

Social, Economic, and Environmental Synergy: The Impact of Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Livestock Market Development in Arid Regions

Ekiru Francis Anno*

Unicaf University (UUM), School of Doctoral Studies, Lilongwe, Malawi

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Abstract: This study sought to evaluate the interactions among social, economic, and environmental factors that influence the implementation of business ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) frameworks in livestock-based enterprises. The study was conducted in Turkana in Kenya, Karamoja in Uganda, and Kapoeta in South Sudan. 9 primary, secondary, and cross-border livestock marketplaces were designated as case study locations, involving 171 statistically selected study participants. The study objectives were to (i) delineate business ethics and the application of corporate social responsibility within the livestock sector, (ii) evaluate the economic, legal, ethical, and altruistic components of CSR as implemented in livestock markets, and (iii) propose strategies for integrating business ethics and CSR into livestock business operations in dryland production and marketing environments. The study highlights that while livestock markets aim for profitability and adhere to legal and ethical standards, they fall short due to limited training, exposure, and resources. It emphasizes the importance of altruism alongside profitability, advocating for a collaborative business model that addresses competitive culture and socio-economic benefits. Ethical practices enhance market integrity and information flow, while legal compliance promotes oversight. To improve operational efficiency in livestock-based enterprises, securing resources and mentorship is crucial. Innovation and societal partnerships are essential for addressing disparities and enhancing corporate social responsibility, with an emphasis on government enforcement of these principles to improve corporate-society relations and overall livestock sector performance.

Keywords: *Business ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility, Livestock policy, Livestock Marketing, Altruism, Trade relations, Gender integration, Community empowerment.*

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Introduction

Effective business governance requires an understanding of ethical and legal obligations linked to business principles that foster positive societal responses. The behavior of individuals involved significantly influences corporate governance where legal elements related to governance must integrate to form a unified framework amidst diverse discussions in international business. Milton Friedman (American economist and statistician) argues that businesses' only societal duty is profit generation, while Peter Ferdinand Drucker (Austrian American management consultant) believes that businesses must align with societal standards. Although corporate culture is shaped by management, it can be misused to justify unethical behavior and that is why the stakeholder principle is gaining prominence in global business, expanding the concept of corporate accountability.

The importance of "Business Ethics" and "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)" lies in their influence on organizational success and sustainable development, tied to the moral culture of firms. Ethical management of company portfolios and clear social responsibility boundaries are essential for legitimacy among business partners. A strong moral foundation supports the economic, legal, ethical, and altruistic aspects of CSR, enhancing

services for both businesses and society. Legal enforcement of CSR is vital for effectively balancing the needs of firms and society, necessitating ongoing ethical standards and inclusive relationships.

The livestock sector is poised to gain from corporate social responsibility and ethical business practices. The management of livestock resources, product value creation, market transactions involving livestock and livestock products, engagement with farmers and traders, and addressing consumer touchpoints are optimally accomplished through established standards of conduct that direct corporate decision-making and interactions with customers, stakeholders, and society at large. The essence of the two concepts is the consistent application of morality to ensure fairness, accountability, and conduct that respects the rights and dignity of both service providers and recipients.

Literature Review

Business Ethics in Corporate Establishments

Business ethics, contents and principles

All enterprises must adopt corporate ethical governance by refining business processes and decision-making (Waddock et al.,

2002). It is argued in Smith and Anderson and Cavanagh (2000) that corporations should promote ethics beyond stakeholder interests for the benefit of both businesses and society, improving workforce choices and overall objectives. It is also stated in Carroll (2001) that business ethics enhance decision-making and ensure justice and welfare. This assertion is in line with the findings in Auger et al. (2008) that emphasise the behaviour of stakeholders who prefer firms that avoid risky practices that could harm society. McWilliams and Siegel's (2001) study underscores the fact that proactive frameworks are needed as ethics go beyond legal requirements. This is further in line with an earlier publication by Carroll (2001) that argues that managers should develop compliant and ethical business strategies to achieve success with society's interests factored into the business models.

