

The Ethical Behavior of Retail Managers

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ABSTRACT. A measure of ethics termed ethical behavior (EB) is postulated and tested across the moral philosophy types of managers. The findings suggest that certain managers, classified as rule deontologists, appear to rank higher on the EB scale than any other philosophy type tested.

Within the area of sales, few researchers have dealt with retailers (Fitzmaurice and Randolph, 1961; Tatham, 1974; Dubinsky and Levy, 1985; Belizzi and Hite, 1989), and none have specifically examined their unethical behavior. The purpose of this article is to explore the ethical behavior (EB) construct as defined by Ferrell and Skinner (1988) of different retail managers and determine whether philosophy type or demographic characteristics affect it.

Recent literature suggests that moral philosophy and cognitive moral development are significant contributors to ethical behavior (Jensen *et al.*, 1981; Derry, 1989; Harris, 1990; Mayo and Marks, 1990; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 1990). In addition, several works suggest that certain demographic variables may explain behavioral differences (Beltramini *et al.*, 1984; Chonko and Hunt, 1985; Crittenden *et al.*, 1986; Kidwell *et al.*, 1987; Derry, 1987; Gable and

Topol, 1988; Tsalikis and Ortiz-Buonafina, 1990; Kelley *et al.*, 1990).

To provide background and support for this research, a general definition of ethics and ethical behavior is offered. Next, several philosophy types are presented along with a discussion of demographic research pertinent to the EB construct. The method of research and a comparison of the Ferrell and Skinner construct are then presented along with a discussion of the results and implications for practitioners and academicians.

Ethics and ethical behavior defined

Taylor (1975) defined ethics as "inquiry into the nature and grounds of morality where the term morality is taken to mean moral judgements, standards and rules of conduct" (p. 1). Another variation of the concept is that ethics is the study and philosophy of human conduct with an emphasis on the determination of right and wrong. The term *ethics* commonly refers to "just" or "right" standards of behavior among individuals in a situation. Extending this definition, Browning and Zabriskie (1983) added that these standards are defined using "recognized" social principles involving justice and fairness (p. 219).

Several ideas emerge from these definitions. First, ethics refers to values and conduct. These values are the result of the learning process. Kohlberg (1976) and Rest (1975) suggest that people go through a learning process from obeying simple rules to realizing that situational variables can impact and change such rules. These rules, maxims, and the realization of situational variables are explained through the use of moral philosophy which is used to justify decisions as being ethical. A problem in the justification

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process is which perspective defines what is right. In this research, the perspective of the organization is used to define ethical behavior. Deviance from corporate policies relegate the individual to a lower ranking of ethical behavior. Ontologically, this perspective defines truth as "a subjective evaluation that cannot be properly inferred outside the context provided by the theory" (Peter and Olson, 1983, p. 119) or domain as defined by the organization. Wedded to the relativist/constructionist approach is that of the acceptance of scientific realism (Hunt, 1990, p. 13).

In other words, ethical behavior will be defined using the organization as the arbiter of right and wrong and will be empirically tested using Ferrell and Skinner's (1988) ethical behavior construct which measures deviance from organizational norms. Failure to define the EB concept in this manner opens debate from both an individual as well as societal perspective. The organizational definition of ethical behavior is used because in retailing the business entity provides a knowledge base for workers who may accept the organization as a legitimate source of right and wrong within the business environment.

Moral philosophy types

The rules and maxims an individual uses in making decisions are inherited in a number of different ways and constitute a major construct in the ethical decision process (Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Trevino, 1986; Ferrell *et al.*, 1989). These heuristics help in the formulation of ethical prescriptions which, collectively based, are called philosophical ethical theories (Fasching, 1981; DeGeorge, 1982; Barry, 1983; Cressey and Moore, 1983; Dubinsky and Levy, 1985). In these theories, morality is based on assumptions that individuals are grounded in systems with principles of conduct. These principles are applied to the decision through moral philosophies.

There are many theories in moral philosophy as well as classification systems. Two such systems that appear to be plausible are teleologicalism and deontologicalism (Ross, 1930; Frankena, 1973; Beauchamp and Bowie, 1979; Robin, 1980; Murphy and Laczniak, 1981; Laczniak, 1983; Ferrell and Gresham,

1985; Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Fraedrich, 1988; Ferrell *et al.*, 1989).

