

The Holistic Educational Approach for Anti-corruption in Human Security: The Case of Korean Business Education

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Abstract: *This paper proposes the holistic educational approach to seek anti-corruption and human security, arguing that it develops a new spirit of capitalism, which promotes a “community civil society” that will contribute to the goals of communitarian values, the justice of civil societies, and the happiness of the marginalized groups in the society. Using the notion of a “holistic” business education that supports anti-corruption for human security, I develop a “systems approach” to business education in order to stress co-operative human security that should be pursued on the principle of “inclusiveness.” Regarding business education, I argue that management is a social practice in which managers face complex issues in business contexts, including ethical problems, moral dilemma, socialization (including social learning and responsibility), and environmental sustainability. To address these complex issues in practice, business schools should offer ethical programs that respect a new vision of virtuous and sustainable societies through the participatory process of action learning in order to develop ethical sensitivity of human security amongst young people. Based on the idea of communitarian ethic and responsibility, we develop and demonstrate why a “systems approach” is necessary to understand business ethics education and how it applies in educational practices in Korean universities.*

Keywords: *holistic educational approach; communitarian value; anti-corruption; human security*

Introduction

An Asian view of human security seeks to explore collective actions-oriented and people-centered approaches that involve the ‘human need’ of human security and good governance (to the extent that corruption, nepotism and cronyism were chronic social problems) that appreciates the values of the common good, rather than appreciation of the values of liberalism and individualism. In a collective action-oriented approach, the concept of human security emphasizes the “inclusiveness” and “holism” of the comprehensive security for entire social groups, including children, civilians, ethnic minorities, and socially marginalized people in societies,¹ whilst the people-centered approach focuses on all interests and objectives involved in the practice.² What about education? As the study of human security inevitably lies within the society as a whole, which includes broad areas of socioeconomic conditions, Owen³ argues that an interdisciplinary analysis and holistic approach are necessary to understand the complex relations that construct human security in a broader context. In this respect, this paper seeks

to explore the holistic educational approach to anti-corruption within the human security paradigm, arguing that it develops a new spirit of capitalism and employs a systems-based approach to business education.

The argument is organized as follows: I begin by reviewing the literature on the holistic approach for business education, clarifying the multiple dimensions of human security, and delineating ways to link human security and the holistic critical approach to business education. Next, I propose that the holistic approach requires five conditions to promote the 'common good' in society. The following section presents the case study for the holistic educational approach, to anti-corruption in the human security paradigm. It is based on a study conducted by the author and participants who are mainly students at the college of Business Administration of Keimyung University, South Korea. The final section discusses the main implications of the study for business education in the context of Korean universities.

Appreciating a holistic approach in education for understanding human security

When dealing with business education and its practice, I acknowledge that "the challenge for modern business education is to develop ethical sensitivity among young people, a baseline for building a virtuous society."⁴ In this respect, I propose that a holistic learning approach is needed to give a voice not only to teachers, but also to students and 'others' in the community whose lives are (in) directly affected by the activities and ideologies of business and management. A holistic approach for business education emphasizes "problems and questions-posing learning", which enables students to think critically and reflect on ethical business practices, and facilitates the process active participatory learning.⁵ The approach asks participants to form a group and create shared purposes and core values, which ultimately leads to a "collective judgment", whereby members decide which values to include in order to sustain their decisions in practice.⁶ In this sense, participants are encouraged to search for "serious intellectual and moral responsibilities", for the benefit of others⁷ and to create critical discourse which will produce a multiplicity of alternatives through the openness of 'questions' and the determination of 'problems' in given contexts.⁸ Recently, human security issues became popular as it relates the "sustainable development" of societies, groups, and individuals, and deals with environmental, political, social, and economic threats to the survival of societies, groups, and individuals.⁹ When dealing with the 'absence of insecurity and threats' (e.g., freedom from both 'fear' of physical, sexual or psychological abuse, violence, and 'want' of employment, food, and/or health), people require the capacity to identify threats, to avoid them when possible, and to reduce their effects when they occur. Human security proposes a framework that places human cooperation at the center of both systemic analysis in problematic situations and collective action. It can serve as a means to evaluate obvious and potential threats, foresee crises and risks, and evaluate the situational redistribution of responsibilities. In this sense, human security signifies shared social and moral values and political and social actions.¹⁰

