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Perceptions of Business Ethics of Working Adults in Public and Private Sectors

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B.A., Governor State University, 2011

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Submitted in partial fulfillment for the
Degree of Master of Public Administration

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Abstract

The public sector in Illinois has long been under scrutiny of corruption and ethical misconducts. Therefore, understanding the ethical perceptions of public and private sector employees and the factors that influence them, as well as their ability to exert leadership in society. There has been increased research on business ethics over the years. Ethical issues such as conflict of interest, account and consumer fraud, and bribery have become more complex and culturally diverse (Nguyen, Tran, Mujtaba, & Tran, 2014). The purpose of this study is to investigate how age, gender, nationality, workplace Code of Ethics, business ethics training, longevity with current employer, and government work experience influence personal business perceptions of American working adults and students. Using Comparison t-test and ANOVA analyses, this research analyzes 132 public and private sector employees and students at Governors State University. Significant correlations were not observed between personal business perceptions and gender, age, nationality, education, business ethics training, management and government experience. This study found significant differences in the mean Personal Business Ethics Scores (PBES) scores and Code of Ethics in the workplace. The results from this research suggest that business ethics codes and diversity trainings play a role in creating an ethical workplace climate. This study offers a unique analysis of the personal business ethics perceptions of students at Governors State University and working adults in public and private sectors.

Chapter One: Introduction

There have been extensive studies on business ethics and ethical behavior in public and private sectors (Burns, 2012; Carlson & Burke, 1998; Cannon, 2001; Jazani & Ayoobzadeh, 2012; Nguyen et al., 2014, 2015; Wang & Calvano, 2015). Many academic researchers wrote about important public-sector values such as accountability, incorruptibility, lawfulness, service delivery capacity and motivation, sustainability, transparency and social justice in administrative ethics literature (Farazmand, 2002, p.127; Gilman and Lewis, 1999; Kaptein and Wempe, 2002, pp. 237-246; Kernaghan, 2003, p. 712; van der Wal and Huberts, 2008, p.272-274; Wang & Calvano, 2015).

Cooper (2004) highlighted that “We need to work at building consensus among those interested in administrative ethics about sets of research questions that, in some sense, define the heart of the field” (p.395). Managers in public and private sectors need to be able to recognize ethical issues, cultural context of the organization and the individual factors that can influence individual ethical behavior in an organization in order to handle these concerns more effectively, and in order to create an ethical organizational culture (Deshpande, George & Joseph, 2000; Ferrell, Fraedrich, & Ferrell, 2015; Victor & Cullen, 1988; Wimbush & Shepard, 1994). As in business ethics, public ethics must encompass accountability and social responsibility it imposes on the culture of its organization. Cooper (2004) identified self-determination, freedom, honesty, trust, and stability are values that are clearly central to the initiatives in public management ethics in a transnational world. De Vries and Kim (2011) wrote that ethics and ethical leadership has recently become “one of the most critical credentials for politico-administrative leadership

positions not only in advanced countries, but also in many developing countries around the world” (p.2).

Problem Statement

This study is being researched to explain the ethical dilemma within both the private and public sector. Issues such as cultural conflict, ethical practices, decision making, and code of ethics are encompassed in this study. Professionals must be able to identify ethical issues, cultural framework of the agency, and the individual factors that could influence individual ethical behaviors within the workplace. In order to meet the challenges and develop an ethical environment, there must be regulations addressing unethical practices.

The results from this study provide an understanding as to why public administration often functions as a business and follow the rules of business. This information suggests that ethical training is a necessity to protect the public and adhere to a standard of professionalism in the workplace through accountability. This study examines business ethics of working adults in the USA.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the ethical perceptions of Governors State University students, private and public employees. To analyze ethical perceptions, this study uses the Clark and Clark's Personal Business Ethics Scores (PBES). Demographic characteristics are cross-tabulated with participants' responses to determine if their demographics characteristics have an influence on their responses.

Research Question

For the purpose of this study, the following questions are addressed:

Central Question

What are the significant differences in the ethical perceptions of Governors State University students, private and public employees based on individual characteristics and different types of business ethics education?

Hypothesis

Based on virtue ethics theory and research reviewed above, the present study made the following predictions:

H1: Respondents will have significantly different PBES scores than female respondents

H2: Respondents who are 26 years old and older will have significantly different PBES scores than respondents who are 25 years old and younger

H3: There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on different ethnicity

H4: There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on different level of education

H5: There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on different years of work with current employees (loyalty)

H6: Respondents with no management experience will have significantly different PBES scores than those with management experience

H7: Respondents with no Code of Ethics will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Code of Ethics on workplace.

H8: Respondents with no Business Ethics Course will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Business Ethics Course.

H9: Respondents with no Business Law or Government Regulation course will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Business Law or Government Regulation course.

H10: Respondents with no Business Ethics Training, workshop, and seminars will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Business Ethics Training, workshop, seminars.

H11: Respondents with no Diversity or sensitivity trainings, workshops, or seminars at work place will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Diversity or sensitivity trainings, workshops, or seminars.

H12: There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on different years of work in government.

Definition of Terms

Specific to this study, key terms are defined for proper understanding of the research. These key terms are defined below

Business ethics – the behaviors and “ingrained values form the human characters that are displayed in thought and action with tolerance, respect, justice, fairness, avoidance of harms to self and to others, obligations to common good and adherence to values of public interests” (Farazmand, 2017, p.598).

Ethical work climate - employees’ beliefs that “certain forms of ethical reasoning or behavior are expected standards or norms for decision-making within the firm.” (Martin and Cullen, 2006, p. 177).

Ethics training – education to empower employees to recognize and deal with ethical problems developing their moral intuitions, which are implicit in everyday choices and actions (Sacconi, de Colle & Baldin, 2002) (DCU, 2017)

Virtue ethics - the right motivations of person who more likely “to understand what should be done, more likely to be motivated to perform required acts, and more likely to form and act on moral ideals than a morally bad person” (Beauchamp and Bowie, 1997, p.39).

