

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Sustainability and Ethics - The perception and relevance for
current and future managers**

By

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Abstract

Sustainability and Ethics are topics that have increasingly become key across modern organisations. Sustainability is a priority interest for many organisations as the world's resources are at threat if organisations do not take responsibility for ensuring that they utilize resources sparingly, preserving scarce resources for future generations. Business schools have incorporated the need of business organisations into the curriculum in line with current business requirements. The Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programme is a management education qualification that is ideal for people wishing to develop or enhance their skills and knowledge across the entire spectrum of modern management. MBA studies feed into the running of today's organisations hence not only does their curriculum matter to business but also the level of understanding, concept application and practicality of learning. These affect the body of knowledge that MBA's apply or must apply in their respective organisations. It is therefore important to determine if MBA students are implementing their learning in their organisations as they represent the current and future managers. However individuals have different perceptions and would have varied opinions of the relevance of their learning to business practice. The primary purpose of this study was to determine if current and future managers are contributing towards sustainability and ethics in their organisations based on their learning. This exploratory study sought to address in particular the understanding of subjects of sustainability, ethics and related topics, the perceptions of future managers and the relevance of the MBA programme based on student perceptions. An outline questionnaire was designed to examine various aspects of the topics of sustainability and ethics as well as the MBA students' perceptions of other aspects of the curriculum. A non-probability purposive sample of 100 current MBA students was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Graduate School of Business and Leadership. The salient findings of this study show that there is a gap between student perceptions on topics of sustainability and ethics and implementation of their learning in their organisations. The study found that though MBA students have an understanding of the meaning of sustainability and ethics and understand the relevance for their organisations there is need for managers to focus on implementation of their learning.

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List of abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
MBA	Master of Business Administration
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present an overview of the study. It introduces a study undertaken with the motive to determine if current and future managers (MBA students) are contributing towards sustainability and ethics in their organisations based on their learning. The following will be outlined in this chapter: the motivation for the study, the focus of the study, the problem statement, the research objectives and limitations of the study.

1.2 Motivation for the study

Master of Business Administration (MBA) studies feed into the running of today's organisations hence not only does their curriculum matter to business but also the level of understanding, concept application and practicality of learning. These affect the body of knowledge that MBA's apply or must apply in their respective organisations. It is therefore important to determine if MBA students are implementing their learning in their organisations.

About 55 years ago, entities began addressing ethics in different methods anticipating to instil and promote ethical conduct among managers. Such methods include compliance programs, the emergence of codes of ethical conduct, the drawing and circulation of value statements, new posts specifically focusing on corporate social responsibility were created and a significant number of training workshops/programs on ethics were on the rise (Varma, 2009).

In light of the programs put in place to promote and instil ethical behaviour, it is sad to note that the events dating few years back are a convincing sign to indicate that these efforts that were highly publicised and trusted, failed to prevent and deter authorities from being involved in unethical business practices which led to corporate scandals and severe loss in investments for example "Enron, WorldCom, Tyco, Global Crossing, Aldephia, InClone, Sunbeam" (Lee, 2011: 42).

In response to this recent behaviour of entities, different nations enacted different legislation and compulsory ethical programs aimed at closely monitoring the activities of entities. This is an ongoing practice so that companies could be more responsible and accountable to the communities where they run their businesses (Lee, 2011).

According to Lee (2011), the past two decades brought along new ethical challenges in the form of bribes, kickbacks and environmental issues affecting developed, emerging and third world countries differently, yielding different outcomes and changing the business landscape altogether. Third world countries are severely experiencing financial mismanagement and fraud (Varma, 2009).

These new challenges have attracted renewed interest from different practitioners to dig further on the topic of ethics and sustainability. It is this renewed interest that motivated the researcher to pursue this study in order to contribute both to literature (academics) and ethical practitioners (corporate social responsibility officers and government) with empirical evidence from a South African perspective. These mentioned stakeholders can rely on the study's findings to help firms align their operational goals and business strategies in proportion to ethical and sustainability practices being undertaken in South Africa.

This study is also motivated by the fact that socially responsible entities would seldom exist in the absence of socially responsible managers who are sometimes keen to forgo, Kiecker & Chonko, 1990; Wood, Chonko & Hun, 1986). Hence, it is of great significance to bring to light the practices of current and future managers regarding their ethical and sustainable behaviour.

1.3 Focus of the study

This study focuses on current and future managers' ethical behaviour. First, the study looks at future managers who are MBA students currently enrolled at institutions of higher learning to understand whether or not the education they acquire regarding ethics and sustainability is being put into practice at the present moment. That is to say, at university level. Also, in view of current managers, who are former MBA students, this study focus on whether or not they are currently practicing what they gained during their learning period with regard to ethics and sustainability at their workplace at the present moment.

This study also focus on whether or not current MBA students do understand the practical relevance of the concept of ethics in today's business environment. The study also seek to

contribute to the debate regarding the introduction of business ethics and sustainability as a standalone module at institutions of higher learning and later focus on perception of MBA students with regard to modules that are currently being taught at institutions of higher learning particularly on ethics and sustainability.

This study further looks into the influence of culture on student perception regarding the concept of ethics and sustainability. This is mainly influenced by the writings of Rossouw (1994) who indicated that the Republic of South Africa was a “developing country” on the other hand indicating that the “struggle for survival in the new economy of South Africa would hardly afford morality”. Fullerton, Bisschof and Moore, (2008) however argue that the previous sentiments by Rossouw which were later nullified in Rossouw’s (1997) publication were as a result of failure to understand that South Africa was a country undergoing transformation. Therefore, culture’s role towards ethics is discussed in this study given that South Africa is a country that is so diverse in terms of culture.

1.4 Problem statement

Empirical evidence lament the death of research regarding future managers, who in this study are referred to as MBA students who are currently enrolled at institutions of higher learning particularly in South Africa (Fullerton et al. 2008; Ahmed, Chung & Eichenseher, 2003). Shafer, Fukukawa and Lee (2006) highlight that the death in empirical studies exploring adherence to ethical and sustainability standards in less developed countries is very little owing to the idea that in less developed countries, expectations regarding adherence to ethical standards to office bearers is currently at its lowest level.

These sentiments by Shafer et al. (2006) suggest that the ethical behaviour of managers is of little significance in emerging markets. The sentiments have far reaching consequences as in investors’ point of view, managers in developing countries, have the room to behave anyhow they like. This certainly scares away investors and rob the African continent of the much needed foreign direct investment (FDIs).

Owing to the premise that South Africa is a two tier country, that is to say, on the one hand, South Africa falls in the category of a developed country and on the other hand, South Africa is characterised as an emerging economy, therefore, a great need exists to investigate the adherence to ethical and sustainability standards of current and future managers in order to ensure that the investment climate is safe both to local and international investors who

currently view South Africa as the safest country to invest in. Consequently, this study seeks to fill this gap by bringing to light the ethical and sustainability behaviour practices of current and future managers in South Africa as it is not directly addressed in the extant literature (Fullerton et al. 2008; Shafer et al. 2006; Ahmed et al. 2003). In light of this statement, the research questions for the study have been formulated and are outlined in the section to follow.

1.5 Research sub-questions

1. Are MBA students implementing their learning on sustainability and ethics in their organisations?
2. Do MBA students understand the relevance of sustainability and ethics in business?
3. Is there need to introduce sustainability and ethics as modules?
4. What is the perception of MBA students with regard to the modules taught?

1.6 Objectives

The research aims to determine if current and future managers are contributing towards sustainability and ethics in their organisations based on their learning.

1. To find out how MBA students define sustainability.
2. To determine if MBA students implement sustainability measures in their respective work places.
3. To establish the use of sustainability reports for investment decisions among MBAs, if any.
4. To determine the relevance of sustainability and ethics in business.
5. To identify the role of ethics for managers.

1.7 Limitations

The fact that the study was conducted at UKZN and only current post-graduate students pursuing MBA were the target population, is a major shortcoming of this research as the findings cannot be generalised to South Africa and the rest of the world. This is because this research can as well be labelled externally invalid as UKZN is not representative of the

whole country. Furthermore the study ignored other ethical and sustainable education activities being carried out by other faculties/disciplines and focused only on ethics and sustainability modules being offered within the school of UKZN creating a perception that ethics and sustainability modules being offered to business students are superior than others which is practically not the case.

1.8 Summary

This chapter discussed among other issues the motivation for the study, the focus of the study and the problem statement. The problem statement was stated as managers in developing countries are lowly expected to adhere to ethical and sustainable business practices which has potential negative business ramifications. Resultantly, there is need to bring to light the ethical and sustainable business practices of current and future managers to confirm or disconfirm the extant literature with empirical evidence which has however been identified as not forthcoming in South Africa. The chapter to follow reviews literature at length on ethics and sustainability.

CHAPTER TWO

Sustainability and Ethics

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a lengthy discussion on sustainability and ethics. Further, this chapter unpacks how graduate students from around the globe perceive the concept of ethics. Lastly, the chapter incorporates the role of education in relation to whether ethics can be taught in schools as a curriculum in an attempt to determine the relevance of the concept currently and in the future. The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: definition of key terms, theoretical background, ethics and education, ethics and student perception. The chapter concludes by focusing on ethics from a South African context.

2.2 Definition of key terms

This section seeks to define major terms underpinning this study which are sustainability and ethics. Sustainability is defined first and ethics thereafter.

2.2.1 Sustainability: definitions and meanings

Sustainability can be defined from different perspectives implying that a significant number of definitions to the concept exist. Definitions of sustainability are mainly found but not limited to three fields which are social, environmental and economics. Social science definitions focus largely on future generations, with environmental science definitions focusing more on technology, resources, waste and pollution. The Brundtland Report (1987) documents the definition of sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Professor David McCloskey a scholar in the field of Sociology at the University of Seattle had a different perspective regarding sustainability. The definition is premised on human actions and outlined as follows:

“Actions are sustainable if:

There is a balance between resources used and resources regenerated.

Resources are as clean or cleaner at end use as at beginning.

-The viability, integrity, and diversity of natural systems are restored and maintained;

-They lead to enhanced local and regional self-reliance;

-They help create and maintain community and a culture of place;

-Each generation preserves the legacies of future generations.”

Faced with the ever increasing human population the planet earth is exposed to a new challenge for example the mismatch between the ability of natural systems to support human activities. In light of the afore mentioned challenge, the definitions of sustainability in their numbers all emphasize the need for each generation to observe that nature (oceans, air in the atmosphere, consumable water sources such as rivers & dams, vegetation and animals) is the only provider of all our needs both the rich and the poor. Therefore, methods being implemented by the natural and artificial persons for survival often termed human activities should ensure that the future generation is not robbed of the same ability of survival which the current generation enjoys.

2.2.2 The ethical context of sustainability

The definitions of sustainability as outlined earlier factor in the concept of development. Development generally refers to the positive reforms in social, economic and political outlook which each society embraces with both hands. The concept of development is the key to fulfilling the needs of both the poor and the rich keeping in mind the needs of the future generation. In other words, what comes first are needs of the current generation versus the needs of the future generation before wants of either generations are addressed (Golding, 1972). This view is important as people continue to reflect in the path of human kind.

According to Kibert, Thiele, Peterson and Monroe (2012), it is relatively correct to state that the current society richly benefited from its ancestors and it has an equal obligation to pass the good to the forthcoming generations by avoiding engaging in harmful practices in the

name of development. Wagner (1971) concurs with the previous statement and further concludes the discussion by stating that if the current generation recognize and appreciate the rights of future generations, chances are high that the current generation would experience satisfying levels of “self-actualization and well-being.”

2.2.3 Ethics

In any given society, people get to be guided in terms of acceptable and unacceptable behavior and this is passed from one generation to the other. Depending on the level of civilization that each society is exposed to, what is regarded as acceptable behavior may differ from one society to the other implying that ethics are also influenced by culture. Put differently, what qualifies a certain behavior as welcome is the element of being right as opposed to being wrong found or associated with that act in the eyes of each member belonging to that society. Thus, ethics can be defined as the unwritten or written code of standards, and values that influence the behavior of each member in any given society with regard to right and wrong (Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Louw & Oosthuizen, 2008).

On a different note, Smith, Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) enriches the above definition by incorporating both natural and artificial persons. Thus, according to Smith et al., (2007), ethics influences both human beings and business entities. However, what differs are the circumstances which requires ethical decision making practices. For example, in human beings an individual is confronted with ethical issues when his/her responsibilities are brought to test. Certain qualities are in the forefront of ethics in humanity for example, honest, and being a faithful steward which are often tested in different ways such as either to accept or deny a bribe, and utilizing organisational resources for personal gains (Fatoki & Marembo, 2012).