Teleologicalism generally refers to moral philosophies that deal with the moral worth of a behavior as determined by its consequences (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985, p. 89). The term teleology implies a direction toward a goal. Teleological ethical theories basically hold that acts are morally right or good if they produce some desired end. Two groups of teleological theories are egoism and utilitarianism.

Egoism argues that only the act which results in the maximum amount of good towards the individual should be chosen (Rosen, 1978, p. 38). The basic premise of utilitarianism (Bentham, 1789; Hoaglund, 1984) is not to maximize individual "good," but rather to maximize "good" in general, or the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Frankena, 1973, pp. 14–15). Smart and Williams (1973) modified this basic tenant by suggesting that an act becomes morally right if it produces the most pleasure for the greatest number of people. The next iteration of utilitarianism shifts the focus even further to adoption of whatever set of rules will accomplish a desired end (Brandt, 1959; Lyons, 1965).

Deontological theories mainly stress methods or intentions in a particular behavior rather than societal rights. Fundamental to deontological theories is the inherent rightness of behaviors. In rule deontology, conformity to rules determines ethicalness. For example, the Equitable Corporation financial companies adhere to a rule deontological mentality which can be found in their policy statement on ethics and is as follows:

Breaches of law, regulations, violations of this Policy Statement or other irregularities — whatever your motive (including improving corporate performance or your own enrichment) — will not be tolerated (Equitable, p. 9).

This statement shows a rule which has no exceptions. In addition, it is not company based in its perspective but rather individually oriented. This orientation brings the Equitable Corporation into the realm of rule deontology. By contrast, if the statement excluded the phrase — including improving corporate performance — one could argue that the company may be teleological (rule utilitarian) in its orientation.

In act deontology, particular acts are emphasized and rules serve only as guidelines. Carritt (1928), Sartre (1947), and Garner and Rosen (1967) generally assert that the rightness of a given action is independent of rules. Cavanagh *et al.* (1981) discuss philosophies which are a form of act deontology. These philosophies focus on certain rights that are deemed inalienable such as: (1) freedom of conscience, (2) freedom of consent, (3) privacy, (4) free speech and (5) due process. In the previous example of Equitable, one sees a rule deontological slant; however, by including such phrases as, "in most cases," one changes the focus from a specific rule to the situation itself and the variables that interact with it, thus creating act deontology.

Because moral philosophies ride a continuum which can have an infinite number of slight variations, five categories were identified and used to represent the major portion of philosophies found in the empirical literature. As was mentioned, teleology and deontology are sometimes used in segmenting moral philosophy (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985; Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Fraedrich, 1988; Ferrell *et al.*, 1989; Mayo and Marks, 1990) as well as act and rule schema (Taylor, 1975; Boyce and Jensen, 1978; Starr, 1983; Fritzsche and Becker, 1984a; Fraedrich, 1988; Fraedrich *et al.*, 1991; Fraedrich and Ferrell, 1991).

Several empirical studies have attempted to demonstrate that an actual link between normative ethical theories and their existence in the business place exist. One of the first to accomplish this was Fritzsche and Becker (1984b). Their study linked management behavior to ethical philosophies and showed a skewing toward teleological philosophies. Several others have built on this work and have demonstrated that this skewing may be an anomaly (Fraedrich, 1988; Fraedrich *et al.*, 1991; Fraedrich and Ferrell, 1991). Others such as Mayo and Marks (1990) have empirically shown a link between deontological and teleological evaluations and intentions.

Demographic characteristics

Few studies in the business ethics field have discussed whether or not demographic characteristics have an impact on the ethical behavior of business

people. In Beltramine *et al.*'s (1984) study of college students it was discovered that gender may be a distinguishing factor. The results showed that female students were more concerned with ethical issues than their male counterparts. But in Crittenden *et al.*'s (1986) study of marketing students no differences were found between gender and ethical standards. Chonko and Hunt (1985) also found work experience to be a factor. They reported that lower-level managers experienced more ethical problems than upper-level management.

Finally, Kelly *et al.* (1990) studied the relationship between perceived ethical behavior and various demographic characteristics. Their conclusions were that gender, age, and experience yielded significant results. Specifically, they reported that females, older researchers, and those in their present job for ten or more years rated their behavior as more ethical. Based on the few studies conducted and the differing results, an attempt was made to classify whether or not certain demographic variables do affect ethical behavior.

Research instrument and design

The research design used consisted of one dependent construct, ethical behavior (EB) and how it was affected by moral philosophy types and demographic characteristics. The questionnaire design developed was reviewed by various marketing experts. A version of the questionnaire, incorporating their responses, was submitted to the sample corporation. The corporation in turn, suggested several alterations to the instrument. The questionnaire was again given to various marketing faculty for refinement.