Code of Ethics – the key principles that public servants should advance, and its educational and review activities support the ethical behavior of members and hold them accountable for adhering to these principles (ASPA, 2017)

Diversity training - instruction aimed at helping participants to gain cultural awareness in order to benefit the organization or company (HR zone, 2017)

Theoretical Framework

Ethics refers to precepts which assess performance as true or false, virtuous or corrupt. The theories selected for this study is the Kantianism theory and Virtue Ethics theory. The theory was developed by German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804). The theory recognizes the demand one should: speak truth; make one’s wrongs right; walk in integrity; be thankful; do others well and improve one’s self-respect. Deontological is Kantian, which support the ethical statute to view the appropriateness or injustice of the actions. The theory’s concept is “duty”, or what is right and fair on a wider level (Amundsen, et al., 2009). This theory indicates that under no circumstance that one should go against the duty of what one should do in a specific situation. Even businesses that produce high profits and financially impact the market and society, must focus on the ethics that is needed to do right by society as consumers. *Virtue ethics* approach is

resented as a useful theoretical framework for analytical purposes and for clarifying the ethical identity in a public-sector environment defined by cultural differences. As applied to this study, the theory holds that the independent variable, ethics can be sustained through accountability, responsibility, and values for all organizations. Reviewing the literature above, this study borrows the *virtue ethics* approach to define the context and examine the ethical perceptions of public and private sector employees and Governors State University students. *Virtue ethics* approach is presented as a useful theoretical framework for analytical purpose and for clarifying the ethical identity in public and private sector.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review includes four areas: (a) administrative ethics in public sector; b) ethics-related organizational interventions; (c) business ethics and education, and (d) individual differences and personal business ethics. This chapter examined the virtue ethics approach of ethical business culture in public and private sectors. In reference to the ethical topics to be discussed, this study focuses on virtue ethics approach. *Virtue ethics* approach define the context and examine the ethical perceptions of public and private sector employees and students at Governors State University. Virtue ethics approach is beneficial for public administration because “public service is best served by these virtuous principles (honesty, integrity, respect of others, hard work, equality, fairness), principles that not only guide public service delivery with virtues and ethical behavior, but also offer profound guidance to the life of people as persons” (Farazmand, 2017a, p.205).

The literature discussed, “ethics outlines what is appropriate and inappropriate, suitable and unsuitable in perception and performance, sketched moral conduct according to the ideology of a precise group, and prescribed what humans ought to do.” According to Lawton (1998, p. 16) “ethics are a set of principles frequently defined as a code of conduct; that is, a framework for actions.” Farazmand (2017a) defined the theory of virtue ethics, “which holds both actions and consequences together, virtues by intent, action, and consequences of ending results. Living a private and public life by virtues in thoughts, action, and results of action is considered ethical and acceptable” (p. 203). Based on the virtue ethics approach, public administration ethics are closely linked to business ethics; though the indispensable to provide accountability, and transparency. Some literature differentiated the business ethics perceptions of employees

amongst the public and private sectors. However, the thesis can be summarized in two statements: ethical proportions and standards can be employed to all variations of institutions and business ethics and public-sector ethics share basic principles and customs (and therefore are very much similar). Voth, for example, references honesty, obligation, devotion, empathy, veracity, acceptance and social conscience, referring equally to the private and the public sector (Voth, 1999).

Administrative ethics in public sector

The Ethics in Government Act of 1978, is a code of established regulations to diminish corruption and avert improper usage of governmental powers and authority. The Act of 1978, required civic disclosure of financial records, which may decrease unethical practices. Feldheim and Wang (2002) wrote that efforts expended enhancing ethical behavior in public service organizations are seen as important and widespread. Adams (2001) suggested that "professional ethics" seems not to have been acknowledged and understood generally among students and practitioners of public administration. Friedrich (1940) suggested that bureaucrats possess a high degree of technical expertise, better situated than politicians to make complex administrative decisions, and often self-regulate their behavior when making decisions through the application professional standards. Ljungholm (2015) explored "The goals that transparency and public involvement serve, the outcomes of transparency of government services, and the influence of transparency and data on citizen participation and service delivery" (p.295).

Many researchers have observed that women tend to have different ethical standards than men (Albaum & Peterson, 2006; Nguyen, Mujtaba, Tran, & Tran, 2013; Nguyen, Mujtaba, & Cavico, 2015; Wang & Calvano, 2015). A study on American students and working adults by Nguyen et al. (2016) indicated that American female respondents were found to be more ethical in the workplace than male respondents based on beliefs. Nguyen et al. (2013, p.41) found “that sexual characteristics and work experience are important aspects in ethical maturity of business students.” Males and females displayed varies levels of differences based on: age and education. There was a correlation with older educated females exhibiting ethical practices, than males.

Age and management experience are important factors in business ethics maturity. Nguyen et al. (2016) found higher age ranges 27-32-year-old working adults perceived business more ethically than those of lower age ranges 21-26 years old. Older American respondents seemed to have a higher level of ethical maturity than younger respondents. Management experience is believed to have an impact on ethical perception. Nguyen et al. (2015a) also found that American respondents with no management experience have higher ethical awareness than those with management experience. American managers who have to confront ethical dilemmas more often in their daily business decision-making; thus, they become more tolerant of unethical behavior in business practices (Ardichvili et al., 2012). Business ethics is essential to the practice of doing business, whether private or public. The correlation between business ethics, as it pertains to public ethics is accountability. Farazmand (2017) has argued very strongly for focusing on ethical character of human beings in general and professional public administrators in particular. Farazmand (2017b) suggested that “public administrators acting virtuously are

considered ethically sound, and they serve the broad based public interests, public good, and are accountable” (p.203). Accountability is an ethical practice and responsibility of both business and public administration. Adhering to a code of ethics will ensure fair ethical practices are upheld within an organization, no matter if it is private or public. A result of good ethical practice will promote guidelines and standards that will safeguard professionalism, which is useful within any workplace atmosphere. Ethics are the rules that define moral conduct, both business ethics and public ethics require such rules and regulation (Svara, 2014).

Bailey and Spicer (2007) compared business ethics attitudes of three groups: US managers working in the US, US expatriates living in America and American managers working in other countries. All three groups of managers agreed on higher-level ethical norms of business behavior. The researchers (2007) found that the groups differed, on evaluation of practices, which conformed to localized norms (e.g., keeping a set of double books as a safeguard against mafia racketeering, or offering small personal payments to local officials to expedite government permits).

Ethics-Related Organizational Interventions

Many scholars have investigated business ethics instruction and training and their effectiveness. According to Lynch (2004), “for public administration, virtue ethics is relevant because its professional purpose is the benevolent pursuit of the public interest. Those in public administration can and should use and develop virtues such as justice, courage, and truthfulness to help them counter the common institutional temptations that drive lesser ethical people to seek wealth, fame, and power instead of advancing the public interest” (p.1).

Other researchers found that ethical educational courses motivate people to take a moral stance (Ermasova, Wagner and Nguyen, 2017; Ermasova, Nguyen, Clark and Ermasov, 2018; Carlson & Burke, 1998; Jeffrey, 1993; Langlois & Lapointe, 2010; Owens, 1998; Perri, Callanan, Rotenberry, & Oehlers, 2009). Ermasova, Wagner and Nguyen (2017) found that professional development focusing on ethics was positively related to reports of ethical behavior for younger employees, but no significant relationship was observed for older employees in America. They also found that professional development focusing on diversity was positively related to reports of ethical behavior for women, but no significant relationship was observed for American men. Jazani and Ayoobzadeh (2012, p.162) suggested that “ethics courses improved the level of personal ethics, and, moreover, such influence on business ethics was significant for people who have work experience.” In a meta-analysis of 25 studies, business ethics instructional programs Waples et al. (2009) found that the impact of such interventions was on average moderately positive, yet highly variable. Ethics training provides employees an overview of ethical policies and rules, outlines key ethical challenges, and teaches appropriate behaviors for completing job assignments (Knouse & Giacalone, 1997; Loe & Weeks, 2000; Minkes, Small, & Chatterjee, 1999; Newbaum, 2009; Owens, 1998; Palmer & Zakhem, 2001, Treviño et al, 2014). Ethics training can also introduce many of a company’s important ethical values and standards (Knouse & Giacalone, 1997; LeClair & Ferrell, 2000). Lopez Rechner & Olson-Buchanan (2005) found that tolerance for unethical behavior decreases with business education.