Importance of business ethics to corporations and society

Corporations, viewed as "artificial persons," share rights and obligations similar to individuals, necessitating an ethical and legal scrutiny of their actions. The relationship between business ethics and administration underscores laws that advocate for sustainable development and the "Triple bottom line." Bakan (2004) argues that legal frameworks can encourage self-serving behavior in companies, making ethical codes critical in preventing misconduct.

A robust corporate culture can significantly influence ethical decision-making, though some innovations may harm societal welfare (Fisman, 2007; Waddock et al., 2002). Ethical theories advocate for responsible corporate behavior that balances corporate and societal interests. Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland in October 1987 in "Our Common Future" report presented to the United Nations asserted that ethically managed businesses better fulfill stakeholder needs and manage risks without compromising corporate intent or societal welfare.

Role of stakeholders in business ethics advocacy

In the context of corporate social responsibility, businesses are encouraged to address a wider array of stakeholders beyond commercial interests. Effective decision-making can reduce ethical violations, as asserted by (Waddock, 2006). Mapping stakeholder interests contributes to organizational sustainability. The globalization of the 21st century highlights the complexities of ethical considerations due to varying stakeholder biases. Human Resources (HR) is pivotal in enhancing employee motivation and retention through ethical practices, which in turn can improve corporate performance and Singer (2000) emphasizes that a solid ethics framework fosters employee engagement, thereby mitigating issues like corruption for purposes of supporting firms' profitability and ethical reputation.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Legal Enforcement

Companies are driven by self-interest, such as maximizing sales and managing brand reputation (Reinhardt, Yao, & Egawa, 2006). The interplay between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility shapes corporate legal and moral obligations, influencing how they fulfill service charters (Porter & Kramen, 2006). Achieving moral purpose involves effective targeting, resource distribution, protecting capital, and accepting responsibilities for corporate actions' impacts.

Stakeholders' empowerment and participation in businesses

Stakeholder theory according to Freeman (2001) emphasizes that organizations should consider interests beyond just their stakeholders. This dictate aligns with Anderson and Cavanagh (2000) assertion on the importance of societal welfare over profits and governments and local communities have legitimate interests in corporate decisions. The legal enforcement of corporate social responsibility is postulated to foster equal engagement among partners and benefits to society. Additionally, organizational diversity influences behavior and interactions with stakeholders, complicating the ethical landscape. The Triple Bottom Line approach promotes inclusivity in CSR, suggesting that without regulatory guidance, stakeholder diversity may overshadow corporate societal responsibilities.

Strengthening corporations' business agenda and objectivity

Corporate Social Responsibility is closely linked to public policy and legal systems, yet companies often struggle to meet their goals due to conflicts between self-interest and societal concerns (Boatright, 1999). Legal enforcement of CSR is proposed to mitigate misunderstandings and biases in CSR planning and execution (Welford, 2006) and incorporating legal processes into CSR can enhance corporate agendas and operations, as well as competitive advantages.

CSR legal enforcement not only drives companies to meet stakeholder obligations but also protects brand integrity and supports capitalism (Reinhardt, Yao, and Egawa, 2006). Furthermore, CSR is seen as a vehicle for addressing customer pain points, creating job opportunities, establishing supplier markets, sharing profits with society, and fulfilling tax obligations (Anno and Pjero, 2021), ultimately aiming for morally effective outcomes through competitive and unique products.

Business appraisals and legal performance management

Governments have improved the regulation and issuance of licenses for firms, ensuring legal backing as emphasized by Porter and Kramen (2006) for market independence and fair competition. highlight this as key for securing market niches. Flores (2011) argues that consistent enforcement of corporate social responsibility laws is crucial for guiding entrepreneurial behavior towards societal benefits. However, there is a risk of misalignment between a corporation's image and its actions, necessitating stakeholder scrutiny. Welford (2006) suggests that legally enforced morality can enhance the effectiveness of CSR by balancing corporate and societal responsibilities. The importance of including diverse stakeholder demands in CSR policies to achieve broader social benefits, aligning with the objectives of both firms and society is noted in Waddock (2004).

