Faculty of Commerce
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Investigation of Applicability of Business Ethics in State Universities in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of National University of Science and Technology (NUST)

BY

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ABSTRACT

Business ethics is the lifeblood of an organisation as it governs the codes of principles and values and action in decision making within an organisation. Ethics consists of the values and moral standards an individual or society determines are desirable and acceptable. Ethics in leadership is the determination of right and wrong, good and the moral standards of the leader and follower relationship. Alternatively, business ethics have been viewed to be concerned with issues not covered by law, this means it starts where the law ends.

This study seeks to expose and gauge the applicability of business ethics in State Universities in Zimbabwe: A case study of National University of Science and Technology (NUST). Relevant literature on (BE) was reviewed to anchor and ground the research and some possible factors that drive (BE) as well as key findings which other researchers have found out explored. Based on the theories that determine ethics, it explains what is at play in the ethics in Zimbabwean State Universities. More on, it explores importance of moral standards and ethical concerns, staff compliance to business ethics and factors influencing business ethics.

The study adopted a phenomenological approach while using the case study strategy that sees all categories of employees in State Universities participating in the study. Data was gathered through questionnaires and interviews from the sources considered informative. Tables, bar and pie charts were used to provide concise presentation and make easy analysis and interpretation of data. The research found business ethics and moral standards are of utmost importance to any organisation. More on, Leadership or management plays an important role in an organisation. Leadership should embed business ethics as culture of an organisation as employees follow suit of what leadership does.

Challenges related to business ethics were lack of written codes or uncommunicated codes of ethics, fear of the unknown (sense of impunity), nepotism and not knowing what is expected of an employee. The study concluded that 22% of respondents were not aware of business ethics and such a percentage represented a significant number which calls for attention, whilst 91% also raised concern regarding unethical practices. As highlighted in the literature review, many authors pointed that business ethics places the demands on businesses to be morally right to its stakeholders, and therefore 91% raising concern may be signaling the bad state of affairs that the institution may be in regarding moral correctness.
The researcher recommended that NUST should train the entire staff on business ethics and its importance in order to create earnest awareness and also create systems that hold accountable those who do not comply with business ethics as a way of embedding business ethics in the university culture. Employees should whistle blow any wrong doing regarding compliance with business ethics.