Business ethics and education

Many researchers investigated business ethics instruction, training and their effectiveness. Social interactions and work environment can impact ethical values and behavior (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Detert, Treviño, Burris, & Andiappan 2007; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, 2009; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2010). In a meta-analysis of 25 studies business ethics instructional programs, Waples et al. (2009) found that the impact of such interventions were on average, moderately positive, nevertheless, highly variable. Unethical behaviors arise from both situational and individual factors (Higgins, Power, & Kohlberg, 1984; Saks & Ashforth, 2000; Vardi, 2001).

Ethics training provides employees an overview of ethical policies and rules, outlines key ethical challenges, and teaches appropriate behaviors for completing job assignments (Knouse & Giacalone, 1997; Loe & Weeks, 2000; Minkes, Small, & Chatterjee, 1999; Palmer & Zakhem, 2001). Ethics training can also introduce many important ethical values and standards (Knouse & Giacalone, 1997; LeClair & Ferrell, 2000; Sims, 1991). Ethical discussions can be supported with active role-playing and participative exercises to reinforce comprehension of ethical principles and provide a forum for exchanges of ethical issues and problems (Loe & Weeks, 2000; Treviño & Nelson, 2007). Ethics training can be a feedback mechanism; managers can better respond to work challenges (Treviño & Nelson, 2007). Jazani and Ayoobzadeh (2012) found that taking ethics courses affects the level of adherence of people to educational ethics and personal ethics; moreover, such influence on business ethics was significant in people who had work experience.

Multicultural education, intercultural education, nonracial education, culturally responsive pedagogy, ethnic studies, peace studies, global education, and social justice education integration are terms used to describe different aspects of diversity education around the world (Nkomo & Vandeyar, 2009). Ludlum and Mascaloinov (2004) found that most students felt that ethical behavior depends on cultural diversity. Stewart, Volpone, Avery and McKay (2011, p.582) highlighted the following factors that make up a positive diversity climate: personal demographics, professional characteristics, department structural diversity, perceptions of department climate for diversity, and personal experiences with diversity. Stewart et al. (2011, p. 584) suggested that perceptions of perceived diversity climate and perceived ethics climate work together to improve the ethical responsibility, diversity climate, and ethical climate because it creates the perceptions that the organization complies with an established code of ethics.

Individual Differences and Personal Business Ethics

A number of individual differences related to ethical judgments and behavior have been identified through empirical research. For instance, gender differences in ethical thinking have various theoretical foundations (Eagly, 1987; Gilligan, 1982) and numerous studies across multiple cultures have observed that women tend to be more ethical than men (Albaum & Peterson, 2006; Nguyen, Mujtaba, Tran, & Tran, 2013b; Nguyen, Mujtaba, & Cavico, 2015b; Roxas & Stoneback, 2004; Wang & Calvano, 2015). A study on U. S. students and working adults by Nguyen et al. (2015a) indicated that American female respondents were found to be more ethical than male respondents. Gilligan (1982) found that while males tend to learn rules as part of their moral development, females learning revolves around caring, helping, and relationships.

Age is another individual factor that research has shown to be related to moral cognizance or ethical development (Ariail, 2005; Cannon, 2001; Nguyen et al., 2015b, Stensota, 2010). Stensota (2010) analyzed two general measures of a public ethics of care as well as a public ethics of justice in the Swedish public sector. This study shows that “these two ethics measures are supplementary, not contradictory, and that age is the main individual determinant behind ethics of care, strongly correlating with number of years in office” (p.295). One review of empirical articles found that nearly 50% of relevant studies illustrate significant positive relationships between age and ethical judgments (Loe, Ferrell, & Mansfield, 2000). Nguyen et al. (2015b) found significant differences in business ethics perception between Vietnamese working adults who are younger than 26 years of age and those who are older, except the above 55 age group. Nguyen et al. (2015a) found that 26 years old and older U. S. working adults perceived business more ethical than 25 years old and younger. Older U. S. respondents seemed to have a higher level of ethical maturity than younger respondents. Management experience is believed to have some impacts on ethical perception. Nguyen et al. (2015a) also found that U. S. respondents with no management experience have higher ethical awareness levels than those with management experience. A double standard in the economy and specific ethical standards are serious ethical issues in the U.S. (Apressyan, 1997; McCarthy & Puffer, 2008). Venard (2009, p.73) showed that corrupt behaviors of many U.S. firms are influenced by the unfair behaviors of their competitors and multinational companies. Furthermore, educational attainment has also been found to be positively related to ethical thinking (Jeffrey, 1993; Ponemon & Glazer, 1990). Lopez, Rechner, and Olson-Buchanan (2005) found that students who are near the completion of their undergraduate business degree are significantly less

approving of the unethical behavior concerning deceit, fraud, and coercion than those who were just starting their program. Morgan and Neal (2011, p. 126) concluded that ethics courses have some positive effect on the student's ethical perceptions. Ross and McGee (2012) showed that more educated people in India and the U.S. demonstrated the strongest opposition to tax evasion in their respective countries. The moderating influence of individual differences on the effectiveness of ethics-related organizational interventions has received less attention in the empirical literature.

The literature review provides a foundation for further evaluating the business ethics perceptions of working adults. Research on these topics remains ongoing, as both are relatively new to the world of research and require evaluating implemented practices to evaluate the ethical perceptions of employees in public and private sectors. The literature reflected the different variables: education, gender, age, and training on the perception of personal business ethics. The relationships between the demographic variables can be analyzed through the collection of a utilized quantitative methodology.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Participants

The questionnaires were made available as a hard copy which was handed out directly to Governors State University students and working adults. Informed consent, explanation of study, procedure of maintaining confidentiality, and detailed instructions on how to complete the questionnaire were included. The researcher used the self-administered survey method to eliminate the errors caused by the subjectivity of interviewers and provided greater anonymity for respondents. A quantitative approach was utilized to determine the association amongst the eight variables and hypotheses.

The majority of respondents were from Chicago Heights, University Park, Flossmoor, and Homewood, Illinois. A total of 132 surveys were completed by GSU students and employees: 41 employees in private sectors and 91 government employees.

