be and what should not be (Stein & Fischer, 2011). This is because, any attempt not to consider the moral principles of the society in the development of the curriculum of Business Education, the aftermath effect may be detrimental to the programme. Thus, it is important that every stakeholder in Business Education are aware of the basic moral principles are also willing to follow such principles in the implementation of the programme. This gives credence to the fact why the concept of morality should be given special recognition in Business Education (Curtis, 2015; Hand, 2014; Lepage et. al., 2011; Samuelsson & Lindstrom, 2017; Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2013).

Ozge (2021) brilliantly attempting to disambiguate the concept of morality in Business Education and also provide its consequential interconnectivity, provided the following metaphoric perceptions of the concept of morality: morality is a value shaped by guidance/education; morality is a value shaped by the society; morality is a value that encompasses intrinsic/personal processes; morality is a requirement of social acceptance; morality is an element that eliminates wrongs/takes one to the rights; morality is a value that provides happiness and peace and also benefits; morality is a value understood from behaviour; morality is a value that requires knowledge; morality is an element of balance; morality is an element that is difficult/impossible to change; morality is a basic need; morality is a value that shapes/guides the individual; morality is a religious element; morality is a value to be protected; morality is a phenomenon that is open to interpretation/changes according to the person and morality is a feature that distinguishes one from other beings.

Promoting Moral Principles in Business Education and the Economy of Nigeria: Harnessing the Benefits and Strategic Nexus

The goal of Business Education is essentially to build morals, develop skills and develop the intellect of the recipients. Promoting moral ideologies in Business Education through moral education helps to raise leaders and employees who can promote moral and ethical values in business organizations and specific industries which contributes in boosting the economic state of the nation. Through these moral principles, business managers and industry leaders are discouraged from aiding and abetting corrupt practices that can be retrogressive towards the growth of the economy.

Importantly, Arteo (2023) asserted that moral principles in Business Education serves as a guide that determines the manner with which students should behave especially in their future careers, the kind of career choice they will have to make and the manner of relationship they would want to maintain with their peers and colleagues in the society and in the world of work.

According to Ponio (2021), some of the positive impacts of promoting moral principles in Business Education in relation to how it can affect the economy of Nigeria can be highlighted as follows: it contributes in building character in the individual, it leaves the recipients with the capacity to cope with difficult situations in life, it helps to form and shape their adult behaviour, it ameliorates the level of bad peer influence from contemporaries, it teaches its recipients how to differentiate right from wrong, it helps to enhance their social perception about life and it instills in the students the character and spirit of selflessness. Figure 1 below succinctly presents the framework of the specific constituents of the indices that makes up the prose of integrating moral principles in Business Education for improved national economic growth and development.

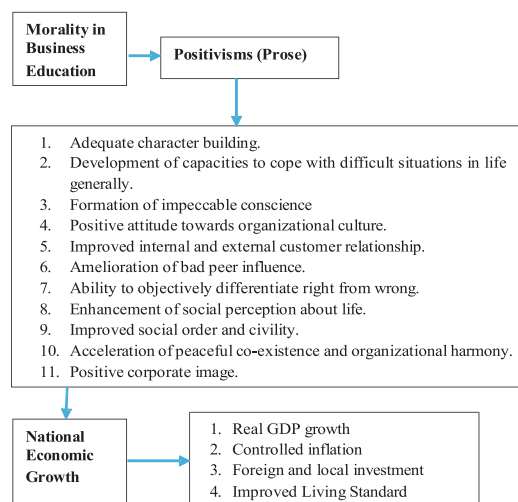


Fig. 1: Framework of Positive Impact of Moral Education in Business Education on Nigerian Economy
Source: Researcher's Conceptualization (2024)

One can certainly argue on a basis of enlightened self-interest that it is, at the very least, generally better to be good rather than bad and to create a world and society that is good rather than one that is bad. However, it is not being suggested at this point that one ought to pursue one's own self-interest. Rather, an argument is being presented that if everyone tried to do and be good and tried to avoid and prevent bad, it would be in everyone's self-interest. For example, if within a group of people no one killed, stole, lied, or cheated, then each member of the group would benefit. Therefore, even though it is not airtight (as Kai Nielsen's essay illustrates), the argument from enlightened self-interest is compelling. The self-interest argument can be a problem when other interests conflict with it; often it is difficult to convince someone who sees obvious benefits in acting immorally in a particular situation that it is in his or her self-interest to do otherwise.

