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The Perceived Influence of Ethics Education in Business

Jessica Selensky

University of New Hampshire, Durham, jes2002@wildcats.unh.edu

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The Perceived Influence of Ethics Education in Business

Jessica Selensky

Advisor: Linda Ragland

Honors Thesis: Spring 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Ethics is “the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation” (Merriam-Webster, 2018, p.1).

How often are ethics being discussed in the classroom within the context of relevancy within the business world? This is an important question that needs to be considered as each year over a million students graduate from college with a bachelor’s degree. For the 2017-2018 academic year about 1.9 million people are going to graduate with a bachelor’s degree (NCES, 2017, p.1). As more students integrate into different companies, one can only hope that they have not only been taught the knowledge within their field of work but also the importance of ethics within the business industry. There have been many incidents throughout history where companies have failed, or their reputation destroyed by making unethical decisions. For example, in the Enron scandal in 2001, ethics were lost when billions of dollars in debt were hidden in failed deals and projects (Segal, 2018, p.1) As such this has led me to the question: “Is there a perceived benefit to teaching ethics within business schools? If so, would it be more beneficial if the training be integrated into current courses and/or set up as a separate course?”

This research question stems from the quest to better understand what factors contribute to business people making unethical decisions. Is it the pressure within industry, money, or simply lack of ethical education? Colleges prepare students to go into the working world to perform to the best of their ability. However, if ethics are not being discussed throughout that time, then students may not be able to apply it when they go into the workforce. Through this study, I survey current undergraduate and graduate students at the University of New Hampshire’s (UNH) Paul College of Business and Economics about their perceptions on ethical teaching within business schools and the business sector.

The main focus of the research is to advance discovery on the perceptions of current business students on the topic of ethics within the business world. As many students have had some exposure to working within the field or are planning on going into the business field, it is important to gage their opinions on the topic. For this study I conducted survey research. The survey was developed based on gaining a better understanding of students' perceptions on the impact ethics education may have on ethics in the business world. The main research questions that I used to assess my data collected were: (1) Do you think ethics should be taught in college? (2) What is your perception on the value of ethical training in the business school? (3) In your mind, do you think ethics taught in the business school would make a difference in your preparation for a future job? (4) In your mind, would it be more beneficial for ethics to be taught throughout various business courses or as a separate (stand-alone) course? Why? This study will provide educators with useful information on students' thoughts related to ethics education.

For this study I survey 73 students from the University of New Hampshire. After the survey was conducted, I used regression analysis to examine relationships between my four main research questions. Major findings show that students who have taken more courses that discussed ethics find an increased benefit of teaching ethics in the business school. In addition, that majority of the students believe that integrating ethics into current courses' curriculum would be beneficial for their future job. This research contributes to our knowledge on ethics in business school education by gaining current students' perspectives as well as the most effective method to do so. The remainder of the paper is as follows. In the next section, I will be discussing a Literature Review regarding the topic of ethics and ethics training in college. In the third section, I will be discussing Hypothesis Development. In the fourth section, I will be

discussing the Method of Study for the research. In the fifth section, I will finish with a Conclusion, followed by an Appendix and References.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I. Ethics

Ethics are the moral principles that guide one's decision making and/or behavior. Our ethics values develop over time based on the experiences we have as well as the environment we have grown up in. It is debated on what the definition of ethics even is because people will often have differing views on the meaning of ethics. An example of a definition of ethics is that ethics are an "inquiry into theories of what is good and evil and into what is right and wrong, and thus is inquiry into what we ought and ought not to do" (Tsalikis and Fritzsche, 2012, p. 696). In addition, another definition of ethics includes "the study of what constitutes good and bad human conduct, including related actions and values" (Tsalikis and Fritzsche, 2012, p. 696). However, despite the difference in views, we all face ethical dilemmas every day whether that is in regard to everyday life or a job. One thing in common with both of those definitions is there is a good and bad and/or a right or wrong decision within every ethical situation. Now, where do ethical values come from that lead us to making decisions in our daily life or work.