A sustainable human development approach would require multiple dimensions of economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political securities.¹¹ In organization studies and systems sciences, a historic-dialectic analysis of the emancipatory possibilities for individuation and institutional flexibility has emerged to explore social relationships of power, knowledge, and ethics in practice.¹² A critical form of human security discourse has also

developed which stresses issues of power, justice, and emancipation.¹³ Put simply, the ethic of the human security movement stresses “holism” and “inclusiveness” from multiple perspectives.¹⁴ Influenced by critical thinking in organization studies and human security movements, the holistic approach in business education is proposed to explore the complex nature of power, knowledge, and justice by offering a more critical and ethical basis for constructing meaning, and challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions of our institutions and communities.¹⁵ To do so, a systems-based or holistic approach is developed to facilitate the process of collaborative inquiry carried out by people affected by problematic situations, a participative approach concerned with developing the ethical awareness and practical knowledge in the pursuit of purposeful human activities.¹⁶

After describing the connection between the holistic approach in business education and human security, I suggest that the holistic approach has five necessary conditions: developing holistic perspectives on social reality; conforming educational practices with appreciation of culture; promoting ethical sensitivity amongst young students through group collaboration; appreciating human security within the communitarian ethos of Asian societies; and employing the inquiring process of critical reflection in practice.

Creating Holistic Perspectives on Social Reality

Modern civilization and its processes have created what Herman and McChesney¹⁷ describes as “a space of transformation,” whereby a virtual international culture is emerging and permeating the economic, political, and social lives of all nations of the world. It is facilitated by flows across borders of technology, trade, education, knowledge, people, Western values, and democratic ideology. It demonstrates a corresponding mix between what Bell¹⁸ refers to as the “consciousness of continuities and innovation in economic, social, and political processes.” As we live in a global civil society, we have witnessed that the theme of human development and civilization is multi-faced, with socioeconomic and sociopolitical implications viewed as complex systems that turn on distinct practice of the changing nature of organizations, communities, societies, economics, the nation-state, and personal life.¹⁹

Wholeness in social reality depends on the understanding of real-world experiences in practice. People interpret social reality and act according to those perceptions and its relevant inter-subjective order.²⁰ Consequently, we can study social reality only through studying people’s different perspectives and ideas. The interpretive approach holds that we can learn about what we see in the world from multiple perspectives. On the other hand, critical management school suggests that there is an increasing attention within critical and ethical awareness about the globalization of the market economy, mainstream thoughts and practice, current systems, and capitalistic societies. For instance, Alvesson, Bridgman, and Willmott²¹ argue that critical management studies offer a new form of knowledge in order to question the mainstream thinking and practice of management studies, and critiques management concepts and practices in the capitalist political economy. Rose²² proposes a way of rethinking current capitalist societies and embracing an alternative way of through the harmony between culture and nature, people and animals, and settlers and the indigenous. Convergent socioeconomic and environmental challenges from globalization are a significant impediment to rebuilding a community through systemic governance. To do so effectively, we must consider the function of the local government within the regional context, focus on community-based action for

transformative change at the local and regional level, and work towards incorporating participatory and reflective practices within educational development.²³ In addition, we need to develop human capabilities to think and act differently if participatory approaches to business practice are to justify a position of social justice, environmental sustainability, and collective well-being.