Advancing the teaching of moral ideologies in Business Education contributes in inculcating in the individual the need for the total respect societal norms, values and the existing laws of the nation state. These laws includes those that are geared towards the sanitizing and salvaging the economy from the whims and caprices of some unscrupulous and nefarious industry players. Moral education in Business Education is a dependable strategy in the restoration of the economy of Nigeria from its woes.

For Nigeria's economic system to be salvaged, key stakeholders in Business Education programme have a significant role to play which is the promotion of generally acceptable moral standards and ideologies among relevant stakeholders.

This argument suggests that because traditions and laws, established over a long period of time, govern the behaviour of human beings, and because these traditions and laws urge human beings to be moral rather than immoral, there are good reasons for being so. Self-interest is one reason, but another is respect for the human thought and effort that has gone into establishing such laws and traditions and transferring them from one historic period and one culture to another. This can be an attractive argument, even though it tends to suppress questioning of traditions and laws—a kind of questioning that is at the core of creative moral reasoning. Morality established by tradition and law is problematic because it is difficult both to change and to question successfully. This lack of questioning sometimes encourages blind obedience to immoral practices. It encourages the belief that because something has been done a certain way for hundreds of years, it must be right.

Moral and Immoral Principles and Practices in Business Education that Negates Nigerian Economic Growth and Development

The promotion and institutionalization of positive moral principles and practices in Business Education has to do with the creation of a business organizational culture where people make decisions and act in ways that build sustainable businesses, care for the needs of all stakeholders and comply with their moral and legal obligations (Clothier & Steinholtz, 2017). Respect for human right and opinion, integrity, transparency, honesty and equity have also been advanced as some of the positive components of moral principles. On the other hand, it is also pertinent to note that there are considerable number of immoral principles and practices that can be counter-productive towards the growth and development of the national economy. These immoral principles usually do not conform to globally acceptable principles and standards and negatively affect the economy of the Nigeria. According to Okoye (2019), examination malpractices, irresponsible teaching, corruption, plagiarism, teachers' misconduct, incompetent teaching and cultism are some of the identifiable immoral principles cum practices in Business Education that contributes in bringing about poor economic growth. On a similar note, other observed immoral practices that are capable negatively affecting Business Education programme for national economic growth are highlighted as follows: academic dishonesty (copy and paste), favouritism and nepotism, tribalism and ethnicism, sex or money for grade, indecent dressing, office politics, unhealthy competition for power and authority among Business Educators, staff and student witch-hunt, and frustration of supervisees by supervisors.

Basic Approaches to the Study of Morality in Business Education

Every individual, professions and institutions upholds some moral principles which seeks the guide the conduct and mode of operations of the individual members of the profession. Most of these moral principles are most times, created by law and are usually encapsulated in the professional code of conduct for members.

According to Arteo, (2023), moral principles which can be described as standards of right and wrong, good or bad that a person or group has can be handed down to an individual or group individuals by family members or contemporaries. They can also be dictated by the society or religion, and they can certainly change throughout our lives depending on our experiences. But importantly and specifically moral principles can be transmitted through scientific or descriptive approach and through philosophical approach (The Nature of Morality, n.d.).