In terms of ethical values, typically, there are multiple steps that people go through when faced with difficult decisions. The first step is the ability to identify the moral nature of an issue. Once someone has realized that ethical judgment is being tested, a moral judgment must be made. Establishing moral intent is not always an easy process especially when temptations of money and power come into play. However, once the last step, engaging in moral action, is reached the outcome is more rewarding when making the correct, ethical decision.

II. Ethics Education

“In terms of where ethics come from, they come from society and the collective beliefs and values of its citizens. But, more specifically, ethics also come from those individuals willing to make difficult choices and think about big questions: good and bad, right and wrong” (The Arthur W. Page Center, 2018, p.1). Not everyone believes in ethics and has ethical values that guide them in their decision making. This leads to the question, can ethics be taught, or by the time students get to college are their ethical values already set in stone? Perceivably, it is important to teach ethics in business schools so that students can use the knowledge and apply it to future scenarios where ethical values are questioned within the business world. The final decision made will not only have a personal impact but an impact on others involved, whether that is directly or indirectly. The key is to figure out the best approach and setting that would be the most effective for ethics training in order for it to be retained.

It is perceived that students need to be exposed to post ethical situations where there was an ethical dilemma so that students can apply that to future situations. According to Nemours (2018), a non-profit children’s organization, they believe in Zig Ziglar’s quote: ‘Repetition is the mother of learning, the father of action, which makes it the architect of accomplishment’ (Nemours’ Reading BrightStart, 2018, p.1). Nemours references learning how to ride a bike, drive a car, or play a new sport and how that once you learn the essential skills, it is all about repetition and practice. This can be applied in teaching ethics as well, if students are consistently taught in various classes the importance of ethics, they will eventually learn and be able to apply that knowledge to their own experiences, in this case, specifically the business world.

From an educational perspective, it is important to know how to approach and then make ethical decisions because the final decision can have a significant impact on a company or

society as a whole. Ethical decisions have the ability to lead an organization to success or cause it to fail and lose credibility. Every decision that needs to be made has an ethical aspect to it and students need to be exposed to ethics and ethical training in order to be prepared for making these important decisions. Related, it is important for ethics to be taught in business courses so that future business professionals are able to differentiate good from bad decisions and how these decisions can impact a business as well as their personal reputation in the business world.

Specifically, in the accounting profession, it is important for accountants to stay impartial in terms of their work and business relationships. Perceivably, ethics should be taught through the integration of college courses because it provides essential preparation for facing ethical decisions in the business world. However, some people feel that ethics cannot be taught effectively in a course, it is something that people learn on their own. This is true in terms that one cannot simply change peoples' values through a course, but that is not the purpose of providing students with the tools of an ethics education incorporated into their classes. The goal of incorporating ethics education at the undergraduate level is to provide students with a basic understanding of ethical issues that will be relevant in their future (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2012).

There are pros and cons to both approaches. A study that was conducted by Martinov-Bennie and Mladenovic in 2013 goes into detail on how each method can influence students' ability to identify ethical situations and how to go about the decision-making process successfully. The research by Martinov-Bennie and Mladenovic (2013) was motivated by the failure of business schools to incorporate ethics education into the accounting curriculum. The topic of integrated ethics has been limited to very little research prior to this study. Overall, they find when incorporating an ethics training model (or framework) through integrating ethics into

accounting courses, students are likely to learn more and be able to apply it. This method reinforces ethical training throughout college course work that can help prepare future business professionals for facing difficult ethical situations and be able to make the right decision. Prior to this study there was only a majority of research done (Martinov and Mladenovic, 2013) with a stand-alone course method, while this study looked into both aspects of the stand-alone vs. integrated method. This tactic allowed participants and analysts of this topic to gain the different perspectives of both methods. The goal of this research was to explore the impact of providing an ethical decision-making framework, alone or as an integral part of an integrated ethics education component of a first-year accounting unit, on students' ethical sensitivity and judgment (Martinov and Mladenovic, 2013).

