

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF PERCEPTION OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN ETHICAL VALUES

Prof. Rupali Jadhav

Adsul Technical Campus, Faculty of Management, Chass, Ahmednagar, India.

Abstract

The rationale of education is not only to impart knowledge or enhance skills or provide academic inputs but also to inculcate ethical values. It is important to understand and recognize the essential moral / ethical values present, especially in the behavior we reinforce and the virtues we promote every day. By ignoring the moral / ethical contents educators may shirk with their responsibility. The purpose of this research is to examine the MBA students' perception on ethical values. A survey through questionnaire was administered to the students of MBA.

The purpose of this research is to examine the MBA students' perception of ethics using four factors: (1) the importance of ethics; (2) student's attitude towards cheating; (3) the impact of education and faculty on ethics; (4) the ethical campus environment. A survey through questionnaire was distributed to students of ATC Campus, faculty of MBA, Chass, Ahmednagar. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that students admitted ethics is very important to them and that they hold themselves to the same ethical standards that they hold others to. Students' attitude towards cheating is measured by their perception of cheating in high schools and colleges. Students tend to cheat less in colleges than high schools. Students also stated that they do not feel compelled to report cheaters to the proper authority. Further, such students' perceive ethics education, and those who teach it, to be relevant and beneficial in shaping their own ethical behaviors. Finally, college students believe that they are living in an ethical campus environment where their faculty members are mostly ethical in nature and that it is never too late to learn about ethics. The study was a result of today's need for ethical behaviors in education and evaluation. Here author has focused on finding the relationships between ethics and MBA examinations and found that business ethics subject has to be included in their curriculum.

Keywords- business ethics, perception of ethics, institution ethics, unethical behavior, student ethics, attitude

INTRODUCTION

There has been a series of scams involving the Indian companies exposing the unholy unethical practices and poor corporate governance that have tarnished the corporate ethical codes. More and more businesses are now conscious of ethical practices and hence expect their employees to maintain high ethical standards at all times. Management students who go into the job market have fresh knowledge in their specialization and potent interpersonal skills. In this light learning how the students perceive ethics and its practice can be crucial for employers. Employers can gain an insight into how management students perceive an ethical activity or an unethical one. Firms can determine how the students will make ethical business decisions when faced with moral dilemmas. Firms in India are beginning to place the ability of making ethical decisions in the real world an important requirement for the new recruits. A number of b-schools teach and stimulate ethics sense, ethical accountability, and corporate social responsibility through classroom discussions, institutional best practices, and research.

The emergence of ethics education now focuses on whether it influences ethical behavior. If businesses have become corrupt in practice, then it seems pertinent that ethics education is inculcated into the college curriculum. The challenging aspect to this is to find out whether the students would perceive this education as beneficial. And, whether it would affect the behaviors in the future. The business community needs concrete ethical thinkers in its newly hired management students, and that is why it is all the more important to conduct a research that explores the impact of ethics education on students' values and reliability. A survey questionnaire was developed and administered to students enrolled at the ATC Campus, faculty of MBA, Chass, Ahmednagar. The survey was administered to a select number of students but was responded to by those who chose to participate.

CONCEPT OF ETHICS

Ethics are our basic beliefs, and they come into play constantly. The concept of ethics involves standards of conduct.

These standards help to distinguish between behavior that is considered right and that which is considered wrong. It may be broadly defined as that division of philosophy which deals with questions concerning the nature of value in matters of human conduct. The definition entails two things; first, it refers to well based standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues. Secondly, it refers to the study and development of one's ethical standards. In other words, ethics are standards or rules you set for yourself that you use to guide your efforts do what is right and wrong, or what you should do. For example, if a friend asks you to copy your homework, you must choose whether or not you will tell the teacher. Whenever you have to make a decision where your actions will impact someone else, you face an ethical dilemma. The decision is ethical because you must decide what your obligation is (especially when another person is involved), and it's a dilemma because there is more than one option to choose from. A decision you make is ethical when you choose to do the right thing.