Scientific, or Descriptive, Approach: This approach is most often used in the social sciences and, like ethics, deals with human behavior and conduct. The emphasis here, however, is empirical; that is, social scientists observe and collect data about human behaviour and conduct and then draw certain conclusions. For example, some psychologists, after having observed many human beings in many situations, have reached the conclusion that human beings often act in their own self-interest. This is a descriptive, or scientific, approach to human behavior—the psychologists have observed how human beings act in many situations, described what they have observed, and drawn conclusions. However, they make no value judgments as to what is morally right or wrong nor do they prescribe how humans ought to behave (The Nature of Morality, n.d.).

Philosophical Approach: The second major approach to the study of morality is called the philosophical approach, and it consists of two parts. Normative, prescriptive, ethics - The first part of the philosophical approach deals with norms (or standards) and prescriptions. Another aspect of normative, or prescriptive, ethics is that it encompasses the making of moral value judgments rather than just the presentation or description of facts or data. For example, such statements as “Abortion is immoral” and “Lupe is a morally good person” may not prescribe anything, but they do involve those normative moral value judgments that we all make every day of our lives. The second part of the philosophical approach to the study of ethics is called metaethics or, sometimes, analytic ethics. Rather than being descriptive or prescriptive, this approach is analytic in two ways. First, metaethicists analyze ethical language (e.g., what we mean when we use the word good). Second, they analyze the rational foundations of ethical systems, or the logic and reasoning of various ethicists. Metaethicists do not prescribe anything nor do they deal directly with normative systems. Instead they “go beyond” (a key meaning of the Greek prefix meta-), concerning themselves only indirectly with normative ethical systems by concentrating on reasoning, logical structures, and language rather than on content (The Nature of Morality, n.d.).

Current Philosophical Positions on Morality in Business Education

Two theories have traditionally dominated this discussion. These philosophical positions include that of Aristotle and Dewey. Undoubtedly, over the years these discussions about the content and the process of morality in Business Education have been informed by these philosophical positions. While one may tend to argue that Aristotelian ethics have underpinned the widely embraced character education approach, and that Dewey's concept of moral thinking would support the cognitive developmentalist approach, the demarcation is not so clear cut and the link not so direct. Neither does Aristotle reject the rational and scientific elements of moral thinking nor does Dewey ignore the concept of desire and feelings.

What an exposition of these philosophers has convincingly and successfully demonstrated to us is the undisputed role of Business Educators as moral educators. Their argument is similar to the revered notion that Business Education as a component of general education encompasses some pertinent moral elements or implications that cannot be overlooked or dismissed. Peters in Winch and Gingell (2023) and Peters (2015) further advanced their argument on the importance of morality and moral education in Business Education. The implication of their argument is the fact that Business Education itself has undeniable moral undertones embedded in it whether it is construed as a product or as a process. That is to opine that Business Education being a course of study that seeks to cultivate the intellectual, cultural and spiritual traditions of a society, is the idea that initiation in the moral traditions of a society is one important aspect of Business Education.

Philosophical analysis directs us towards an understanding of the assumption that underlies our concepts of moral education. Psychology, on the other hand, generates understanding of how the individual develops moral thought across various stages of life. Sociology highlights the interaction between individual thought and the social processes in the formation of the moral self. In each discipline the distinct traditions that have directed thought, have also served to enrich our understanding of the concept of moral education.

Conclusion

The pertinence of integrating and institutionalizing some morale elements and principles in Business Education programme as part of the collective and collaborative effort to boost and refocus the economic system of Nigeria cannot be overstressed. Part of the objectives of moral education in Business Education is to develop a body of moral principles in the major stakeholders of Business Education programme such as the students and Business Educators who will turn out to be responsible, responsive and accountable employees and industry players. The Nigerian economy of today requires individuals with good moral principles and standards to drive it. Hence, need for moral considerations in the curriculum of Business Education. Moral principles in Business Education programme would rather prevent the fabrication of reality, falsification of facts, sharp practices, racketeering, bribery, tribalism, favouritism and nepotism which have remained a bane to the economy of Nigeria. Thus, if Business Education as a critical contributor to the development of Nigerian economy by producing sound products, it must adopt relevant codes of conducts through policy formulation that will help to determine the behaviour of the stakeholders in the profession.

