

# Chapter 12

## Developing Ethical Mindedness and Ethical Imagination in Postgraduate Professionally Oriented Education



Mamun Ala, Svetlana De Vos, Sumesh Nair, and Janice Orrell

**Abstract** This chapter explores the attributes of ethical mindedness and ethical imagination to argue that these are desirable graduate competencies that should be fostered in postgraduate profession-oriented education. Ethical mindedness, guided by defensible, high standards, is a disposition and a practice that encompasses respect and impartiality regarding individuals, teams, organizations and phenomena. Ethical imagination is the capability to examine and identify potential ethical issues in novel situations and create ethical ways to confront them. To ensure that ethical practices occur in higher education research, institutional ethics committees are required to examine the ethical implication of each research application based on publicly espoused regulatory ethical guidelines and standards. However, ethics committees can only call for compliance with regulations and standards but cannot ensure that all researchers will exercise ethical behaviour when they are confronted with unforeseen ethically ambiguous conditions. For this reason, in this chapter, we assert that assuring ethical research practices requires more than ensuring compliance with a set of rules. Ethics should be viewed as a knowledge discipline, incorporating attributes of ethical mindedness and ethical imagination that are fostered as graduate dispositions and capabilities that contribute to the development of ethically-minded business professionals. To conclude the chapter, we will generate a conceptual framework for situating the role of ethical mindedness and ethical imagination in a supportive institutional climate and culture in postgraduate professions-oriented

---

M. Ala (✉)

Department of HR & Management, Australian Institute of Business, Adelaide, Australia

e-mail: [Mamun.Ala@aib.edu.au](mailto:Mamun.Ala@aib.edu.au)

S. De Vos · S. Nair

Department of Marketing, Australian Institute of Business, Adelaide, Australia

e-mail: [Svetlana.DeVos@aib.edu.au](mailto:Svetlana.DeVos@aib.edu.au); [Sumesh.Nair@aib.edu.au](mailto:Sumesh.Nair@aib.edu.au)

J. Orrell

Emeritus Professor, College of Education, Psychology and Social Work, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

e-mail: [Janice.Orrell@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Janice.Orrell@flinders.edu.au)

© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature

Switzerland AG 2022

L. M. Fedoruk (ed.), *Ethics and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*,

Ethics and Integrity in Educational Contexts 2,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-11810-4\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-11810-4_12)

research education. We also offer two propositions that would provide the opportunity for empirical testing and theoretical advancement in the field of ethics education.

**Keywords** Ethical mindedness · Ethical imagination · Ethical dilemma · Ethical scholarship of teaching and learning · Ethical culture and climate · Postgraduate professionally-oriented education

This chapter aims to examine how ethical mindedness and ethical imagination might be fostered in postgraduate professionally-oriented education. This is a timely study as many teaching-focused higher education institutes seek to offer research degrees and encourage research-active staff and students (To & Yu, 2020). We argue that the evolution to become active research institutions requires more than regulatory compliance by staff and postgraduate research students. We seek to establish a premise that, ideally, research practice should be guided by a deep understanding of the underlying principles of ethics and ethical practice rather than mere compliance with regulations. This, we will argue, calls for a deliberate pursuit of an institutional culture of ethical mindedness and ensuring that staff, students and graduates have gained the capacity to exercise an ethical imagination in novel contexts.

To accomplish this goal, we will draw upon our insights gained from the academic literature pertaining to ethics and our combined experience and expertise developed from our joint membership and leadership on an ethics committee in a higher education institute that has a key focus on the discipline of Business. Despite this shared primary focus we authors hold, we also argue that what we propose is salient for research education in general.

We have structured the chapter by providing an overview of ethics and ethical thought, followed by a discussion of how ethical mindedness, as an element of ethical thought, can be viewed as a competency. The next section examines ethical imagination as a goal of postgraduate research education, followed by an exploration of major stakeholders' responsibilities in promoting ethical mindedness in postgraduate, profession-oriented education. Subsequently, the focus turns to our primary interest as members of an intuitional ethics committee: what should be done to bring ethical imagination in business and management learning, teaching and scholarship. Finally, we propose a conceptual framework to illustrate the place of ethical mindedness and ethical imagination in higher education institutions for developing an ethical climate and culture in postgraduate professionally oriented education.

## Ethics

Ethics, also called moral philosophy, is a branch of philosophy that studies human goodness and right actions (Deigh, 2010). Morality, which is the basis of ethical behaviour, is an intuitive, gut feeling (Haidt, 2012) of what is right and wrong in the daily conduct of life. Ethics and morality are an integral part of human behaviour (Fowers, 2015), but Kohlberg (1984) argued that individuals acquire moral and ethical reasoning through hierarchical stages. Despite its innate and acquired nature, the metaethical, normative, positive and practical discourses of human ethics and morality have been intensely debated over centuries (MacIntyre, 2003). These debates date back to the times of virtue ethics of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (Dhiman, 2021) through to the times of Kant's 'categorical imperative' (Ward, 2019), Jeremy Bentham and Stuart Mill's 'utilitarianism' (Eggleston & Miller, 2014) to the modern-day 'practical ethics' of Peter Singer (Singer, 2016). Many theoretical and practical ethics perspectives developed over centuries are rooted in eastern and western philosophical traditions (Alzola et al., 2020). This chapter, however, focuses only on the western philosophical traditions richly contributed by the above authors.