Next, a pilot study was done which consisted of 40 retailing managers and assistant managers of different corporations. These respondents reviewed the questionnaire for content and readability. Content was analyzed by asking the business people if they understood what the verbiage was trying to convey. Readability refers to certain awkward or grammatically incorrect statements in the original scales that were identified by the group. After these modifications were made, a validity check was done using experts in these scales to assure that

no significant word or concept meanings were altered.

The questionnaire design itself consisted of vignettes using personal integrity. Personal integrity was selected as the ethical issue on the basis of past research (Beauchamp and Bowie, 1979, Barry, 1983; Fritzsche and Becker, 1984b). Vignettes were used because they tend to elicit a higher quality of data from respondents than is possible from simple questions (Alexander and Becker, 1978). Respondents were asked to read three vignettes and respond to whether or not they would be likely or unlikely to commit a specific act (see Figure 1). Next, the respondent was asked to choose the most appropriate explanation for the decision made. The following statements correspond to the five measured philosophy types:

- (1) Rule Utilitarian
"If everyone (violated confidences, cheated on their income taxes, made under-the-table payments) no one would be able to trust anyone. As a result, no one could really be happy or have peace of mind."
- (2) Egoist
"My decision, whatever it may be, will lead to some goal for myself (i.e., praise, recognition, money, keeping my job, power over the system, promotion)."
- (3) Act Deontologist
"In this case, one has (not) an obligation to (provide information, report the extra income, pay the money)."
- (4) Rule Deontologist
"(Divulging confidential information, cheating the government, providing money to individuals) is simply wrong, regardless of the results it might bring."

Situation 1 (Betraying a Trust)

Sherry Smith has recently accepted a job with a young aggressive retail company. Smith's former retail employer is rumored to have developed a confidential in-house software package which is easily used by managers. When Sherry was hired she was led to believe her selection was based upon her management potential. On the morning of her third week, Smith received the following memo from her superior: "Please meet with me tomorrow for the purpose of discussing your former employer's software package."

If you were Smith, what are the chances you would provide your new employer with the software?

Likely		Unlikely
1 2 3 4 5		6 7

Situation 2 (Tax Evasion)

Allan Bartels did some odd jobs for neighbors (i.e., painting, building sheds and garages, etc.) and was paid substantial sums of money. Allan knows that these monies go unreported. At tax time Allan considers his options of reporting the extra income or not. He knows that the IRS will never find out about the extra income.

If you were Bartels what are the chances you would report the extra income?

Likely		Unlikely
1 2 3 4 5		6 7

Situation 3 (Bribery)

Ed Johnson is in charge of market development for Rollfast Company. In the past, the company has been barred from entering a market in a large Asian country by collusive efforts of the local retail corporations. Rollfast could expect to net 550 million dollars per year from sales if it could penetrate this market. Last week a businessman from the country in question contacted Ed and stated that entry into this market could be had for an "under-the-table payment" of \$50,000.

If you were Ed Johnson, how likely would you be to pay the money?

Likely		Unlikely
1 2 3 4 5		6 7

Fig. 1. Situation types.

(5) Act Utilitarian

"Sometimes (providing information, not reporting extra income, paying money to get into markets) is beneficial because it leads to (more efficient organizations, greater disposable income, more competition)."

Moral philosophies were measured using modified statements from Boyce and Jensen's (1978) MCT scale. Due to respondent time constraints, the multi-item MCT version was not used because it would have doubled the time commitment thus jeopardizing the entire study. As a result, a forced choice version of the MCT was given to respondents who selected between various salient and nonsalient value set factors and chose that philosophy which came closest to their values. Thus, as Boyce and Jensen state, "the MCT [becomes] a measurement of content" (p. 186).

A general dependent measure of ethical behavior (EB) used by Ferrell and Skinner (1988) was the operationalized construct that determined respondent deviation. This measure of behavior was tested and found to have sufficient reliability (0.71) and internal validity (Ferrell and Skinner, 1988, p. 108). Ferrell and Skinner's (1988) construct was modified to match the sample's environment. Table I shows a comparison of the two constructs. Ethical behavior (EB) was measured on a six-item, seven-point Likert scale anchored by strongly agree and strongly disagree headings.