Ethics seeks to address questions such as how a moral outcome can be achieved in a specific situation (www.iimahd.ernet.in). The American Guru of Modern Management Peter F Drucker states that "business professionals should abide by "Principle of non-malfeasance". i.e. resist from doing wrong doings or illegal acts.

APPLICATION OF ETHICS

Discussion of ethics have a tendency to be more centered on moral values with a greater focus on the application or outcomes of adherence to such moral value systems (Buckeridge, 2002). Understanding, acceptance, and application of ethics are important to individuals and groups because they permit for success and productivity. It also allow for confidence, community and innovation. Employee morale is another positive result of understanding, acceptance, and application of ethics. This can lead to pride in work, and a group mentality. These effects are important in any group situation, and the effective application of ethics will lead individuals and group to be more prolific and efficient.

True education should, therefore, also provide for the skill for application and enable development of the traits, which foster its future growth. The ethical component of education caters to this need. It is in the different ethical values of the knowledge makers that

we find the cause for the difference in their contribution, even though they are equipped with the same level of knowledge.

ETHICS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

It is vital for business in general—and management education students in particular—to understand the symbiotic relationship between business and society, especially in terms of the moral dimensions of the power placed in the hands of owners and managers. The actions of business leaders have an effect on not only themselves, but customers, employees, investors, suppliers, governments, citizens, and communities. Moreover, abuse of dependency by corporations undermines trust in business and in the markets needed to ensure commercial success. A society where those holding power are neither moral nor accountable creates a state where the strong do what they will and the weak what they must. In short, the power of business must be exercised so that it does not punish or exploit those who are dependent on its largesse or vulnerable to its demands. Business must faithfully exercise its responsibility in the use of power. Business schools are addressing these societal responsibilities in many ways. In many instances, conventional, functional-area MBA courses are overlaid with courses that explore the relationships between businesses, managerial decision-making, and leadership in the context of the societies wherein the businesses exist. Students regularly face and analyze complex dilemmas in global, social, political, ecological, and ethical contexts in business. Students often participate in projects that involve them in the realities and vagaries of real business environments. These exercises help them to understand how business decisions affect groups, organizations, and societies. By developing a perspective on the shared or common good, these programs challenge leaders to balance the impact of decisions and actions on themselves, their organizations, and societies. Besides, ethics being made a part of course curriculum in business education; students' are usually taught numerous frameworks for improving their ethical decision-making skills. Students are encouraged to consider multiple stakeholders and to assess and appraise using different lenses and enlarged perspectives. In some environments, new frameworks—with new names—combine these precepts in different ways. Regardless of the terminology or particular features, the inner purpose behind understanding and applying these frameworks lies in giving students the tools they

need to identify and think through ethical issues. Above all, they learn what questions should be asked—of them and others—and what factors need to be considered in their decision-making. Learning experiences should expose students to cases and types of ethical issues that they are likely to face in the business world

A SET OF TWENTY-EIGHT ETHICAL VALUES

1. *Creativity*: It is a phenomenon whereby something new and somehow valuable is formed.

2. *Respect*: It is a feeling of admiration or deference toward a person, child, non-human animal, group, ideal, or indeed almost any entity or concept, as well as specific actions and conduct representative of that esteem.

3. *a. Attentiveness*: The trait of being considerate and thoughtful of others

b. Kindness: The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate

4. *Self-motivation*: Ability to do what needs to be done, without influence from other people or situations.

5. *a. Self-discipline*: The ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses

b. Temperance: Moderation in action, thought, or feeling : restraint

6. *Responsibility*: The state or fact of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for something within one's power, control, or management

7. *a. Fulfillment*: The achievement of something desired, promised, or predicted

b. Diligence: Is an investigation of a business or person prior to signing a contract, or an act with a certain standard of care.

8. *Honesty*: The quality or fact of being honest; uprightness and fairness

9. *Humor*: Is the tendency of particular cognitive experiences to provoke laughter and provide amusement.

10. *Service*: The action of helping or doing work for someone

11. *Integrity*: Is the qualifications of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

12. *a. Vision*: The ability to think about or plan the future with imagination or wisdom

b. Objectivity: Striving to reduce or eliminate biases, prejudices, or subjective evaluations by relying on verifiable data.