Suggestions

Based on the issues raised above, the following points are suggested for further policy considerations:

1. Business Education programme administrators should enact feasible administrative policies that will be predicated on advancing relevant and workable moral principles in Business Education.
2. Moral and ethical education should be included in the curriculum of Business Education at all levels of the programme so that all the major stakeholders can be instilled with the requisite moral principles and ideals needed for them to distinguish themselves in their chosen career.

3. Adequate measures should be put in place by the administrators of Business Education programme in order to promote the principle of morality by making sure that stakeholders who indulge in any form of immoral act are penalized. This will to a great extent serve as a deterrent to others who may intend to act immorally and bring the profession to disrepute.
4. Business Education students should be adequately prepared through moral education on the need for them to prioritize value creation, ethical standard, and proficiency development in the discharge of their corporate responsibilities.

REFERENCES

- Adýgüzel, A. (2017). The relationship between university students' moral maturity levels and their general self-efficacy perceptions. *Anatolian Journal of Educational Leadership and Instruction*, 5(1), 1-17.
- Akpomi, M. E. (2019). *Organizing business education*. Pre-Joe Publishers.
- Akpomi, M. E., & Ohaka, N. C. (2019). Business education students' perception of the influence of technology on production efficiency of entrepreneurs in Rivers State. Conference paper presented at the 31st National Annual Conference of Association of Business Educators of Nigeria at Delta State from 9th-12th of October, 2019.
- Akpomi, M. E., & Ohaka, N. C. (2020). Business Education students' perception of the influence of technology on production efficiency of entrepreneurs in Rivers State. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 7(1), 288 - 302.
- Anangisye, W. A .L. (2018). Rethinking the justification of teaching morality: Review-based evidence. *Huria Journal*, 25(1), 1-27.
- Anangisye, W. A. L. (2015). Revisiting teachers' understanding of ethics and the teaching profession in Tanzania. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Sciences*, 4(2), 48 - 65.
- Arteo, A. (2023). What Are Moral Principles? Retrieved from www.arteo.com.
- Baºdemir, H. Y. (2007). Moral metaphysics. In R. Kaymakcan & M. Uyanýk (Eds.). *Ethics with its theoretical and practical aspects*. DEM Yayýnlarý.
- Bloom, P. (2012). Religion, morality, evolution. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63, 179 - 199.
- Boone, B. (2017). *Ethics 101: From altruism and utilitarianism to bioethics and political ethics, an exploration of the concept of right and wrong*. Adams Media.
- Bupo, G. O., & Ohaka, N. C. (2020). Business Education students' perception of the utilization of online platforms for educational assessment in Rivers State University. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 7(1), 507 - 516.
- Clothier, P., & Steinholtz, R. (2017). *Ethical business values*. Hart Publishers.
- Curtis, E. (2015). The values dimension of quality teachers: Can we prepare pre-service teachers for this? *Athens Journal of Education*, 2(4), 313-330.
- Darwall, S. (2019). *Philosophical ethics*. Routledge.
- Egberenwen, E. P. (2014). Producing a global worker through business education with office technology and management (OTM) in perspective. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*. 2(1), 134 - 142.
- Erdem, H. (2002). *Moral philosophy* (2nd Ed.). Hü-erYayýnlarý.
- Folger, R., Cropanzano, R., & Goldman, B. (2005). What is the relationship between justice and morality. In J. Greenberg and J. A. Colquitt (Eds.), *Handbook of Organizational Justice*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Hamm, C. M. (2003). *Philosophical issues in Education: An introduction*. Routledge.
- Hand, M. (2014). Towards a theory of moral education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 48(4), 519 - 532.