Each statement within the construct measured the amount of *duplicity* that respondents exhibited within an organization. Because this duplicity was directed towards the organization, those who agreed with the six statements increased their probability of being unethical within the organization's domain.

TABLE I
Comparison of Ferrell and Skinner (1988) and present ethical behavior constructs

Scale items	Standardized loading	Scale reliability
<i>Ferrell and Skinner (1988)</i>		
<i>Ethical behavior in research activities</i>		0.77
1. Sometimes I compromise the reliability of a study to complete the project.	0.66	
2. Sometimes I only report part of the data because I know my client may not like the results.	0.52	
3. I sometimes have to cover up nonresponse and sampling error to please my clients.	0.64	
4. I have continued a research project after knowing I made errors early.	0.48	
5. Sometimes I have to alter the sampling design in order to obtain enough respondents.	0.53	
6. Sometimes I claim to use the latest research techniques as a selling tool, even though I don't use the techniques.	0.43	
<i>Present Study Construct*</i>		
1. In my job I sometimes compromise my beliefs to do my job the way the company wants me to do it.	0.46	0.74
2. Sometimes I report only part of the truth to my boss.	0.49	
3. Sometimes I have to alter things (documents, time cards, etc.) in order to please the company.	0.53	
4. Sometimes I have to break company policy to do what's necessary.	0.48	
5. Sometimes I say one thing even though I know I must do something else.	0.58	
6. Sometimes I claim to have done something when I have not.	0.68	

* On a 7-point scale with 1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree.

Unethical people are so defined in that they become dishonest relative to the organization's goals and procedures.

The reliability of the multi-item EB scale was evaluated by calculating coefficient alpha. The statistical package used was SPSSX's (1986) ALPHA model. The ALPHA model computes Cronbach's alpha and a standardized item alpha (Cronbach, 1951). According to Nunnally (1978), coefficient alphas should be at least 0.70 in the early stages of research.

The discriminant validity of the scale was evaluated by subjecting the scores of all respondents to a principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. Several other items were included to determine whether the EB variables loaded heavily on only one factor. The results showed that with one rotation 49.7 percent of the total variance could be explained. The rotated factor pattern also showed discrimination between the sets of scale items and previous research. This loading pattern constitutes evidence that the EB construct does discriminate or measure a concept differently from others.

Sample specification

A judgment or purposive sample was taken from the marketing domain. This sample type was chosen because it is believed that the firm chosen is representative of the retailing population. Additionally, a judgment sample was deemed preferable to a random sample to reduce the nonresponse rate. Historically, nonresponse rates have plagued ethical research. By gaining approval from corporate headquarters and using its mailing system, an increase in the response rate was anticipated. Within the work domain, the purposive sample becomes random in that every potential respondent within that domain had an equal opportunity to be selected for the sample.

Several corporations were contacted for inclusion in the study; however, only one agreed to distribute the instrument. Those corporations that were contacted gave discrimination, infringement of privacy, and excessive time commitment as their reasons for nonparticipation.

A total of 700 management personnel were given the questionnaire within a large multi-level South-

ern retailing corporation. All managers, assistant managers, and department managers received the questionnaire and a random mailing of 50 questionnaires was sent to the general corporate staff.

Discussion of results

The survey resulted in a total response rate of 27 percent or 189 returns. The sampled individuals were predominantly male (74.7 percent), married (64.0 percent), having 2 to 10 years experience with

TABLE II
Comparison of respondent versus population characteristics

Gender	Respondent (%)	Population (%)
Male	74.7	76.2
Female	25.3	23.8
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	64.0	58.8
Single	36.1	41.2
<i>Title</i>		
Store Director	16.1	13.2
Assistant Manager	19.9	10.2
Department Manager	60.2	47.4
General Staff	3.8	29.2
<i>Years with Firm</i>		
0-5	36.0	24.1
6-10	41.9	28.7
11-15	15.6	32.7
16-20	4.9	9.8
> 20	1.6	4.6
<i>Age</i>		
< 21	1.6	0.5
21-30	50.5	37.7
31-39	30.6	39.1
40-49	12.9	15.5
50-59	3.2	6.2
> 60	0.5	1.0
<i>Ethnic Origin</i>		
Caucasian	90.3	89.4
Black	1.6	3.2
Hispanic	6.5	5.6
Oriental	0.5	1.6
Other	1.1	0.2

the corporation, and 8 to 15 years experience in retailing. Over half were between 21 and 30 years of age with another 30 percent being between 31 and 39. Family income was evenly dispersed between \$20,000 to over \$50,000. Over half were affiliated with a Protestant religion and the majority of the respondents had some college education. The ethnic origin of the sample was 90 percent Caucasian and 6.5 percent Hispanic. The response rate demographics were compared to the population as shown in Table II to determine nonresponse bias. Because all categories were statistically different using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the results can only be tentatively generalizable or should be considered exploratory in nature.