Making an educational practice through the appreciation of the role of culture

When developing holistic perspectives or ‘systems thinking’ in educational practices, culture plays an important role. Culture is passed on throughout history, it is both static and dynamic, and thus transforms itself within a space. In contrast, a virtual culture emerges and permeates every aspect of life throughout the complex system in which we live. To understand culture’s dynamic quality, we must address not only the “past” but also the “present” of a culture. It is important to remember that the “present” of culture is the culmination of the dynamic transmission of culture from previous generations to the present, a process that forces culture to be constantly re-interpreted and modified.²⁴ For example, reinterpretation and modification through group engagement is one form of cultural evolution. A new culture evolves to best serve the purpose of the group(s) in adapting to its environment, while still retaining some historical cohesion and continuity. Education has always played an important role in the process of “enculturation.”²⁵ During the process of enculturation, cultural acquisition and transmission can take place in all the three forms of education, namely, informal, formal, and non-formal education, as defined by LaBelle.²⁶ Public and private schools have become the major domains of cultural acquisition and transmission because they are viewed as formal sites for the interpretation and transmission of values and knowledge.²⁷ For this reason, it is self-evident that education and culture are closely interdependent and interwoven in educational practices in South Korea. During the process of education, cultural transmission always occurs in local and contingent contexts. This means that it only makes sense when considered in the broader context of what society intends to accomplish through its educational investment in the youth. An intersection occurs between education and culture wherein we can see how culture as a regulating system influences the processes of teaching and learning, and how these processes in turn reinforce culture. In the traditional Korean culture, communities and group formations are of great importance for understanding the purposes of the values of society. Group formation occurs through the interaction of education and culture in order to develop a sustainable society. For this reason, I look at Korean education through some of the main threads in the tapestry of Korean culture, including widespread respect for learning, the belief in hard work and determination, the examination systems, and moral education. Like Chinese moral education, moral education in Korea has always taken a prominent position in Korean educational systems. In short, understanding culture is necessary in an educational practice. The processes of enculturation and cultural transformation can happen through the process of participatory learning.

Developing Ethical Sensitivity amongst Young Students through Group Formation

Countries with a Confucian tradition like Korea (and Japan) share a wide-spread belief that education is of paramount importance in one’s life.²⁸ Thus, it is a general belief that ethical and moral education is important for both the individual and the Korean society.²⁹ In modern education, many scholars agree that it is necessary to develop ethical sensitivity through group

collaboration.³⁰ For developing ethical sensitivity, Varela's ideas can be linked with the Eastern thoughts of appreciating ethics.³¹ In his vision of ethical know-how, Varela³² believes that it is not objectively desirable to have an ideal moral and social order. It means that ethics, moral and human values cannot be universal but rather they are contextual and dependent on contingency and improvisation. Thus, an ordinary person can be an ethical agent in collaboration with others, and they can be transformed into a group of 'selfless selves' who will reach an enlightened state of mind as the group formation proceeds during the transformational process of "becoming others."³³ In the process of "becoming others," it does not merely look for acceptable and satisfying solutions for given situations, but develops the questions and understands 'problems' in larger contexts.

Appreciating Human Security, the "Good Life," and the Communitarian Ethos of Asian Societies

Interestingly, Asian society is infused with a philosophy based on liberalism and individualism, which lead to questioning the sustainable development of the modern capitalist societies.³⁴ MacIntyre explains that ethics for the modern society is constituted through social practices, the narrative unity of a human life, and the traditions of society.³⁵ MacIntyre argues that an individual self should pursue what he called "common life," or the common good within a society.³⁶ In this respect, the 'communitarian ethic' is to contribute to build a virtuous society.³⁷ Moral development should be considered with respect to the communitarian ethos of a society that will contribute to developing a new spirit of capitalism, and to promoting a 'community civil society' and the common good within modern society.³⁸

In traditional Korean societies, moral development and education are based on the Confucian tradition, a study of human relationships through ethical and moral behaviors. In Confucian tradition, relationships can create a good society with peace and harmony. On the other hand, in Confucian education, a human being is committed to a search for personal moral perfection or self-perfection. The belief in the morally transforming power of learning is not limited to Confucianism. Rather, it is in this belief that the three main traditional schools of thought (e.g., Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism) echo each other. While Buddhism and Daoism differ greatly from Confucianism in their thoughts and practice, they both advocate learning for self-perfection. For instance, Lao-tse, the founder of Daoism believed that the main evil that had befallen society was its quest for materialistic betterment. For this reason, Daoism calls on humans to forsake physical prowess, to acquire spiritual strength, and to abandon material well-being or wealth in order to have harmonious relationships with nature, the greatest source of happiness and sustenance.³⁹ In Buddhism, humans need a peaceful and harmonious relationship with Nature. Buddhism is much concerned with conducting the good life, a fact that bespeaks its emphasis on moral and spiritual cultivation. Besides, the pursuit of truth in monastic isolation as a means of 'enlightenment' is a spiritual enjoyment for self-perfection. With a great influence of the above mentioned three main traditional schools of thought in the East, Korean education and moral and ethical cultivation has never been separated by cultural systems. Instead, they are closely interwoven in complex relations amongst families, public schools, private educational systems, and culture. Thus, traditional Korea society believes that individual persons are regulated by moral behaviors and ethical principles based on benevolence, propriety, and collective goods. By means of things being investigated, knowledge became complete. The capacities of human individuals were built