Two important values for the decision-making process is a students' level of ethical sensitivity and ethical judgment where establishing ethical intent, ethical motivation, refers to prioritization of ethical values higher than other values or agreeing to perform chosen course of action. In addition to engaging in ethical behavior refers to a perseverance to follow through on one's intention, as well as implementing the chosen course of action. The first crucial step is being able to recognize that one is dealing with an ethical issue, which falls under the category of ethical sensitivity. Ethical sensitivity is the interpretation of a situation, recognition of the ethical issue, awareness of what actions are possible and the effect on the parties concerned. Ethics education is a significant factor affecting both perceptions of the severity of an ethical issue and the ethical judgments of accountants early in their careers. In the Martinov and Mladenovic study, there was a significant difference in scores between when students were exposed to the ECRP (Ethical Conflict Resolution Process) framework before and after the ethics education was completed. For example, 52 additional students were able to identify the environmental issue

after experiencing the ethics component (an increase of about 27% in ethical sensitivity). In terms of the human rights issue, 20 additional students were able to identify the issue after completing the component (an increase of 16%). These results showed that once exposed to the framework, students were able to identify ethical issues. Not only does this support the idea for organizations to establish ethical codes but also the potential upside to providing ethics education within the business school (Martinov and Mladenovic, 2013).

The Martinov and Mladenovic study used an ethical framework that had the potential to influence how students were able to identify and handle an ethical situation. Repetition also comes into play when students are exposed to more ethical knowledge over and over again. This supports the idea of teaching ethics as a part of the curriculum in college courses will help students be able to identify and handle ethical-questioning situations to the best of their ability. Similarly, in the analysis of my research, the more students that had exposure to ethics education thought that it was increasingly important to teach ethics as a part of business courses' curriculums. In the next few sections, I will discuss my research, analysis and findings in more detail.

III. Ethics in Business

With ethics education, when students are faced with ethical dilemmas, they will be able to dissect the scenario and use their knowledge to handle the situation in the best way possible. This is vital not only with the situation at hand, but also in regard to their career. When one's ethical values are questioned, the public may lose trust in the individual and the organization that the individual represents. Ethics are imperative within the business world because businesses are largely successful based on their human capital, and if they lose the credibility of employees,

then they will not be able to successfully run their business without having anything to back their word.

However, throughout history, numerous companies have chosen to disregard their ethical values and listen to other pressures in their decision making. In addition, to the Enron scandal, many other companies have had scandals surrounding ethic-questioning situations. For accounting companies, the most important aspect of the companies is their credibility, when that becomes questioned, they lose their reputation and possibly clients. In addition, from a purely bottom-line perspective, “trust counts: a 10-year analysis by Fortune.com has shown that public trust in a company and profitability are strongly positively correlated” (Open Government Partnership, 2017, p.1)

Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative that promotes transparency between the government and citizens, empowers citizens, fights corruption and use new technologies to strengthen governance. The initiative group wrote an article surrounding the topic of credibility, it’s importance and how companies can build it. Trust is the “glue that binds companies to their customers and to the communities where they operate” (Open Government Partnership, 2017, p.1) Nevertheless, when faced with ethical dilemmas, many forget that the short-term benefits do not outweigh the long-term costs. For example, the Satyam scandal in 2009, where the Indian IT services and back-office accounting firm falsified their revenue by \$1.5 billion. This was done through misrepresenting revenues, margins as well as the cash balance. In this instance, the Founder/Chairman as well as his brother were charged with breach of trust, conspiracy, cheating and falsification of records (The Accounting Degree Review, 2010, p.1). The company was able to turn it around after bringing in a new management team and cleaning up their act. Clearly, ethical values were questioned here and rather than maintaining

their credibility, they valued gaining a short-term profit over honesty. And long-term costs included re-building their reputation over several years in order to gain back trust of the public.

