



Principles of Responsible Management Education: An Assessment of South African Business Schools

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ABSTRACT

The role of responsible management education becomes evident when one considers urgent global issues (UGIs), such as financial system failure, resource depletion, climate change, inequality, extreme poverty and hunger, and lack of education. These are exacerbated by management and leadership challenges, such as abuse of power, unethical practices and a disregard for matters of sustainability. If business schools pursue the objectives of building intellectual capital for countries and industries, and provide knowledge and critique relevant to management practice, demonstrable commitment to responsible management education is paramount. This study assesses the status of South African business schools' visible commitment to responsible management education, as espoused in the United Nations' (UN) Six Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative. The study identified seven signatory business schools from South Africa, using the PRME online portal. Since there are 18 business schools in South Africa, all of which are members of the South African Business Schools Association (SABSA), this finding is disconcerting. A qualitative document analysis of the South African signatory business schools' Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports was undertaken. With less than half of South Africa's business schools represented, a national sectoral status was not achievable. However, the study revealed a high level of attestable commitment to the effective implementation of the Six Principles within these seven institutions. The study concludes with practical recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Key phrases

Business School; PRME; SABSA; Six Principles; SIP report; and South Africa

1. INTRODUCTION

With reference to urgent global issues (UGIs), Rayment and Smith (2013:480) draw on the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (UNDP), which highlight leadership challenges. These challenges include financial system failure; resource depletion/sharing (for example, water depletion, oil depletion and deforestation); climate change; wealth/power distribution; extreme poverty and hunger; domination by corporations; soil degradation; species being wiped out; lack of education, lack of basic numeracy and literacy; and the role of nation states. Contemporary organisations are increasingly being weighed down by problems, such as abuse of power, unethical practices, toxic emotions, alienation in the workplace and violation of employees' psychological wellbeing, which exacerbates the abovementioned leadership challenges (Currall & Epstein 2003; De Cieri, Fenwick & Hutchings 2005; Einarsen 1999; Frost 2003; Sankowsky 2005; Sarros, Tanewski, Winter, Santora & Denstein 2002; Thornthwaite & Sheldon 2004; Wright & Cropanzano 2004, all cited in Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora 2008:492). Sendjaya *et al.* (2008:492) argue that these chronic problems are epitomised in frequent corporate scandals and the demise of numerous companies globally.

It is within this global business environment that management education has firmly positioned itself as a global phenomenon (Hardy & Tolhurst 2014:265) and business schools, specifically, have achieved legitimacy in the field of education (Cornuel 2005:819). They play a critical role in developing future leaders of business and industry (Gempesaw 2009:333). Cornuel (2005:828) believes that the aim of management education is to encourage the emergence of socially responsible behaviour in companies, which simultaneously enhances corporate performance.

However, business schools are facing rising criticism regarding the capabilities they claim to impart (Rubin & Dierdorff 2009:208). Bennis and O'Toole (2005:96) state that business schools are on the wrong track, failing to impart suitable skills, prepare leaders or instil

norms of ethical behaviour. Podolny (2009:63) expresses his dismay at the apparent inattention to ethics and values-based leadership in business schools. Patry (2010:9) contends that more should be done in terms of ethics and socially responsible leadership and behaviour.

Another challenge to business school convention comes from Critical Management Studies (CMS), which draw on critical theory and post-structuralism to provide a radical critique of managerialism, corporations and markets (Clarke 2008:54). CMS's common core is "deep scepticism regarding the moral defensibility and the social and ecological sustainability of prevailing conceptions and forms of management and organisation" (Adler, Forbes & Willmott 2007:119). The most significant question arising from the literature relates to the UGIs and what the focus of a business school should be in relation to these (Rayment & Smith 2013:481).

In response to the challenges, the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI) reports that a survey of Deans at a European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) conference in 2005 revealed unanimous agreement that business schools should do more to influence students, so that they make decisions and behave in ways that reflect globally responsible leadership after they graduate (EFMD 2005:33). Rasche and Escudero (2009:244) argue for business schools to place responsible management education at the core of their curricula, and identify the PRME initiative as a possible change agent to drive the process.