through their thoughts and knowledge. Through the capacities-building of individual and their thoughts being sincere, their hearts are then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their own selves are cultivated. Their own selves being cultivated, their own families are regulated. Their own families being regulated, their schools are rightly operated. Their own schools being rightly operated, their states are rightly governed. The states being rightly governed, the whole human race becomes complete and whole societies are happy and tranquil.

Developing capacity-building of individuals through learning for self-perfection or personal mastery, Zen Buddhism and Dao (or Tao) philosophy affirms an extraordinary experience known as enlightenment, wherein all dualities such as good and evil, objects and subjects, mind or spirit and body are dissolved. On the other hand, Zhuang Zu (or Chuang Tzu), the critical thinker of Daoism, argued that ethics and morality developed from human perspectives, a limitation to understanding the virtue of natural distinction (性). For this reason, Daoism calls on humans to abandon justice and righteousness from human individuals' perspectives in order to make human security possible through a harmonious relationships with nature or natural distinction (性), the greatest source of happiness and strength for both individuals and a society.⁴⁰

Inquiring Process of Critical Reflections on Social Practice

For the final stage of the holistic approach to anti-corruption for human security, I propose an inquiring process of critical reflections on social practice, which encourages participants to appreciate the collective thinking and behaviors within business practices. The current systems are challenged by the collective in which the 'judgment systems' function as knowledge in action through the process of critical reflection on social practice.⁴¹ Using these judgment systems as the 'outsider perspective,'⁴² participants should search for "all chances and possibilities" and create critical discourse to produce a multiplicity of alternatives through the openness of 'questions' and the determination of the 'problem' in a wider context.

Case Study: Educational Practice at the College of Business Administration, Keimyung University

We demonstrate the use of a holistic approach to anti-corruption for human security in an educational practice in the Korean context. To do so, we explore the management and operation of social business and microfinance through the exercise of action learning programs at the College of Business Administration in Keimyung University, in Daegu in South Korea.

Understanding the Nature of Transition in the Korean Society

Korea is currently pursuing the transition into community-based capitalism through the introduction of social businesses into local and national contexts.⁴³ The Korean government has made a strong commitment to developing the voluntary social service and welfare sectors that is regarded as a social innovative force in Korean societies through a number of strategic initiatives. These include heavy public investment in the development of a social service sector, the creation of social businesses and jobs for disadvantaged groups in local communities, deregulation in the financial sector, and a new establishment of the Korean microcredit bank that aims to finance the operation of social businesses and microenterprises in Korea and to

encourage social entrepreneurship for the development of community-based capitalism in Korea. In January 2007, the Korean government established the “Social Enterprises Promotion Act” (SEPA) to create socially-oriented businesses and jobs for socially disadvantaged groups in the Korean society. In 2010, 330 social enterprises were certified by SEPA. The idea that social enterprises might play a role in societies strengthens social cohesion by reducing the isolation of marginalized groups, including unemployed laborers, elderly people, and mentally and physically disabled people. Their role also includes preventing failure at schools, delinquency, and social exclusion and creating social networks and links between people who live in local communities. Future plans to further expand social enterprises include the development of sub-national regions of social service providers (social innovators) of social entrepreneurship concentrated around the fields of developing environment-friendly energy and technology.