In the Aristotelian era, ethics was considered the basis of a good and happy life, denoted by the term *eudemonia*, which roughly means "broad idea of a life going well" (Annas 1995, p. 44). Aristotelian ethics, also known as Nicomachean ethics, contemplated ethics in terms of human virtues, hence also called virtue ethics (Shanahan & Hyman, 2003). Virtue ethics is a broad term that encompasses the ethical theories of many philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Hume, and Nietzsche, to name a few (Athanasoulis, 2013). Generally, virtue ethics holds that good is defined in terms of a person's virtuous behaviour (Louden, 1984). According to MacIntyre (1985), "Virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways but also to feel in particular ways. To act virtuously ... is to act from inclination formed by the cultivation of the virtues" (p. 149).

Kant's theory of Categorical Imperative and Universal Ethical Behaviour is still debated even after 200 years of his death (Zuckerman, 2017). Kantian ethics is rooted in the deontological principle that holds that a person's action is the focus for judging right and wrong, unlike in a deontological principle, where the consequence of an action is the concern (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Laczniak & Murphy 1993; Thompson, 1995; Wotruba, 1990). Kant stipulated universal rules that must be followed despite the cost or consequences of the action, hence the term 'categorical' to denote the rules as opposed to hypothetical or conditional imperatives applied in other ethical theories (White, 2004).

The teleological perspective evaluates right and wrong based on the consequences of action (Baumane-Vitolina et al., 2016). Utilitarian ethical theories follow this logic and are credited to Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart and Henry Sidgwick (Singer, 2011). A more recent ethical orientation, 'practical ethics' (Singer, 2011), considers the principle of equal consideration in the context of promoting happiness

and alleviating pain. Singer (2011) argued that “The essence of the principle of equal consideration of interests is that we give equal weight in our moral deliberations to the like interests of all those affected by our actions... What the principle really amounts to is: an interest is an interest, whoever’s interest it may be” (p. 20).

Ethics consists of the standards of right and wrong, in terms of fairness, rights, obligations and advantages to society, to which individuals should subscribe. According to Velasquez et al. (2010), “Ethics also means, then, the continuous effort of studying our own moral beliefs and our moral conduct, and striving to ensure that we, and the institutions we help to shape, live up to standards that are reasonable and solidly-based” (p. 5). This conceptualisation of ethics indicates the importance of ‘ethical mindedness’ and ‘ethical imagination,’ two central themes in this chapter. The following section explains these terms.

### *Ethical Mindedness*

In the context of ethical theory and thoughts, ethical mindedness can be deduced as a critical part of human behaviour. Fowers (2015) indicated that ethical mindedness is the “strong, rapid, and automatic inclination to see one’s own and others’ actions as right or wrong, good or bad” (p. 3). Ainsley (2019) viewed ethical mindedness as “the human propensity to be concerned with morality or ethics” (p. 6) and argued that ethical mindedness is a fundamental communal characteristic, an inborn inclination to integrity or rightfulness (fairness instinct). According to Gardner (2006), “the ethical mind ponders the nature of one’s work and the needs and desires of the society in which one lives” (p. 3). An ethical mind looks for the ways and means to serve society unselfishly. Since selfishness is assumed to be basic human nature (Ainsley, 2019), it can be argued that nurturing ethical mindedness involves a conflict between our lower self and moral functioning. A person with an ethical mind asks, “If all workers in my profession...did what I do, what would the world be like?” (Fryer, 2007, p. 52). Therefore, it can be argued that ethical mindedness is synonymous with moral absolutism, a notion that what is inherently right or wrong is independent of situations or circumstances.

Fowers argued that our ethical mindedness is how we respond to the ethical questions “in seven key domains of human sociality: attachment, identify information, imitation, cooperation, social norms, intergroup relations, and status and hierarchy” (2015, p. 3). Ethical mindedness, therefore, can draw from the notion of moral capacity – “individual potential to make morally-evaluable decisions” (Thomasma, & Weisstub, 2004, p. 9). The answers posed by one domain (e.g., cooperation) must be agreeable to the other (e.g., status and hierarchy). Clearly, existing regulations provide us with directions about right or wrong but being ‘ethical minded’ implies a philosophical realization and disposition to act beyond laws and regulations (Cloke & Jones, 2003).

Ethical mindedness can also be explained using the notion of moral disposition and capacity, namely, “individual potential to make morally-evaluable decisions” (Thomasma, & Weisstub, 2004, p. 9). Thomasma and Weisstub argued that moral capacity is combined with competent decisional capacity. Specifically, an individual should have the capacity to evaluate choices, make decisions and recognise their consequences based on the law that informs general and minimum requirements and ethics that offers a more normative perspective. Therefore, based on this discussion, we propose a working definition for ethical mindedness, “the ability to develop an impartial view of the individual, team, organization and phenomenon, and holding high standards... in every situation”. We argue that ethical mindedness is an indispensable competency in any profession that shapes society’s well-being and future, including education, law, and medicine. It is the ethical obligation to safeguard the interest of stakeholders (Freeman, 1994). In other words, any form of relationship or interaction with stakeholders with an ethical dimension should be guided by morality. This is especially so in the case of professionally oriented postgraduate degrees, where the stakes are very high in terms of their impact on building skills, imparting knowledge, researching new insights and perfecting practices. We will further elaborate on this insight as the chapter continues.