Power and money create an issue when an individual is given a significant amount of control within a company and s/he is not capable of making correct ethical decisions. This happens because natural temptations occur when one is faced with a decision that can benefit the individual rather than the company as a whole. An example of this is providing skewed financial results and data of a company that make the company look financially better. In addition, management can make decisions that could provide themselves with a better bonus or make the company look financially better than what is realistically true. This could influence shareholders and stakeholders of the company to believe information that is not accurate. Clearly, it is unethical to provide false or skewed information, which can negatively impact a company as well as that company's reputation. There are multiple factors that vary between individuals and groups, but ultimately these specific factors have the ability to manipulate people into making unethical decisions.

When a company breaks that trust, how do they rebuild it? It is not impossible for a company to rebuild their credibility with the public, but it is not an easy task. There is more to a company than simply providing superior quality products and. First, a company needs to be responsible for their actions and realize the potential impact of their actions. In addition, there is also the importance of being transparent, the company has to willingly be transparent in order to show that the company is not waiting to be questioned or caught on what they do and/or how they do it.

IV. Relationship between ethics education and ethics in business

Ethics education is a current discussion among many college campuses, specifically in business schools. What is the relationship between ethics education and applying ethics in business? One could argue that with more ethics education, the more ethical decisions will be made. On the other hand, one could refute with the argument that ethical values cannot be simply changed with ethics education. In a sense, by providing ethics education, one is not simply trying to change peoples' ethical values but to broaden one's perspective and have the knowledge to be able to distinguish right from wrong. However, many people know what is right and what is wrong but will choose the unethical path because they perceive that it will result in a greater personal benefit, usually monetary.

The purpose of ethical education in the business world could help future managers and top employees make better ethical decisions because it can set a base layer of knowledge on what is going to be expected when people start to work for an organization. It has been seen in a variety of cases where managers make unethical decisions to benefit themselves rather than the company as a whole. In addition to having ethical education prior to entering the workforce, it would be extremely beneficial if the education was reinforced throughout peoples' careers. This brings us back to the impact of repetition. Repetition can reinforce knowledge previously learned and allow individuals to continuously incorporate ethics even as they develop throughout their career.

A contributing factor of reinforcing ethics knowledge is that people are not always taught ethics in the undergraduate level of business school and thus do not learn how to apply the knowledge when put in situations that test ethical standards. This brings up another question, when should ethics be taught? Many say that ethics should be introduced earlier than college

years. For this question, there is not right answer. However, many can argue that despite ethics being incorporated into education, home-life may have an even more significant impact on people's ethical behaviors. If good ethical standards are not enforced where people live, many people are less likely to maintain good ethical standards that are taught in formal ethical education.

Companies have to be selective in the employees that they hire if they want their employees' values to align with the values that they instill within the company. In order to maintain the values of the companies they need to hire employees that agree with those values. The knowledge that throughout their career will be a strong influence of the choices individual's make. With that in mind, employers want their employees to have a strong basis for ethical values prior to joining their company. Through ethical training at college business schools, students will be able to be aware of ethic-questioning scenarios and be able to handle them properly.

V. Factors that may affect the relationship between ethics education and ethics in business

This leads me to explore factors that affect the relationship between ethics education and ethics in business. People develop in different ways depending on their childhood, their role models and the environment they have been exposed to. If ethics are not taught within the home environment, then ethics may not be enforced on a daily basis. However, ethics could be enforced by individual experiences, schools or through extracurricular activities.

In a broad sense, ethics can be categorized by individual (internal) factors as well as organizational (external) factors. Some examples include philosophy and value orientation, education and employment factors, age, locus of control, and cognitive moral

development/ethical judgment. Age can be a factor based on maturity levels. It is hard to say that someone who is older will make more ethical decisions than someone that is younger, but that can be assumed if one was only looking at the experiences and maturity levels of someone who is older has. Factors such as home life, education, and life experiences can have an impact on ethics.