Conversely, at an entity level, ethics are standards, measures and values that influence the overall decision making process in dealing with the firm’s stakeholders (public relations) (Smit et al., 2007). Herriegal et al., (2008) note that business ethics encompass all efforts by the entity in its attempt to integrate important themes in its policies, practices and decision making. Such themes include among others honesty, trust, respect and fairness. From the above descriptions, it can be inferred that business ethics revolves around building the firm’s image through adhering to good corporate practice standards in order to minimize

detrimental effects to the firm's stakeholders. On a broader perspective, business ethics facilitates the undertaking of business transactions by different players in the market to satisfy the firm's interest as well as the interest of those of participating in such business transactions. It is because of this broad perspective of business ethics that led to Ahmed, Chung and Eichenseher (2003) to view business ethics as the study of the ethical values regulating the economic activity.

Further, business ethics form an integral focal point of many firms. This is the case because if properly implemented and crafted, business ethics can enhance the profitability level of an entity (Daud, 2006). Profitability can be enhanced in a number of ways related to good business ethics, for example, through the word of mouth. Customers and employees as well as suppliers may be compelled recommending the firm to other players in the market. The brand name of the firm can as well increase in value owing to positive publicity the firm enjoys as a result of good implementation of business ethics (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Du Toit, Erasmus & Strydom, 2010).

The firm can as well take the initiative to post testimonies on its website of customers who are aware of the firm's activities in the community regarding the environment and community projects to educate other customers to build on customer loyalty leading to repeated sales (Barnett, 2007; Fatoki & Marembo, 2012). The section to follow discusses theoretical background of ethics in the business world.

2.3 Ethics: Theoretical background

Studies by Amberla, Wang, Juslin, Panwar, Hansen and Anderson (2010); Fatoki and Marembo (2012) propose the stockholder and stakeholder theories as the underpinning theories relating to ethical behavior of business entities. In light of the extant literature, this study also subscribes to the stockholder and stakeholder theories in relation to business ethics and these are discussed at length in this section.

2.3.1 The stockholder theory

In an entity set up, providers of funds to run the entity fall in the category of stockholder. Stockholders hold shares and their main expectation is the continuous increase in the value of the stock held for maximum returns in investments.

Personnel running the firm are managers who are appointed as agents and have the mandate to advance the desires of the stockholders. Friedman (1962) the proponent of the stockholder theory states that to firms, only one corporate social responsibility exist: a firm is to utilize resources at its disposal in order to realize profits while adhering to the rules prescribed by relevant authorities in the market. It therefore entails that an entity should therefore abstain from practices that unjustly enrich the entity at the expense of its clients and detrimental to the environment when pursuing its core business activities. In other words, the entity should advocate and adhere to fraud free business transactions and compete openly in the market.

In this 21st Century era, the majority of entities are managed by professionals who are appointed by stockholders to advance their interests. In this arrangement, professionals appointed to advance the interests of stockholders are often found in a dilemma. This dilemma is brought about by the need to maximize the wealth of stockholders (long-term) versus the need to increase the profitability of the firm (short-term). Furthermore this leads to the problem of interaction between the concerned parties. It is of great significance that future managers be aware of such problems as these problems require deeper understanding of ethics on how to move forward without jeopardizing the reputation of the firm, its profitability base, and the risk of job loss (Waldkirch, 2008).

As outlined earlier, managers are agents who have an obligation to stockholders clearly spelt out in the agency contract or contract of employment. Owing to the agency/employment contract, managers are therefore obliged to further the interest of stockholders. Put differently, managers may not utilize entity resources in corporate social responsibilities activities regardless of benefits that may accrue to the firm without the blessing of stockholders.

The stockholder theory regards an entity as a mere arrangement whereby funders advance their money in the form of capital to managers to be utilized in various entity projects meant to enrich funders who later receive stock ownership certificates hence the name stockholders. The stockholder theory therefore outlines that managers are officers who are contracted by the entity and may not divert from plans approved by stockholders. Even if it means sidelining corporate social responsibilities, managers are expected to oblige, however this is unlikely as all firms particularly in South Africa are by legislation required to give back to communities they operate in. According to Friedman (1970) pursuing ethical considerations is more costly to entities through an extra administrative burden. In other words, managers

pursuing ethical considerations pay extra attention to the short-term expenditure in the form of ethical and social responsibilities expenses as they play a significant role in the overall achievement of short-term profits.

The stockholder theory advances that managers of an entity in their pursuit of profit are constrained by ethical dimensions found in each respective society. Ethical dimensions generally are embedded in community laws which are biased towards honesty and managers are expected to oblige at the same time keeping the entity as a going concern. In other words, current and future managers should be aware that ethical dimensions form boundaries and the entity can be said to be at the centre with more options to stretch its profitable activities to the boundary line (Waldkirch, 2008).

In light of this background, it can as well be argued that firms have no corporate social responsibilities besides legally maximizing the profits of stockholders (Friedman, 1970; Akram & Azad, 2011). Resultantly, proponents of corporate social responsibility and critics of the stockholder theory argue that entities need to focus beyond profit maximization seemingly the only goal of stockholders as opposed to the needs of other stakeholders (Barnett, 2007). It is this limitation of the stockholder theory that led to the development of the stakeholder theory.

2.3.2 The stakeholder theory

The stakeholder theory has its roots both in organisational management and business ethics where it advances the recognition of morals and values in managing firm activities (Freeman, 1984). The stakeholder theory identifies stakeholders as any group of people who are directly or indirectly affected by organisational activities for example, the government, current and prospective employees, current and prospective customers, political groups, trade organisations/unions, competitors and the community at large. In light of this definition, the stakeholder theory therefore argues that managers in their quest for profits, should take into consideration the interest of the stated groups as opposed to the interest of stockholders only (Caldwell, Karri & Vollmar, 2006).

Rossouw (2004) explains that the stakeholder theory is far beyond a tool of maximizing stakeholder financial returns but also the best tool of integrating the interests of all groups concerned. In undertaking business activities managers have the obligation to equally take

into consideration the desires and interests of other stakeholders, if it happens that these interest clash at a certain point, the firm should manage it in such a way that an optimal point should be met in a progressive manner.

In relation to the stakeholder theory, the study by Greenwood and De Cieri (2005) reiterate that the underpinning function of management is miles away from maximizing the entity's financial account. Instead, when the stakeholder theory is interpreted correctly, the primary goal of management is to ensure the survival of the firm by striking the balance between the conflicting interests of all stakeholders involved.

The primary goal can be met in two tested dimensions (Caldwell et al., 2006). First, the application of corporate legitimacy principle proves to be handy. Corporate legitimacy refers to a state where an organisation is managed for the benefit of all stakeholders. Corporate legitimacy affords all stakeholders the chance to participate in decision making pertaining to their interests and welfare (Brinto & Eweje, 2010).

Secondly, a fiduciary relationship exists between management and stakeholders and to the firm. In other words, managers should act in good faith in pursuing both organisational interests and stakeholders interests. This is an important principle for current and future managers to take into consideration as it has much significance to their relevance or non-relevance in the field of management (Gibson, 2000; Hernández, 2008). Future managers include among others students who are still pursuing their education. Consequently, the next section discusses education and ethical issues.

2.4 Ethics and Education

Discussions around the globe on ethical corporate activities have reiterated the importance of transparency and the recognition of the role of shared morals in the decision making process particularly at the workplace. This has been influenced by a number of reasons. Firstly, community expectations have put more pressure on entities to account for their activities thereby compelling entities to focus more on ethical behavior. Secondly, the behavior of firm employees at organisational level which involve falsifying financial reports, and in their individual capacities, employees are participating in insider trading activities and this has taken the debate around ethical business practices to higher levels (Brunton & Eweje, 2010).

Given this background, entity and employee behavior is on regular check. Conversely, business colleges and universities have also responded in various ways for example, ethical issues have been incorporated in various study disciplines stretching from medicine, commerce and social sciences. The thinking here could be that, future managers need early awareness of ethical issues in the workplace environment before they are employed.

Lehman (1988) concurs and states that the reason behind business ethics education for students is to increase their level of awareness pertaining the value of social responsibility in daily practice. For example, one act of social responsibility has the ability to change a person's life for the better. This is evident through scholarships, grants and bursaries in the education field. Many people have been emancipated from poverty to decent lives.

Wright and Bennett (2011) examined the degree to which the subjects of business ethics, corporate social responsibility and sustainability have penetrated into the MBA curricula globally. Their findings reveal that institutions differ in their delivery mode of the courses and the teaching of ethics has had a better penetration rate into MBA programs given that approximately 50% of the Financial Times Global MBA top 100 schools are teaching the module as a required module. However, only 6% of the top ranked MBA schools teach sustainability as a required module.

Brunton and Eweje (2010), point out that evidence exists that students who are future organisational decision makers particularly those enrolled in business colleges benefit tremendously when they are exposed to ethical issues through study curriculums that has more emphasis on ethical issues. In other words, chances are high that business students who study business courses that place more emphasis on ethical issues are likely to act and behave as expected when they are employed (Burnet, Keith & Pettijohn, 2003; Weber; 2006).

A study by Amberla, Wang, Juslin, Panwar, Hansen and Anderson (2010) found that students who have been introduced to an ethical awareness curriculum were more alert to emerging ethical debates globally and portrayed a more optimistic attitude towards ethical issues. Another study by Lindeman and Verkasalo (2005) found that commercial students regarded ethical values and matters surrounding ethics as a problematic area when compared to other disciplines.

It is interesting to note that the debate on the role of education with regard to ethics is still ongoing and with the extant empirical evidence revealing mixed results. For example the study by Cohen, Pant and Sharp (2001) investigated the differences in ethical decision practices between Canadian university business students upon enrolling and finishing of their programs versus professional accountants in different workplaces. The results of the study revealed insignificant differences between the two groups.

Duizend and McCann (1998) conducted a study titled “Do collegiate business students show a propensity to engage in illegal business practices?” In this study, participants were first exposed to an ethical course. The results of the study revealed a high likelihood of students pursuing unethical business activities soon after being exposed to a curriculum that placed more emphasis on ethical issues. In support of Duizend and McCann (1998), a study by Smyth and Davis (2004) revealed that business students were more unethical in their attitude than non-business majors.

Conversely, a study by Okleshen and Hoyt (1996) compared ethical decision making behavior of American and New Zealand university students after they were all exposed to an ethics course. The results of the study revealed that the ethical course had a significant impact on ethical decision making practices of the students. Thus, students were making decisions taking into consideration ethical guidelines than before they were exposed to ethical studies.

In support of the study by Okleshen and Hoyt (1996), a study by Lopez, Rechner and Olson-Buchanan (2005) investigated the efficacy of an integrated programme approach as opposed to a stand-alone ethics program. In this instance, formal education represented by an integrated curriculum was found to be favorable in respect of reducing tolerance to unethical behavior amongst students as opposed to a stand-alone course. It should however be mentioned at this stage that to a certain degree, culture also played a pivotal role in the results obtained by the studies reviewed in this section.

On the contrary, MBA programs have been heavily criticized owing to their failure to reduce unethical behaviours in corporations. Some literature has labelled MBA programs or curriculums as contributors to unethical behaviours exhibited by MBA graduates and undergraduate students. For example, Stubbs and Cocklin (2008) point out that for a very long time, MBA students have been exposed to a certain ideology (neoclassical economic

thinking) neglecting other schools of thought. They argue that, new ideas need to be introduced and taught in MBA subjects in order to shift the student's perspectives through engaging them in various ethics/sustainability views as opposed to aligning them on one version. The discussion to follow looks at this criticism at length.

2.4.1 The role of MBA programs/education towards unethical behaviors

According to Gruber and Schlegelmilch (2013), ethics oriented education and MBA curriculums targeted at future leaders being provided by institutions of higher learning are under thorough scrutiny owing to entity scandals blamed at ethical dilemmas. It is this regard that Trevino and Nelson (1999) made a call to relevant practitioners to take a second look on business school students reiterating that they may be in dire need of training in ethics and moral reasoning compared to other student groups stemming from other disciplines.

Best (1987) attests to the previous call by providing evidence which claims that students in business schools actually ranked lower in moral judgment compared to other students in different disciplines, for example, philosophy and medicine. In addition, Crane (2004:149) quotes a study of top business schools in the United States of America (USA) which found that business schools curriculums not only fail to enhance the moral behavior of MBA students. Instead, it was potentially degrading their moral behavior.