Procedure and Measures

This study used Clark and Clark's Personal Business Ethics Scores (PBES) measure (Clark, 1966). As in other studies, it is not uncommon to use business ethics situations to study public servants' ethical perceptions. A questionnaire (consisting of business and administrative ethics approve-disapprove statements as well as several multiple choice and open-ended items) was handed out with a copy of the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) Code of Ethics to 750 administrators in 1989, 1996 and 2007 (Bowman and Williams, 1997; Bowman and Knox, 2008). These surveys were used for the analysis of perceptions regarding "ethics in society and government, the nature of integrity in public agencies, and ASPA's code" (Bowman and

Williams, 1997, p.518). Bowman and Williams (1997) used the business ethics cases to examine changing attitudes about ethics in government in 1989 and 1996 surveys and suggested that “ethical dilemmas in management are pervasive; both in appearance and reality they are part of being public servant” (p.522). Another study uses the business ethics cases (PBES scores) to study the attitudes of public and private sector employees in Iran (Mujtaba et al., 2011).

This study’s questionnaire consisted of eleven vignettes (mini scenarios) that asked respondents if they approve or disapprove of the action in each scenario. The total score of the eleven questions represents the Personal Business Ethics Scores (PBES). The PBES ranged from 11 which indicated very low personal business ethics perception for the eleven scores, to 55, which indicated very high personal business ethics perception for these dilemmas. Each dilemma is scored based on a 5-point Likert scale. The PBES scores from 50 to 55 showed very high range of personal business ethics perception for these dilemmas; the PBES scores from 44 to 49 demonstrates high range; the PBES scores from 38 to 43 – moderately high range; the PBES scores from 32 to 37 – moderately low range, and the PBES scores from 26 to 31 –demonstrates low range personal business ethics perception for these dilemmas. Table below shows the PBES scores and descriptions.

Table 1. PBES Scores and Descriptions

SCORES	DESCRIPTIONS
50-55	Very high range of business ethics perception
44-49	High range
38-43	Moderately high range
32-37	Moderately low range
26-31	Low range
11-25	Very low range of business ethics perception

Notes. Scores illustrate personal business ethics

The illicit nature of business ethics perception for these dilemmas implies that respondents may be reluctant to give details about their hidden and forbidden behaviors. In order to collect reliable answers from respondents, some precautions were undertaken. Instead of an a priori perception of what is “ethical,” the respondents are asked to establish the case in accordance with their cultural and personal perspectives. The standardized survey instrument provides each subject with business scenarios with ambiguous ethical behavior, where full information is either withheld or distorted by one party to a transaction. Subjects are asked to evaluate the propriety of the described behavior and assess the potential damage it could cause.

The example of one business scenario from the survey:

Sabato is a sales representative of Ajax Tool Company. Sabato has been instructed by Maynard, Vice President of Sales, to adopt a sales policy Sabato considers unethical. Maynard and Sabato have discussed the policy at length; and it is apparent Maynard thinks the policy is quite unethical too. Maynard nonetheless, due to the firm’s worsening financial

condition, orders Sabato to follow the policy; and Sabato reluctantly does so. What is your opinion of Sabato's actions?

The goal of the survey was to understand whether public and private sectors employees could recognize, evaluate the situations and distinguish the difference between ethical and unethical solutions. The situations described in PBES were good for both business and public employees because they called for ethical assessment regardless of the sector affiliation. Every person can make a judgement and show her/his reasoning of the fairness of a given solution. This study is based on *virtue ethics* approach that an ethical person with the right motivations is more likely to “understand what should be done, more likely to be motivated to perform required acts, and more likely to form and act on moral ideals than a morally bad person” (Beauchamp, Norman and Bowie, 1997, p.39).

Hypothesis

Based on the theory and research reviewed the present study concentrates on the following hypotheses:

H1: Male respondents will have significantly different PBES scores than female respondents

H2: Respondents who are 26 years old and older will have significantly different PBES scores than respondents who are 25 years or younger

H3: There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on ethnicity

H4: There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on level of education

H5: There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on years of work with current employees (loyalty)

H6: Respondents with no management experience will have significantly different PBES scores than those with management experience

H7: Respondents with no Code of Ethics in working place will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Code of Ethics.

H8: Respondents with no ethics course experiences will have significantly different PBES scores than those with business ethics course experiences.

H9: Respondents with no business law or government regulation course will have significantly different PBES scores than those with business law or government regulation course.

H10: Respondents with no business ethics training, workshop, and seminars will have significantly different PBES scores than those with business ethics raining, workshop, seminars.

H11: Respondents with no diversity or sensitivity trainings, workshops, or seminars at work place will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Diversity or sensitivity trainings, workshops, or seminars.

H12: There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on experience of work in government.

Data Analysis

Table 2, illustrates participants' demographic characterizes. The majority of the respondents were between 25 and 45-years old (43.4%). There were more female (61.8%) than male respondents (38.2%). The majority of the respondents have a bachelor degree (48.3%). There were four respondents who have over 30 years of work experience (.8%), 11 (19.3%) respondents who have work experience from 1 to 5 years, 42 (33.9%) respondents with work experience from 6 to 15 years.

Table 2. Demographic Variables (N=132)

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Age	18-25	56	42.2
	26-35	40	30.2
	36-45	21	15.6
	46-55	9	5.5
	56 and above	6	4.5
	Total	132	100
Gender	Male	40	29.1
	Female	92	70.9
	Total	132	100
Education	High school diploma	22	16.6
	Two years of college	18	13.6
	Bachelor Degrees	74	55.8
	Master Degrees	4	3.5
	Doctorate Degrees	8	7.0
	Other	22	16.6
	Total	132	100
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	38	34
	1-5 years	28	28.2
	6-15 years	21	12.6
	16-30 years	6	5.5
	Above 30	3	2.5
	Full-time students	34	33.7
	Total	132	100
Work in public sector	Public sector employees	91	69
	Private sector employees	41	31
Total		132	100

Note. The data illustrate demographic variables of the survey.

Limitations of the Study

This study has been associated with some constraints. One of the limitations is its small sample size. It includes mainly students, working men and women in public and private sector. Future studies can expand the sample to include more people from different work backgrounds and possibly other states. Given the sensitivity of respondents to a questionnaire on ethical issues, anonymous questionnaire was used in this study. Questionnaires was distributed face to

face, and the rate of return was relatively low. Another limitation of this study is the lack of pretest and posttest designs. If a questionnaire survey could have been performed before and after completing an ethics course, differences in participants' responses could have been measured to determine what effect the course had on their ethical and moral compass. In spite of some limitations, the conclusions that can be drawn from this study are still important to researchers and organizations

Data Collection

Participants signed the Letter of Consent attached as Appendix B when asked to participate in the study or provided verbal consent for anonymity purposes. The target population was 132 participants, Governor State University students, and private and public employees. The participants were asked several questions to assess their perception about business ethics. These participants were chosen in order to randomly capture their perspectives on personal business practice and ethics within the workplace.