International Risk Management Institute (IRMI), a company that facilitates communication between insurance and risk management professionals, shared information regarding factors that affect the development of ethical values (IRMI, 2010, p.1). They suggest that one's childhood upbringing has an extraordinary impact on an individual's ethical values. Parents or guardians have the ability to teach their children in both words and actions, what is right and wrong. In addition to that, what they allow their children to do, shows that even if something is not morally right, by not stopping them, it is implying that what they are doing is okay. These are basic fundamentals that people grow into on what is right and wrong, but that does not mean people cannot learn or change these values as time goes on.

IRMI further suggests that later life experiences will affect a person's ethical values because there is always a learning lesson in experiences even if we do not realize it at the time. As an example, "someone severely injured in an automobile accident may have a much higher opinion of the entire automobile-injury reparations system...if that person is satisfied with the ultimate medical and financial result months and years after the accident. If, however, this victim feels the result was medically inferior or legally unfair, the victim may well treat everyone in the system unfairly—even years later in circumstances unrelated to the original accident—just to seek some measure of personal 'justice'" (IRMI, 2010, p.1). The experiences that people go

through can severely impact the way they go through life and the decisions that they make but there are other external factors as well to consider as well.

IRMI also suggests that religious beliefs can have an impact on ethical values. A religion can be another form of some sort of ethical code that people willingly choose to follow. For example, a highly religious person may apply these values in both their personal and business parts of life. In contrast, this does not mean that someone who is not religious will not have high ethical values and be able to apply them in all aspects of their life as well.

Lastly, IRMI suggests there is a basic code of ethics, which can be seen as the most direct reference that an individual uses to apply their ethical values in the decisions that they choose to make. Whether these values are issued by top management, professional societies, a business or other form of influencer, there is a purpose to administering the code. The first goal of the code of ethics is to “set forth objectives like quality output, honesty, and public service to the customer or community dealings by the people who are governed by, or choose to subscribe to, a particular code. The second typical goal is to protect those to whom the code applies from harmful conduct by others governed by that particular code—conduct such as unfair competition or actions that that cast the entire group in a bad light” (IRMI, 2010, p.1). The second goal can vary among each business or organization based on each individual’s specific role as well as general goals within the company.

Discussed above, are different perspectives on factors that have the ability to affect one’s ethical values as an individual goes through a variety of experiences in their life. However, there are factors within a company that also have the ability to affect their top management as well as their employees’ ethical values. Among many possible factors, there are five central organizational variables that have this ability to influence ethical decision-making. They

variables include: the basic codes of ethics, ethical climate and culture, industry type, organizational size, and rewards and sanctions (IRMI, 2010).

A code of ethics is typically correlated with the ethical climate because the type of culture within an organization is based on its' mission and core company values. Having a code of ethics is often positively related to ethical decision-making because it outlines how one should behave and make decisions within an organization. In addition to communicating the code of ethics, the environment of an organization typically has a correlated relationship with ethical decision-making because the people and culture of a business influences the values of the employees. There are also a variety of industries in which a company may do business, this can also have an effect on how decisions are made but typically not as significant on whether or not a person will make the correct ethical decision. Another organizational factor that can have an influence on moral decision-making is the size of the organization. Typically, a larger business will have a more complex structure and a larger management team than a smaller business. Lastly, rewards and sanctions can impact ethical decision-making. Research shows that when unethical behavior is rewarded it is more prevalent within an organization, however, it is not seemingly an issue for organizations that punish for unethical behavior. (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2012)

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Research Question Development

It has been established that incorporating ethics into business courses, specifically accounting, is crucial for students who want to pursue a career within the business world. It is essential that accountants are able to identify if a decision or situation is ethical or if it is not ethical. In terms of ethics education, the first approach would be to create a completely separate

ethics course that students would be required to take. This style would contain a broader ethics education in relation to the business world. However, another method would be to integrate ethics into current courses that students are taking, such as principles of accounting. This would allow students to apply what is learned in the course and relate it to situations where one is faced with an ethical decision-making process. In my opinion, an integrated-ethics course would be the most effective approach because of repetitive effects and students would be able to connect the relevance of ethics with courses that they are interested in and that are preparing them for their future endeavors in the business world.