Business malpractices (amoral & immoral) and risk management

In cases where corporations face legal issues due to business discrepancies, they often resort to cover-up strategies, including policy changes and corrupt deals. The law must enhance accountability and transparency, aligning with the concept of factor sparsity, and mandate socio-economic and environmental assessments prior to business decisions (Reinhardt, Yao, and Egawa, 2006). By ensuring corporate social responsibility (CSR) complies with legal frameworks, businesses can better address societal issues, which lowers associated repercussions. Legal enforcement of CSR not only aids in streamlining corporate

practices but also mitigates unethical behavior, supports responsible decision-making, and reduces risks of corruption, benefiting both corporations and society (Singer, 2000; Anno et al., 2025).

Rewarding corporations’ and society’s labour force

Labour plays a crucial role in production, necessitating the influence of ethics and legislation to ensure meaningful and sustainable employment. Carroll (2001) emphasize that business labour laws are vital for strategic labour and business operations. Implementing labour standards can protect against stakeholder biases jeopardizing corporate objectives and societal benefits, linking to corporate social responsibility. However, legal actions within CSR often reveal stakeholder inequalities, influenced by the size of organizations and social dynamics. The Marxist perspective suggests that legal enforcement in CSR can create an uneven landscape between different classes, where altruistic CSR measures may benefit the wealthy, and corporate motives can hinder compliance without regulations.

Business competition management and gender integration

Porter and Kramen (2006) argue that legally enforcing corporate social responsibility enhances capitalism and protects the rights of all market participants, especially in the context of competition and cartels. By regulating CSR, environmental

exploitation can be limited, and sustainability measures can be implemented to restore affected ecosystems. Sustainable development is thus crucial for companies, emphasizing the "Triple bottom-line" of social, economic, and environmental responsibility. Legal CSR enforcement supports gender integration in business by safeguarding the roles and interests of men and women within corporations. This is particularly important given the historical marginalization of women in the workforce, as highlighted in Waddock et al. (2002) and Welford (2007) making CSR inclusion to be morally and economically beneficial for corporate practices.

Legality and duty of corporations on development

The implementation of legal frameworks governing corporate social responsibility is essential for maintaining order and consistency in corporate operations, ensuring satisfaction within society (McWilliams and Siegal, 2001). Laws and policies serve as a moral obligation for corporations, complemented by performance and impact measurements. Elkington (1998) notes that organizations should align their vision with societal goals, and civil rights advocacy enhances accountability for CSR. Thus, consistent legal enforcement of CSR guidelines is crucial. The diagram below presents a CSR pyramid where profitability is the foundation achieved through obedience to the law and ethical and corporate practices.



Methodology

The research on the integration of business ethics and corporate social responsibility within livestock markets in Turkana County and adjacent cross-border markets in Uganda and South Sudan was executed in 9 markets of varying classifications: 3 primary markets (Kerio, Kalokol, and Katilu), 3 secondary markets (Lokichar, Lodwar, and Kakuma), and 3 cross-border livestock markets (Nakiloro, Kotido, and Nadapal). 171 research participants were statistically sampled, representing 86 percent, 85 percent, and 88 percent of the internal primary, internal secondary, and cross-border markets, respectively. 98 percent of study participants provided responses to the survey.

This indicates that the acquired data was indicative of the markets and livestock production regions it represents. Statistical sampling was utilised to choose study samples from each category of merchants, as demonstrated in the table below:

Table 1: Statistical Sampling framework

Trader category	Confidence level	Margin of error	Population proportion	Sampling frame	Sample
Internal Primary markets	95%	5%	50	70	60
Internal secondary markets	95%	5%	50	68	58
Cross border markets	95%	5%	50	60	53
				Total sample	171

Results and Discussion

1 Experience of Livestock Markets on Business Ethics and CSR

The components of business ethics and corporate social responsibility were evaluated within the framework of livestock markets in Turkana County and adjacent cross border markets in Uganda and South Sudan. The subsequent outcomes are as follows.