### *Ethical Imagination*

Ethics entails continually evaluating our thoughts and actions and making the necessary adjustments to ensure that we can conform to the highest standards of integrity, fairness and honesty in every sphere of our life (Christie (2005)). Ethical mindedness essentially involves ethical imagination. Sarid and Levanon (2021) claimed that the notion of ethical imagination could account for how individuals can expand their perspective of the world, engage in deep processes of self-understanding (self-consciousness) and become critical toward the social world around them, endowed with coherency, continuity and meaning. Thus, similar to ethical mindedness, ethical imagination is not merely a trait or a disposition. It is a competency that can be demonstrated in identifying and analyzing situated ethical dilemmas. Christie (2005) argued that, whether acknowledged or not, education always involves ethics and cultivating an ethical imagination ought to be one of the goals of education (Spector, 2017). Similarly, Rozuel (2016) emphasised the importance of ethical imagination for business ethics education in which critical or rational reflection and ethical imagination should be integrated within a community of practice (CoP) into the context of organisational life and business education (Sarid & Levanon, 2021). Christie (2005) outlined the complexity of an ethical imagination construct that is extended into several interrelated dimensions. In this view, ethical imagination entails:

- Ethics of commitment to intellectual rigour
- Ethics of civility
- Ethics of care

Developing ethical imagination is a central aspect of ethics of commitment to intellectual rigour. It occurs through exposure to the scholarship of in-depth disciplinary inquiry and the creative extension of this into new knowledge (Christie, 2005).

Education for an ethical imagination requires continuous engagement with issues of civility and cultivating an understanding of how the public domain is established by inter-human activity (Christie, 2005). Subsequently, ethical imagination demands a continual openness of thought and action concerning notions of human good and harm in the public realm. Finally, an ethics of care acknowledges the significance of care for the other before any concerns for reciprocity or mutual obligation (Christie, 2005). Christie argued that in relation to ethical imagination, the challenge is to hold a position of continuous questioning and reflection and be open to others who are different from ourselves. When applied in the education context, an ethics of care means building a capacity to care for the other as another and not oneself.

Similarly, ethics of care and its relevance to critical pedagogies in higher education has been emphasised by Zembylas et al. (2014). Building on Tronto's (1993) ideas on care and responsibility, Zembylas et al. highlighted that care is built on moral qualities of "trust and solidarity" (p. 205), which is especially important in the field of education. The disposition to care is critical to engage both students and educators in a critical interrogation of the interplay between power, emotion, and praxis in society and education. The value of these frameworks to an ethic of commitment to intellectual rigour, civility, and care is that they can help students exercise ethical imagination beyond themselves, considering the interests of multiple participants in this process.

From a psychological perspective, imagination is an essential component in rational thinking that helps order concepts and ideas and identifies overarching themes and logic. It also elicits feelings and emotions, acting as a core ingredient for human sympathy. However, imagination has to be qualified, and as Rozuel (2016) argued, it necessitates a connection with the self to be of moral value. In other words, imagination brings depth, movement and dynamism to ethics (Rozuel, 2016).

### ***Stakeholders in Engendering Ethical Practice and Culture in Professions-Based Studies***

The following section of this chapter addresses the part to be played by the major stakeholder groups in the professions-oriented postgraduate degrees in the higher education sector, such as Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) and highlights the role in promoting ethical

mindedness and imagination. As justification for this focus, we have a shared responsibility for an institutional research ethics committee and related professional education in an institute for the postgraduate study of Business. Nonetheless, we also believe that our arguments hold true for any profession-based or other discipline that engages in postgraduate research.

Developing staff and students' dispositions of ethical mindedness is essential to develop their capacity to exercise their ethical imagination in identifying and confronting ethical dilemmas. Redwood and Todres (2006) suggested that developing an ethical imagination is "an ongoing iterative process" (p. 39), which involves the application of sensitivity and tactfulness in dealing with the issues of autonomy, respect and confidentiality in complex situations. For example, a conflict of interest and an imbalance in power can occur when the boundary conditions between researchers and the researched are not explicitly considered and clearly defined. While a research ethics committee provides a safety net for the researcher by examining the ethical implication of a research proposal (e.g., risks/benefits, power differentials, confidentiality and consent), using agreed ethical guidelines and standards, the committee cannot ensure that in the enactment of the research the researcher would demonstrate appropriate behaviour when confronted by unforeseen, situated ethical challenges.

Arguably, research ethics is more than a set of rules that require compliance; rather, it entails a body of knowledge, values, capabilities and discipline and, as such, should be viewed as a discipline that requires institutions to adopt a deliberate educative process for both staff and students (Hill, 2004; Rensik, 2015). Many academics and research candidates in professions-oriented postgraduate education are focused primarily on their disciplinary scholarship, for example, economics, management, marketing and finance. Their research projects often include human participants, which give rise to various ethical issues such as recruitment of participants, behaviour toward vulnerable subjects, the confidentiality of information, and conforming to appropriate methods, analysis and reporting, among others. To conduct a study responsibly, scholars need to discern potential ethical issues. As argued by Healey et al. (2013), many Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoLT) researchers "lack formal training in ethics because they do not have philosophy backgrounds" (p. 23). All researchers who seek human participants, regardless of their disciplinary or professional orientation, require adequate guidance concerning the implications of "respect, free and informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, researcher/subject power differentials, conflict of interest declarations, and risk-to-benefit analysis" (p. 23).

A further complication is that many mature graduate candidates come to their studies with an employment history that has generated a rich background knowledge of their field of practice. They often present with a clear sense of what they want to research and the problems they wish to solve, including a predetermined idea of what the solution might be and how the single solution might be created. In other words, they engage in their studies with a *reformer* mindset with a fixed

solution in mind (Orrell & Curtis, 2016). However, an open research mindset should be the goal in higher degree research. Such a mindset is open to all possibilities in terms of understanding the nature of the problems being examined and weighing up the merits and consequences of alternative solutions to address them. A significant role for supervisors of graduate research is to guide students to progress from this reformer, *knowledge-creation* mindset that aims to arrive at a fixed solution into an open-minded researcher mindset that epitomises *knowledge building* (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2014). Ethical mindedness is central to the capacity of knowledge building as it is alert to the impact and consequences of change and the change process. Thus, we argue that ethical mindedness is a graduate disposition that contributes to producing graduates as professionals who have the potential to be ethical, industry and practice-based researchers of the future.