The PRME initiative, an initiative by the UN, is a progressive endeavour to inspire and drive responsible management education and research globally. The PRME initiative is largely the result of efforts by the UN, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International, the EFMD, the Aspen Institute's Business and Society Program, European Academy of Business in Society (EABIS), the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), GRLI, and Net Impact (Alcaraz & Thiruvattal 2010:542-543). Signatories to the PRME publicly commit themselves to develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large, to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy, and to incorporate into their academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility (PRME 2017:Internet).

A central commitment of any institution participating in PRME is to regularly share information with its stakeholders, by means of an SIP Report, on the progress made in implementing the United Nations' Six Principles for responsible management education. As a key integrity measure, the SIP's main objective is to serve as a public platform for information on responsible management education (PRME 2017:Internet).

Against this backdrop, this article aims to assess the status of South African business schools' demonstrable commitment, evidenced through their SIP reports, as espoused in the United Nations' Six Principles for responsible management education initiative (see Annexure 1).

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

As part of the global business landscape, South African business schools cannot separate themselves from mounting criticism. They therefore need to consider whether their programmes indeed embrace the notion of responsible management education.

Rayment and Smith (2013:488) report that business schools involved in their research were not adopting a global leadership perspective, attempting to lead business and humanity towards genuine sustainability, or finding solutions to other global issues. They believe this applies to most business schools worldwide.

There are 18 accredited business schools in South Africa affiliated with SABSA (SABSA 2017:Internet). A voluntary association, SABSA facilitates the means of leveraging information, skills and expertise between business schools, and assists in developing the business education sector in line with international standards. "It aims to provide a platform for the generation and exchange of innovative ideas, as well as the exposure of best local and international practices and experience. This sharing of knowledge is aimed at improving the overall quality of business education on an ongoing basis" (SABSA 2017:Internet).

Apart from being party to the UGIs, South Africa faces numerous local challenges, as recently reported in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Competitiveness Report (WEF 2017:268). Although remaining one of the most competitive countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa's economy is nearly at a standstill, with the unemployment rate estimated to be above 25 percent, and rising. Political uncertainty has also decreased the

confidence of South African business leaders, with the country's institutional environment, financial markets and goods-market efficiency weakening (WEF 2017:268). Some of the most problematic factors for doing business in South Africa include corruption, crime and theft, government instability, poor work ethic and the inadequately educated workforce (WEF 2017:268).

If South African business schools pursue the objective of building intellectual capital for the country and industries, and provide knowledge and critique relevant to management practice, demonstrable commitment to responsible management education in relation thereto should be paramount. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to assess South African business schools' demonstrable commitment to responsible management education, as espoused in the Six Principles. To address the primary objective of this study, some of the secondary objectives include the following:

- Determine which of the 18 South African business schools are signatories to the PRME initiative.
- Analyse the SIP reports of the South African business school signatories.
- Thematically integrate the SIP reports to establish a status that is representative of the country.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The apparent mistrust surrounding management education and business schools is associated with the belief that they produce business students who are income-driven, primarily seeking financial well-being (Khurana 2007:329; Louw 2015:201). A plethora of studies have documented deficiencies that plague management education. At the forefront of these perceptions of management education is an increased concern with morality, social responsibility, business ethics and sustainability, lack of business accountability, societal concern with excessive materialism, and the role of business in environmental deterioration and human-rights abuses (Burchell, Kennedy & Murray 2015:480). Management education's primary goal is to acquire the skills needed to function and excel in business organisations. However, Dyllick (2015:21) argues that success is measured by the status and salary of students' jobs once they graduate. Business students' focus has shifted from learning to

earning. There is a risk of creating standardised, egocentric systems that conflict with the beliefs and convictions of other students (Dyllick 2015:21).