The topic of ethics first sparked my interest when I was taking Intermediate Accounting I with Professor Ragland, my advisor for this thesis report. The discussion about ethics within the accounting field was brief during one class period of the semester. However, that one discussion pulled me in, enticing me to dig more into the topic of ethics. My first step was digging into specific scandals that have occurred over the years and the lack of ethics there tends to be within the business world. This led me to ask myself, how are ethics being taught in college, if at all?

When asking this question, I found that at the university I attend, the University of New Hampshire started to require students to take a philosophical based ethics course. However, this required course is not entirely related to business. Students get some ethical exposure of ethical situations that occur in the business world, but that is not the entire focus of the course. This new course is required for all Sophomores to take as a requirement within the business school. But is this the most effective method for ethics education in regards to using it in business?

I took a step back and looked at all the courses I have taken at the University of New Hampshire, but there was no specific course related to ethics, nor did any class focus on it for more than a day or a specific discussion that came up in class. It was not until it came to making

the decision for my literature review topic where I designated ethics education within the business school as my focus for my research. From there, I designated that as my topic for my Honors Thesis, leading to conducting research and data analysis from the responses of the survey I created and distributed to current business students.

Not only was I interested on if and how ethics was being taught within the realm of business, but students' perspective on the importance of ethics education. This is vital because when students do not care or do not think a topic is important, they will not pay attention to what their professor is saying or retain any of the information they are being taught. Specific questions within the survey, test how important students feel ethics education is and the impact it may have within the business world.

METHOD OF STUDY

Type of Research

The type of research conducted within this study was a survey that included both scales, multiple-choice and open-ended questions that participants answered. Through this survey both quantitative and qualitative data was collected to analyze. The qualitative data come from the scales where participants would rate the importance or level of significance relating to ethics education.

The four research questions that I looked at more closely are: (1) Do you think ethics should be taught in college? (2) What is your perception on the value of ethical training in the business school? (3) In your mind, do you think ethics taught in the business school would make a difference in your preparation for a future job? (4) In your mind, would it be more beneficial for

ethics to be taught throughout various business courses or as a separate course (stand-alone) course? Why?

Participants

The participants took the survey in a classroom setting and had the option to not take the survey as well. A total of 73 students participated in the survey research, however, only 69 completed the full survey as such their responses were used in my analysis. If any participant did not answer one or more of the questions, their responses were not included in the results when analyzing the data collected.

Analysis

As expected when researching a topic, there are certain correlations and relationships that you expect to find when analyzing data. Prior scandals suggest, such as those above, emphasize the importance of ethics in business school education and my research suggests support to prior findings. When looking at the data as a whole, there were definitely a lot of trends among the responses. To analyze the data quantitatively, regression tests were run to see which questions any sort of relationship had as well as any questions that did have any correlations.