### ***Stakeholder Responsibility in Professionally Oriented Education***

The professional postgraduate education stakeholder groups include the institution itself, staff, and students. Each group has a unique responsibility to upkeeping the higher ethical and moral standards in the sector.

#### **Institutional Level (to Create Ethical Mindedness)**

What has been outlined thus far suggests that it is not good enough to leave the responsibility and development of ethical mindedness and ethical practice to the individual staff or student researcher. Rather we argue that academic institutions have the responsibility to ensure that their academic staff and students are enabled to be ethically minded in their conduct of research. Beyond the development of policy and processes, an institution needs to be deliberate in developing a culture of ethical mindedness such that its staff are role models of ethical practice for their students (Allen & Israel, 2018; Israel, 2014). A future orientation to student research acknowledges that students need to be prepared for a longer-term career in which they may well be industry-based researchers in their own organizations. Hence there is a need to include the goal of instilling the principles of ethical reasoning and ethical decision making as part of a researcher mindset. The institution's responsibility is to set an ethical and moral culture and standards for the staff and students to adopt and situationally adapt. In this context, an ethically minded orientation is warranted at all levels of the institution, including the development of policies and procedures, curriculum development, staff and student recruitment, staff development and modes of course delivery.

In the Australian context, for example, it is pertinent to review the perspectives of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 - updated 2018) developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)



(2018). The statement has stipulated specific institutional responsibilities of Australian research institutions, and these guidelines are relevant to the ethical conduct of the institution in all its activities. The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 - updated 2018) suggests that an ethical research process upholds research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect.

- The research merit and integrity, among other things, indicate the rigour and appropriateness of the research methods employed.
- The insistence on merit and integrity can be extended to all institution activities, such as curriculum development in developing ethical minded culture.
- Justice refers to the fairness of the processes that again would be relevant to critical processes such as recruitment of students and staff, delivery of the MBA program, etc.
- Respect is about regarding and accepting differences, privacy, culture, and other diversities of people involved in institutional activities.

These values are critical in developing an ethical-minded culture in the institution.

In this connection, Procaro-Foley and Bean (2002) proposed that higher education institutions should have written codes of ethical conduct to create an ethical culture. Essentially, a higher educational institution's perceptions of ethical culture influence employees' ethical behaviour (Cullen et al., 1989). It is imperative to recruit ethically oriented people to develop ethical institutions (Procaro-Foley & Bean, 2002). This is in line with the virtue ethical theories of the Aristotelian school (Athanasoulis, 2013) that virtuous behaviour stems from a virtuous person.

### **Staff Level (to Deliver Ethical Mindedness)**

The staff responsible for the institution's ethical conduct belongs to three categories: the managerial staff and leadership; the academic staff; and the administrative staff. The executive team and the academic leaders are responsible for developing an ethical code of conduct and other related policies and procedures. This group's responsibility is to create an ethically minded culture and effectively implement the policies and practices. The role of leadership in creating an ethical climate and culture in an organisation has been widely reported in the extant literature (Mihelic et al., 2010; Brown & Treviño, 2006). The moral identity of a leader is an important determinant of ethical leadership (Mayer et al., 2012), resulting in the implementation of an ethical culture and further recruitment of new leaders with high moral predispositions (Procaro-Foley & Bean, 2002). Ethical leadership is also found to influence job satisfaction and levels of staff commitment both directly and indirectly. In addition, it can indirectly influence the shaping of the ethical climate in an organisation (Neubert et al., 2009). The above evidence emphasises ethical leadership as an essential prerequisite in developing an ethically minded institution.

Academic staff play an important role in creating and implementing ethical mindedness in higher education institutions. The academic staff members are particularly responsible for upholding the ethical standards in research and teaching.

The administrative staff has similar responsibility in supporting the academic staff and students in understanding, interpreting and practising the ethical standards in higher educational institutions. Couch and Dodd (2005) listed the following responsibilities for academic staff members:

- Be informed about the ethical policies and procedures and facilitate discussions to create an ethically minded climate in the institution.
- Help develop the codes of ethics relevant to the institution.
- Identify the inconsistencies between the ethical policies and practice in the institution.
- Communicate and collaborate with colleagues to develop an ethically minded climate and culture in the institution.
- Provide ethical leadership, if necessary, in developing an ethical learning climate in the institution.
- Educate the students to understand their organisations' ethical climate and environment and help develop skills in practising ethical standards.
- Create a learning curriculum for the students to understand the ethical dilemmas in their personal and professional lives and prepare them with the skills to tackle the ethical challenges.

In addition, Brown and Krager (1985) suggested that academic staff have the primary role as instructors in bringing various ethical questions and challenges for free and fair discussions in the classrooms and other communications with the students. In addition, the academic staff are responsible for designing and developing a curriculum for learning the principles and practices of moral-ethical practice. Subsequently, academics are responsible for ensuring that ethical research processes are implemented at the practice level for the students and staff. Furthermore, as research professionals, the academics should act as mentors for students to coach them on the ethical practices in their professional lives.