Thus, the nature of Korean social business is clearly different from social business or community enterprises operated overseas (e.g., Europe and the United States) for two reasons. First, the Korean government seeks to solve social problems through the linkage of non-profit and the for-profit sectors in the collaborative social enterprises initiative. Second, Korean social enterprises evolved as it links society with social economy wherein marginalized group are not be identified by the current market system. Social entrepreneurship is required for introducing transformative changes in at least one of the following ways. These include the creation of new patterns of how society operates, the opening of a new social economy which creates social capital through goodwill and trust among civic engaged individuals, and the introduction of a new (or higher quality) product and service that contributes to community development or expanded labor market participation in Korea.⁴⁴

Action Learning Programs at the College of Business Administration in Keimyung University

As far as business education is concerned in Korea, research on business ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) has proliferated in recent years. Some have pointed out that business education in developing countries has heavily imported knowledge, methods, and techniques from developed countries, both in terms of topic areas and in terms of pedagogical organizations.⁴⁵ Based upon the author’s experience on business education in Korean universities during the last decade, this is true in the case of Korea as well. More recently, a number of Korean universities have introduced courses for business ethics or ethical management in undergraduate and MBA programs, where the ethical content in business school are required by Korea’s ranking agency, the Korea Accreditation of Business Administration, and which is influenced by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate School of Business (AACSB) accreditation.

During the ‘modern society and ethical management’, which a class that is taught within the Keimyung university, the college of Business Administration offers an action learning program in the contexts of social transformation and local development of Korean societies. During that course, teachers and participants are concerned with “evaluating human actions” in terms of social justice and practice, human security, and economic, social, and environmental sustainability. It is concerned with what are good or bad behaviors based on ethical-based reasoning (e.g., virtue ethics, deontological, and utilitarian approaches). Dealing with real-world situations, however, practitioners and participants in action learning programs have to face

critical issues within the full complexity of living practice. Regarding business ethics education, the ethics of determining the right and wrong of business theories and their implementation are considered in terms of what is good or bad in social practice.

Application of a Holistic Approach to Anti-corruption for Human Security

As a part of the action-learning program in the business ethics course at the College of Business Administration at Keimyung University, there are three distinctive phases of a holistic approach to anti-corruption.

Phase 1: Determine the problems and issues in local communities from systemic perspectives.

The first phase of the holistic approach is concerned with the initial appreciation of the real-world problem from a systemic perspective. There are various student organizations or club societies in which students can join the community outreach activities and contribute to community development that facilitates organizational transformation and social change within local communities. The mission of these organizations/societies is for students to participate and support extra-curricular humanitarian activities that promote anti-corruption, social responsibility, and ethical awareness. The mission also contributes to the development of community-based microenterprises (called 'village enterprises' in Korea), which make contributions towards creating jobs for foreign residents, ethnic minorities, and socially disadvantaged groups (e.g., physically and mentally handicapped people, unemployed youth, and old-aged pensioners in local communities). On the other hand, as a part of the project requirement between local government's agencies and Keimyung University, Dr. Jae Eon Yu formed five action learning teams within MBA programs at the College of Business Administration at Keimyung University in 2012 to carry out the participatory program in local communities. During these action learning programs, participants (mainly students) recognized that the 'problem-solving' activities (e.g., voluntary services to the socially disadvantaged groups in local communities) were limited because certain people experienced insecurity in their home and 'immoral' customs and practices in their communities. A great number of people were still unemployed within local communities.

Phase 2: Plan actions for improving current situations

This author has been engaged in teaching courses called the "strategic management for (social) business" and the "modern societies and ethical management" at the College of Business Administration in Korea University since the Fall semester, 2011. This gave me the opportunity to see how participants (students and practitioners in local communities) appreciate the problematic nature of social situations and community businesses in the Korean context. During this course, the action learning and action research were used to facilitate 'learning-by-doing' and problem-solving capabilities for understanding the complex management of social enterprises using Beer⁴⁶'s viable systems model from the systemic perspectives approach.⁴⁷ To facilitate action learning outside the classroom, fieldwork in connection with courses were carried out within local communities around a 10 ~ 12 weeks per semester.