Huhn (2014), points out that previously, MBA programs were designed to accommodate multiple perspectives enabling practitioners to educate aspiring managers in a classroom set-up. Today, empirical evidence lament that these classrooms have since become centres of brainwashing where aspiring managers are enforced to adhere to unrealistic principles, ignoring the moral theory of management resulting from the application of special pedagogy and syllabus (Dierksmeier, 2011; Ghoshal, 2005; Pfeffer, 2005; Hernstein, 1990). Research further reveals that various scholars are in agreement that the hegemonic theory (Henisz, 2011), that anchors the management discipline, contributes significantly to the escalating illegal behaviors of managers and also contributed significantly to the recently experienced financial crisis (Currie, Knights & Starkey, 2010; Kashyap, Mir & Iyer, 2006).

From the above discussion, Huhn (2014) argues that, the current ethics/management education is negatively affecting managers' and leaders' assumptions and the manner they run corporations daily. This is influenced by the fact that current MBA programs are a

designed uniform template (Navarro, 2008) founded in world case studies, largely designed to conform to a given economic ideology (Pfeffer, 2005). Thus, exposing MBA students to a certain type of economic theory, has led to the production of MBA graduates who perceive the concept of ethics in a biased manner. In other words, current MBA programs prepare future managers with reduced learning abilities, whose ethics are negatively compromised and this is evident in natural leadership abilities that they exhibit.

The above discussion is supported by a large body of empirical evidence for example, two studies undertaken by the Aspen Institute (2008; 2001) report that the longer the students are enrolled, factors such as customers, employees and product quality become of little importance as opposed to shareholder value. Moreover, the confidence level to solve ethical conflicts which is an important leadership indicator is systematically eroded over time.

In a study undertaken by Marwell and Ames (1981), a higher propensity to free-ride was reported, while a study undertaken by Cadsby and Mayness (1998) sadly reports that business and economics students were the least contributors to social funds in comparison to other disciplines.

Furthermore, Frank, Gilovich and Regan (1993) reports that economic professors rank the top of the least likely donors to charity. Another study by Frank and Schulze (2000) found that business and economics students were more prone to accepting bribes when assigned to a post of higher authority and responsibility within school activities for example the selection of a supplier in the tendering process.

Shocking results are reported in the study by Yezer, Goldfarb and Poppen (1996) where a higher propensity to steal was found amongst economics students. On the contrary, MBA students are reportedly as having a higher propensity to cheat when compared to any other student group (McCabe, Butterfield, Trevino, 2006).

Literature attributes the above challenges to the manner in which the MBA program has been designed globally. For example, MBA students most of the time are qualified economists or business oriented degree holders. However, the MBA classes themselves are presented by “dyed-in-the-wool” academics who surprisingly neither have practical management experience nor the interest in the actual practice of management theories (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005).

In light of the above discussion, reasonable application of ethical standards is negatively affected by the fact that MBA graduates are deprived of reflected experiences with the expectation that they have to assimilate large amount of information and comprehend it within a short space of time (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2006).

In addition, owing to time and resources constraints, MBA students are merely educated on how to use and apply certain tools. On the far end, they are deprived of theoretical background as well as the implications, problems and consequences of the tools in question. In light of this discussion, it can be learnt that the design of some MBA programs have little role to play in helping future managers to be expected to abide in a moral and ethical manner as they are deprived of relevant reflections which can moderate their behavior.

2.5 Ethics and student perception

In their study Brunton and Eweje (2010:353), present the question “Why do ethical perceptions of business students matter?” Brunton and Eweje further attempt to present a theoretical answer to this question by stating that, business graduates wherever they are geographically, constitute citizens of this planet. In the near future, the same students/graduates are likely to be responsible for running business organisations and implementing complex and demanding business ideas. Business organisations on one hand exert influence, and on the other hand are influenced by the society in which they operate.

In light of this context, business graduates will soon be required to formulate and implement ethical strategies in an attempt to answer ethical questions arising from their respective individual business communities. In dealing with ethical questions, managers are expected to provide moral and ethical sound answers from their own perspectives. Managers’ perspectives in this instant are guided by moral decisions regarding human values and the relationships they share with the majority at the present moment as well as in the future (Trevino & Brown, 2004).

Given the ever increasing demand for transparency and accountability globally, both international and local firms are in search of future managers who are keen and also competent to amicably deal with ethical issues. In addressing ethical dilemmas, future managers are also expected to successfully exercise moral judgement that is rationale and with the possibility of yielding unquestionable actions (Brunton & Eweje, 2010).

Given such important requirements, it therefore calls for the role of education to successfully deliver graduates who are well groomed, equipped with ethical insights and who are technically and socially alert as they will be expected to participate in ethical decision making at the workplace. Put differently, graduates should exhibit ethical competence before entering the workplace (Hosmer, 2006).

Ethical competency refers to a scenario where an individual is able to identify what should be done and providing specific reasons why that should be done. In other words, a competent graduate should be in a position to decisively pinpoint the benefit and harm that is likely to accrue from a right and wrong act (Hosmer, 2006).

In line with ethical issues, education has been found to play a pivotal role, for example Brunton and Eweje (2010:353) had this to say:

“benefits evolve from practitioners who have knowledge and skills, are willing to facilitate ongoing dialogue and learning, and actively develop organisational practices that provide opportunities for interaction of international stakeholders and the development of sensitivity to ethical issues. Building and maintaining ethical capability have emerged as key drivers for success in the international market place. Educators cannot afford to brush aside the discussion and debate inherent in encouraging, and hopefully developing, enhanced moral reasoning to provide the catalyst for ethical decision making and sound practice in our future business men and women”.

First, Brunton and Eweje (2010) acknowledge that institutions of higher learning provide a better platform for debate and progressive reasoning regarding ethical issues. Academics and managers in companies are considered important stakeholders in unpacking ethical issues as they possess the knowledge, skills and experience which are important ingredients in dealing with complex issues such as ethics.

Secondly, they highlight that, it is impossible for educators to sideline the topic of ethics in debates and probably in their offering at institutions as it plays an important role for example, firms to succeed beyond their home soil, ethical debates is an important reference for strategies to succeed globally and to successfully deal with ethical dilemmas. This is evident in the majority of products which are sold locally and beyond borders with little or without the need for modifications to suit local conditions. Finally, the ethics topic is of significant

value for the continued relevance of future managers (students) as they will be expected to participate in ethical decision making processes in the workplace. The section to follow reviews empirical evidence regarding the practice of ethics in South Africa.

2.6 Ethics, The South African Context

An earlier study undertaken by Moore and Radloff (1996) investigating South African students overall results revealed that change was slow and a lengthy period was expected to transform the South African business practices into ethical standards that will be appealing to the stakeholders. A lengthy period was expected owing to a number of reasons which include among others profit motive that at that time eclipsed community expectations and soft legislation which could not deter offenders to desist from unethical business practices.

Despite the indicated setbacks, Fullerton, Bisschoff and Moore (2008) reveal that the South African's business community's ethical standards were positively changing than anticipated. For example, Fullerton et al., (2008) report that when the attitude of South African students towards ethical practices was compared to that of American and Australian students, the results revealed that the attitude levels of these three groups were at par, indicating a tremendous positive improvement in ethical standards from the South African perspective.

A study by Rossouw (2005), focusing on corporate governance in the African continent concluded that the prevailing attitude in Africa was that, "business ethics are considered an integral and essential part of good governance". In the same study, a significant number of codes relating to corporate governance were investigated and results revealed that standards and principles of good governance were inseparable from higher standards of business ethics. Therefore, within the South African context, a greater improvement was still expected during this time as the second generation of codes relating to corporate governance were still emerging.

However, Marta, Singhapakdi and Higgs-Kleyn (2001) reported that there is a challenge of generalizing ethical business standards to the whole South African population owing to significant differences in subcultures. In other words Marta et al., (2001) suggest that as South Africans have different subcultures (English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa and Tswana among others) their ethical behavior differ significantly and it may be inconclusive to categorize as one.

On the contrary, a study by Klein (1999) undertaken to investigate the level of honesty from successfully employed graduates from the United States of America, Singapore and South Africa reveal low scores in relation to honesty on South African graduates. Given this background regarding mixed results stemming from studies undertaken in South Africa, Fullerton et al., (2008) conclude that to arrive at a meaningful conclusion is rather a challenge and “dubious at best” as literature engaging in this area is rather scarce and not forth coming.

However, given that there seems to be more publicity on South African media regarding abuse of office by public officials for example the Nkandla ordeal where President Jacob Zuma is accused of misuse of public funds, the toilet scandal in the Eastern Cape province where African National Congress (ANC) leaders are accused of awarding their spouses tenders worth millions of rands, just to mention a few, a person can therefore conclude the South African scenario regarding ethical standards is questionable particularly in the public sector as opposed to the private sector.

Future managers need to be aware that in a South African context, there are at least twelve subcultures and they all play significant roles in influencing the ethical conduct of individuals and entities. Given this background, it is therefore vital to review literature and understand the influence of culture in relation to ethical conduct of individuals and business organisations. This is important particularly to future managers as they need to be informed at an early stage of what to expect in the workplace and probably some insights on how to address people with different backgrounds accordingly. Consequently, the next section briefly reviews literature on ethics and culture.

2.7 Ethics and Culture

Given that most of the 21st century businesses now operate far beyond their geographic and cultural borders, it is rather difficult to separate the discussion of ethics from culture (Brunton & Eweje, 2010). A cross cultural management study undertaken by Jackson, David, Deshpande, Jones, Joseph, Lau, Matsuno, Nakano, Park, Piorunowska-Kokoszko, Taka and Yoshihara (2000), reveal that the nature of ethical judgements are positively influenced by culture. In other words, if a person takes a closer look at ethical decisions that have been designed by any given organisation, their structure and content is closely

associated with a certain group of people. This is normally the case as ethical decisions are often what drives people to behave in one way or the other on a daily basis.

A robust description of culture is given by Ting-Toomey (1999:9). In Ting-Toomey's words, "culture is a diverse pool of knowledge and shared realities and norms that constitute learned systems of meaning in a particular society". As the human race evolves, the stated systems are passed from generation to generation and culture enables these generations to adapt and survive life perils. Although culture by itself is dynamic owing to civilization, its underpinning values are embedded and endures.

According to Jackson (2000) and Sae (2005), cultural values do impact the ethical decision making process and informs in different perspectives for example, whether or not, bribery should be categorized as corruption or the violation of the principle of stewardship when an employee utilizes firm resources including time allocated for work to enrich him/herself. The just mentioned examples depending on culture, in one society bribery could be referred to as corruption while the other act could be abnormal but acceptable depending on prevailing circumstances; when every employee is behaving in the same manner including top managers.

Conversely, it is imperative for future managers to note that a mere act of extending a token of appreciation or a gift could be interpreted as a bribe in some societies. More important to note is that movement of people from one country to the other has increased tremendously in the 21st century than ever before leading to cultural convergence. Hence, understanding the culture of a given society in relation to ethical conduct is of significant value to future managers.

2.8 Sustainability and MBA students

Various authors have put forward different ideas in an effort to stimulate and broaden the interest of commercial students with regard to sustainability in different spheres of life (education and industrial practice) with the major emphasis being placed on sustainability at the workplace (Springett, 2005; Rusinko, 2005; Cordano, Ellis & Scherer, 2003; Kearins & Springett, 2003). As outlined earlier in the study, a business is said to be sustainable given that it places the same weight on issues relating to the environment, society and its economic responsibility.

In relation to the environment, sustainable activities include waste packaging reduction efforts, reduction of greenhouse gases emission, the use of ingredients produced on pesticide and chemical-free farmland. Conversely, sustainable social practices include adhering to stipulated employment/hiring practices (as they differ from one country to the other), and working closely with small and local suppliers, among others (Neubaum, Pagell, Drexler, McKee-Ryan & Larson, 2009).

The question however can be posed; Do MBA students implement sustainable measures at workplace? Although it is an immense task to provide a conclusive answer to this question, empirical evidence indicate that to a certain extent MBA students take sustainability issues at workplace seriously.

A study by Montgomery and Ramus (2003) undertaken using a sample of 279 MBAs' from two European and three North American business schools to determine how a firm's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reputation influence MBAs' job choice. CSR in their context covered issues such as communication with social stakeholders, environmental sustainability and caring about employees. Montgomery and Ramus (2003) found that 90% of MBA students were prepared to leave jobs with lucrative financial benefits to join organisations that had a better standing with regard to sustainability and ethics. It therefore entails that to a greater extent, MBA students/graduates by all means seek to implement what they are taught at business schools and when afforded the opportunity, they certainly will practice sustainability and ethics principles at the workplace.

In support of the above notion, Aarup (2004) documents her personal experience as a lecturer of a sustainability module in McGill University, Canada. She documents that the reason behind introducing the sustainability course was to enhance student awareness of and ability to tackle social and environmental issues. She narrates that since 1999, at least 600 management students took the course annually at McGill University. It actually indicates that a large number of individuals may be involved in ensuring that sustainability issues are not overlooked worldwide as of today. In her own words, "sustainability is not a concept that is separate from the learner. Rather, it engages learners and invites them not only to know differently but also to act differently." In light of this it is relatively correct to assume that MBA students worldwide to a greater extent implement sustainability and ethics measures at workplace.