Altruistic responsibility

The concept of altruism in business focuses on prioritising the welfare of employees, customers, and the community over profit. In Kenya's pastoral regions, the study established that communalism benefits livestock farmers and traders, although egocentrism and favouritism create a competitive culture that undermines welfare objectives. This is equally similar to cross-border markets, where pastoral communities' entrepreneurs exhibit similar characteristics. However, in displacement settings such as refugee-hosting areas like Kakuma, livestock markets showcase refugees' economic contributions, with butcheries and cafes emerging as primary businesses best capitalised by refugees.

The livestock business model promotes collective prosperity and socio-economic benefits among entrepreneurs, especially in Turkana County, which has enhanced revenue collection. The industry involving live animal trading, slaughterhouses, and butcheries creates employment through market yards and meat eateries. A culture of loyalty among employees, averaging six years with employers, boosts client retention, and compliance with public health regulations enhances sustainability in markets. Livestock enterprises demonstrating altruism through environmental and social policies gain long-term sustainability and competitive advantages over profit-driven competitors.

The responsibility to act ethically

The study noted effective leadership structures in some market segments, particularly secondary markets, but highlights a lack of effective leadership in primary and itinerant markets, impeding mentoring and conflict resolution efforts and leading to unstable management committees. While market leadership shows a strong sense of accountability, challenges like high illiteracy and dependency on external funding have resulted in asset neglect. The conclusion stresses that improving accountability necessitates integrity in cultivating ethical behaviour, trust, and reliability among livestock market actors.

High respect in the livestock market is overshadowed by competition from new entrants, leading to pricing conflicts. Low-capital traders often become suppliers of high-capital traders, resulting in reduced profit margins. The study emphasises that to enhance market relationships and respect, ethical conduct, effective administration, and dignity are essential, and engaging all stakeholders in strategic planning is crucial for market stability and equitable benefits.

The study underscores the need for integrity and structured information sharing to boost trader performance and accountability, especially in secondary markets. However, the underuse of reporting tools hampers accountability, while challenges persist in key ethical traits like transparency and communication. Furthermore, employee compensation is low, given the amount of work they do in livestock marketing

administration, their high cost of living, and the multitude of risks and uncertainties they face.

All livestock markets in Turkana foster compassion through fair livestock trading, aiding herders and ensuring meat supply, although price disparities exist between itinerant and secondary markets. The livestock marketing management committee's goal to improve livestock trade faces challenges due to ineffective waste disposal in many markets and slaughterhouses, which endangers local ecosystems. The untapped value of by-products like manure and hides is hindered by poor processing, leading to environmental concerns and economic losses, and current hygiene standards are inadequate for ensuring environmental safety. The study suggests incorporating environmental management into market operations, highlighting the need for employee training and strict adherence to operating procedures.

Legal responsibility

The registration of all primary and secondary livestock markets in Turkana highlights ethical leadership and compliance with legal requirements. These markets aim to operate legally, which promotes ethical business practices that meet regulatory standards. The Turkana Livestock Marketing Council (CLMC), along with the county departments of livestock production, trade, and cooperatives, is enhancing understanding of market and traders' obligations regarding legal compliance and necessary procedures.

The Turkana Livestock Saleyard and Marketing Act 2021 is a significant legal framework aimed at improving livestock marketing management in the county. It allows livestock sales in approved markets and farm gate sales in the absence of markets; mandates livestock trading in designated facilities; and assigns the registration of market associations to cooperatives and community-based organisations approved by a national agency. Additionally, the county government is responsible for developing guidelines for the operation of these associations.