Dyllick (2015:21) argues that it is vital for business schools to adapt their current business models to provide solutions to the multi-faceted global crises and regain their legitimacy. He goes on to state that drastic changes are required, as business schools influence business and the economic system as a whole. If management education is to live up to the challenge of developing responsible leaders, it will have to address these issues. Dyllick (2015:21) stresses that the educational challenge is to develop the potential of an individual to act in a responsible way with regard to complex and contentious issues, and in collaboration with different stakeholders. Education should help students make sense of the world, and their place in it, and instill in them a sense of responsibility for the common good (Dyllick 2015:21). To this end, many business schools have taken this criticism as an opportunity to assess their educational practices (Singhal, Suryawanshi & Mittal 2017:46). Manuel Escudero, the former head of the PRME initiative, defends the position of MBAs and business education as being instrumental in offering a positive, transformational experience for students. However, he believes that change needs to take place in these institutions to address the socio-economic challenges affecting many countries, especially those in Africa (Alcaraz & Thiruvattal 2010:544-545).

The PRME initiative was launched in 2007 and by the end of 2016 there were over 450 signatories representing approximately 80 countries (Singhal *et al.* 2017:47). The basic objective of the PRME is to embed corporate responsibility and sustainability into the core activities of signatory institutions, primarily expected to be business schools (Singhal *et al.* 2017:50). In December 2008, 170 business schools and other academic institutions from 43 countries joined the first PRME forum at the UN's Headquarters in New York, to reaffirm their commitment and decide on concrete actions, mainly in the areas of research, curriculum redesign, reporting and new learning methodologies (Alcaraz & Thiruvattal 2010:544-543). During the event, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "the current crisis has reinforced our view that the long-term viability and success of business will depend on its capacity to manage environmental, social and governance concerns, and to create sustainable value through innovation and new business models adapted to a changing global environment" (PRME 2008:Internet).

However, Burchell *et al.* (2015:481) argue that, when compared to non-participating business schools, there is little evidence to suggest that signatory business schools have made noticeable progress in developing a responsible management curriculum. The aforementioned authors suggest that, as with the UN's Global Compact (UNGC), the soft-governance approach adopted by the PRME does not produce the type of change and development for which it was intended. To mitigate their concerns, they propose that for business schools to take full advantage of the potential of the PRME to shape significant change, they must look beyond a quantitative evaluation of modules and programmes towards a more comprehensive assessment of the manner in which they - in particular active faculty members - engage with the United Nations' Six Principles for responsible management education. Singhal *et al.* (2017:57) support these views, stating that responsible management education for a sustainable world will require fundamental changes in management education, management research and in managing faculties. However, this cannot be done without redefining the role of business schools as social institutions with a clear public responsibility.

3.1 The State of PRME in South African Business Schools

The importance of business schools, both globally and in South Africa, cannot be denied. What is being taught in business schools may determine how scandals in corporate institutions and government will be addressed (Alcaraz & Thiruvattal 2010: 542). As with many other sectors in South African society, the development of the Higher Education (HE) landscape has been significantly influenced by racial segregation. The country continues to struggle to shift from institutionalised practices of racism and sexism, based on white supremacy (Nkomo 2015:243), to practices based on inclusiveness, diversity and fairness. The goal expressed by the government at the start of democracy remains the establishment of a non-racial and non-sexist democratic society, as proposed in the Constitution of 1996 (Nkomo 2015:243).

Another challenge common to the South African context is poverty. According to Statistics South Africa (STATS SA) (2017:14), poverty is on the rise in South Africa. Their latest Poverty Trends in South Africa report shows that, despite a general decline in poverty between 2006 and 2011, poverty levels increased after 2011 and beyond. Neal (2017:55)

purports that management education is a key player in sustaining or reducing poverty; because it involves developing those whose jobs and choices directly or indirectly have an impact on the world's poorest people. He believes poverty is a management issue, because it relates to many features of business environments around the world, in matters such as corruption, cheap labour, low-cost production bases, gender relations, crime, exploitation, injustice, social inequalities, market opportunities, and the sustainability of current business and management systems.