Findings

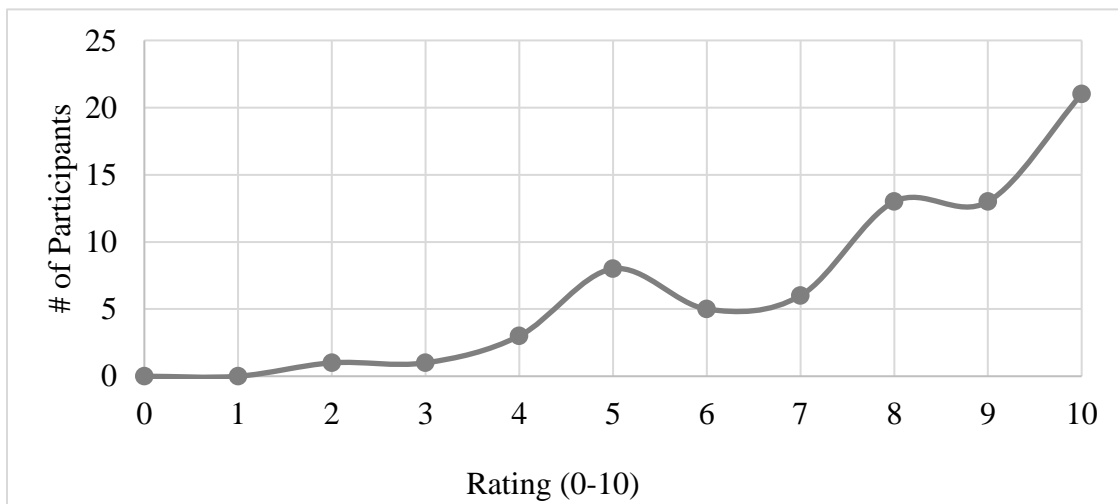
First, looking at the data as a whole without comparing any questions, I was intrigued at some of the results. The participants were asked where they feel they have learned and gained majority of ethical values. A common perception is that a person's childhood as well as life experiences influence values and perception of ethics as a whole (The Arthur W. Page Center, 2018, p.1). Through the study I found that 98.5% of the participants believe that they were taught ethics in their home. In addition, 82.6% of the participants learned their ethical values through primary education and 79.7% in secondary education. This shows that basic ethical training is

done prior to college, however, the question arises whether or not ethics education can be taught effectively in college.

Many people believe that ethics cannot be taught because the values that people have cannot be changed simply through a college course, as noted in written respondents from some of the participants of the survey. However, a different perspective can always shed light to a scenario. From the responses in the survey, many participants believe that through integrating ethics into their current courses, they will be able to relate ethics to the subjects taught as well as their future job. By integrating it, it enables them to see the importance of ethics and not feel like they are just taking a course because it is a requirement. Also, it references (through repetition) the importance of ethics. When comparing the question that asked: “Do you think ethics education should be taught in a separate course?” majority of the students were not as confident that it would be beneficial. The graphs below show the distributions between the two survey questions regarding ethics being integrated into current courses and ethics being taught in a separate course:

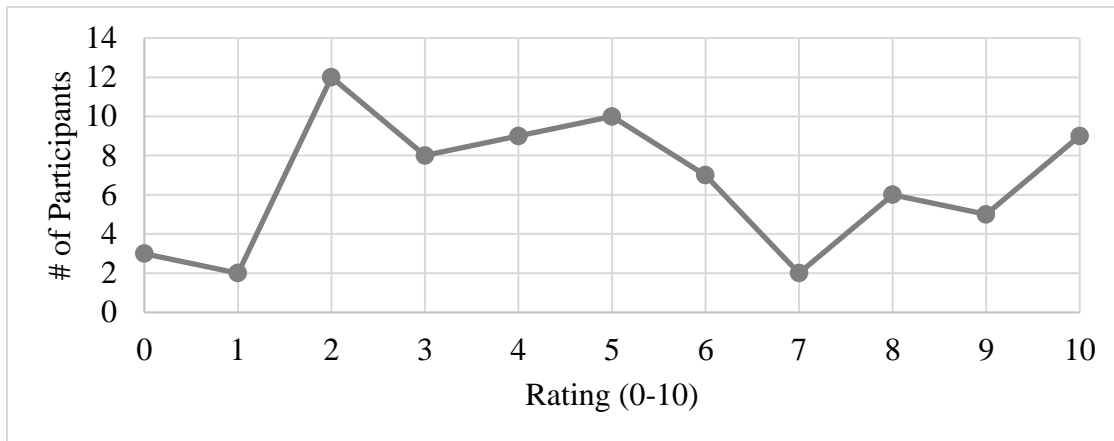
Survey Question:

Do you think ethics education should be integrated into current courses?



Survey Question:

Do you think ethics education should be taught in a separate course?