Ethical behavior scores were compared to the five philosophy types across the three situations. Table III shows a significant difference between philosophies with respect to the EB construct in both work situations. Within the situation of betraying a trust at work, retail managers identified as egoists were ranked relatively unethical as to their behavior. This did not occur, however, with the bribery vignette. Within the significant *F*-test ANOVA'S, Duncan tests (Carmer and Swanson, 1973; Montgomery, 1984) were run to obtain a test of significance between philosophy types.

Post Hoc test results suggest that act utilitarian

managers are significantly different from managers identified as rule deontologists. Also, egoistical managers are significantly different in their EB scores in bribery-related situations than managers using a rule deontological philosophy.

The type of situation presented to the respondent was also a factor. Within the betraying-a-trust situation, the EB means of act utilitarian managers were significantly less than those of rule deontologists. In the bribery situation, rule deontologists were ranked significantly higher than managers using the egoist or act utilitarian philosophy.

Table IV compares agreement ratings with the demographic variables. No clear conclusions can be stated because there were no predominant statistical significances by construct. As a result, one cannot conclude that gender, age, marital status, religion, years with firm, or educational level are good discriminators of ethical behavior.

This contradicts Kelley *et al.*'s (1990) study where gender, age, and education level were found to be good indicators. This contradiction may be explained in two ways. First, this study used six instead of ten statements in the EB construct. The Kelley *et al.*, statements were also specific to market researchers whereas this study addressed retail managers. Finally, the Kelly *et al.*, study used a six point Likert scale whereas this study used a seven point scale. The

TABLE III
Ethical behavior by situation

Group	Betraying a trust*		Bribery*		Personal/income tax evasion	
	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean
Rule Utilitarian	25	4.26	15	4.49	13	4.69
Egoist	7	3.94	20	4.15	37	4.23
Act Deontologist	56	4.41	35	4.20	61	4.45
Rule Deontologist	66	4.66	69	4.67	44	4.60
Act Utilitarian	30	4.19	45	4.22	30	4.21
TOTAL	184	4.43	184	4.42	185	4.42

* probability < 0.05.

1 = unethical behavior.

7 = ethical behavior.

TABLE IV
Comparison of agreement ratings

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Gender</u>		<u>Age</u>				
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>< 21</u>	<u>21–30</u>	<u>31–39</u>	<u>40–49</u>	<u>50–59</u>
Sometimes compromise my beliefs to do my job the way the company wants me to do it.	3.91	4.77*	3.33	4.0	4.29	4.33	4.5
Sometimes have to break company policy to do what's necessary.	4.47	5.11*	4.33	4.5	4.58	4.92	5.33
Sometimes say one thing even though I know I must do something else.	4.74	4.74	4.00	4.70	4.91	4.38	5.83
Sometimes have to alter things (documents, time cards, etc.) in order to please the company.	6.06	6.21	3.67*	6.04*	6.32*	6.25*	5.17
Sometimes claim to have done something when I have not.	5.83	6.00	4.33	5.96	5.88	5.79	5.83
Sometimes report only part of the truth to my boss.	5.27	5.49	5.67	5.38	5.16	5.71	5.33

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Education</u>				
	<u>Some High School</u>	<u>High School Graduate</u>	<u>Some College</u>	<u>College Graduate</u>	<u>Advanced Degree</u>
Sometimes compromise my beliefs to do my job the way the company wants me to do it.	3.0	4.66	4.51	4.93	4.5
Sometimes have to break company policy to do what's necessary.	5.0	4.68	4.65	4.98	4.75
Sometimes say one thing even though I know I must do something else.	7.0	5.82	6.05	6.33	7.0
Sometimes have to alter things (documents, time cards, etc.) in order to please the company.	7.0	5.84	5.7	6.18	6.25
Sometimes claim to have done something when I have not.	7.0	5.45	5.10	5.44	6.75
Sometimes report only part of the truth to my boss.	3.0	3.8	4.1	4.56	4.0