Doherty, Meehan and Richards (2015:53) state that it cannot be business as usual for business schools, as they need to understand that responsible management education is pivotal and could create a competitive advantage for the institution. In an attempt to remain relevant, South African management academics and administrators have reacted to recommendations offered by opponents of mainstream management education by integrating topics on corporate social responsibility, governance and sustainability into their curricula (Nkomo 2015:252; Waddock & Lozano 2013:283). From the above we can see that higher education plays a critical role in the transformation of society by aligning with the developmental goals of the country.

There is limited research into the adoption of the PRME initiatives in South Africa. Nhamo and Nhamo (2014:94) express their concern over the limited number of signatories in South Africa. As discussed, there are 18 accredited business schools in South Africa who are affiliated with SABSA (SABSA 2017:Internet). Of these, only seven are signatories to the PRME. In their study on assessing the progress made by institutions in South Africa in terms of the PRME initiative, Nhamo and Nhamo (2014:105-106) highlight the following lessons:

- The PRME has become relevant for business schools in addressing emerging global issues of climate change, bad corporate governance, the green economy and growth agendas.
- Applying the PRME by integrating business curricula to cover aspects of social innovation, sustainability, system solutions and participatory action learning will produce graduates who can apply their experience and reflect on what they have learnt.

- The PRME allows business schools to evaluate their position on corporate responsibility and sustainability.
- Some business schools in South Africa have introduced into their management strategy, aspects of the environment and social and corporate governance.
- Research produced by business schools should not only be published in 'A-rated' journals for peer recognition. Instead, it should be used by other business schools to find solutions to issues that are common to both parties. In this way, success can be realised through lasting partnerships.
- Signatories should implement the principles in a planned and pragmatic manner.

While the theme of sustainability has become imperative in the achievement of sustainable development goals and, in particular, South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP), the PRME initiative is more relevant today than was predicted during its launch in 2007.

4. METHODOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

In light of the complexity involved in evaluating how South African business schools can successfully embrace responsible management education, and in an endeavour to ensure a sustainable global economy, the researchers decided to use a qualitative research approach. The paradigm or underlying philosophy that informed the research approach, methodology and methods was one of postmodernism. As discussed, the problems currently experienced by organisations are complex and volatile. The view of postmodernism is that the world is multifaceted, volatile and chaotic, and that reality is complex and transitional (Bloomberg & Volpe 2012:35). To address the objectives of the study, an analysis of the SIP reports of the seven South African business school signatories would provide a status (representative of the country) of the level of the schools' demonstrable commitment to responsible management education. To this end, document analysis was used to analyse the documents.

Document analysis encompasses the study of documents in existence, so as to gain a deeper understanding of the content within (Ritchie & Lewis 2003:35). Analysing data is a process that requires "analytical craftsmanship and the ability to capture an understanding of the data" (Henning 2004:101). There are a variety of ways to analyse documents, and content analysis was considered the most appropriate technique to use for this research.

Content analysis was chosen because it is a systematic and detailed examination and evaluation of a specific body of material (Leedy & Ormrod 2013:148). Undertaking content analysis on the documents and relevant literature is a systematic approach that aims to quantify the occurrence of common words within the documents to assess the progress of South African business schools in their implementation of the PRME principles. The analysis was performed on the current SIP reports and a sampling procedure that identified and highlighted the main themes from the body of the material was followed (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport 2011:308). Data was created from the existing sources (de Vos *et al.* 2011:308). Although the data existed in the form of SIP reports and other forms of literature, the researchers still had to verify the relevance, reliability and validity of the data (de Vos *et al.* 2011:309).

Data was collected by gathering all the current SIP reports submitted by South African business schools that are signatories to the PRME initiative. These reports are all available on the official PRME website (<http://www.unprme.org/>). Qualitative content analysis usually uses individual themes that emanate from the content of the data (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009:2). The themes in this case were the principles of the PRME reports. Relevant literature was also gathered from the PRME website and other academic databases.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