Conversely, a study by Neubaum et al., (2009) found that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of business freshmen and business seniors concerning profits and sustainability disputing the findings of Ghoshal (2005) giving evidence that the actual practice of sustainability and ethical themes is rather an area that requires more than school education but the dedication and the willingness of those who occupy influential positions.

Empirical evidence to confirm or disconfirm whether MBA students take into considerations sustainability issues when making investments decisions is scarce and not forthcoming. Resultantly, it is the goal of this study (among others) to determine whether or not MBA students incorporate sustainability issues when making investments decisions.

2.9 Summary

This chapter focused on sustainability and ethics; definition of key terms were provided and a theoretical background in respect of ethics was provided. The stockholder and stakeholder theory as well as their relevance to the current business environment was discussed. Furthermore, the role of education with regard to ethics was also discussed. The perception of students in respect of ethics was also highlighted. The importance of perception and the interpretation of ethics in the South African context as well as ethics and culture were also unpacked. Finally this chapter concluded by reviewing literature on sustainability and MBA students. The chapter to follow focuses on methodology used in undertaking this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains in detail the research methodology followed in carrying out this research. The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: aims and objectives of the study; participants and location of the study; data collection strategies; research design and methods; and analysis of the data.

3.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to determine if future and current managers are contributing towards sustainability and ethics in their organisations based on their learning. The study's objectives have been formulated as follows:

1. To find out how MBA students define sustainability.
2. To determine if MBA students implement sustainability measures in their respective work places.
3. To investigate the use of sustainability reports for investment decisions among MBAs, if any.
4. To determine the relevance of sustainability and ethics in business.
5. To identify the role of ethics for managers.

3.3 Participants and Location of the Study

This section identifies the study participants and the survey area (location of the study). In the following sub-sections answers to questions such as where the research was conducted, what was researched and who was studied are provided.

3.3.1 The Study Area

The study was carried out in South Africa at the UKZN as the researcher targeted both current students and former MBA students who successfully graduated at UKZN. University

of KwaZulu-Natal was chosen as a case study because the university currently produces a significant number of MBA students and the researcher is at UKZN. In the year 2013, the University had a total of 85 MBA graduates and four of them graduating Cum Laude (UKZN News, 2013). In addition, the UKZN is one of the best ten universities in South Africa.

3.3.2 The Target Population

The target population refers to the universe of units from which the sample is drawn (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Furthermore, it encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. The population of relevance for this study was current MBA students enrolled at UKZN. The study will rely on current MBA graduates who enrolled at the university between the year 2013 and 2014. Given that the university produces an estimate of 85 MBA graduates per annum, a 2 year period is considered sufficient to provide a large sample that is representative of the population of MBA students.

3.4 Strategies

To gather primary data researchers can choose any data collection method that suits the nature and setting of their research. The main reason researchers conduct research is to arrive at informed decisions during the decision making process. Informed decisions can only be made when quality data has been gathered from the correct elements of the targeted population (Wiid & Diggines, 2013).

In any research, prior to selecting the best data collection method and the type of data to be used (that is between primary and secondary data); major elements which the study seeks to address should be clearly spelt out. After clarifying the major elements of the research, the researcher should then evaluate whether or not, the methods chosen are capable of delivering the desired goals and this choice has to be made between the two methods which are primary and secondary data collection methods (Aaker, Kumar & Day 1996).

Primary and secondary data were utilised in this study to serve different purposes. Primary data was collected to answer the research questions through the use of web-questionnaires. Secondary data utilised in this study was in the form of empirical studies including journals articles, books, online material and unpublished dissertations. Secondary data was used to

construct the theoretical foundation of the study, and to build up the literature review chapter and partly in the methodology section.

3.5 Research Design and Methods

In their publication Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau and Bush (2008) point out that the procedure of drawing up the research approach embrace the research design. Put differently, the research design generally determines how data will be obtained and also it provides answers to often asked questions such as:

- Given the available data gathering techniques, which techniques will the researcher implement to gather primary data?
- Given constraints such as time and costs, how will the researcher overcome such constraints without compromising the quality of data?

The paragraphs to follow outline the research design adopted in this study and the motivation thereof.

3.5.1 Description and Purpose

Research design gives a clear layout of how the researcher will collect data and thereafter, conduct data analysis. In Zikmund's (2003) edition, three types of research design namely: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods designs are mentioned. The question therefore arise, how does a researcher selects a research design to use within a study? In choosing the research design, the researcher is informed by the nature of the research, its setting and scope as well as the underpinning hypotheses that informs the study.

Given that this study seeks to test theory as well as describe, and explain whether or not, the concept of sustainability and ethics is relevant to future managers and how they currently perceive the concept today, consequently this study follows a quantitative design. The quantitative design is appropriate if the researcher seeks to make generalisations of the study's findings to the whole population (Wiid & Diggins, 2013). In this research, findings will be generalised to the population of MBA students in South Africa.

In their writing, Andrew, Pederson and McEvoy (2011) describe quantitative research as a technique that is applicable when an investigator intends to tests theories and examine relationships on given variables. By nature, quantitative research is deductive in that it is

typically used to test theories statistically, as opposed to constructing theories. In addition, the study adopted the quantitative research design because of its characteristics and strengths. The following strengths and examples have been documented by Andrew et al., (2011):

- In quantitative research, variables are usually measured by means of instruments that produce numerical data such as questionnaires (with “Likert scale questions”) for statistical analysis. In this study, variables are measured by a questionnaire consisting of scaled questions for statistical analysis. Thus, descriptive methods and inferential methods will be utilised to arrive at research findings.
- Quantitative research uses data from a sample collected through closed-ended questions in order to generalise the findings of the study to a larger population. Questions utilised in the study instrument consisted mostly of closed-ended questions and partly open-ended questions. This improved the response rate and the validity of the study and aided in the generalisation of the study to the whole population of current and future managers regarding their perception towards the concepts of sustainability and ethics. With regard to quantitative studies, generalisation is considered a vital component as it may be used to determine future courses of action.
- When conducting quantitative research, the researcher benefits tremendously from its capability to statistically test the study’s primary data making use of formulated research hypotheses (Zikmund, 1986).
- Quantitative research can be undertaken as a longitudinal study if it is a big project or it can be undertaken as a small project. Longitudinal studies are also called time-series studies because they involve repetitive measurement of the same sample of elements over time. The survey in time-series studies is carried out at different points in time which therefore facilitates analysis of changes over time (Creswell, 2014). In other words there is flexibility in quantitative research as it caters for both large and small projects. This study can be categorized as a small project and it includes testing of hypotheses, hence adopting the quantitative design.
- Finally, quantitative research often stresses objectivity and replicability. Researchers undertaking quantitative research can replicate the same study under different settings making use of possibly the same study instrument and statistical analysis techniques. In

other words, the investigator is in a position to compare findings of different studies undertaken in different settings to arrive at an informed decision about a problem. In light of this statement, it can be assumed that quantitative research can as well predict the possible outcome of the study (taking into consideration findings from other studies carried out prior to the study at hand) hence serving as a guide to the researcher.

3.5.2 Construction of the Instrument

This study adopted and modified questionnaire scenarios regarding ethics and decision making from a study by Brunton and Eweje (2010). The perceived role of ethics items in the questionnaire were adopted and modified from a study by Singhapakdi, Scott & Kenneth (1996). The researcher had to modify the mentioned questionnaires from the stated studies to suit this study's objectives and setting as it relates to current and future managers. The study's instrument consisted of closed and open-ended questions. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- **Closed-ended questions**

Bajpai (2011) indicates that in closed-ended questions, free-to-express response options are not availed to respondents, instead closed-ended questions are structured questions that provide response alternatives to respondents. The investigator provides a number of choices that best describe the situation at hand from a respondent's perspective. These choices range from ratings to scales among others.

Bajpai (2011) further documents the following strengths which to a greater extent highly motivated the author to adopt closed-ended questions; (1) they are relatively cheaper; (2) analysis of data is easily facilitated as closed-ended questions are easy to code and sometimes more reliable, and (3) in closed-ended questions the respondents has a limited burden of expressing a feeling or an opinion in his or her own thinking. This actually motivates respondents to complete the questionnaire thereby enhancing the response rate. There are categories of closed-ended questions namely; dichotomous, multiple-choice and scales. This study made use of dichotomous and scaled questions. These are discussed in the paragraphs to follow.

- **Dichotomous questions**

Dichotomous questions only present two response options to the respondent which are “yes” and “no”. In rare circumstance, researchers can as well provide a third neutral response option to respondents. In this study, dichotomous questions were formulated in a way that required the respondent to indicate whether a given scenario could be categorized as ethical - representing the “yes” component; and unethical - representing the “no” component.

- **Scale question (Likert scale)**

The researcher also made use of Likert scaled questions. A scaled question (“Likert scale”), “is a verbal scale” which requires the respondents to indicate the “degree of agreement or disagreement” (Tustin, Lighthelm, Martins & Van Wyk, 2005:400). Scaling enables the investigator to successfully measure the intensity of “respondents” answers to multiple-choice responses.” The majority of scaled responses incorporate numbers, which researchers therefore use as codes. Scaled questions were used in order to accommodate the use of more advanced statistical tools. Furthermore, “ordinal and interval data” can be generated from the use of scaled questions.

- **Open-ended questions**

Open-ended questions are a scenario that can be likened to the researcher handing over control of the conversation or dialogue to the respondent. It is this main characteristic of open-ended questions that makes them so useful in research. The researcher asks questions and provides a reasonable response space for the respondent to clearly articulate the response in his or her own perspective and understanding. In this way, experiences, opinions and feelings can be gathered easily in respect of the research problem at hand. In this study, open-ended questions were incorporated to solicit participants’ views regarding the relevance of ethics and sustainability in organisations and academic settings. This was done in order to generate an in-depth understanding of the subject at hand from the respondents’ perspective.

The study’s questionnaire consisted of two important sections (A&B). Section A was on demographic characteristics of respondents and section B was the general section which solicited the views of respondents regarding sustainability and ethics. Demographic section was put first. Aaker, Kumar and Day. (1998) and Wiid and Diggins (2013) point out there is no agreement among researchers on where to place demographic questions. However, the general view is that, demographical questions are valuable ice-breakers at the start of the interview since they are generally non-threatening and easy to answer.

3.5.3. Recruitment of Study Participants

Researchers often had to deal with the reality that they cannot collect data from everyone who is in the category being researched. Resultantly, “researchers rely on evidence acquired from a portion of the whole in the expectation and hope that what is found in that portion applies equally to the rest of the population” (Denscombe, 2003:11). To ensure that findings from the chosen sample can be replicated given that the study is repeated making use of the same population, first, the sample needs to be carefully selected following either probability or non-probability sampling techniques.

Probability sampling is based on the premise that the people or events that are selected as the sample, are selected because the investigator/inquirer has some notion of the probability that these will be a representative cross-section of the people or events in the whole population under investigation. Conversely, non-probability sampling is carried out in the absence of such knowledge about whether those included in the sample are representative of the whole population (Denscombe, 2003).

To recruit respondents, this researcher employed convenience sampling which falls under the broad non-probability sampling technique. The researcher adopted the convenience sampling technique as informed by Stake, (1995:4) cited by Denscombe (2003:17) who point out that “our time and access for fieldwork are almost always limited. If we can, we need to pick cases which are easy to get to and suitable to our inquiry”. In light of this statement, and the fact that the population of MBA students in South Africa is currently not known and not immediately available, therefore distribution of questionnaires will be made to current UKZN MBA students by handing out the questionnaires. The sample will be made up of 100 UKZN Graduate School current MBA students. In order to access the sample, permission to conduct the study will be requested from the Head of school (GSB & L).

3.5.4 Pretesting and validation

Questionnaire design is a demanding task. It is demanding in the sense that a person is required to put several measures in place to ensure that the research instrument is valid and

reliable (Tustin et al., 2005). For example, a pilot study is the most common exercise that researchers rely on to ensure that the research instrument is reliable. The researcher in this study, undertook a pilot study making use of 20 respondents. As documented by Schwab (2013:47), a pilot study serves two crucial purposes in research as outlined in the paragraphs to follow.

Firstly, a pilot study was undertaken in order to ascertain whether or not, the targeted respondents were in a position to interpret and understand the questionnaire contents and provide relevant responses. Through this exercise, the researcher was in a position to identify errors of assumption, oversights and areas that were difficult to understand within the questionnaire. Thereafter, the researcher had to rephrase such areas of concern and this led to an increased response rate.