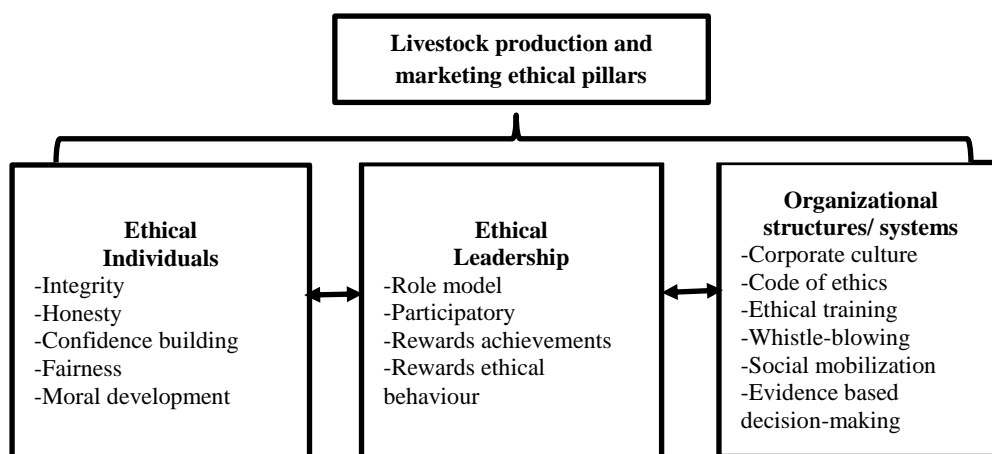
The Act allows livestock marketing associations to engage in public-private partnerships for a set duration and permits unincorporated livestock market groups to provide market maintenance services via community participation. Users of livestock market facilities must adhere to laws regarding animal health, veterinary public health, and animal welfare to ensure access for authorised enforcement personnel. Guidelines will be created to promote fair trade in market practices and facilitate access to market information. Additionally, reporting on livestock trading quantities, disease surveillance, and pricing trends will inform stakeholders about important market activities.

Economic responsibility

The livestock markets in Turkana facilitate the trade of high-quality animals, boosting local traders' competitiveness. Key factors for trading improvements include effective market mechanisms, competitive pricing, and a robust cash economy. The study proposes strategies to attract clients, tackle business challenges, and utilise feedback while assessing competitors' successes. To secure essential resources such as technology and advisors, the study suggests the establishment of a transparent revenue model with effective pricing strategies. A plan for acquiring initial capital from investors or personal savings is necessary. Generating initial sales through a minimum viable

product strategy, along with outsourcing and automation to enhance efficiency, will help remove non-value-added processes,

thus improving competitiveness and profitability, potentially supported by mentorship.



Conclusion

Business ethics and corporate social responsibility are vital for aligning corporate goals with societal needs and environmental sustainability. They reinforce ethical obligations, accountability, and transparency, crucial for protecting social, economic, and environmental facets of business. Companies should innovate for societal welfare while maintaining their agendas. Legal enforcement of CSR can improve business practices, encourage compliance, enhance stakeholder engagement, and promote ethical standards and accountability.

Businesses and society are urged to collaborate to tackle inequity through pragmatic solutions rooted in established ideals. Enhancing production efficiency involves systematic management, reducing crony capitalism, optimising stakeholder trade-offs, enforcing corporate social responsibility standards, and effectively motivating human resources. Main objectives include fostering an equitable environment for stakeholders, producing in-demand goods, regulating market dynamics, promoting gender inclusivity, and upholding the rule of law, highlighting the significance of CSR for both society and corporations.

The lack of governmental enforcement of corporate social responsibility, especially in South Sudan livestock marketing contexts, adversely affects corporate-society connections and economic outcomes, leading to negative public perception, lower visibility, and decreased employee motivation. This, in turn, harms performance and productivity while undermining firms' legitimacy and investment opportunities. Reduced community involvement can raise operational costs, and ineffective CSR initiatives result in fewer partnerships and lower revenue, negatively impacting workplace culture, innovation, and professionalism. Therefore, integrating ethical and CSR principles in livestock industry businesses is essential for developing sustainable and ethically responsible livestock-based enterprises.