Chapter Four: Results

The results from this study are based on one-hundred thirty-two (132) surveys of working men and women in public and private sector, and Governors State University students. This chapter examines the findings and analyses of the research in relation to the research questions presented in Chapter One. This chapter will begin by examining the hypotheses, concluding with a broad overview of results related to the main question.

Hypothesis 1 “*Male respondents will have significantly different PBES scores than female respondents*” is not supported ($F=0.01$, $p=.9344$). For gender, the relationship between ethics perception and PBES scores was not significant (Table 3). Female respondents do not have higher PBES scores than male respondents. Female respondents were not found to be more ethical than male respondents. Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(1) = 3.6187$ $\text{Prob}>\chi^2 = 0.057$

Table 3. ANOVA analysis of impact of gender on business ethics perceptions of respondents based on gender

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Between Groups	.387	1	.387	0.01	0.9344
Within Groups	3405.096	130	56.751		
Total	3405.48	131			

Note. The data illustrate impact of gender.

As seen in Table, hypothesis 2 “*Respondents who are 26 years old and older will have significantly different PBES scores than respondents who are 25 years old and younger*” is not supported ($F=-0.53$, $p=.71$). There is no statistically significant difference in the mean PBES scores between the two age groups. Respondents 26 years old and older do have not higher

PBES scores than those 25 years old and younger. This study showed that 26 year olds and older American working respondents were ethical as 25 year olds and younger. Older American respondents have not higher level of ethical maturity than younger respondents (Table 4).

Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(4) = 0.7463$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.946$

Table 4. ANOVA analysis of age on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Between Groups	122.74	4	30.685	0.53	0.7121
Within Groups	3282.74	57	57.591		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate age on business ethics.

The third hypothesis “*There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on different ethnicity*” is not supported ($F=1.17$, $p=.32$) (Table 5).

Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(3) = 4.3703$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.224$

Table 5. ANOVA analysis of impact of ethnicity on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	194.686	3	64.895	1.17	0.3282
Within Groups	3210.796	58	55.358		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate impact of ethnicity on business ethics.

As seen in Table 6, hypothesis 4 “*There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on different levels of education*” is not supported at .1 level ($F=1.57$, $p=.18$).

In other words, respondents with higher degrees do not have higher levels of ethical maturity compared to respondents with less education.

Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(5) = 7.0700$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.215$

Table 6. ANOVA analysis of education’s impact on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	417.918	5	83.583	1.57	0.1845
Within Groups	2987.565	56	53.349		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate impact of education on business ethics.

As seen in Table 7, hypothesis 5 that “*There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on different years of work with current employees (loyalty)*” is not supported (F=1.22, p=0.3133)

Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(4) = 4.8082$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.308$

Table 7. ANOVA analysis of tenure of current work of employee on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	333.734	5	66.746	1.22	0.3133
Within Groups	3071.749	56	54.852		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate tenure of current work of employee on business ethics.

Hypothesis 6 “*Respondents with no management experience will have significantly different PBES scores than those with management experience*” is not supported (F=0.03, p=.85). Respondents with no management experience do not have higher PBES scores than those with management experience (Table 8). Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(1) = 0.0902$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.764$

Table 8. ANOVA analysis of impact of management experience on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	1.972	1	1.972	0.03	0.8527
Within Groups	3403.510	60	56.725		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate management experience on business ethics.

As seen in Table 9, hypothesis 7 that “*There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents who has Code of Ethics on work place compare to respondents without Code of Ethics on work place*” is supported at .05 level (F=4.84, p=.037<0.05). This study showed that the existence of Code of Ethics, which is mandatory in public organizations and many private companies in the U. S., lead to positive differences in ethics score.

Table 9. ANOVA analysis of impact of Business Ethics Code in workplace on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	254.064	1	254.064	4.84	0.0317
Within Groups	3151.419	60	52.523		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate business ethics code on business ethics.

Table 10, illustrates, for many of the hypothesized predictors of PBES, observed correlations failed to achieve statistical significance, including those for the relationship between PBES and business ethics course, business law courses and ethics professional development. Hypothesis 8 “*Respondents with no Business Ethics Course will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Business Ethics Course*” is not supported at .05 level (t=-1.615, p=0.107). The data indicates there is no statistically significant difference in the mean PBES

scores between the two groups with business ethics course or without. This study showed that the effectiveness of taking business ethics course is very low.

Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(1) = 2.5155$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.113$

Table 10. ANOVA analysis of impact of Business Ethics Course on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	254.064	1	254.064	1.615	0.107
Within Groups	3151.419	60	52.523		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate business ethics course on business ethics.

Hypothesis 9 that “Respondents with no business law or government regulation course will have significantly different PBES scores than those with business law or government regulation course” is not supported at .05 level ($t=0.02$, $p=0.8905$). The data revealed there is no statistically significant difference in the mean PBES scores between the two groups with business law or government regulations course or without. This study showed that the effectiveness of business law or government regulation courses is very low. Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(1) = 0.0884$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.766$

Table 11. ANOVA analysis of impact of Business Law Course on business ethics perception

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	1.083	1	1.083	0.02	0.8905
Within Groups	3404.4	60	56.74		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate business law course on business ethics.

Hypothesis 10 that “Respondents with no Business Ethics Training, workshop, and seminars will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Business Ethics Training, workshop, and seminars” is not supported at .05 level ($t=-0.00$, $p=0.9791$). The results indicate there is no statistically significant difference in the mean PBES scores between the two groups with Business Ethics Training, workshop, and seminars offered at the workplace or without. This study showed that the effectiveness of Business Ethics Training, workshop, seminars at the workplace or one’s is very low. Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(1) = 0.0843$ $\text{Prob}>\chi^2 = 0.772$

Table 12. ANOVA analysis of impact of Business Ethics Training, workshop, and seminars on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	.039	1	.039	0.00	0.9791
Within Groups	3405.444	60	56.757		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate business ethics training on business ethics.

Hypothesis 11 “*Respondents with no diversity training, workshop, and seminars will have significantly different PBES scores than those with diversity training, workshop, and seminars*” is statistically supported. Diversity training ($F= 3.61$, $p=0.062 < .1$) had a significant positive relationship with PBES but at .1 level. These findings support previous studies in concluding that people can develop their moral judgment by through interactions in the following settings, schools, workplace, and the community (Jadack et al., 1995; Mujtaba & Sims, 2006). Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(1) = 0.1260$ $\text{Prob}>\chi^2 = 0.723$

Table 13. ANOVA analysis of impact of Diversity Training, workshop, and seminars on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	193.211	1	193.211	3.61	0.0632
Within Groups	3212.272	60	53.537		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate diversity training on business ethics.

Hypothesis 12 “There is a significant difference in PBES scores of respondents based on different years of work in government” is not supported at .1 level (F=0.54, p=.7477).

Bartlett's test for equal variances: chi2 (5) = 2.8287 Prob>chi2 = 0.726

Table 14. ANOVA analysis of impact of government experience on business ethics perceptions of respondents

	<u>Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig</u>
Between Groups	155.699	5	31.139	0.54	0.7477
Within Groups	3249.784	56	58.031		
Total	3405.48	61			

Note. The data illustrate government experience on business ethics.

However, PBES did not have significantly unique relationships with government experience.

The data results of the PBES reflected factors which may address the variables that may provide vital to reflecting on business ethics in the workplace. The variables with the most significant was in the area of training and education, these factors will be detailed within the discussion chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussions

This researcher observed significant difference with PBES and diversity professional development. This study revealed significant differences with PBES scores between U. S. respondents who experienced code of ethics training, and those who did not. This study showed that the existence of Code of Ethics, which is mandatory in government organizations and many companies in private sector in the U.S., makes a positive difference in ethics scores. It can be explained by virtue ethics theory and coincides with the studies by Birtch and Chiang (2014); Deshpande et al. (2000); Nguyen et al. (2014); and Trevin et al. (1998). Ethical climate refers to the values, practices, and procedures that exist within an organization that pertain to moral behaviors and attitudes. It plays a significant role in influencing what is considered ethically correct behavior. The ethical climate reflects shared perceptions about what is considered ethically correct behavior. Venezia et al. (2011, p. 26) suggested that “business managers, executives, entrepreneurs, and especially leaders must have a “moral compass,” that is, they must have a moral sense and ethical judgment as well as the moral character and integrity to do what they know is the right thing to do and not do what they know is wrong.”

The results of this study reflected the current ethical reality in the U. S. as reviewed in the literature (Apressyan, 1997; Beekun, Westerman & Barghouti, 2005; McCarthy & Puffer, 2008; Nguyen et al., 2013a, b; Nguyen et al., 2015a). U. S. working adults seemed to be aware of unethical behaviors in current business practices. The respondent’s gender, age, nationality, level of education, tenure, government and management experience were not significantly correlated with PBES.

The hypothesis that “Respondents with no Diversity or sensitivity trainings, workshops, or seminars at work place will have significantly different PBES scores than those with Diversity or sensitivity trainings, workshops, or seminars” is supported. There is a statistically significant difference in the mean PBES scores between the two groups with diversity or sensitivity training, workshops, or seminars in the work place. This study showed that the effectiveness of diversity or sensitivity training workshops, and seminars within the workplace is very noticeable and important.

Summarizing, the existence of Business Ethics, Law, Government Regulation courses, and Business Ethics Training, workshop, and seminars did not make a difference in the respondents’ PBES scores, even though approximately half of respondents indicated that they do engage in activities with a current employer. The individuals learned what types of ethical behaviors are acceptable by observing cues and information from their environment (Apressyan, 1997; Beekun, Westerman & Barghouti, 2005; McCarthy & Puffer, 2008; Nguyen, Ermasova & Ermasova, 2015; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). People learn ethical or unethical actions from one another through observation, identification, and imitation in the workplace and their interactions and experiences with others (Bandura, 1986; Peterson, 2002). Mayer et al. (2009) suggested that a strong ethical climate is likely to promote convergent norms and shared values in terms of ethical values and behavior. In our example we can see that strong unethical climate in USA organizations is likely to encourage low level of ethical behavior.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Determining the types of business ethics education and training that are the most effective in the USA would be beneficial to researchers and practitioners. To reduce unethical behavior, the results suggested that managers should not only have Business Ethics Code and emphasize the organization's stance on maintaining ethical practices, but also communicate the organization's value of diversity to workers. As an organization, being ethical can result in positive public attitudes, which in turn will assist the organization with establishing credibility. According to Mayer et al. (2010, p.13), "an ethical climate serves a sense-making function for employees so they know how to respond to ethical issues." Our findings have practical implications for managers. Our study shows that human resource (HR) practices, policies, and procedures should emphasize the value of being an ethical employee in an organization. Human Resources (HR) should provide diversity training as well as improve awareness of ethical issues and employees' ethical behavior. The outcomes from this research suggested that ethics education and diversity training play critical roles in creating an ethical climate in the workplace.

Researchers and scholars in business ethics fields can benefit from this study as it provides more empirical outcomes in understanding the impact of demographic, educational and cultural factors on the ethical maturity of working adults and students. This study sheds light on the ethical maturity of working adults and students based on age, gender, education, management experience, professional development and diversity education. Leaders, managers and practitioners, can benefit from this study as it provides managerial implications in managing this workforce in the most effective and efficient manner. This study proposes that ethical courses, presence of Ethic Code within the workplace, and diversity training impose constraints on the

perception of ethical and unethical behavior of Governors State University students and working adults.

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Appendix A

Attitudes Towards Business Ethics Questionnaire (ATBEQ)

Participation in this study is anonymous and voluntary. You can choose to withdraw from this study at any time. This study is primarily concerned with the attitudes towards business ethics of respondent groups. You are not required to record your name, and the information you provide will be totally confidential. You may quit at any time without any negative consequence. Some of the questions pose moral decisions and dilemmas to the subjects. These questions make result in feelings of concern or discomfort. This study is primarily concerned with the business ethics view of respondent groups. You are not required to record your name, and the information you provide will be totally confidential. Please select the appropriate answers and thank you for your cooperation.

This survey has two parts: the first is a brief demographic questionnaire, and the second is the Attitudes Towards Business Ethics Questionnaire. Please select the appropriate answers and thank you for your cooperation. For more information, contact:

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If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research study or concerns regarding the study itself, you may also contact the Co-Chairs of the Governors State University Institutional Review Board (IRB): David Rhea, Ph.D. at 708-534-4392 or Dale Schuit, Ph.D. at 708-235-2148 or email at irb@govst.edu.

Part I: Demographic Questionnaire

- A. What is your gender?
 Male Female
- B. What is your age?
 18-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 40-above
- C. What is your nationality?
 Russian Russian with foreign residency Other _____
- D. What is your religious affiliation?
 Catholic

 Protestant

 Orthodox

 Jew

 Muslim

 Other

 None
- E. How much do you practice your religion?
 Practicing

 Occasionally practicing

 Non-practicing
- F. What year are you in at your college/university?
 First year

 Second year

 Third year

Fourth year

Fifth year

Other

G. What is the highest academic schooling you have acquired?

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Two years of college, community college, or vocational training institute
- Bachelor Degree
- Master Degree
- Doctorate Degree
- Other_____

H. How long have you worked with your current employer?

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-15 years
- 16-30 years
- 30 or more
- Currently unemployed

I. What is your primary area of specialization?

- Accounting, finance, or banking
- Advertising, marketing, or sales
- Communications or public relations
- Economics or statistical
- Engineering
- Government relations or grants
- Medical or healthcare
- Human resources, personnel, or training
- Legal or legal assistance
- Manufacturing or production
- Scientific
- Technology or computer science
- Other_____

J. How many years of work experience do you have?

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-15 years
- 16-30 years
- 30 or more
- None

- K. Have you ever worked in a management position regardless of business or industry?
 Yes No
- L. Does your current college/university/employer have a Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct?
 Yes No
- M. Have you ever taken a business ethics course or a course that covers business ethics at a college or university?
 Yes No
- N. Have you ever taken a business law or government regulation of business course at a college or university?
 Yes No
- O. Have you ever had any ethics or business ethics training, workshops, or seminars at work?
 Yes No
- P. Have you ever had any diversity or sensitivity training, workshops, or seminars at work?
 Yes No
- Q. How long have you worked with a government or public institution?
 Never or less than one year
 1-5 years
 6-15 years
 16-30 years
 30 or more years
 Currently unemployed

Part II: Attitudes Towards Business Ethics Questionnaire (ATBEQ)**Directions:**

Reflect on the statements about business attitudes in the following questions (1 – 30). Please indicate your opinion (based on the scale below) regarding each by writing a number in the blank before each statement.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not sure 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

- _____ 1. The only moral of business is making money.
- _____ 2. A person who is doing well in business does not have to worry about moral problems.
- _____ 3. Every businessperson acts according to moral principles, whether he/she is aware of it or not.
- _____ 4. Act according to the law, and you cannot go wrong morally.
- _____ 5. Ethics in business is basically an adjustment between expectations and the way people behave.
- _____ 6. Business decisions involve a realistic economic attitude and not a moral philosophy.
- _____ 7. Moral values are irrelevant to the business world.
- _____ 8. The lack of public confidence in the ethics of business people is not justified.
- _____ 9. “Business ethics” is a concept for public relations only.
- _____ 10. The business world today is not different from what it used to be in the past. There is nothing new under the sun.
- _____ 11. Competitiveness and profitability are independent values (exist on their own).
- _____ 12. Conditions of a free economy will serve best the needs of society. Limiting competition can only hurt society and actually violates basic natural laws.

- _____ 13. As a consumer when making an auto insurance claim, I try to get as much as possible regardless of the extent of the damage.
- _____ 14. While shopping at the supermarket, it is appropriate to switch price tags or packages.
- _____ 15. As an employee, I take office supplies home; it does not hurt anyone.
- _____ 16. I view sick days as vacation days that I deserve.
- _____ 17. Employee wages should be determined according to the laws of supply and demand.
- _____ 18. The main interest of shareholders is maximum return on their investment.
- _____ 19. George X says of himself, “I work long, hard hours and do a good job, but it seems to me that other people are progressing faster. But I know my efforts will pay off in the end.” Yes, George works hard, but he’s not realistic.
- _____ 20. For every decision in business the only question I ask is, “Will it be profitable?” If yes – I will act accordingly; if not, it is irrelevant and a waste of time.
- _____ 21. In my grocery store every week I raise the price of a certain product and mark it “on sale.” There is nothing wrong with doing this.
- _____ 22. A businessperson cannot afford to get hung up on ideals.
- _____ 23. If you want a specific goal, you have got to take the necessary means to achieve it.
- _____ 24. The business world has its own rules.
- _____ 25. A good businessperson is a successful businessperson.
- _____ 26. I would rather have truth and personal responsibility than unconditional love and belongingness.
- _____ 27. True morality is first and foremost self-interested.
- _____ 28. Self-sacrifice is immoral.

_____ 29. You can judge a person according to his work and his dedication.

_____ 30. You should not consume more than you produce.

Appendix B

Personal Business Ethics Survey (PBES)

Participation in this study is anonymous. Participation in this survey is totally voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled. You may quit at any time without any negative consequence. Some of the questions pose moral decisions and dilemmas to the subjects. These questions make result in feelings of concern or discomfort. This study is primarily concerned with the business ethics view of respondent groups. You are not required to record your name, and the information you provide will be totally confidential. This survey has two parts: the first is a brief demographic questionnaire, and the second is the Business Ethics survey. Please select the appropriate answers and thank you for your cooperation. For more information, contact:

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If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research study or concerns regarding the study itself, you may also contact the Co-Chairs of the Governors State University Institutional Review Board (IRB): David Rhea, Ph.D. at 708-534-4392 or Dale Schuit, Ph.D. at 708-235-2148 or email at irb@govst.edu.

Part I: Demographic Questionnaire

- A. What is your gender?
 Male Female
- B. What is your age?
 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-above
- C. What is your nationality?
 White African -American Hispanic/Latino Other _____
- D. What is the highest academic schooling you have acquired?
 High school diploma or equivalent
 Two years of college, community college, or institute training
 Bachelor Degree
 Master Degree
 Doctorate Degree

Other _____

E. How long have you worked with your current employer?

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-15 years
- 16-30 years
- 30 or more
- Currently unemployed

F. What is your primary area of specialization?

- Accounting or finance
- Advertising, marketing, or sales
- Communications or public relations
- Economics or statistical
- Engineering
- Government relations or grants
- Medical or healthcare
- Human resources, personnel, or training
- Legal or legal assistance
- Manufacturing or production
- Scientific
- Technology or computer science
- Other _____

G. Have you ever worked in a management position regardless of business or industry?

- Yes
- No

H. Does your current employer have a Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct?

- Yes
- No

I. Have you ever taken an ethics or business ethics course at a college or university?

- Yes
- No

J. Have you ever taken a business law or government regulation of business course at a college or university?

- Yes
- No

K. Have you ever had any ethics or business ethics training, workshops, or seminars at work?

- Yes
- No

L. Have you ever had any diversity or sensitivity training, workshops, or seminars at work?

- Yes
- No

M. How long have you worked with a government or public institution?

- Yes
- No

- Never or less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-15 years
- 16-30 years
- 30 or more years
- Currently unemployed

N. What is your place of birth? (Province/City)

O. What is your current place of residence? (Province/City)

Part II: Business Ethics Survey

Directions: Please select the answer which best expresses your judgment of each case.

1. A number of high-ranking executives of several U.S. electrical companies were convicted and sentenced to jail for conspiring to fix the prices of heavy electrical equipment. Their defense counsel argued that they only sought to rationalize a chaotic pricing situation and they also were only seeking to be better able to compete against foreign electrical companies. What is your evaluation of the action of these executives?

- Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove

2. Sabato is a sales representative of Ajax Tool Company. Sabato has been instructed by Maynard, Vice President of Sales, to adopt a sales policy Sabato considers unethical. Maynard and Sabato have discussed the policy at length; and it is apparent Maynard thinks the policy is quite unethical too. Maynard nonetheless, due to the firm's worsening financial condition, orders Sabato to follow the policy; and Sabato reluctantly does so. What is your opinion of Sabato's actions?

- Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove

3. Star, a member of the Board of Directors of Scott Electronic Corp., has just learned that the company is about to announce publicly a 5-for-1 stock split and an increase in the dividends. Star personally is on the brink of bankruptcy. A quick gain of about seventy-five thousand dollars can save Star and Star's family from economic and social ruin. Star decides to take advantage of this information, and thus purchases the company's stocks now to sell back in a few days for the expected profit. What is your opinion of Star's actions?

- Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove

4. Chuckwell sells “pre-owned” cars for Avila Auto Company. Although Chuckwell feels that the cars sold are reasonably priced, nevertheless in the company’s standard “sales pitch” Chuckwell is forced to match the extravagant claims and sharp tactics of competitors. The Avila Auto Company also engages in such questionable practices as setting back the speedometers, hiding major defects, and putting pressure on prospects to close a deal on their first visit. Chuckwell knows that the company could not survive without such practices. Although Chuckwell disagrees with such practices, nonetheless, Chuckwell reluctantly follows these practices. What is your opinion of Chuckwell’s actions?

Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove

5. The Reed Engineering Firm faces a very competitive situation in bidding for a large contract to construct a new store for a large discount chain. Inasmuch as the firm is seriously in need of the work, Pennings, a partner in the firm, suggests that the Reed Engineering firm submit a bid which will certainly be unrealistically low; and then the company can make its profit on the use of inferior materials and other “short-cuts.” Pennings is certain this can be done without arousing the suspicion of building inspectors or the discount chain. Pennings argues that any firm which is awarded the contract will have to do that since the bidding will be so intensely competitive. Reed, the senior partner, agrees, stating that this type of low bidding is neither an infrequent nor unusual practice in the industry anyway. What is your opinion of Penning’s planned actions?

Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove

6. BeeBee is a sales person for the Sweet Soap and Body Lotion Company. With commissions, BeeBee’s salary is \$76,000 per year. BeeBee usually supplements this amount to the extent of about \$8,000 per year by cleverly charging certain unauthorized personal expenses against the company expense account. BeeBee feels that this is a common practice in the company; and since “everybody is doing it,” BeeBee should do it too, and it would be foolish of BeeBee not to. What is your opinion of BeeBee’s action?

Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove

7. Shaquanda, Treasurer of Lloyd Enterprises, is about to retire; and contemplates recommending one of her two assistants for promotion to treasurer. Shaquanda is sure that the recommendation will be accepted, but also knows that the assistant not recommended will find his/her promotion opportunities seriously limited. One of the assistants, Musta, seems most qualified for the new assignment; but the other assistant, Perwiz, is related to the president of Lloyd's biggest customer. Though Shaquanda hates to do it, Shaquanda recommends Perwiz for the job because the relationship with the customer will help Lloyd's business. What is your opinion of Shaquanda’s action?

Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove

8. Kuan, editor of the Daily News, is troubled. Kuan has just received a visit from Cramer, a public relations executive with the Aztec Department Store. Aztec is a big advertiser in the Daily News; and its continued purchase of advertising space is very important to the paper, especially now with the intense competition from online news sources. Recently, Aztec sold a large quantity of appliances which proved to be defective; and then the company refused to refund the consumer's money or to exchange the merchandise for better quality products. The Daily News at the present time is running a series on local business firms. Cramer wants to be sure that a story on the Aztec will contain no mention of this "unfortunate occurrence." Kuan is troubled; but in order not to offend this important advertiser, Kuan reluctantly agrees not to mention the sale of defective appliances by Aztec in the paper. What is your opinion of Kuan's actions?
- Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove
9. Schall, a Public Accountant, has been called in to audit the books of the Lakewood Trucking Company in anticipation of a public sale of stock. In the course of the audit, Schall discovered an item that is puzzling: a \$20,000 advertising expense paid to a Chicago Advertising Company. This was a one-payment expense three years ago; and no further business has been done with the Chicago firm. When questioned by Schall, Wallen, President of the Trucking Company, readily admitted that this money was used as a bribe to pay a union official. "It was a question of paying up or going out of business," Wallen explained. However, due to an employee empowerment program, Wallen sees no possibility of this situation recurring, and consequently asks Schall not to mention this item in the Auditor's Report. Since the firm seems well managed and financially viable, Schall agrees to ignore this questionable expense. What is your opinion of Schall's actions?
- Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove
10. Pisa, President of Pisa Fashions Co., has heard rumors that a competitor, Sunset Fashion, is coming out with a new line of dazzling spring styles which in all likelihood will sweep the market. Pisa cannot afford to wait until the new styles come out, and thus hires Bishop, plant supervisor of Sunset. Although Bishop is not a designer, in the capacity of plant supervisor, Bishop has become thoroughly familiar with the new Sunset spring fashion line. It is understood that Bishop will reveal the full details of the new Sunset styles to the new employer, Pisa Fashions Company. What is your opinion of Pisa's action?
- Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove
11. Sarwar is a sales person for Fare and Shear, stockbrokers. Sarwar has been instructed to recommend to customers the purchase of Electric Power Company Bonds, because the brokerage firm is carrying a heavy inventory of these bonds. Sarwar does not feel the bonds are a good investment under present circumstances; and is therefore reluctant to recommend them. However, after some thought, Sarwar decides to follow the company directive and recommend the bonds. **What is your opinion of Sarwar's actions?**
- Strongly approve Approve Undecided Disapprove Strongly disapprove

Comments: You are welcome to share any comments regarding business ethics at local organizations or globally.

APPENDIX C

GRADUATE CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

FINAL TRANSMITTAL FORM

Student Name: Lavonia L. Crawford

Student ID#: 1004257

Dissertation/Thesis/Capstone Project:

Title: Perceptions of Business Ethics of Working Adults in Public and Private Sectors

The capstone documentation submitted by the aforementioned student has been read and approved by the student’s capstone committee. The committee is composed of three members of the faculty, and at least two committee members are from the student’s college.

The document is, therefore, accepted and approved on behalf of the University.

(Final Signature of Committee Chairperson)

(Date)

(Signature of Committee Member)

(Date)

(Signature of Committee Member)

(Date)

Note: Copies of this form must be included with the distributed copies of the capstone documentation and the original must be submitted to the College Dean’s Office.

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APPENDIX D

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE,
HAVE APPROVED THIS THESIS

**Perceptions of Business Ethics of Working Adults in Public and Private
Sectors**

By

Lavonia L. Crawford

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Natalia Ermasova, Ph.D. (Chair) College of Art and Science - Public Administration

Susan Gaffney, Ph.D. College of Art and Science - Public Administration

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University Park, IL 60484

May 2018

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