Secondly, the researcher intended to verify from the pilot data gathered that scores were behaving as per the expectations of the researcher as well as outlined in literature. Thus, the researcher investigated whether or not the results gathered by the study instrument were yielding data that could be statistically tested, and results that could be interpreted with the ability of yielding conclusive findings. From the pilot study findings, the researcher realised that the average scores were behaving and varying as expected and the results were interpretable as well as conclusive.

When a measure accomplishes its claim, it is referred to as valid. Thus, validity is therefore concerned with whether or not the study instrument has the ability to measure what is intended to measure in a context that it is being applied (Zikmund, 2003). Cooper and Schindler (2006) agree with Zikmund's claim and emphasise that validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what the study is intended to measure. This study focused on both external and internal validity;

- **External Validity**

External validity refers to the extent at which the findings of a given study obtained in a natural setting could be relied upon or used in a rationale human being living setup (Cant, Gerber-Nel, Nel & Kotze, 2005). Conversely, Cooper and Schindler (2006) point out that external validity accounts to a person's ability to infer or generalise the study findings to a portion of a given population at a given time and setting. In order to ensure that the findings of this study were externally valid, a large sample was adopted and reached through web-

questionnaires that gave the researcher a high response rate. The statistician was also consulted to check if the data was within the acceptance levels.

- **Internal Validity**

In Cant et al., (2005) internal validity is defined as a scenario where conclusions arrived at through research gives a true reflection of the facts on the ground without bias. Thus, internal validity revolves around the degree of confidence that rests upon the causes and effects of relationships among variables. To ensure that this study was internally valid, a proper inferential statistical method (the Chi-square test of independence) was applied to test the degree of independence within the study variables and rigor was maintained in presenting the study's results. Chi-square test of independence was considered relevant owing to the nature of the study's independent and dependent variables. The study's variables (independent and dependent) were categorical as a result the Chi-square test was utilised. The independent variable in the form of MBA students was categorized into current and future managers. The first dependable variable ethics was categorized into ethical and unethical depending on how current and future managers perceived the behavior. The second dependable variable sustainability was also categorized into sustainable and non-sustainable.

3.5.5 Reliability

Zikmund (2003) indicates that, reliability refers to the extent to which measures are error free and therefore should be able to yield consistent results. A study is said to be reliable if the same results can be obtained from a follow up similar study. Therefore reliability refers to consistency of measures and results. A survey, is said to be reliable if the measurement can produce similar results if used in similar circumstances.

In this study, reliability was ensured by consulting the supervisor, the statistical department, other experienced researchers, minimising the inclusion of open-ended questions and performing a thorough review of the literature in the field of study.

In addition, the "Cronbach's alpha" was used to test for reliability of the study scales. Cronbach's alpha is mainly used to test the survey's internal consistency, thus it is sometimes referred to as the scale reliability test. Moreover, the "Cronbach's alpha" is a measure of how well each individual items in a scale correlate with the remaining items. Cant et al., (2005) indicate that reliability measurements of a test should remain consistent over repeated tests on the same subject. The accepted Cronbach Alpha coefficient is 0.7 and above

(Cronbach, 1951; Cohen, 1988), hence the study's instrument was above the normal required range. The Alpha coefficient values were calculated and confirmed suggesting that the study instrument was reliable.

3.5.6 Administration of the Questionnaire

The study participants were identified in lectures attended at the Graduate School of Business. The researcher then requested permission from lecturer to distribute the questionnaires to each participant with its cover letter inviting each participant to participate in the study. The researcher also sought the consent of the participants (see questionnaire cover letter), and thereafter, participants had to provide relevant information in the questionnaire.

Completed and returned questionnaires had to be captured for data analysis. The data gathered by questionnaires was subjected to data preparation stages mainly coding to facilitate data analysis which is discussed in detail in the section to follow.

3.6 Analysis of the Data

Data analysis was carried out after the data preparation process which involved coding. During the coding process, the researcher assigns digit codes or symbols to each possible answer to a particular question. Cant et al., (2005) indicate that coding plays an integral role in the road to data analysis and it is because of the value of this role that the researcher has to exercise great caution and ensure that categories within a single variable are approximate, exhaustive and mutually exclusive and derived from one classification principle. Generally the, coding of data involves two approaches namely; pre-coding and post coding.

The researcher employed both pre-coding and post coding given the nature of the data. Pre-coding relates to dichotomous and multiple choice question types because they have few response options. The researcher has the ability to pre-determine the way in which the numbers are to be assigned to each category of responses. However, post-coding relates to the final overall coding involving major scaled questions and sometimes ranked questions. In this study, post-coding was undertaken in relation to Likert scale questions. It is always important to keep a code book describing each variable from the data set. Thus, the researcher developed a code book and placed it under safe keeping for future reference. The

major reason for coding data is to facilitate the transfer of readable data to computer software.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was the computer program utilised to statistically analyse the data. Data analysis usually involves the reduction of accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques. Practically, the nature of the data, the research design, and the researcher's requirements help determine what type of data analysis is most appropriate.

This study made use of descriptive methods (surveys). Descriptive statistics was applied to explain the basic characteristics of the data in the research. Inferential methods were used to confirm or disconfirm relationships and patterns described earlier in the study by descriptive methods. The Chi-square test of independence was used to undertake inferential statistics and it is generally performed through cross tabulations.

3.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology implemented in undertaking the empirical study. The research design adopted in this study which lies in the quantitative model was described and the motivation to undertake the quantitative research design was given. The chapter further discussed data collection strategies implemented in this research. Both secondary and primary data was used. Secondary data utilised include peer reviewed articles, books, and online sources. Primary data was obtained through survey. Questionnaire was used to gather primary data.

Convenience sampling was utilised in recruiting study participants. To ensure external validity, a large sample was utilised. In addition, to ensure that the study was also internally valid, an appropriate statistical analysis in the form of Chi-square was employed. Reliability of the results, was ensured through the calculation of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.

Prior to conducting a full scale research, the research instrument was subjected to a pilot test and this led to the improvement of the questionnaire's outline to ensure readability. A pilot study also helped the researcher to understand whether or not, the respondents were able to correctly interpret the questionnaire items. Data preparation was undertaken through coding

and data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The chapter to follow presents the results of the study and the interpretation thereof.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of results

4.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters, two and three provided a technical and theoretical base for the research study. Collection of data was over a period of a month. Chapter four presents the results of the empirical study in the form of tables, graphs and explanations. A total of 80 participants completed the questionnaire.

4.2 Demographics

Participants' socio-demographic information is summarized in Table 4.1. About two-thirds of the participants (65%) were male and 82% were less than 40 years old. More than a third of the participants (44%) were working in the manufacturing industry followed by finance and business services (26%). It was found that more than two thirds (71%) were working in middle management or senior management.

Table 4. 1: Summary of socio-demographic information.

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	51	64.6
	Female	28	35.4
Age Group	25-29	9	11.4
	30-34	28	35.4
	35-39	28	35.4
	40-44	10	12.7
	45-49	2	2.5
	50-54	1	1.3
	55 over	1	1.3
Industry that you currently work	Manufacturing	24	44.4
	Mining	4	7.4
	Agriculture	1	1.9
	Communication	3	5.6
	Tourism	1	1.9
	Wholesale and retail trade	7	13.1
	Finance and business services	14	25.9
Current level of management in your company	Non-management	9	11.5
	Junior management	14	17.9
	Middle management	35	44.9
	Senior management	20	25.6

Table 4. 2: Respondents opinion on core subjects offered on a general MBA programme, in terms of the current business relevance.

Whilst this study attempted to get the opinions on topics of sustainability and ethics the researcher also seeks to establish the respondents' perception of the relevance of other subjects taught in the business environment. The majority of respondents found the subjects desirable and essential.

Subject	Very little	Desirable	Essential
Organisational behaviour	3.8	35.9	60.3
Business Law	7.7	33.3	59.0
Ethics	2.7	20.3	77.0
Business statistics	16.7	42.3	41.0
Business management	3.8	24.4	71.8
Economics		19.5	80.5
Information management	3.8	35.9	60.3
Management accounting	3.9	33.8	62.3
Financial accounting	10.4	41.6	48.1
Corporate finance	5.2	26.0	68.8
Marketing management	9.1	40.3	50.6
Strategy	2.6	9.1	88.3
Entrepreneurship	9.2	36.8	53.9
HRM	9.2	31.6	59.2
Labour relations	11.7	28.6	59.7
Supply chain management	11.7	33.8	54.5
Research methodology	12.0	34.7	53.3
Taxation	15.5	53.5	31.0

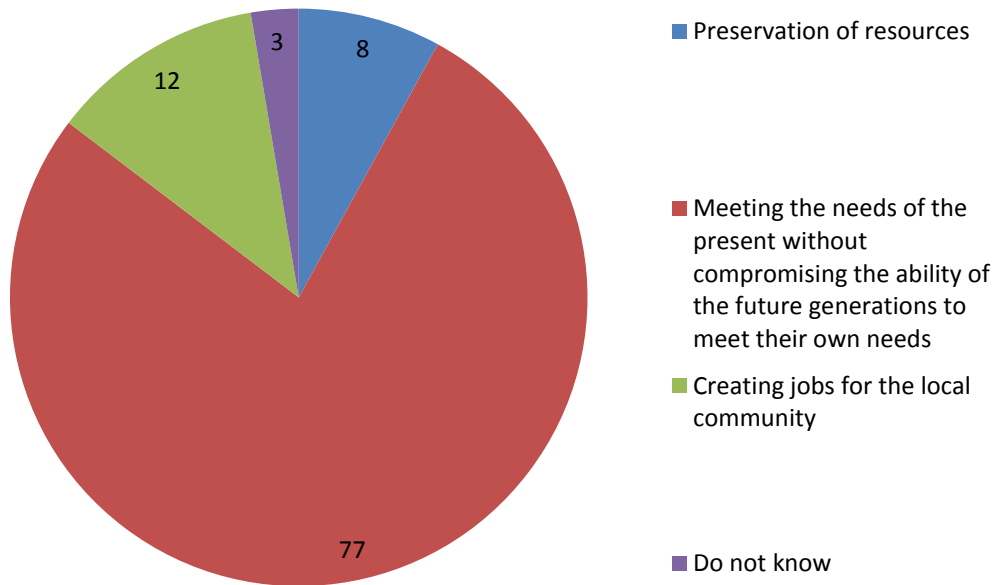
Table 4. 3: Respondents opinion on relevance of other subjects taught in the business environment.

Subject	No	Yes
Corporate management	21.6	78.4
Sustainability	18.9	81.1
Ethics	2.6	97.4
Leadership	1.3	98.7
Corporate management	6.8	93.2
Sustainability	9.6	90.4
Ethics	1.3	98.7
Leadership	1.3	98.7
Corporate management	14.7	85.3
Sustainability	22.4	77.6
Ethics	21.1	78.9
Leadership	3.9	96.1

4.3 Definition of sustainable development

Participants were asked to define sustainable development. More than three-quarters (77%) of the participants' defined sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs (Figure 4.1). This gives an overview which shows the respondents understand sustainable development.

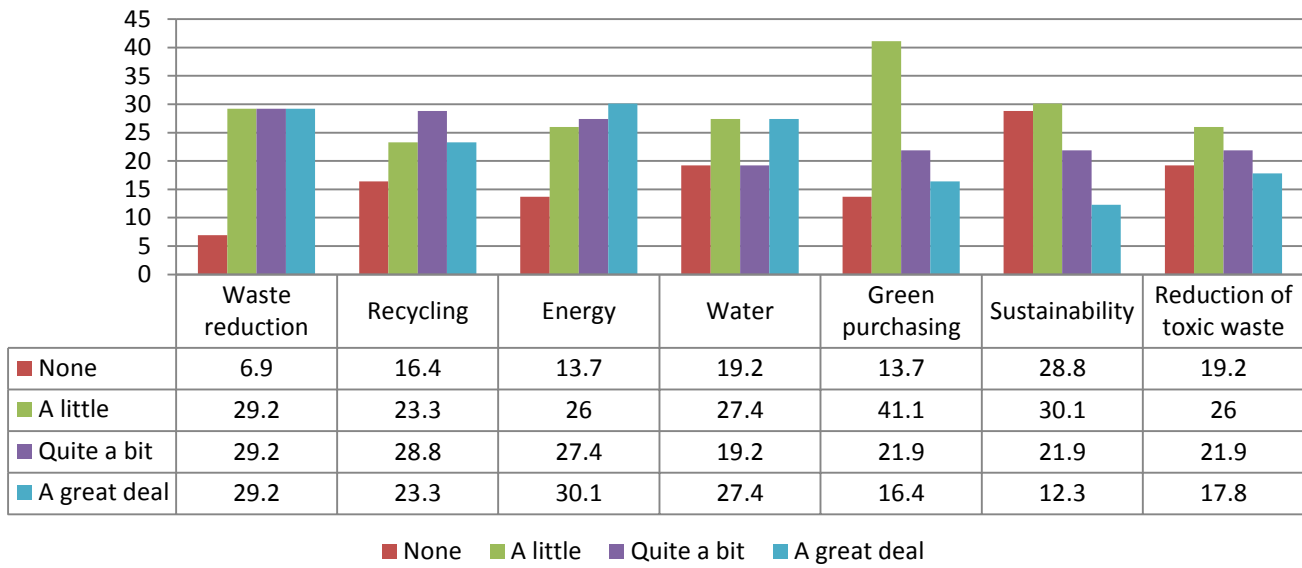
Figure 4. 1: Respondents responses when asked to define ‘sustainable development’.