Recommendations for Application

- Business ethics and corporate social responsibility are essential for aligning corporate objectives with societal and environmental needs, emphasising accountability and transparency. They encourage corporations to improve ethical standards and stakeholder engagement. However, the lack of legal enforcement may harm

corporate legitimacy, public perception, employee morale, and community participation.

- Ineffective CSR can also lead to reduced corporate partnerships and innovation. Therefore, integrating legal principles into business operations is necessary for promoting effective and sustainable practices in the livestock sector.
- Altruism in business emphasises prioritising stakeholder welfare over profit, fostering a balance between social responsibility and financial viability, particularly in Kenya's pastoral regions. While livestock markets benefit various farmers, challenges like egocentrism hinder resource distribution. This malpractice needs to be abolished in livestock business establishments.
- In refugee areas like Kakuma, refugees participate in livestock markets despite restrictions, leading to operations like butcheries and meat eateries. This inclusive model supports socio-economic growth, job creation, loyalty, and client retention, while adherence to health regulations ensures sustainability and competitive advantages in the livestock sector.
- The study addresses ethical issues in livestock markets, emphasising leadership and accountability. It notes insufficient information on effective leadership, leading to poor management practices. Despite leaders' commitment to trader livelihoods, challenges such as high illiteracy rates and dependency on external funding impede responsible management. Literacy programmes in dryland areas and traders are key in increasing information and competitiveness in local markets.
- Respect exists among traders in homogeneous groups, but competition from new entrants causes conflicts that impact pricing and market relationships. Integrity and transparency are vital for ethical practices, although problems persist regarding financial information access and employee compensation. This is well addressed through efficient financial literacy and inclusion programmes.
- Environmental issues, particularly poor waste disposal, underline the need for integrating environmental management to enhance outcomes and protect livestock trading ecosystems. Every market infrastructure should

be fitted with a robust and efficient waste management system, coupled with waste recycling operations.

- The registration of primary and secondary livestock markets in Turkana reflects ethical leadership and legal compliance, supported by the Turkana County Livestock Marketing Council (CLMC) and the county government department of livestock production. Registration of markets should include all primary and itinerant markets as well as points for meat value chain consumption.
- The Turkana Livestock Saleyard and Marketing Act 2021 aims to enhance livestock market management by regulating sales in approved markets and establishing livestock association guidelines. It promotes public-private partnerships and mandates adherence to animal health and welfare laws while improving livestock trading and reporting to facilitate fair trade practices. Ratification of the act into law will strengthen compliance on matters of livestock marketing and public health.
- Turkana's livestock markets focus on trading organically produced animals, giving local traders a competitive advantage. However, the study area is known for many livestock diseases which are not often treated due to pastoral lifestyles which include frequent mobility and inhabitation of most peripheral and hard-to-reach areas. Managing livestock diseases is important for credibility and traceability of livestock products and public health guarantees. Every livestock market should advocate for herders' consistencies in accessing livestock health services and every market becoming a disease surveillance point.
- Effective trading relies on competitive pricing and a robust cash economy. Strategies for attracting clients, competitor analysis, and feedback collection are essential for improving market practices. Also, continuous evaluation of successes and failures in markets is vital. The strategic recommendations in addressing the most common livestock marketing challenges include securing enough financial resources, establishing revenue models, generating initial sales via a minimum viable product, and utilising mentorship to discern high- and low-value tasks for enhanced efficiency and profitability.

Areas for Future Research

Business ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility are critical domains for further investigation, particularly with their implementation in livestock industry advancements in dry locations. The insights will enhance understanding of strategies for organisations to achieve profitability, competitiveness, and sustainability while balancing corporate and societal objectives.

Disclaimer

- The views stated in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of any of the entities mentioned.

Interest Conflicts

- The author declares no conflict of interest whatsoever in this publication.

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