The next phase in the research plan was how best to analyse the data. As there are myriad methods for collecting and analysing data, the collection of material was limited to the current SIP reports submitted by the signatory institutions, and document analysis was used. This method was deemed the most appropriate method to address the research questions. To ensure rigour and triangulation, relevant literature was analysed in conjunction with the reports. The first step in the analysis involved a decontextualisation of the data, which were in the form of the SIP reports (Bengtsson 2016:4). In order to gain a deeper understanding of the context as a whole, the researchers read the SIP reports in detail. It is important for researchers to familiarise themselves with the data so that documents can be broken down into “meaning units” (Bengtsson 2016:4). Once the researchers had done this, these meaning units were categorised according to the principles of the PRME SIP reports. Different coloured highlighters were used to identify key words within each of the principles

in the SIP reports. The researchers checked that all the content from the original documents were scrutinised in this process. They reflected on the data and the categories to ensure that only the necessary data were used in the relevant categories (Bengtsson 2016:5), and that they addressed the research question.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is evident that there has been some progress on the part of South African business schools in implementing the United Nations' Six Principles for responsible management education. Following the study completed by Nhamo and Nhamo in 2014, which considered the progress made by South African business schools in implementing the Six Principles, three additional business schools became signatories to the PRME and submitted their SIP reports.

Although there are now eight South African business signatories to the PRME initiative, only seven were included for the purposes of this study, due to the absence of one institution's SIP report. As a result, the following seven SIP reports have been analysed (see Table 1.).

Table 1: PRME Signatories - Business Schools in South Africa

Name	Parent Organisation	Organisation Type	Type
Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS)	University of Pretoria	Business School	Signatory
The Graduate School of Business (GSB)	University of Cape Town	Business School	Signatory
MANCOSA	Management College of Southern Africa	Business School	Signatory
Milpark Business School (MBS)	Milpark Education	Business School	Signatory
Nelson Mandela Business School (NMUBS)	Nelson Mandela University	Business School	Signatory

*Regenesys Business School	Stand-alone private Business School	Business School	Signatory
Rhodes Business School (RBS)	Rhodes University	Business School	Signatory
University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB)	University of Stellenbosch	Business School	Signatory

*Excluded due to non-submission of SIP report.

Source: PRME (2017)

The evidence from each of the business schools indicates a variety of approaches in reporting on the implementation of the United Nations' Six Principles for management education. The emphasis of different facets of sustainability is highlighted within each business school's reporting technique. A discussion of the results of the analysis uses the principles as a guide to establish coherence in reporting.

Principle 1 relates to Purpose. This alludes to the overall purpose of the institution in relation to inculcating sustainable values within both students' experiences and the institution as a whole. In each of the reports, the integration of sustainable leadership and management aspects into the business schools' core values and curricula is highlighted in areas such as the curriculum and research. In the current SIP reports, each business school, barring the USB, explicitly states how they have reviewed and amended their curricula to incorporate the PRME principles. Where institutions had an opportunity to review areas of their curricula, they reviewed the way they viewed sustainability. Thus, they committed to imbuing sustainability within all their academic activities and revised learning goals. Some institutions brought in new and specific subjects, such as corporate governance and ethics, leadership, social responsibility and environmental management, and committed to external projects. RBS, for example, illustrates its total integration through the alignment of all teaching, research and learning. RBS has also instituted a sustainability policy, which is to be adopted and implemented. Six of the seven reports clearly illustrated progress. With regard to Principle 1, the institutions have given evidence of how they integrated and

embedded changes through their vision, mission, curricula reviews, and more focused research initiatives and by making use of the changing HEQF frameworks.

Principle 2 refers to Values. This principle is demonstrated through the institutions' academic activities, curricula and organisational practices. Both RBS and GIBS have combined their reporting of principles 1 and 2 in their reports. MBS and NMUBS have introduced specific modules that address social responsibility. They have embedded the concept of sustainability and leadership throughout their curricula. They have also embedded aspects of global social responsibility in their short learning programmes. USB is somewhat vague in terms of addressing this principle, and states that their educational approach is "purposefully values-based". It is apparent that principles 1 and 2 are integrated and therefore the reporting on them was combined in two instances.

Principle 3 refers to Method, which relates to the educational frameworks, materials and processes that enable effective experiences for responsible leadership. Through a variety of different initiatives, these SIP reports display practical evidence of the implementation of Principle 3. This principle involves utilising technology to share ideas, enable students and encourage best practice in areas such as entrepreneurship. Two of MANCOSA's campuses have invested in eco-friendly infrastructure (through design, materials and construction), which is laudable. They also use eco-friendly teaching, learning and office administration where possible. Similarly, USB provides concrete evidence of improving their ecological impact. They only procure materials from sustainable suppliers. USB also indicates a significant reduction in paper usage. They have improved their online learning environment and have created a "glocal" (global and local) classroom. This lowers costs for students, as well as their carbon footprint, as they do not have to travel to campus for lectures. RBS has provided a long-term approach. They have spent over three years reflecting on and revising their curriculum. They have responded to Principle 3 by implementing the Four E module (namely Economy, Equity, Ethics and Ecology), which must be embedded into all business decisions. This has been advantageous to businesses who collaborate with them – according to the report, they are the "academic bridge between the business community and society". UCT-GSB has implemented a variety of initiatives and has highlighted the visible impact they have had by receiving awards that focus on innovation and leadership. UCT-GSB expressly say that educational strategies should go beyond conventional strategies,

and that they are making progress. However, there are no demonstrable activities evidenced in their report. Two of the institutions (MANCOSA and GIBS) have made use of guest lecturers and dialogue mechanisms to illustrate the implementation of Principle 3. Overall, the reports show that students in each of the seven institutions are required to invest time in socially responsible activities.

Principle 4 relates to Research and advancing people's understanding of the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value. Across all reports, there is increased attention given to improving the quality of sustainability related research, which is evidenced through publications in peer-reviewed journals, and international and national conferences. Faculty publications are acknowledged, as well as the output of relevant dissertations and theses from students (as demonstrated by RBS). Annual research activities and seminars demonstrate their commitment to the PRME initiative. MANCOSA has developed an in-house journal that emphasises sustainability, as does its annual conference. UCT-GSB highlights an investment from the government of Flanders for research. MBS shows commitment to ongoing quality research efforts through its membership to various professional bodies and by forming part of the International Business Conference's organising body. Overall, the reports indicate that there is a focus on quality faculty and student research output, via different mechanisms.

Principle 5 relates to Partnership. Across the SIP reports there is significant engagement between the institutions and the communities within which they do business, and global partnerships. The importance of the institutions' Alumni is also showcased, as they are important stakeholders. A commendable example is UCT-GSB's Bertha Centre of Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which has developed key partnerships with both local and international companies.

Principle 6 relates to Dialogue. The reports illustrate a variety of dialogue platforms between government, business and students. Both RBS and MBS have taken part in the development and testing of the Sustainable Literacy Test, which is a tool for the assessment and verification of the sustainability literacy of Higher Education Institution students. In all instances, the reports indicate that there is a willingness on the part of the business schools

to participate in important platforms for dialogue on sustainable and responsible management that engages students, business communities and government.

Overall, the analysis of the SIP reports demonstrates that the signatory institutions who have submitted their reports, are indeed focusing their efforts on promoting responsible leadership education. There are, as could be expected, variances in the reporting, as each institution reports from the premise of their unique circumstances and strategic orientation.

Exter, Grayson and Maher (2013:321) refer to the five stages of corporate responsibility and sustainability maturity for business schools, with stage 1 indicating that a business school is still in denial with regard to implementing social responsibilities. Stage 2 indicates that the business school is complying so as to retain their accreditation status. Stage 3 indicates that business schools have introduced specific measures, such as specialist subjects and programmes, to inculcate sustainability activities into their institutions. Stage 4 moves further along the spectrum and is the strategist stage. In this stage, business schools are forming alliances with various partners to implement sound research and community engagement in sustainability related activities. The last stage is the Global Leader stage. This is Stage 5, where business schools are able to develop further capacity to become involved in mainstream sustainability initiatives and to share their learning (Nhamo & Nhamo 2014:98). In light of the reports analysed, it may be advantageous for each business school to evaluate their position on this spectrum.