4.3.1 Use of sustainability

With regards to use of sustainability, more than half of the participants positively indicated the use of waste reduction (58%), Recycling (52%) and energy (58%) respectively. On the otherhand, one fifth (19%) indicated there was no reduction of toxic waste in the company. It was found that 41% of the participants reported that little was done when it comes to green sustainability initiatives. Results showed that about a quarter of the participants reported as little being done with regards to water (27%) and sustainability (30%) (Figure 4.2).

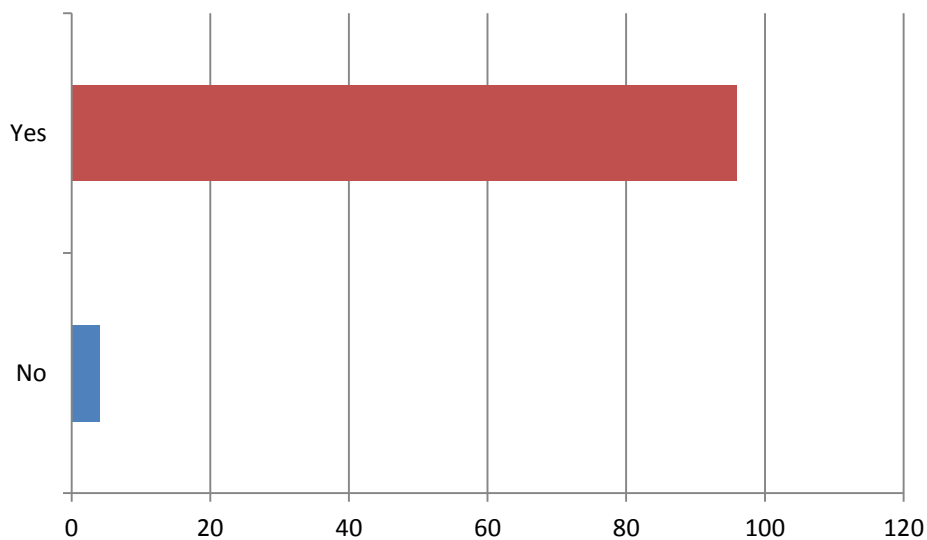
Figure 4. 2: Use of sustainability



4.3.2 Benefits of sustainable practices

Almost all the participants (96%) believed that these practices are beneficial to the organisation (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4. 3: Respondents responses when asked if sustainable practices are beneficial to the organisation.



4.3.3 Recommendations on sustainable practices

About half of the participants mentioned that they would not recommend anything for sustainability (Figure 4.4). They were also asked to give reasons for their answer. Almost half answered that they had never thought about the future (48%) followed by they had no say in the Organisation (44%) (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4. 4: Respondents responses when asked if they would recommend sustainability.

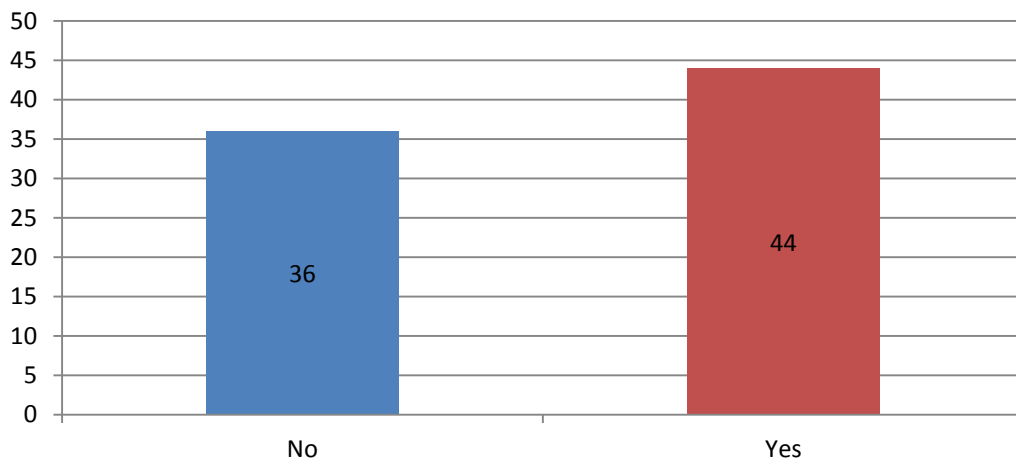
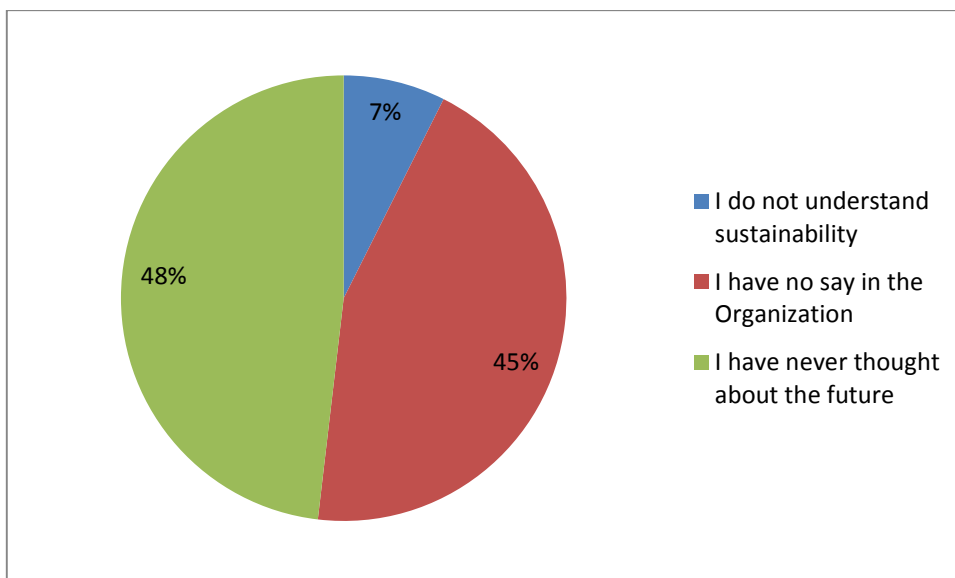
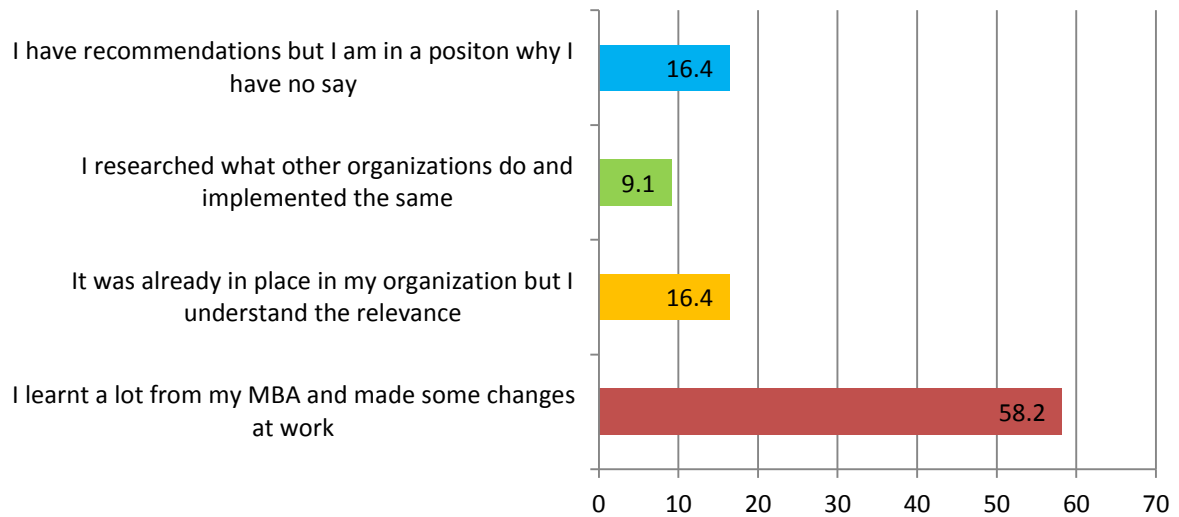


Figure 4. 5: Reasons given by respondents for not recommending sustainability.



Those who recommended, among them 56% mentioned that they learnt a lot from the MBA and made some changes in the workplace and another 16% reported it was already in place in their organisation but they understand the relevance (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4. 6: Reasons given by respondents for recommending sustainability.



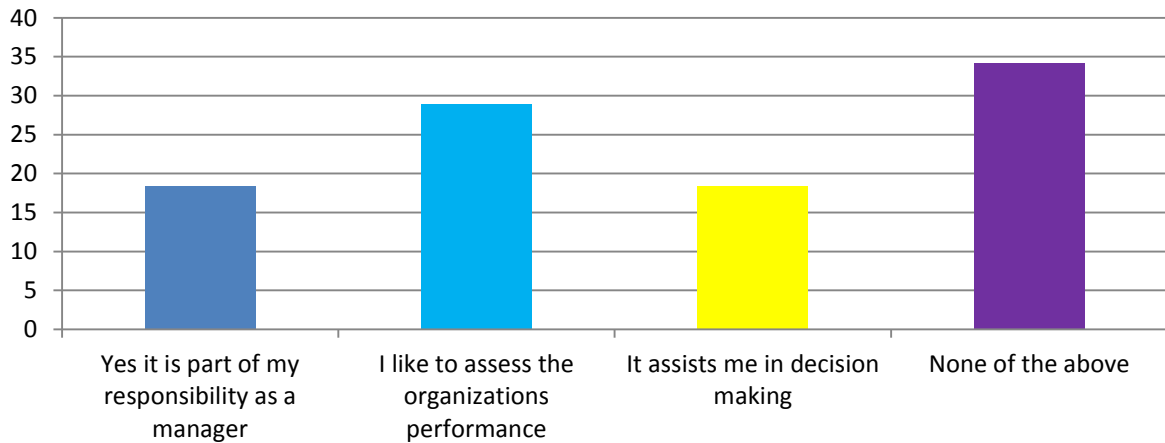
4.3.4 Sustainability reports

Less than half of the participants (43%) did not know what is included in the sustainability report, and more than a third had never seen the sustainability report (39%) (Table 4.4). It was found that about two-thirds of the participants answered negatively that the organisation produces a sustainability report (65%). Those that mentioned producing a sustainability report, among them 29% reported as they like to assess the organisation performance followed by it is part of their responsibility as a manager, and it assists them in decision making (18% respectively) (Figure 7).

Table 4. 4: Respondents views regarding sustainability report.

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Do you know what is included in sustainability report	No	33	43.4
	Yes	43	56.6
When sustainability reports are reviewed	I have never seen them	29	38.7
	Strongly disagree	7	9.3
	Disagree	1	1.3
	Partially agree	8	10.7
	Agree	23	30.7
	Strongly agree	7	9.3
Does your organisation produce sustainability reports	Do not know	22	29.3
	No	27	36.0
	Yes	26	34.7

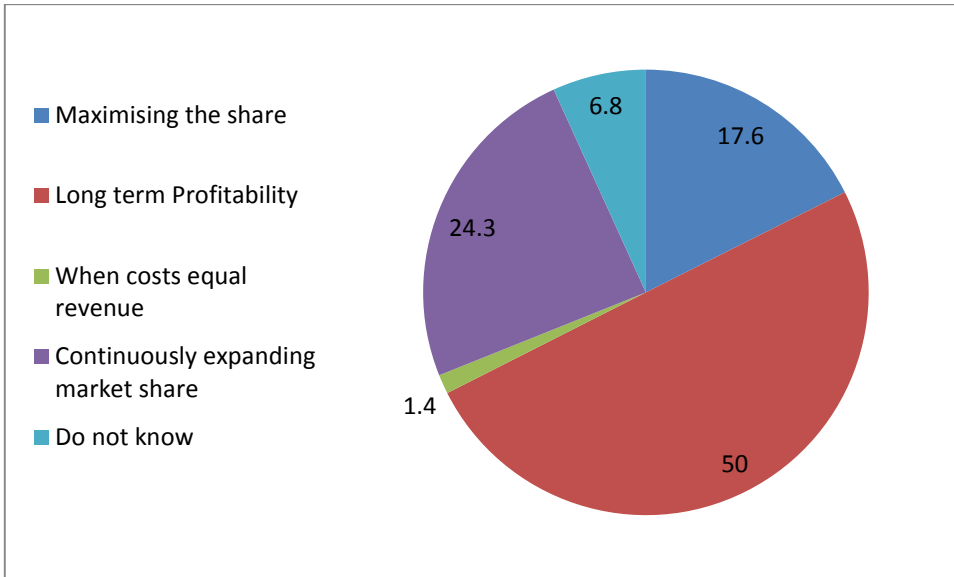
Figure 4. 7: Respondents reasons for producing a sustainability report.