### **Student Level (to Practise Ethical Mindedness)**

Ethical mindedness is an essential requirement among professional MBA and DBA students in tackling ethical challenges in research, life and professions. Brown and Krager (1985) explained that students' responsibility as advisees, classroom students, school members, researchers, and mentees in an ethical learning environment, contributes to creating an ethically minded learning culture. As advisees and classroom students, all students are allowed to participate in discussing and autonomously deliberating ideas on theories and practices. This autonomous and fair learning environment presents an opportunity to develop an ethically minded learning environment. As school members, students are provided with various options to participate in educational, recreational, administrative, and charitable activities. All these interactions are opportunities to learn and practice ethically-minded values. For example, a student member on a curriculum development team could actively influence designing an ethically oriented curriculum. Also, actively participating in

MBA classroom discussions presents opportunities for learning about different ethical challenges faced by other students.

As researchers, students are exposed to possible ethical dilemmas and challenges. They are also trained in research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect, as stipulated by the national guidelines for ethical conduct in human research. These ethical research orientations can develop an ethical-minded approach among MBA and DBA/PhD students. As mentees, students have informal professional interactions with academic team members, leading to a reciprocal exchange of ideas and insights related to ethical practices and dilemmas.

In summary, promoting ethical mindedness in professional education warrants joint efforts by the major stakeholders, including institution, staff and students. The following section explores how we foster ethical imagination in business and management education through academic research.

## **Fostering Ethical Imagination in Business and Management Learning, Teaching and Scholarship**

Despite increasing the presence of *ethics talk* in business curricula, the ability of business ethics educators to support the development of morally responsible agents is questionable (Brenkert, 2019; Rozuel, 2016). While revisiting the nature of ethics education, Rozuel (2016) argued that imagination contributes to enhancing self-knowledge and ethical reflection in organisational life and business education. Likewise, Nussbaum (2010) advocated that a daring imagination is needed to be present in business curriculums to develop an empathetic and sympathetic understanding of various human experiences.

Ethical imagination is central to adult learning and critical reflection and involves either critical reflection or tacit judgment (Mezirow, 1998). Based on Taylor's (1992) view of identity formation, the ethical imagination accounts for how students explore who they are and who they could be, demonstrating the integral role of psychological work in sustaining moral development and ethical integrity (Rozuel, 2016). In particular, Rozuel stated that meaningful moral education would pursue specific goals based on imagination-based activities, ensuring the following is included within curriculum:

- a psychological exploration.
- a confrontation with— and acceptance of—the inevitable shadow.
- a withdrawal of personal projections by following and expanding the call for critical self-reflection and exposure to business and non-business material.
- an acceptance of a fundamental human need to experience both the rational mind and the transcendent;
- an affirmation of individual integrity in contrast to an identification with the mass (reflecting upon the meaning of integrity and the risks of compartmentalization) (Rozuel, 2011, p. 48).

Rozuel (2016) argued that such curriculum elements constitute *a life task* and require significant efforts from the individuals, yet these are what ethics education should be concerned with primarily. Various examples of imagination-based activities that can be embedded into the curriculum and their impact on education outcomes for meaningful business ethics education are listed in Table 12.1. For example, role-playing is often used to explain people's behaviour concerning business ethics (Conrad, 2018), addressing important questions while practicing ethical imagination, such as: What motivates people to behave in this way? To what extent is it ethically oriented? Is there a sense of justice? Is there a conflict of goals between ethics and market economy? Do companies have a social responsibility?

Imagination-based activities explore the domains of the potential or possible, provided the purpose is self-understanding and appreciation of the other, so that individuals acquire an advanced sense of who they are, identify dark aspects of the self (the shadow), and recognise inclinations to project qualities or flaws onto others etc. (Rozuel, 2016).

**Table 12.1** Examples of imagination-based activities and potential educational outcomes

Goal (inner and moral work) and related activities	Educational outcomes (business ethics education)
Psychological exploration (via journaling with reflective reviews; role-play, creative imaginative writing)	Enhanced ability to practice moral/ethical imagination in stakeholder management More opportunities to develop individual and organisational creativity.
Shadow work—Awareness and acceptance of otherness (via 'psychological mapping')	Awareness of the of compartmentalisation phenomenon (see Rozuel (2011)) Awareness of the effects of organizational scripts that guide cognition & action but preclude consideration of ethical issues
Projection identification (via role-play) followed by discussion about the experience of interpreting a character	Appreciation of group dynamics
Recognition of need for both rational mind and transcendent (via encounters with guest-speakers open to the transcendent realm)	Appreciation of meaning and purpose, both at the individual and organisational levels.
Affirmation of individual integrity (via reflecting upon past situations of moral compromise)	Clearly defined moral values consistently guiding behaviour. Appreciation of the complexity of life situations, and the need for empathetic dispositions

Adapted from Rozuel (2016, p. 48)

## ***Research Ethics Perspective: Translating Ethical Theory into Practice***

By merging the values of covenantal ethics and action research, Stevens et al. (2016) created a process of Structural Ethical Reflection (SER), which is either an individual or collaborative process to identify key values and critically test the ways in which these values are embedded in research practice (see Table 12.2).