13. *Patience*: Waiting or enduring without complaint.

14. *a. Perseverance*: Is the state of endurance under difficult circumstances, which can mean persevering in the face of delay or provocation without acting on negative annoyance/anger; or exhibiting forbearance when under strain, especially when faced with longer-term difficulties

b. Hard worker: Doing your best and not stopping until you are finished even when your work is not very fun.

15. *Humility*: Is the quality of being humble.

16. *Communication*: Engaging in genuine dialogue.

17. *Fairness*: Is the quality of being reasonable, right, and just.

18. *Generosity*: Unselfish willingness to give or share.

19. *Comprehension*: The ability to understand completely and be familiar with a situation, facts

20. *Courage*: Attitude of facing what is difficult, painful, or dangerous in a brave manner.

21. *Tolerance*: Accepting that which one may not especially like.

22. *a. Knowledge*: Facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject

b. Learning: The acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught

23. *Enthusiasm*: A feeling of energetic interest in a particular subject or activity and an eagerness to be involved in it

24. *a. Forgiveness*: To give up resentment against and stop being angry with someone in order to pardon or release one for an offense.

b. Compassion: Demonstrating an active concern for the well-being of others.

25. *Love*: Is a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes that ranges from interpersonal affection to pleasure.

26. *Decision making*: The cognitive process resulting in the selection of a belief or a course of action among several alternative possibilities.

27. *a. Gratitude*: The state of being grateful

b. Appreciation: A feeling or expression of admiration, approval, or gratitude

28. *a. Friendship*: Is a relationship of mutual affection between people.

b. Unity: Is being together or at one with someone or something.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out with the objective of understanding the student's notion and perception

about ethics. The survey was administered to students of ATC Campus, Faculty Of Management, Chass ,Ahmednagar.. The analysis was expected to provide valuable insight into the students' perception of ethics across varying factors. The ratio between males and females in the sample was very similar (Male, 48.48%, Female, 51.52%). The average age is about 22-25 years. Under convenience sampling 40 students were administered the survey questionnaire.

This is descriptive type of study, with inclusion of primary and secondary data, frequency distribution was used to study the replies and data was analyzed by using cross tabulation.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

After the questionnaires were administered, useful data were collected, organized, summarized, and meaningful analysis was made of the sample population. The results are presented in Table-1 & 2. The following paragraphs with reference to ethics will describe the analysis based on four factors of relevance of ethics, cheating, education and faculty, and campus environment.

1. Importance of Ethics

Homann (1996) predicted that students of today would be leaders of the future. This belief is even more accurate when referring to college students. Thus, its important to measure how students perceived the importance of ethics in their lives. The two items under this factor yielded a high rate of acceptance, that is, in “Ethics is important to me”, and “I hold myself and others to the same ethical standards”. This overwhelming confidence in their own ethical standards is evident by the very high percentage on the two statements: 90% and 87.5% (Table – 2) respectively. On the contrary, 10% of the participants were either “not sure” or preferred to remain neutral. Hence, students do believe that ethics is important to them.

Table 1 Ethics Factors (as per sample)

Sample Size: 120 students of ATC	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1 Importance of Ethics			
Ethics is important to me.	36	0	4
I hold myself and others to the same ethical standards.	35	1	4
2 Attitude Towards Cheating			
I have never cheated on my school work while in high school.	15	18	7
I have never cheated on my work while at college or in this institute.	29	6	5
When I see other students cheat, I feel compelled to report to the authorities.	9	31	0
3 Education and Faculty Impact on Ethics			
Education should play a crucial role in teaching students about ethics.	29	3	8
Faculties help students develop values in their classes.	24	10	6
Faculties incorporate ethics training into their classes.	17	15	8
Faculty should enforce ethical standards on their students.	16	18	6
4 Ethical Campus Environment			
I don't think students abide by the Institute's ethics and discipline code.	10	14	16
I consider the faculty to be ethical human beings.	33	2	5
By the time people reach the age of going to college it's too late to teach ethics.	4	29	7