- Hawley, P. H., Geldhof, G. J. (2012). Preschoolers' social dominance, moral cognition and moral behaviour: An evolutionary perspective. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 112, 18-35
- Hitlin, S., & Vaisey, S. (2010). Back to the future. Reviving the sociology of morality. In S. Hitlin & S. Vaisey (Eds.). *Handbook of the Sociology of Morality*. Springer.
- Ibe, E. C., & Nwosu, C. D. (2014). Business education and the challenges of time. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 2(1), 55 - 62.
- Kýlýç, P. (2012). *The religious basis of morality* (7th Ed.). Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları.
- Kropotkin, P. (2005). *Anarchy: Philosophy-ideal* (2nd Ed.). KaosYayınları.
- LePage, P., Akar, H., Temli, Y., Şen, D., Hasser, N., & Ivins, I. (2011). Comparing teachers' views on morality and moral education, a comparative study in Turkey and the United States. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 366 - 375.
- Limbasan, S., Ling, M., & Pang, V. (2018). *Students' moral behaviour inventory development and validation: A rasch analysis*. Stemco Publishers.
- Naderi, M. (2014). Pathology of preservation of morality in Islamic and western societies. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 33(2569), 1 - 7.
- Ohaka, N. C. (2017). *Conflict management in schools: The role of the teacher as an in loco-parentis*. GRINVerlag Publications.
- Ohaka, N. C., & Bupo, G. O. (2019). Students' perception of business studies trainee-teachers and classroom conduct in Port-Harcourt secondary schools. *International Journal of Innovative Education Research*, 7(1), 73 - 82.
- Okoye, A. C. (2019). Ethical considerations in business education for national development. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 6(2), 237 - 247.
- Oral, B., & Çoban, A. (2019). Basic concepts In B. Oral, A. Çoban, & N. Bars (Eds.), *Moral and ethics in education*. PegemAkademi.
- Ozge, M. S. (2021). What is morality?: The concept of morality from prospective teachers' perspective. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 43(1), 135 - 154.
- Özlem, D. (2004). *Ethics: Moral philosophy*. NotosKitap.
- Peters, R. S. (2015). *Ethics and education*. Routledge Revivals Publications.
- Ponio, J. (2021). Why Are Moral Values Important in Children? Retrieved from <https://www.ofhsoupkitchen.org>
- Timuçin, A. (2016). *History of thought: Sources of realistic thought* (8th Edition). Bulut Yayınları.
- The Nature of Morality (n.d.). Chapter 1. Retrieved from www.mythinkinglab.com.
- Thornberg, R. (2008). Values education as the fostering of school rules. *Research in Education*, 80(1), 200 - 211.
- Samuelsson, L., & Lindström, N. (2017). On the educational task of mediating basic values in an individualist society. *Athens Journal of Education*, 4(2), 137 - 147.
- Sanger, M. N., & Osguthorpe, R. D. (2013). Modeling as moral education: Documenting, analyzing, and addressing a central belief of pre-service teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 29, 167 - 176.

- StudySmarter (2023). Nigerian Economy: Structure, Overview and Facts. <https://www.studysmaster.co.uk>.
- Stein, Z., & Fischer, K. W. (2011). Directions for mind, brain, and education: Methods, models, and morality. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 43(1), 56 - 66.
- Vatanda^o, S. (2017). Morality as one of the basic subjects of philosophy and “happiness” as a goal of moral behavior. *Journal of International Management and Social Researches*, 4(7), 1 - 9.
- Vishalache, B. (2012). Real lie dilemma in moral education. University Malaya Press.
- Winch, C., & Gingell, J. (2023). The evolution of the thought of Richard Peters: Neglected Aspects. *De Gruyter*, 24(1), 21 - 51.
- Yüksel, M. (2015). Code of ethics morality and the law. *Hacettepe Law Review*, 5(1), 9 - 26.