**Table 12.2** Core values of ethical imagination informing each stage of the research

Processes	Values		
	Caring	Trust	Integrity
Developing partnerships	Find ways for partners meet their goals and their organizations	Consider the time it takes to develop trust	Follow through on actions agreed upon with any partners
Constructing research question	Create questions to assist participants self-reflect and gain potential growth	Ensure that the research question is one that has the potential to enhance trust	Develop open-ended and flexible questions that adapt to the research environment
Planning project/action	Design projects that allow ample time to develop relationships with participants	Look for ways to ensure confidentiality with participants	Be forthright with stakeholders concerning research project activities and schedule
Recruiting participants	Follow up whole group invitations with personal follow-up messages	Ensure participants understand the safeguards in place to protect them	Ensure the option to participate is open to all staff members as defined in the proposal
Collecting data/taking action	Establish interview environment that is hospitality & allows participants to unwind	Honour the agreement with participant s	Follow in word and spirit the agreement co-developed with each research participants
Analysing data/evaluating action	Make careful notations about follow-up or clarifying questions that arise during analysis	Remember the primacy of the relationship with the research participant	Remember the implied responsibility, taking multiple, partial, & situated perspectives, to stitch them together
Member checking	Check-in with participants prior to undertaking member checking processes	Revisit the agreement with each research participant	Provide participants with the chance to respond to interview transcript and summary
Going public (presentation and publication)	Ensure that presentations & publications acknowledge participants contributions.	Be clear about the efforts made to develop and maintain trust with participant	Do what I said I was going to do, primarily in taking a strength seeking stance with relation to publication of findings

Adapted from Stevens et al. (2016, p. 440)

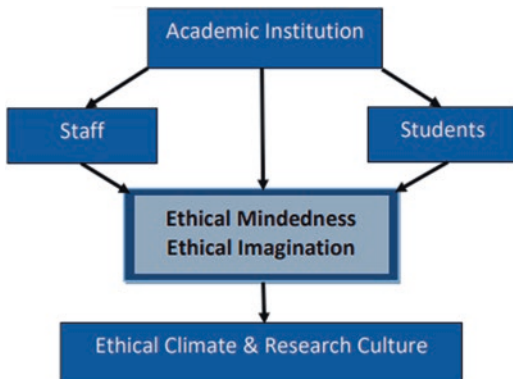
Combining ethical reflections and ethical imagination helps ground individual or collaborative research inquiry in an explicit set of values that consequently informs each stage of the research in a planned and purposeful way to maintain solid ethical standards. This comprehensive approach serves as an ethical compass that enables foreseeing and overcoming ethical challenges as the research process unfolds, building ethical mindedness and ethical imagination capacities. Research practice can be staged into several phases such as: developing partnerships; constructing research question; planning project/action; recruiting participants; collecting data; analysing data; member checking; going public via presentation; and publication.

Key values should represent an ethical stance or a relational mindset by way of thinking, feeling, and acting, that researchers would like to adopt in each stage of their research investigation. Stevens et al. (2016) recommended choosing 7–10 key values to be the most representative of the research (see Stevens et al. for a 50 + values list). Identifying these core values and anticipating possible ethical implications in each research stage have empowered students to find their *ethical voice* and protect these values inherent in the research (Stevens et al.,) which are essential for adopting an ethical stance and researcher identity. Overall, the nature of SER process is ongoing, relational, concrete and iterative, often mirroring research values that research participants embrace. Importantly, structured ethical reflections revolve around values representing the core of ethical imagination (i.e., care, trust, integrity).

## **The Role of Ethical Mindedness and Ethical Imagination in Supporting an Ethical Climate and Culture: A Proposed Framework**

The discussion in the preceding sections regarding the acquisition and exercise of ethical mindedness and ethical imagination underscores that it should not only be limited to fostering ethical practice in research to an individual level but also highlights that it is an essential organizational capability. As a result of this exploration, we have generated the following conceptual framework, illustrated in Fig. 12.1, that highlights the overarching importance of the institution's role in ensuring the development of a climate and culture for fostering their goal of ethical research practice, to which they are held to account. To address and achieve this institutional responsibility, higher education leaders need to provide policy frameworks, infrastructure, and resources to enable staff and students to acquire professional dispositions, knowledge, and capabilities to engage in ethical research practice autonomously.

**Fig. 12.1** A framework for the role of ethical mindedness and ethical imagination



Note. This framework supports an ethical climate and culture in professionally oriented education

The efficacy of an ethical climate and culture in an academic institution will depend on the collective goals and efforts by key institutional stakeholders in fostering the delivery of opportunities for both academic staff and research higher degree students to enhance their ethical mindedness so they can exercise their ethical imagination to identify potential ethical dilemmas in their research approach. Failure to provide the means for such professional learning of staff and students undermines this important institutional responsibility. It will fail to develop a climate that will produce graduates who fully understand the importance of ethical practice in research and professional practice.

Following on from our exploration of the achievement of an ethical climate and culture, we offer three propositions:

**Proposition 1:** Engendering ethical mindedness and ethical imaginations lay critical foundations in creating an ethical climate and culture in organisations offering postgraduate professionally oriented education.

**Proposition 2:** The three major stakeholder groups (institutions, staff and students) in postgraduate professionally-oriented education play a critical role in creating and shaping the ethical climate and culture in an organisation.

**Proposition 3:** The prime responsibility for creating and fostering an ethical climate and culture belongs to institutional leadership’s goals, infrastructure, and resourcing.

## Conclusion

While we have recounted that theorists of ethics and ethical thought asserted that ethical mindedness and ethical imagination are innate characteristics (Haidt, 2012; Fowers, 2015), these attributes and capabilities can be further nurtured and enhanced so that research practice is not limited to mere compliance to policies and regulations. In postgraduate profession-oriented education, it is the academic institution's responsibility to set ethical and moral standards for the staff and students and promote a culture of ethical mindedness and ethical imagination, rather than rely on mere compliance. In doing so, both staff and students are enabled to identify and explore potential solutions together while exercising critical appreciation of ethical dilemmas in research contexts processes and outcomes. Students should graduate with dispositions toward ethics practice in their professions that enable them to function autonomously without infringing and overstepping natural justice laws and the rights of others, especially those with limited power and control over their environment. This graduate capability is critical in professions-based disciplines. This is especially the case in the discipline of Business, where there has been an over-emphasis on practical action skills and processes, often at the expense of fostering dispositions of integrity and ethical professional practice capabilities.