Some students reported that they feel there is a greater benefit to incorporating ethics into current courses that they are taking rather than taking a one-time ethics course that doesn't fully relate to business. Students that have taken the current ethics course state that they would prefer to integrate ethics into current courses so that they can relate it more to business scenarios. In some of their responses they wrote that they viewed the ethics course as simply another general requirement and did not take away much from it. This was very interesting to analyze and also read students' written responses to get a deeper look into their thoughts.

When looking at the relationships between different survey questions the findings were somewhat predictable but also enlightening at the same time. A strong correlation was found that students who have taken more ethics courses at the University of New Hampshire also believed that it would be beneficial if ethics training was integrated into current courses they are taking. To me this emphasizes the idea that by integrating ethics into current courses, students will gain a greater benefit than if ethics was taught as a separate course. With the repetition of the importance of ethics, students will instinctively reference the knowledge they learned in college regarding ethics. This is because students will then be able to relate what they learn about ethics

in the courses that prepare them for their future job and be able to relate those discussions to future experiences when they enter the workforce.

In addition, another correlation was found between students who felt ethics were an important value to have for their future job also thought that there is value of teaching ethics within the business school. Hence, students believe that ethics education will have a positive effect on their work experiences in the future. It is perceived that having ethics education prior to encountering ethic-questionable situations is better than learning a lesson the hard way without some sort of education and dealing with the repercussions. Students see the value in ethics education not only for the present but for the future as well.

CONCLUSION

Ethics are very personal and unique to each individual; however, it is important to be aware of different ethical situations that someone could be put in, especially going into the business world. The business world is full of peer pressure as well as the pressure of money, and to be successful in that aspect as well. Everyone wants to be liked and move up the corporate ladder, however, it is possible to get there without compromising good ethics. It brings us back to the point of can ethics education be useful in the business school? It certainly does not start in college where you are getting prepared to enter the corporate world. It begins with your upbringing, specific life experiences, and the people you surround yourself as you grow up. These are extremely important factors to consider when examining ethics.

Everyone is capable of differentiating what is right from wrong, but what makes people choose the less ethical path? This study shows the perceptions of current college students in a business school, especially those who have been in college for at least two to three years, and whether or not they think it would be beneficial to have ethics training as a part of the college

3. What is your perception on the value of ethical training in the business school?

- a. Extremely helpful
- b. Helpful
- c. Moderately Helpful
- d. Not Helpful
- e. Extremely Not Helpful

Why?

4. In your mind, do you think ethics taught in the business school would make a difference in your preparation for a future job?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

5. In your mind, would it be more beneficial for ethics to be taught throughout various business courses or as a separate (stand-alone) course? Why?

Integrated into Current Courses:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at All Beneficial

Extremely Beneficial

8. Based on Question 7, how has that influenced your ethical values today?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at All

A Significant Amount

Specific Examples:

ETHICS

Six Pillars of Character related to Ethics

- 1. **Trustworthiness** – honesty (don't deceive, cheat, steal, etc.)
- 2. **Respect** – (treat others with respect)
- 3. **Responsibility** – do what you're supposed to do
- 4. **Fairness** – play by the rules
- 5. **Caring** – be kind
- 6. **Citizenship** – do your share

Questions Related to the Six Pillars

9. Listed above are the six pillars of character related to ethics, what are your perceptions of them in relation to:

a. Everyday life

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Importance

Extremely Important

b. School/Education

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Importance

Extremely Important

10. To you, what is the importance of ethics in relation to:

a. Everyday life

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Importance

Extremely Important

b. School/Education

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No Importance

Extremely Important

Thank you for participating in this survey. At this point, please answer the following three demographic questions.

Demographic Questions

11. What is your age?

- a. 18-19
- b. 20-21
- c. 22-23
- d. 24+

12. What year in college are you?

- a. Sophomore
- b. Junior
- c. Senior
- d. Graduate

13. What is your major? (Circle all that Apply)

- a. Accounting
- b. Finance
- c. Management
- d. Marketing
- e. Decision Sciences
- f. Economics
- g. Hospitality Management
- h. Other: _____

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