According to the 2012 Faculty Guide Book of Keimyung University, all faculty members scholars should create knowledge as educators and should devote their talents to the development of the nation and humanity. As citizens of their communities, faculty members and students have the right to express their opinions on various social issues, and to make social services to communities. In accordance with the University's policy, the Business school should have a clear understanding of its role as a "good citizen" within the local, national, and international communities in which it operates. Hence, participants (who include faculty members and students) appreciate the 'social problems' that will encourage expansion of educational programs for teaching business ethics, social responsibility, good citizenship, human security, and social justice at the School. On the other hand, local government agencies have prepared special projects for helping the socially disadvantaged or marginalized people in local communities. To promote student voluntary activities, some of the faculty members supported students in directing and developing community outreach activities. Presently, this non-hierarchical structure of voluntary activities is under the guidance of Dr. Jae Eon Yu in the "operational processes of action learning programs" at the College of Business Administration in Keimyung University. Consequently, the actual events took place in various forms of community projects at Keimyung University during 2012 and 2013. Action learning projects are interactive learning experiences that help students strengthen and understand business ethics and ethical management for pursuing a good life in local communities. Students took various forms of workshops, and conducted formal and informal discussions with managers in the companies at local communities. There were many student responses and according to the action learning reports, one student said that, "the culture of group collaboration and teamwork has enriched our students' experience through collaborations with other people in local communities."

Phase 3: Discover new possibilities for community development.

After formal and informal interviews, and discussions with participants who were involved in the action learning programs, MBA students made a number of the recommendations to the managers of local business companies in order to bring about changes within the local community. The following recommendations aim to facilitate community projects and social responsibilities within local businesses. First, the college of Business Administration should introduce new programs for job creation at local communities that promote helping marginalized or disadvantage groups (e.g., unemployed youth, foreign workers, and foreign partners at Korean families) in local communities. Second, the college of Business Administration should continue to develop the course for 'modern society and ethical management,' and encourage teaching and research about business ethics and ethical management in both undergraduate and graduate programs. Third, the college of Business Administration should support action research programs on community development by providing financial and non-financial aids to young students who want to find new possibilities for social transformation that focuses on local human security.

Phase 4: Appreciating human security, quality of life, and common good through critical reflections.

The critical issues of human security, quality of life, and common good emerged from critical reflection on social practices conducted by the action learning educational programs, at the

college of Business Administration at Keimyung University, Korea. For instance, the presence of immigrants from other Asian countries has greatly increased through arranged international marriages facilitated by marriage agencies for Korean men wanting to find a partner from neighboring countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, China, and so on. In 2010, there were 589,532 foreigners living in South Korea.⁴⁸ These “multicultural families” face significant economic and social “difficulties” and conflicts that stem from complex interactions between themselves and their environments. Based upon the practical experience of the holistic educational approach to anti-corruption, participants agreed that social collaboration is necessary among practitioners, academics, and local government’s agencies in order to determine new possibilities of social transformation for local Korean communities towards the “multicultural societies” that focus on anti-corruption and human security in the modern Korean society.⁴⁹

Conclusion

This introduced and proposed a holistic approach for anti-corruption business education in Korea. It highlights the importance of holistic perspectives on social reality, and how this is achieved through the systemic process of action learning programs, the appreciation of the role of culture and the development of ethical sensitivity amongst young students through group formation, and critical reflections on social practice. Through critical reflections, we observed that participants view themselves as an integral part of a wider context through the engagement of multiple relationships with diverse groups or organizations (e.g., stakeholders, sponsors, agents, and clients or hosts of action learning projects); the transformational learning-process occurs in wider social contexts. By analyzing the nature of social transformation in community businesses from holistic perspectives, including the different discourses and localized practices in education whereby ethical questions are raised to gain practical knowledge, it is possible to see that participatory learning may be enhanced through the relationship of social, economic, and political aspects amongst diverse groups that are involved in the action learning projects. These findings contain implications for the scientific and business community where a holistic approach could take place in addressing the following issues. First, business education takes into account how social, cultural, environmental, political, and economic environments influence students’ capacity for developing a holistic perspective of management roles, and aids them in considering ethical issues and developing critical awareness to “move beyond what we already know” and put the systems approaches into practice (Rhodes, 2009: 663). Second, it is important to develop ethical sensitivity in young students and to refocus their social practices on serving the human needs within the human security paradigm (e.g., freedom from ‘want’). Finally, business education stresses the holistic approach to “inclusiveness,” which fosters the comprehensive security for entire marginalized social groups and individuals.

About the Author

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Notes

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