It is concerning that ten of the 18 business schools in South Africa who belong to SABSA have not signed up to the PRME initiative. Being a signatory to the PRME initiative, and continuing to report on progress made in the implementation of the Six Principles, demonstrates a commitment to responsible leadership. Integrating the PRME principles by means of the vision, mission and other behaviours required of the students uses the hidden curriculum and implicit learning to drive transformation in the way students think, reason and act.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Business schools need to take note of the importance of responsible management education to ensure that graduates are equipped to meet the leadership challenges of dynamic and global business requirements, and are capable of managing in environments marked by

constant change. A learning space must therefore be created through a holistic intervention of institutional development, inclusive of curriculum development, faculty development, student development, administrative and staff development, and resource development. These interventions need to be coordinated around an institutional vision and mission to promote responsible management education. If administrative leadership has priorities focused on income and ratings, the resources for responsible management education promotion will not be available. It is therefore recommended that business schools re-emphasise and accentuate the “responsible management education” schema, as advocated by the Six Principles, in their thinking, curricula and teaching methodologies. The following practical recommendations are advised:

- SABSA needs to review its role in promoting responsible management education among its members. It is recommended that SABSA makes participation in the PRME initiative a prerequisite for membership.
- Via the mechanisms of SABSA, collaboration between member schools in relation to the practice of responsible management education should be promoted, and best-practice guidelines should be developed and drafted.
- South African business schools that are not signatories to the PRME initiative should become signatories as a matter of urgency, and thereby demonstrate their willingness to commit to responsible management education.
- South African business schools must live the PRME values and not merely pay lip service to this important endeavour. If business schools are to be successful in ensuring their legitimacy, relevance and the upholding of their social contract, they will have to demonstrate to their stakeholders that they are living the PRME values.

In terms of this study and the Six Principles of PRME discussed herein, business schools are expected to (1) model the behaviour they expect of students; (2) envision the benefits and possibilities of responsible leadership, and enlist students in this shared view of the future; (3) seek innovative ways to change, grow, innovate and improve in relation to responsible management education; (4) foster collaboration, trust and individual accountability amongst peers; and (5) create a spirit of community in the pursuit of responsible management education.

8. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study only focused on the South African business schools that were SABSA members. The findings therefore do not encapsulate the entire South African management education sector's status in respect of the Six Principles. Further research into the broader South African management education sector is recommended, to include faculties of commerce and management sciences across the higher education landscape, inclusive of public and private providers.

Owing to the importance of responsible management education in Africa, it is suggested that similar studies be conducted via the Association of African Business Schools (AABS), consisting of 44 member schools across the continent. Such research could provide valuable insight for determining a developmental agenda for the promotion and enactment of the PRME's Six Principles.

9. CONCLUSION

This article sought to assess the status of South African business schools' commitment to responsible management education in terms of the Six Principles of the PRME. In the midst of present societal ills plaguing South Africa, responsible management education is critical. Business schools worldwide are placing strategic importance on responsible management education. This research is among the first to assess how business schools in South Africa have adopted and implemented the PRME's Six Principles, as evidenced in their SIP Reports. Fewer than half of the business schools who are registered with SABSA have become signatories, which indicate that there is much work to be done in South Africa around sustainability issues. Our results suggest that SABSA could be used as a vehicle to facilitate and encourage business schools in South Africa to fully participate in the PRME initiative.

This will also provide a platform for business schools to share ideas on how to become more sustainable and to address criticism.

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ANNEXURE 1: THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

As higher-education institutions involved in the development of current and future managers, we declare our willingness to progress in the implementation, within our institution, of the following Principles, starting with those that are more relevant to our capacities and mission. We will report on progress to all our stakeholders and exchange effective practices related to these principles with other academic institutions:

Principle 1 | Purpose: We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large, and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Principle 2 | Values: We will incorporate into our academic activities and curricula the values of global social responsibility, as portrayed in international initiatives (such as the United Nations' Global Compact).

Principle 3 | Method: We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Principle 4 | Research: We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

Principle 5 | Partnership: We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Principle 6 | Dialogue: We will facilitate and support dialogue and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

We understand that our own organisational practices should serve as examples of the values and attitudes we convey to our students.