## References

- Ainsley, J. B. (2019). *Toward a theory of ethical mindedness: Moral psychology and the evolution of human nature* (Publication no. 22592105). Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami. ProQuest Dissertations and These Global.
- Allen, G. & Israel, M. (2018) Moving beyond regulatory compliance: Building institutional support for ethical reflection in research. In Iphofen, R. & Tolich, M. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research ethics* (pp. 453–462). Sage.
- Alzola, M., Hennig, A., & Romar, E. (2020). Thematic symposium editorial: Virtue ethics between East and West. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 165(2), 177–189.
- Annas, J. (1995). *The morality of happiness*. Oxford University Press.
- Athanassoulis, N. (2013). *Virtue ethics*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Baumane-Vitolina, I., Cals, I., & Sumilo, E. (2016). Is ethics rational? Teleological, deontological and virtue ethics theories reconciled in the context of traditional economic decision making. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 39, 108–114.
- Bereiter, C. & Scardamalia, M. (2014). Knowledge building and knowledge creation: One concept, two hills to climb. In S. C. Tan, H. J. So, & J. Yeo (Eds.) *Knowledge creation in education* (pp. 35–52). Springer.
- Brenkert, G. G. (2019). Mind the gap! The challenges and limits of (global) business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 155(4), 917–930.
- Brown, R. D., & Krager, L. (1985). Ethical issues in graduate education: Faculty and student responsibilities. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 56(4), 403–418.
- Brown, M. E., & Treviño, L. K. (2006). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(6), 595–616.
- Christie, P. (2005). Education for ethical imagination. *Social Alternatives*, 24(4), 39–44.



- Cloke, P., & Jones, O. (2003). Grounding ethical mindfulness for/in nature: Trees in their places. *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 6(3), 195–213.
- Conrad, C. A. (2018). *Business ethics – A philosophical and behavioural approach*. Springer.
- Couch, S., & Dodd, S. (2005). Doing the right thing: Ethical issues in higher education. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 97(3), 20.
- Cullen, J. B., Victor, B., & Stephens, C. (1989). An ethical weather report: Assessing the organizational ethical climate. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18(20), 50–62.
- Deigh, J. (2010). *An introduction to ethics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dhiman, S. (2021). Being good and being happy: Eudaimonic well-being insights from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. *The Palgrave Handbook of Workplace Well-Being*, 3–32.
- Eggleston, B., & Miller, D. E. (Eds.). (2014). *The Cambridge companion to utilitarianism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ferrell, O. C., & Gresham, L. G. (1985). A contingency framework for understanding ethical decision making in marketing. *The Journal of Marketing*, 87–96.
- Fowers, B. (2015). *The evolution of ethics: Human sociality and the emergence of ethical mindedness*. Springer.
- Freeman, R. E. (1994). The politics of stakeholder theory: Some future directions. *Business ethics quarterly*, 409–421.
- Fryer, B. (2007). The ethical mind: A conversation with psychologist Howard Gardner. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(3), 51–56.
- Gardner, H. (2006). Minds viewed globally: A personal introduction. *Five minds for the future* (pp. 1–19).
- Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. Pantheon. Vintage.
- Healey, R. L., Bass, T., Caulfield, J., Hoffman, A., McGinn, M. K., Miller-Young, J., & Haigh, M. (2013). Being ethically minded: Practising the scholarship of teaching and learning in an ethical manner. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry: The ISSOTL Journal*, 1(2), 23–33.
- Hill, A. L. (2004). Ethics education: Recommendations for an evolving discipline. *Counseling and Values*, 48(3), 183–203.
- Hunt, S. D., & Vitell, S. (1986). A general theory of marketing ethics. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 6(1), 5–16.
- Israel, M. (2014). *Research ethics and integrity for social scientists: Beyond regulatory compliance*. SAGE Publications.
- Kohlberg, L. (1984). *The psychology of moral development: The nature and validity of moral stages* (Vol. 2). HarperCollins College Div.
- Laczniak, G. R., & Murphy, P. E. (1993). *Ethical marketing decisions: The higher road*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Louden, R. B. (1984). On some vices of virtue ethics. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21(3), 227–236.
- MacIntyre, A. C. (1985). After virtue: A study in moral theory. 2nd (corrected) ed. London: Duckworth, 1985. *Three rival versions of moral enquiry: Encyclopaedia, genealogy, and tradition: Gifford lectures delivered in the University of Edinburgh in 1988*.
- MacIntyre, A. (2003). *A short history of ethics: A history of moral philosophy from the Homeric age to the 20th century*. Routledge.
- Mayer, D. M., Aquino, K., Greenbaum, R. L., & Kuenzi, M. (2012). Who displays ethical leadership, and why does it matter? An examination of antecedents and consequences of ethical leadership. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(1), 151–171.
- Mezrow, J. (1998). On critical reflection. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48(3), 185–198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074171369804800305>
- Mihelic, K. K., Lipicnik, B., & Tekavcic, M. (2010). Ethical leadership. *International Journal of Management & Information Systems (IJMIS)*, 14(5).

- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2018). National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018). <https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018>. Accessed 5 February 2022.
- Neubert, M. J., Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., Roberts, J. A., & Chonko, L. B. (2009). The virtuous influence of ethical leadership behaviour: Evidence from the field. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 90(2), 157–170.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2010). *Not for profit: Why democracy needs the humanities*. Princeton University Press.
- Orrell, J., & Curtis, D. (2016). Transforming identities from students and reformers to researchers. In J. Orrell & D. Curtis (Eds.), *Publishing higher degree research: Making the transition from student to researcher*. Sense Publishers.
- Procario-Foley, E. G., & Bean, D. F. (2002). Institutions of higher education: Cornerstones in building ethical organizations. *Teaching Business Ethics*, 6(1), 101–116.
- Redwood, S., & Todres, L. (2006). Exploring the ethical imagination: Conversation as practice versus committee as gatekeeper. *Qualitative Social Research*, 7(2), 38–45.
- Rensik, D. B. (2015). What is ethics in research & why is it important?. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/index.cfm?links=false>
- Rozuel, C. (2011). The moral threat of compartmentalization: Self, roles and responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102(4), 685–697.
- Rozuel, C. (2016). Challenging the ‘million zeros’: The importance of imagination for business ethics education. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 138(1), 39–51.
- Sarid, A., & Levanon, M. (2021). Rethinking the theory of communities of practice in education: Critical reflection and ethical imagination. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 1–12.
- Shanahan, K. J., & Hyman, M. R. (2003). The development of a virtue ethics scale. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 42(2), 197–208.
- Singer, P. (2011). *Practical ethics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Singer, P. (2016). *One world now: The ethics of globalization*. Yale University Press.
- Spector, H. (2017). Cultivating the ethical imagination in education: Perspectives from three public intellectuals. *The Review of education/pedagogy/cultural studies*, 39(1), 39–59.
- Stevens, D. M., Brydon-Miller, M., & Raider-Roth, M. (2016). Structured ethical reflection in practitioner inquiry: Theory, pedagogy, and practice. *The educational forum (West Lafayette, Ind.)*, 80(4), 430–443.
- Taylor, C. (1992). *The ethics of authenticity*: Harvard University press.
- Thomasma, D. C., & Weisstub, D. N. (Eds.). (2004). *The variables of moral capacity* (Vol. 21). Springer
- Thompson, C. J. (1995). A contextualist proposal for the conceptualization and study of marketing ethics. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 177–191.
- To, W. M., & Yu, B. T. (2020). Rise in higher education researchers and academic publications. *Emerald Open Research*, 2. <https://doi.org/10.35241/emeraldopenres.13437.1>
- Tronto, J. C. (1993). *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Velasquez, M., Andre, C., Shanks, T., & Meyer, M. J. (2010). Thinking ethically. *Issues in Ethics*, (August), 2–5.
- Ward, K. (2019). *The development of Kant's view of ethics*. Wiley.
- White, M. D. (2004). Can homo economicus follow Kant's categorical imperative? *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 33(1), 89–106.
- Wotruba, T. R. (1990). A comprehensive framework for the analysis of ethical behaviour, with a focus on sales organizations. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 10(2), 29–42.
- Zembylas, M., Bozalek, V., & Shefer, T. (2014). Tronto's notion of privileged irresponsibility and the reconceptualisation of care: Implications for critical pedagogies of emotion in higher education. *Gender and Education*, 26(3), 200–214.
- Zuckerman, E. W. (2017). *The categorical imperative revisited: Implications of categorization as a theoretical tool*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

**Mamun Ala** is a Senior Lecturer (Strategic Management and International Business) and Discipline Leader, Human Resources Management at the Australian Institute of Business (AIB). Previously he taught at the University of South Australia (UniSA) and Flinders University for eight years. Mamun's research focuses on international trade regulation, industrial policy, and online learning and teaching. He has a PhD in Applied Economics (UniSA), an MPhil in Management (NUB), MBA (DU) and Graduate Certificate in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education (Swinburne University). His publications appear in various outlets including *Journal of Business Research*. Mamun also serves as the Ethics Committee Coordinator and Mentor and Advisor for Indigenous Students at AIB.

**Svetlana De Vos** is an experienced Senior Lecturer (Marketing and Entrepreneurship) with a demonstrated history of working in the higher education industry. She is a strong research professional with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) focused in Business Research, with Dean's Commendation Award for Doctoral Thesis Excellence from University of Adelaide, Australia. Her publications appear in *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, and *Psychology & Marketing*. Svetlana is also research - active in the domain of e-learning, student journeys, and student retention. She served as a long-standing member (4 years) of AIB Ethics committee.

**Sumesh Nair** has been working in the Australian higher education sector for the last 15 years. Sumesh currently works with the Australian Institute of Business (AIB) as a senior lecturer, and he previously worked with Monash and Murdoch Universities for 11 years. He had earned a PhD in environmental marketing in 2006. Since then, Sumesh has been researching and publishing in green marketing, sustainability, pro-environmental behaviours and marketing ethics. Sumesh's research appeared in the *Journal of Macromarketing*, *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, *Business Strategy* and the *Environment and Ergonomics*, to name a few. Sumesh's passion for environmental and ethical issues drives his research and teaching.

**Janice Orrell** is Emeritus Professor of Higher Education and Assessment at Flinders University in the College of Education, Psychology and Social Work as well as being an independent higher education consultant. She has been an educator for more than 50 years and in higher education in particular for 40 years. She is also a former foundation Director of Discipline Initiatives and Networks for the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. Her projects encompass Assessment as Learning, Work Integrated Learning, teacher thinking research and doctoral education as a field of practice and research. She is currently a supervisor of Doctoral and PhD candidates in the fields of post compulsory education and the education of the next generation of professional practitioners. She has also been involved in nonformal 'education for liberation' with Tribal and Dalit women in South India for more than 35 years. She is a life-time member of both HERDSA and the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) for her contribution to research and development in higher education and has recently been awarded the James W Wilson award for outstanding contribution to research by the USA Cooperative Education and Internship Association (CEIA).