4.3.5 Economic sustainability

When asked what defines economic sustainability, half of the participants indicated long term profitability (50%) followed by continuously expanding market share (24%) (Figure 4.8).

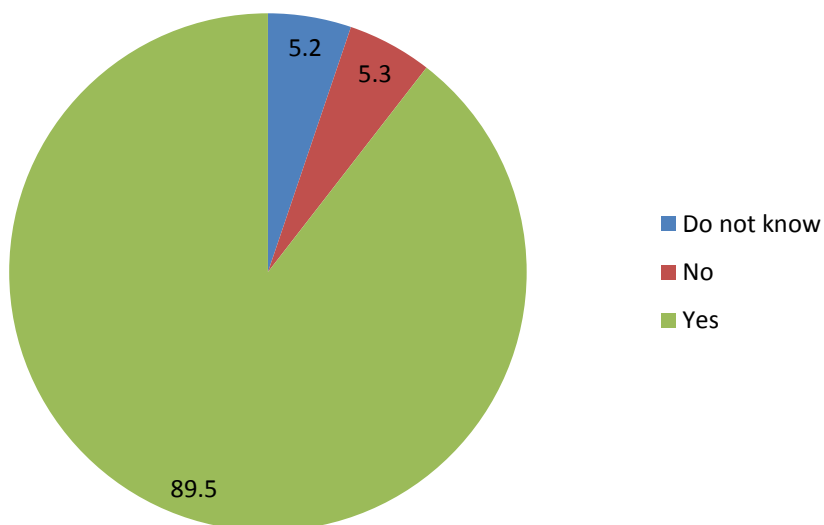
Figure 4. 8: Respondents definitions of economic sustainability (%).



4.3.6 Sustainable investment decisions

The majority of the participants (90%) positively reported that sustainability should be considered in investment decisions (Figure 4.9).

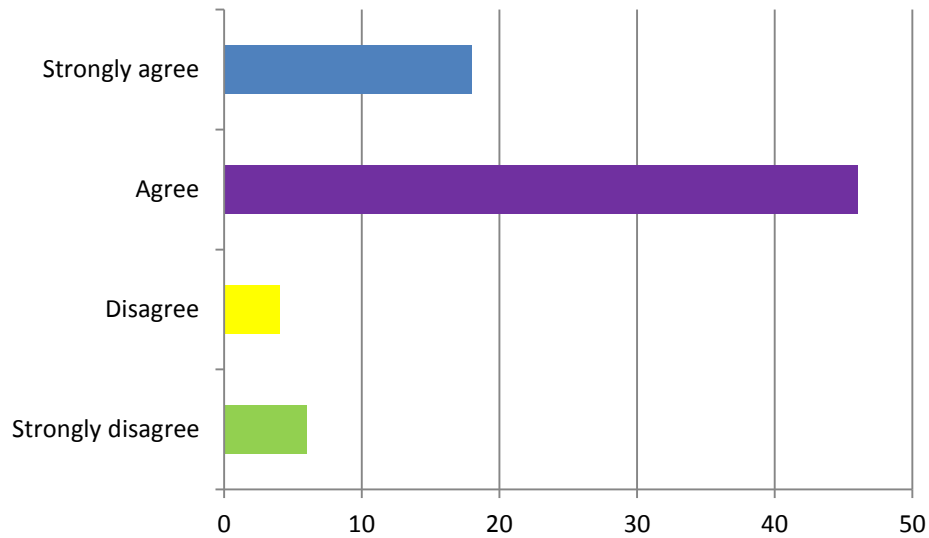
Figure 4. 9: Respondents views on whether sustainability should be considered in investment decisions.



4.3.7 Responsibility towards the environment

Almost all the participants agreed or strongly agreed that organisations are responsible for the environment (87%) (Figure 4.10).

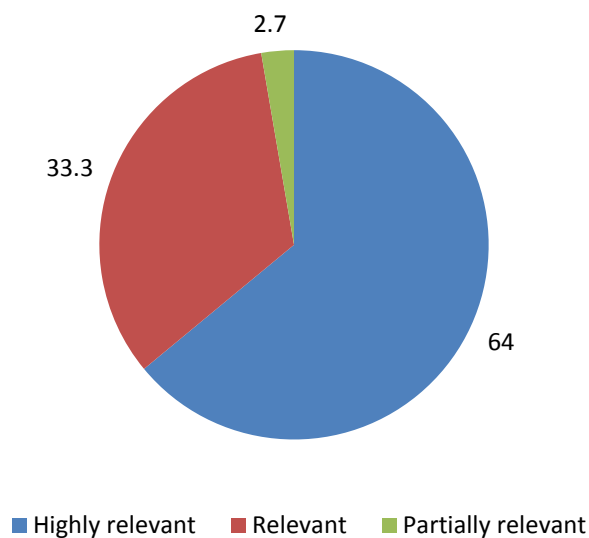
Figure 4. 10: Respondents views on whether organisations are responsible for the environment.



4.3.8 Relevance of sustainability

About two-thirds of the participants (64%) thought that sustainability was highly relevant to the business organisation (Figure 4.11).

Figure 4. 11: Respondents views on whether sustainability was relevant to the business organisation.



4.4 Ethics

Participants were asked to define ethics as good or bad. Results showed that the majority of the participants (86%) agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, 94% agreed that as a manager it is important to always act ethically, and all the participants highlighted that as a manager it is important for the organisation to have a formal procedure to arrest misconduct (Table 4.5).

Table 4. 5: Respondents views regarding ethics.

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Ethics defines good and bad	Strongly disagree	9	11.7
	Disagree	2	2.6
	Agree	38	49.4
	Strongly agree	28	36.4
As a manager do you think it is important to always act ethically	Sometimes	3	3.9
	No	2	2.6
	Yes	72	93.5
As a manager do you consider it important for the organisation to have a formal procedure to arrest misconduct	Yes	77	100.0

4.5 Summary

Data gathered from the survey were presented in this chapter. Demographic information was gathered on the respondents, and then further information was gathered on the subject of sustainability definition, reporting, sustainable practices and ethics. Information regarding definitions, opinions and relevance of the topic of sustainability was gathered. These results show that the future leaders understand sustainability and acknowledge the relevance of sustainable practices in the business environment. The next chapter will focus on these findings as a discussion of secondary data obtained from the review of literature and other sources.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the data findings and analysis. This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings of the study on the ethical and sustainability behaviour practices of current and future managers in South Africa. This chapter will interpret and explain the findings in conjunction with previous research conducted both locally and internationally to either refute or concur with the findings of this study. This chapter will address the aims and objectives.

5.2 Scope of study

The main purpose of this study was to determine if future and current managers are contributing towards sustainability and ethics in their organisations based on their learning. As noted earlier in previous chapters, this study made use of quantitative research and data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The study's objectives are as follows:

- To find out how MBA students define sustainability and CSR
- To determine if MBA students implement sustainability measures in their respective work places
- To establish the use of sustainability reports for investment decisions among MBAs, if any.
- To determine the relevance of sustainability and ethics in business
- To identify the roles of ethics for managers.

5.3 Socio-demographics

Gender

The results show that current and future MBA students are male (64,6%) , while women constitute the remaining 35,4% of the respondents. The minority of females in business shown in the findings of this study is also consistent with the findings of Nieman and Nieuwenhuizen, (2009), who justify that women are in the minority due to the limited access

to finance that women experience. A study by Langowitz and Minniti, (2007), using a stratified representative sample of 2000 individuals per country in 17 countries, found out that the level of female involvement in business activities tend to be significantly lower than that of men.

Age Group

The main active respondents are between the ages of 30-34 and 35-39, with 35,4% respectively, of the respondents falling in that category. The ages of 50 and over got the least respondents with only 2,6%. This is consistent with previous research, which found out that most people generally venture into the MBA programme in their 30s (De Kok, Ichou & Verheul, 2010). According to Henriquez, Verheul, Van Der Knaap and Bischoff (2009), young people (less than 29 years) and the elderly (more than 50 years old) are less likely to enroll for an MBA and these results are consistent with this notion.

Industry Business falls in

The type of industry a firm operates in, determines the need to recruit MBA students or not. The findings show that 44,4% of the respondents are in the manufacturing sector while 25,9% are in the finance and business services sector. The findings indicate that 1.9 % of the respondents are in the tourism and agriculture sector respectively. The findings are contrary to what Shafeek (2011) noted, that most MBA students were in the finance and services sector.

5.4 Evaluation of objectives

This section measures the success of the study against the research objectives formulated in chapter one.

1. To find out how MBA students define sustainability and CSR

The first objective of the study was to determine how MBA students define sustainability and CSR. Participants were asked to define sustainable development. More than three-quarters (77%) of the participants' defined sustainability as meeting the needs of the present

without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. This is in line with the definition provided by Kibert, *et al*, (2012) which stated that the current society richly benefited from its ancestors and it has an equal obligation to pass the good to the forthcoming generations by avoiding engaging in harmful practices in the name of development. This indicates that the vast majority of MBA students have an understanding of sustainability and sustainable activities that business should engage in.

2. To determine if MBA students implement sustainability measures in their respective work places.

The second objective sought to determine if MBA students implemented sustainability measures in their respective workplaces. With regards to use of sustainability, more than half of the participants positively indicated the use of waste reduction (58%), Recycling (52%) and energy (58%) respectively. On the otherhand, one fifth (19%) indicated there was no reduction of toxic waste in the company. It was found that 41% of the participants reported that a little was done when it comes to green sustainability initiatives.

Results showed that about a quarter of the participants reported as little being done with regards to water conservation (27%) and sustainable transportation (30%). This is greatly supported by research done by Montgomery and Ramus (2003) which found that 90% of MBA students were prepared to leave jobs with lucrative financial benefits to join organisations that had a better standing with regard to sustainability and ethics. It therefore entails that to a greater extent, MBA students/graduates by all means seek to implement what they are taught at business schools and when afforded the opportunity, they certainly will practice sustainability and ethics principles at the workplace.

The European Commission , (2008: 3) shows the positive impacts of sustainability and CSR from a perspective of human resources with reports of running employee volunteering programmes leading to improved employee morale and helping participants to acquire and develop new skills. Furthermore, Polasek, (2010:165) in his study, substantiates the benefits of implementing socially responsible practices and ethical behaviour towards employees as improvement of employees' job satisfaction, reduction of staff turnover, increase of current employees' loyalty and recruitment of new qualified employees. This empirical evidence indicates that to a certain extent MBA students take sustainability issues at workplace seriously.

About half of the participants mentioned that they would not recommend anything for sustainability. They were also asked to give reasons for their answer. Almost half answered they had never thought about the future (48%) followed by they had no say in the Organisation (44%)

3. To establish the use of sustainability reports for investment decisions among MBAs, if any

Less than half of the participants (43%) did not know what is included in the sustainability report, and more than a third had never seen the sustainability report (39%). It was found that about two-thirds of the participants answered negatively that the organisation produces a sustainability report (65%). Those that mentioned producing sustainability report, among them 29% reported that they like to assess the organisations performance followed by it is part of their responsibility as a manager, and it assists them in decision making (18% respectively)

The majority of the participants (90%) positively reported that sustainability should be considered in investment decisions.

These findings are in line with a study by Taylor-Gee which concluded that a growing emergence and drive for sustainable development which requires harmonising the traditional focus of the financial bottom line with environmental and social aspects arguing that the three spheres are inter-dependent and mutually enhancing has resulted from increased pressure on businesses (Taylor-Gee 1999:29). It is deemed to be in the best interest of firms to protect themselves for the sustainable future which could depend on the long-term availability of resources. Investors and buyers nowadays are showing preference for investing in and buying from businesses they view as socially responsible.