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>			<u>Religion</u>		
	<u>Married</u>	<u>Single</u>	<u>Divorced</u>	<u>Protestant</u>	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>None</u>
Sometimes compromise my beliefs to do my job the way the company wants me to do it.	4.55*	3.59*	2.96*	4.31*	4.34*	3.42*
Sometimes have to break company policy to do what's necessary.	4.79	4.41	4.22	4.88	4.51	4.35
Sometimes say one thing even though I know I must do something else.	5.08*	4.25*	3.91*	4.93	4.76	4.23
Sometimes have to alter things (documents, time cards, etc.) in order to please the company.	6.17	5.98	5.96	6.27*	6.22*	5.90*
Sometimes claim to have done something when I have not.	5.97	5.8	5.57	5.99	5.85	5.81
Sometimes report only part of the truth to my boss.	5.53	5.0	4.87	5.41	4.98	5.71

Table IV (continued)

	Years with Firm			
	<u>1-4</u>	<u>5-7</u>	<u>8-10</u>	<u>11-25</u>
Sometimes compromise my beliefs to do my job the way the company wants me to do it.	4.30	4.0	4.38	3.85
Sometimes have to break company policy to do what's necessary.	4.81	4.76	4.65	4.4
Sometimes say one thing even though I know I must do something else.	4.79	4.68	4.64	4.9
Sometimes have to alter things (documents, time cards, etc.) in order to please the company.	6.28	5.95	6.02	6.25
Sometimes claim to have done something when I have not.	6.12*	6.05	5.82	5.43*
Sometimes report only part of the truth to my boss.	5.58	5.46	5.15	5.15

* $-p < 0.05$ using t -test or Duncan's test of significance.

inclusion of a neutral midpoint may have masked respondent results by allowing some to respond in a neutral manner.

Table V summarizes the EB construct findings across situations. In general it was found that act types and egoists had EB scores significantly lower than rule types. The research does not show that any

retail manager was unethical in his/her behavior using the EB construct. However, one exception did occur with managers using the egoist philosophy in the betraying-a-trust situation. Even though rule deontological managers were ranked highest overall on the EB scale, all philosophy types were within the ethical realm. Further analysis of the EB construct showed a grand mean of 5.13 with a standard deviation of 1.12. The data was slightly skewed (-0.69) towards the ethical side of the EB construct with 71 respondents above 5.7 and 17 below 3.50. These results indicate that rule deontologists have the highest EB score with egoists the lowest.

TABLE V

Summary of ethical behavior construct by philosophy type

- (1) Act utilitarian retailers' and less ethical than rule deontological retailers.**
- (2) Act deontological retailers' are less ethical than rule deontological retailers.
- (3) Egotistically oriented retailers' are less ethical than rule deontological retailers.*
- (4) Act utilitarian retailers' are less ethical than rule utilitarian retailers.
- (5) Act deontological retailers' are less ethical rule utilitarian retailers.
- (6) Egotistically oriented retailers' are less ethical than rule utilitarian retailers.

* Was significantly different in one work situation (bribery) at the 0.05 level.

** Was significantly different in both work situations (betraying a trust and bribery) at the 0.05 level.

Conclusions

The research conducted suggests that retail managers exhibiting certain moral philosophy types tend to rank higher on the EB construct than others. Based on the EB construct, rule deontologist managers rank higher than any other philosophy type tested. In general, within organizations it appears that rule types rank higher than act types. The implication for researchers is that some underlying construct within rule types may exist which makes managers exhibit such behavior. One explanation of this finding may be that the EB measure is rule oriented, therefore

rule type management personnel would naturally score higher on such a construct.

From a management perspective the research provides more data on the heterogeneity of value structures for business personnel. Contrary to some, business people appear to be widely dispersed across philosophy types with no type dominating. The research also provides insight into the relativism of determining ethical and unethical behavior. In addition, the study also supports the idea that people in business want to do what is right or ethical.

The issue of ethical decision making by managers is complex, and our understanding of the subject is far from complete. Each article and study incrementally adds to the stream of research. However, at the same time, new research can often raise more questions than answers. In this case, more research is needed on scales that define ethical behavior and on the various philosophy types. Studies extending the generalizability of this research by testing different corporations need to be conducted. Value research could also be completed on each philosophy type to determine each group's value structure and how it relates to differing corporate cultures. Differing cultures and manager responses to the EB construct is another area which might be studied. While these suggestions for future research are not exhaustive, they may help other researchers interested in developing streams of research in business ethics.

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