Table -2- percentage of replies

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1 Importance of Ethics			
Ethics is important to me.	90%	0	10%
I hold myself and others to the same ethical standards.	87.5%	2.5%	10%
2 Attitude Towards Cheating			
I have never cheated on my school work while in high school.	37.5%	45%	17.5%
I have never cheated on my work while at college or in this institute.	72.5%	15%	12.5%
When I see other students cheat, I feel compelled to report to the authorities.	22.5%	77.5%	0
3 Education and Faculty Impact on Ethics			
Education should play a crucial role in teaching students about ethics.	72.5%	7.5%	20%
Faculties help students develop values in their classes.	60%	25%	15%
Faculties incorporate ethics training into their classes.	42.5%	37.5%	20%
Faculty should enforce ethical standards on their students.	40%	45%	15%
4 Ethical Campus Environment			
I don't think students abide by the Institute's ethics and discipline code.	25%	35%	40%
I consider the faculty to be ethical human beings.	80%	5%	15%
By the time people reach the age of going to college it's too late to teach ethics.	10%	72.5	17.5%

2. Attitude towards Cheating

Bloodgood, et al. (2010) examined students' perceptions based on academic and passive cheating to determine whether ethics education could change their tolerance of cheating. Table – 2 highlights that although 45.% of the participants admitted that they have cheated in high schools, only 15% admitted that they cheated in colleges. Similarly, 37.5% of the respondents claimed that they have never cheated in high schools, while large number (77.5%) of respondents claimed

that they have never cheated in colleges and in this institute. It is observed that, while many students agreed that it is okay to cheat in high schools, they did not feel the same about cheating in higher education institutions. We can infer from this that students to a great extent do not believe in cheating in higher education institutions and that their perceptions have changed with the transition from schools to colleges. There are many reasons to support this finding. In summary, students consider that there is more cheating going on in high schools than in higher education institutions. However, they are unwilling to report cheaters to the proper authority.

3. Education and Faculty Impact on Ethics

Respondents were asked to respond to ethics education in the item “Education should play a crucial role in teaching students about ethics”. This statement indicated that majority of the participants (72.5%) agree with the same, as opposed to 7.5% who disagreed that looked more like challenging the claim and 20% who had no opinion on this topic. The other three items solicited respondents' attitudes towards faculty's ability to help students develop values in their classes, to incorporate ethics training into their classes, and whether or not they enforce ethical

standards onto their students. All three items relate to a higher percentage of the participants agreeing with the items, that is, 60%, 42.5%, and 40%, respectively. Less than 21% of them are “not sure” about the faculty involvement in their ethical training. The four items in the above factor clearly show that college education and faculty do play an important role in forming the students' ethical behaviors. All these results are shown in Table-2 above.

4. Ethical Campus Environment

Desplaces, Beauvais, Melchar, and Bosco (2007), found that codes of ethics and how students perceived these codes can affect how they perceive the overall ethical culture of the institution. The institution should facilitate students to become contributing member of the society by providing knowledge, skills and character development opportunities. It is clear from Table-2 that a large proportion of the respondents (80%) considered the faculty members to be ethical human beings. In contrast, only 5% of the participants disagreed with this statement and 15% were not clear about what they wanted to believe on this issue. On the statement “by the time people reach the age of going to college it is too late to teach ethics”, 72.5% of the sample population believed that it is “not too late” to teach college students about ethics. On the other hand, a small percentage, 10% said “agree” while 17.5% said “not sure” although it would indicate that they chose to remain neutral on this issue. However, when participants were asked if they think that their peers abide by the Institute's ethics and discipline code, 35% of the respondent students believed that their peers abided, while 25% of them agree to otherwise. It is interesting to know that students perceive their faculty members to be mostly ethical in nature. Students also believe it is never too late to learn about ethics, and yet they are hesitant to accept that their peers are honest human beings.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to determine the PG students' perception of ethics using four factors. These four factors are: (1) the importance of ethics; (2) students' attitude towards cheating; (3) the impact of education and faculty on ethics; and (4) the ethical campus environment.

The findings in this study presented several practical implications for both the academic and professional worlds. Under the first factor, it addressed the students' perception of the importance of ethics. Majority of the respondents reported that ethics is important to them

and that they hold themselves and others to the same ethical standards.

The students' attitude towards cheating is measured by their perception of cheating in high schools and colleges (or higher educational institutions). This research study indicated that students tend to cheat less in colleges than in high schools. In contrast, students also stated that they do not feel compelled to report cheaters to the proper authority.

In the third factor, respondents were asked if their college education and their faculty members have any influence on their ethical behaviors. This research provided evidence to conclude that faculty influence can be exerted through their ability to help students develop values in their classes, to incorporate ethics training into their classes, and to enforce ethical standards onto their students. By teaching ethics in college classrooms, students are introspective and more ready to learn about the realistic consequences of their actions. Knowing that education and faculty play an important role in educating young people, it is therefore, essential for academicians to be ethical themselves before they can raise ethical future leaders. Finally, the last factor investigated the ethical environment on campus. Students, in general, seem to think that their faculty members are ethical human beings. That, it is never too late to learn about ethics in higher education institutions. This is indeed good news for companies visiting institutes for campus placements. As per the study, it would be erroneous to believe that students' fresh out of college would be having an inferior ethical nature and awareness. The businesses in a wider spectrum are not necessarily filled with corrupt and decadent people. Rather, higher education and students' understanding of ethics are probably shaping future ethical decision makers and effective business leaders.

Ethical component of education to equip the future generations to meet the growing challenges is the only effective answer. All education must, therefore, be ethics oriented to equip the future nation builders for the performance of their task. The real purpose of education must be fulfilled. Ultimately, making good, ethical and morally sound decisions would make a positive contribution to the overall operation of the student's future workplace and profession.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bloodgood, J., Turnley, W., and Mudrack, P. (2010). Ethics Instruction and the Perceived Acceptability of Cheating. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 95(1), pp. 23-37.

- [2] Buckeridge, J. S. (2002). *Ethics and the Professional. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology*
- [3] Desplaces, D., Beauvais, L., Melchar, D. and Bosco, S. (2007), "The Impact of Business Education on Moral Judgement Competence: An Empirical Study", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 74(1), pp.73-87.
- [4] "Ethics and Values : The need for student Awareness of Workplace Value Systems", Discussion Paper, <http://www.waceinc.org/philly2011>
- [5] Homann, M. (1996). *A multiple-case study examining ethics teaching and learning models in baccalaureate nursing education programs*. Ed.D. Eastern Michigan
- [6] John A. Battle, Th.D., "Theology 5: Apologetics and Ethics", Chapter – 7 – Application of Ethics, Western Reformed Seminary, www.wrs.edu.
- [7] Johnson Steve (2010), " An Education in Ethics", Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics, Santa Clara University, Silicon Valley, www.scu.edu
- [8] Mercader Victor (2006), "Study of the Ethical Values of College Students", Dissertation submitted to University of South Florida.
- [9] Pabla M.S (2011)., "The Corrosion of Ethics in Higher Education : A Challenge of 21st century", *International Journal of Management and Business Studies*, Vol.1, Issue 2, June;2011, pp. 44-48.
- [10] Weegar Mary Anne (2007), "Promoting Ethical Practices within Institutions of Higher Education", *Proceedings of the 2007 Association for Business Communication Annual Convention*, National University.

Websites :

- 1- www.kunalpandya.com/blog
- 2- www.ugc.ac.in
- 3- www.aacsb.edu

ABOUT AUTHOR



Ms. Rupali Jadhav, BBA, MBA, presently working as an Asst. Professor with ATC Campus, Chass, Ahmednagar. She has total 5 years experience in academia and Looking after the entrepreneurial consultancy for her home business as an assistance to financial and administrative affairs for about 3 years. Her area of interest is Marketing Management, Human resource Mahangenet and business trends in related segments too".

Email id: rupali0804@gmail.com