4. To determine the relevance of sustainability and CSR in business

Almost all the participants agreed or strongly agreed that organisations are responsible for the environment (87%). About two-thirds of the participants (64%) thought that sustainability was highly relevant to the business organisation. Investors are increasingly choosing to invest funds in organisations that are showing a high level of Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability (Baron, 2008). Waddock and Graves (2000) indicate that

institutional investors are positively drawn toward enterprises with excellent performance in corporate social responsibility. Therefore in order to access finance businesses need to implement sustainable business practices.

Organisations that are socially responsible attract, retain and develop, motivated employees that are committed to the organisation (Murillo & Lozano, 2006). High employee turnover is significantly costly hence employee retention can be of particular importance to business. CSR and sustainability can subsequently have positive impact on the productivity of employees, as indicated by Chatman (1991) in his study, which showed that employees, whose values match closely match that of the firm, feel more satisfied and remain longer with the firm.

Consumers that are socially conscious will take heed of the public consequences of their private consumption (Webster, 2008). The customer is one of the key stakeholders of any firm and their loyalty and attraction is important to any business. Neville, *et al.*, (2005), identify reputation as an intermediary variable between CSR and financial performance. According to Roberts, (2002) the value of every aspect of an organisation is enhanced by a good reputation . This empirical evidence which is in line with the findings of this study show the relevance of sustainability and CSR in business.

5. To identify the role of ethics for managers

Participants were asked to define ethics as good or bad. Results showed that the majority of the participants (86%) agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, 94% agreed that as a manager it is important to always act ethically, and all the participants highlighted that as a manager it important for the organisation to have a formal procedure to arrest misconduct. This concurs with studies undertaken before which concluded that, managers' perspectives should be guided by moral decisions regarding human values and the relationships they share with the majority at the present moment as well as in the future (Trevino & Brown, 2004). In addressing ethical dilemmas, future managers are also expected to successfully exercise moral judgement that is rationale and with the possibility of yielding unquestionable actions (Brunton & Eweje, 2010).

5.5 Summary

This chapter provided a discussion of the research findings of the study on the ethical and sustainability behaviour practices of current and future managers in South Africa. This chapter also interpreted and explain the findings in conjunction with previous research conducted both locally and internationally to either refute or concur with the findings of this study. The chapter addressed the aims and objectives in relation to the results of this study as well as results and conclusions of previous research.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

According to Baruch and Lemming , the purpose of the MBA is to prepare candidates for managerial positions, help them understand the needs of the business and industrial world and provide them with the essential competencies and skills enrichment (Segon and Booth, 2009). It is the responsibility of business schools to develop curriculums that produce business managers that can become sustainable locally and globally by providing a framework that facilitates understanding sustainability concepts in the business environment (Amran et al., 2010). However tertiary students represent a population with different perceptions and intellectual capability to assimilate the different dimensions of sustainability (Sibbel, 2009).

6.2 Has the problem been solved?

This research has shown that the majority of students have benefited from the MBA programme in terms of understanding sustainability and its relevance in the business environment. However depending on individual perception not all individuals fully understand the subject and or are not aware of the benefits of sustainable practices in their organisations. The relevance of the topic of sustainability and ethics was evaluated in terms of the MBA students and the findings that support the objectives show the following.

- Future managers understand the definition of sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.
- Though future managers understand sustainability there is need to implement sustainability measures in their business environment. In today's turbulent times, sustainability should be one of the main key focus areas for organisations.
- There is need take initiative to implement and recommend sustainable practices in their organisations and they understand the benefits. The majority of respondents of the survey are in management positions and in a position to manage resources and or influence the management of resources.

6.3 Implications of this Research

The research implications impact the implementation of the learning of future managers to sustainable and ethical business practices. MBA studies feed into the running of today's organisations hence not only does their curriculum matter to business but also the level of understanding, concept application and practicality of learning. The implementation of students' learning to the business organisations also requires input from members of the organisation in order for the organisation to benefit from sustainable practices. The sustainability reports should be reviewed by all managers and employees because improvements must be done based on inputs from the whole organisation. This will ensure that all stakeholders understand and improve on sustainable practices within their job functions and departments. Current business requirements emphasize on the need of social responsibility and moral behavior.

6.4 Limitations of the Research

Practical constraints posed the following limitations on the study.

- The actual population was restricted because they are widespread over the country. The questionnaire was only distributed by hand. However block release MBA students come from different regions around South Africa hence other regions were represented in the sample.
- MBA graduates could not be included in the sample population because the questionnaire was distributed by hand.
- The scope of the study ignores other important variables relating to sustainability and ethics.
- Questionnaires have a problem of that they can be biased and misrepresentation from respondents is possible. However the questionnaire information sheet requested respondents to complete the questionnaire frankly and honestly in order to give the researcher a correct picture.
- Quantitative research limits respondents to give further information as the questions cannot be altered.

Further studies can overcome the limitations on this topic and can include other aspects into their research. Topics of sustainability and ethics can be much more extensive and there is

room for further and new studies. However it is still evident that MBA students should implement their learning as leaders and future leaders in their organisations.

6.5 Recommendations for Future studies

This study includes some controversial areas with regards to sustainability, ethics and the perception of future leaders. It was not possible to cover all aspects of these intensive topics in one study hence further studies is required in the areas below:

- This research makes conclusions based on the perception of MBA students of the subject of sustainability and ethics , however the actual content of the courses is not covered ;
- Other factors such as students' prior studies and work experience are not accounted for in this study
- Business schools should work in conjunction with other stakeholders such as employers to ensure the MBA curriculum is relevant for managerial efficiency and effectiveness.
- The research was conducted on a small sample of MBA students and further investigations are needed in a larger sample including MBA graduates in order for the findings to be generalized;

Other issues that can be investigated to cover the extensive nature of the study are:

- Due to the changing environment and the rise of social responsibility should South African Business schools implement MBA programmes that specialize in Sustainability and Social Responsibility?
- What can Business Schools do to ensure that students implement their learning in their organisations?
- Should all registered companies implement Triple Bottom Line Reporting?
- What hinders managers to implement practices that are beneficial to organisations?
- Should the MBA programme be changed periodically in line with a changing economic and social global environment?
- Are managerial abilities affected by the MBA programme?

6.6 Summary

This research examines the perception of current and future leaders in terms of sustainability, corporate social responsibility and ethics. Although, this study shows room for improvement, it is hoped that current leaders and future leaders of organisations will contribute more towards sustainable practices, social responsibility and ethics. Business schools need to produce successful and effective managers to deal with environmental complexities and corruption and enhance the economy. Students should implement their learning to their organisations because they are equipped with the skills essential to make a difference in society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. Age group

- 25 to 29
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 39
- 40 to 44
- 45 to 49
- 50 to 54
- 55+

3. Industry that you currently work in (please select the main one):

- Admin, Office & Support
- Agriculture
- Arts & Entertainment
- Beauty
- Building & Construction
- Business & Management consulting
- Design
- Distribution, warehousing & Freight
- Education
- Engineering
- Financial
- FMCG, Retail & Wholesale
- Government & Local Government
- Hospitality & Restaurant
- Human Resources & Recruitment

- Information Technology
- Legal
- Manufacturing, Production & Trades
- Maritime
- Marketing
- Media
- Medical
- Mining
- Motor
- Petrochemical
- Property
- Safety, Security & Defence
- Science & Technology
- Social & Community
- Sport & Fitness
- Telecommunication
- Transport and aviation
- Travel and tourism

4. Please select your current level of management in your company

- Non-management
- Junior management
- Middle management
- Senior management

5. Please rate the following core subjects offered on a general MBA programme, in terms of the current South African business relevance. Tick one per row.

	Very little	Desirable	Essential
Organisational Behaviour			
Business Law			
Ethics / Corporate governance			
Business statistics			
Business management			
Economics			
Information management			
Managerial accounting			
Financial accounting			
Corporate finance			
Marketing management			
Operations research			
Strategy			
Entrepreneurship			
Human resources management			
Labour Relations			
Supply chain management			
Research methodology			
Taxation			
Brand management			
Leadership development			

6. Were the below topics taught.

	Yes	No
Corporate governance		
Sustainability		
Ethics		
Leadership		

7. Do you think the learning of these topics was relevant to the current business environment?

	Yes	No
Corporate governance		
Sustainability		
Ethics		
Leadership		

8. Do you recommend the below should be offered as core subjects:

	Yes	No
Corporate governance		
Sustainability		
Ethics		
Leadership		

9. Which one of the following would you say best defines sustainable development?

- Preservation of resources , never to be used
- Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs
- Creating jobs for the local community and activities to develop the children learning and welfare

- Don't know

10. The chart below lists some of the operational practises emphasized by organisations moving towards sustainability indicating the extent to which your organisation has implemented these practises using the following scale. 0- don't know, 1- none, 2- a little, 3- quite a bit and 4- a great deal.

Waste reduction (e.g. double sided printing, e-communication)	
Recycling of solid waste (e.g. plastic, paper, e-waste)	
Energy conversation (e.g. lighting , heating , cooling)	
Water conversation (e.g. efficient toilets, rain water	
Green purchasing (e.g. Non-toxic products)	
Sustainable transportation (e.g. staff bus, car pools)	
Reduction of toxic material and radioactive waste	
Other - specify	

11. Do you believe these practises are beneficial to the organisation

- Yes
- No

12. Do you have any recommendations that you would like to implement that you have learnt or researched that are sustainable?

- Yes
- No

13. If your answer is “no “ to either question 11 and 12 please select the following

- I do not understand sustainability and its relevance in my organisation
- I have no say in the organisation and it is not my responsibility to give recommendation of sustainable practises
- I have never thought about it further ever since I did the course.

14. If your answer is “ yes “ to question 12 please select one the following

- I learnt a lot from my MBA and made some changes at work

- It was already in place in my organisation but I now understand the relevance
- I researched what other organisations do and implemented the same
- Yes I have recommendations but I am in a position where I have no say.

15. Do you know what is included in sustainability reports?

- Yes
- No

16. When sustainability reports are reviewed, they assist in placing annual positive and negative information in context, in addition to demonstrating the long term commitment of the organisation.

- I have never seen them
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Partially agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

17. Does your organisation produce sustainability reports

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

18. If your answer is "yes" to question 17. Do you as a manager contribute or review the reports and why.

- Yes , it's part of my responsibilities as a manager
- I like to assess the organisation's performance.
- It assists me in decision making
- None of the above

19. Which of the following best defines economic sustainability.

- Maximising the share price of a company's stock
- Long term profitability
- When costs equal revenue

- Continuously expanding market share
- Don't know

20. Do you think sustainability should be considered in investment decisions?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

21. Organisations that are responsible for the environment, social and economic performance do better than those that do not.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

22. How relevant do you think sustainability is to the business organisation?

- Highly relevant
- Relevant
- Partially relevant
- Irrelevant

23. Ethics defines good and bad, it helps people to make a decision on what is right or wrong.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

24. As a manager do you think it is important to always act ethically?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

25. As a manager do you consider it important for the organisation to have a formal procedure to address misconduct?

- Yes
- No

Appendix 2: Ethical clearance

05 May 2015

Ms Kundai Chibarabada (210552195)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Chibarabada,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0337/015M

Project title: Sustainability and Ethics – The perception and relevance for current and future managers

Full Approval – Expedited Application

With regards to your application received on 15 April 2015. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and **FULL APPROVAL** for the protocol has been granted.

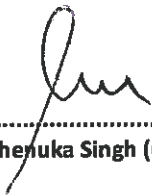
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Abdulla Kader
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr M Hoque
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

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Appendix 3: Turnitin Similarity Index



Turnitin Originality Report

Sustainability and Ethics by Kundai
Chibarabada
From Chapter 1 (Dissertation 2015)

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- 2 1% match (publications)
[Margaret Brunton. "The influence of culture on ethical perception held by business students in a New Zealand university". Business Ethics A European Review, 09/26/2010](#)

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- 9 < 1% match (Internet from 19-Mar-2015)
<http://www.jrsgis.com/articlefiles/vol1issue12012/JRSGIS12006.pdf>

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<http://aprehet.org/IMAGES/PDF/VOLUME%203%20NO%20%20DECEMBER%202012.pdf>

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<http://ufh.netd.ac.za/bitstream/10353/359/1/MUSARA%20MCOM.pdf>

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[Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal on 2014-01-26](#)

- 15 < 1% match (student papers from 31-Oct-2015)
[Submitted to Pacific University on 2015-10-31](#)

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Higher Degrees and Research Administrator, Mrs. Z Bullyraj

Congratulations on your well earned achievement.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M Hoque', written over a large, light-colored scribble or mark.

Dr M Hoque
Academic Leader: Higher Degrees & Research
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus