



Global survey of business ethics (GSBE) reports 2022–2024 from Asia, Australia and Russia — RUSSIA

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Introduction

Russia participated in “A Worldwide Survey of Business Ethics in the 1990s” (Enderle 1997) but, unfortunately, was not presented as a separate topic in the next global survey (Rossouw & Stückelberger 2012). Now we are happy to present a chapter on Russia in the new Global Survey of Business Ethics and share some observations about the contemporary situation with business ethics in Russia. Our report is focused mainly on training organizations and businesses, which provide business ethics training to employees, but will also provide some insights about recent academic research in business ethics conducted by Russian academics.

Business ethics trainings are actively supported and conducted by large corporations and commercial organizations in Russia. They accept Codes of Business Conduct and Ethics as best practices, integrate ethical culture supported by compliance functions, or, at least, comply with anti-corruption legislation, which, however, is more a voluntary measure. Legal obligation to implement anti-corruption measures is more applicable to state and public organizations where ethics is a component of this program. There is a mature ethics and compliance community in Russia that has been formed during the last ten years by professional compliance officers aiming to promote and share business ethics practices within companies and society.

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Existing literature

In this section, we will review the academic literature in business ethics and CSR published in Russia from 2011 to 2023. Some Russian scholars also publish their research in international journals on business ethics (Blagov & Petrova-Savchenko, 2012, 2021; Belyaeva, 2013, 2019; Belyaeva & Kazakov, 2015; Storchevoy, 2015; Parshakov et al., 2023; Deviatko & Bykov, 2022; Bykov et al., 2021; Villo et al., 2020; Villo & Turkina, 2023; Belyaeva & Kazakov, 2015; Semenova et al., 2023), book chapters (Blagov & Aray, 2021a, b; Grekova & Storchevoy, 2021; Storchevoy & Belousov, 2020) or books (Storchevoy, 2017a, b). Some of these publications are even focused on business ethics education (Belyaeva et al., 2018; Storchevoy, 2015, Rimanoczy, 2022). We will not overview this literature because it is available to international readers, and will focus only on the publications written, edited and published in Russian sources.

There are numerous papers devoted to business ethics and CSR published annually in Russian academic journals, but, in general, the articles on business ethics have a rather modest level of theoretical or empirical quality, compared to international standards. These papers are published in various Russian journals administered by second-tier and third-tier universities or colleges, which have governmental funding and therefore have to conduct some research regularly to meet the formal requirements. Although sometimes the papers may contain interesting theoretical insights or valuable empirical observation worth mentioning, we are not going to refer to them further in our report.

There are few reputable journals in Russian language, which publish good papers on business ethics, CSR and ESG, and we provide an overview of these publications. Among the leaders are the two journals on business ethics and CSR: the *Russian Journal of Management* issued by Graduate School of Management of St. Petersburg State University and the *Bulletin of St. Petersburg State University, Management Series*. They published 12 papers on business ethics and CSR 2011. Four of these papers are devoted to a rather popular topic of relationships between ESG and financial performance of the companies (Nazarova et al., 2023; Verenikin et al. 2023; Egorova & Chigireva, 2021; Makeeva et al. 2023). Two papers deal with SMEs: Cheglakova et al. (2018) (Russian References) provides a survey of various ethics and CSR practices in small and medium enterprises, and Aray et al. (2023) (Russian References) conducted quantitative empirical research of entrepreneurial orientations for sustainable development. Cherenkov et al. (2020) discusses a problem in marketing ethics — the issue of local imitation of global brands. Partsvania (2020) provides a case study of implementation of sustainable development into business practices by Scania, a large truck producer company (www.scania.com). There is only one paper dealing with managing ethics in the company, written by Ivanova (2014), that provides a deep study of codes of ethics of Russian companies using the comparative content analysis of ethical codes drafted by Russian and multinational companies operating in Russia, as well as a series of interviews with leading experts on business ethics. Her research aims to examine the level of penetration of ethical practices in Russia,

finding out its feasibility as a management tool and defining the special characteristics of corporate codes of ethics.

The first Russian national university — M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University — also publishes its own journal in management; but we find only three papers about ethics and CSR published since 2011. Dementieva (2012) (Russian references) provides an introduction to the concept of CSR which was not very common in Russian academia at that time. She describes organizational, normative and managerial aspects of CSR and presents some analysis of foreign and Russian CSR practices. The paper by Petrovskaya and Bychkova (2014) (Russian References) is devoted to ethical leadership. They focused on the concept of “servant leadership” and conducted a survey in Russian companies to reveal the characteristics of such leaders. A paper by Soboleva (2014) (Russian References) is devoted to MBA students’ attitude towards business ethics. The author conducted a survey of 222 students of business education programs in three Moscow Universities (that served as empirical base), and distinguished six types of students with different practical orientations and compared their views about the importance of business ethics in education and in business. All of them have named business ethics competences as important skills which should be practiced during MBA programs, although these skills had slightly lower priority than other competences like marketing or strategic management. It should be mentioned that all types of MBA students claimed that they would not agree to work in a company which violates some ethical or legal norms, although there is a slight variation in their tolerance to various ethical violations (ecological harm, dangerous products, labor standards, etc.) in the eyes of various types of MBA students.

There are several research centers of CSR and ESG that conduct regular research of various business practices and publish their reports. One of the first research centers was founded by the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs in early 2000s and has been led by Elena Feoktistova, a well-known activist and proponent of social responsibility in Russian business. The center conducts various researches in CSR and publishes two series of materials: (1) biannual surveys on non-financial reporting practices of Russian companies since 2006 (Shokhin et al. 2012 (Russian references), Alenicheva et al. 2015a (Russian references), Feoktistova et al. 2017, 2019 (Russian references), (2) annual surveys of corporate practices in various CSR areas (e.g., Feoktistova 2018, 2020, 2021 (Russian references). All publications rely on primary information collected from large Russian companies through questionnaires and interviews.

Another pioneer in CSR research in Russia is The Center for Corporate Social Responsibility of the Graduate School of Management of St. Petersburg State University, which was founded in 2008 with support of PwC Russia.¹ The director of the center — Yuri Blagov — is a leading Russian specialist of CSR who made many efforts to increase business awareness of CSR concepts and introduced many Russian companies to the world of CSR. The center publishes two annual reports: “Report about Social Investments in Russia” (since 2008) and “Leaders of Corporate Philanthropy” (since 2009), which are prepared on the basis of questionnaires

¹ After March 2022, the Russian division was transformed into “Technologies of Trust”.

filled by the largest Russian companies. These annual reports are prepared in collaboration with the Russian Association of Managers — one of the leading business associations in Russia.

There are several new research centers, which started their activity in the last few years.

In 2021, MGIMO University,² launched the Center for Sustainable Development that created and regularly updates *The MGIMO Digital Library in SDG/ESG* — an online database of Russian and foreign sources and international documents necessary for a comprehensive understanding of key trends in sustainable development and ESG-transformation.

In 2022, Moscow State University established the Scientific Laboratory for Sustainable Development Management and ESG-transformation in cooperation with the National Rating Agency (NRA). The laboratory develops ESG rankings of Russian regions (e.g., Konstantinidi 2022 (Russian references)) and publishes *ESG Digest* — a quarterly review of current developments in sustainability, climate agenda, global energy transition and ESG transformation.

In 2021–2023, HSE (Higher School of Economics) University conducted a large research project in business ethics, focusing on examining self-regulation of ethics in the market by Russian industrial and professional associations and on developing tools for measuring ethical conduct of Russian companies. One part of this project was devoted to the elaboration of a new ethics training for employees and managers of Russian companies.

Methodological considerations

The authors of this study are members of the Russian Business Ethics Network (RBEN)³ and constantly engage with the professional community related to business ethics training and CSR starting from 2017 (if not earlier).

The survey was conducted in Russian language. The translation of the questionnaire into Russian is provided in the Introduction to the *Global Survey of Business Ethics 2022–2024* in Volume 1. This questionnaire in Russian was distributed among RBEN members, Ethics & Compliance Officers and other managers and employees of Russian organizations. Our poll represents Moscow and St. Petersburg experts mostly; as for the regions, they are provided with training content from companies' headquarter offices.

We have conducted the survey among the professional community in Russia and people working in different industries, mostly in ethics and compliance functions. To get the maximum feedback, we requested respondents directly using personal contacts. Doing this way, we managed to collect 104 respondents.

² MGIMO is the Russian acronym of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, an institute responsible for professional education of diplomats and run by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³ Now in the process of reorganization.

Demographic data

The majority of the respondents are women (64%), compared to men (36%).

Over 70% of the participants belong to the age group between 36 and 60 years. 26% are below 35 years old and 3% are over 60.

90% of the respondents have a higher education, 9% hold a degree equal to Ph.D. (in Russia we call this degree a “candidate of science”), 1% have secondary special education.

84% of respondents work in private companies, 10% belong to state organizations, 3% are from non-for-profit organizations, the rest of 6% belongs to other types of organizations such as law firms, higher education institutions, public authority, professional societies.

Answering the question about their role in ethics training, almost half of the respondents (46%) indicated that their work relates to ethics officer or a similar role, 35% are managers and 5% are trainers. The rest are lecturers, students, and employees.

44% of the respondents are over 5 years in their current role, 19% are between 6 and 10 years, 21% are over 11 years, and 15% are less than a year.

At least 40% work as Ethics & Compliance managers or in the compliance field while around 48% occupy managerial roles as heads of functions or departments, including directors and even CEOs. There are a couple of entrepreneurs as well.

In summary, approximately 50% of the respondents are Ethics & Compliance experts, with no less than 5 years in the profession and a solid working experience (age after 35) including managerial roles. The rest of the respondents are employees of the commercial and other organizations who are covered by ethics and compliance functions, including training on business ethics. So, we find our sample valid for the purpose of the survey to get relevant and professional opinions of the practitioners who are involved in training business ethics as trainers or trainees. All 104 respondents relate to training practice either as developing and providing training or participating in training business ethics (Table 1).

Table 1 Demographic description of the respondents

Gender	64% female/36% male
Age	70% in 36–60 group age, 26% in below 35 group age, 3% in over 60 years
Education	90% in higher education; 9% with Ph.D., 1% in secondary
Type of organization	84% in private companies, 10% in state, 9% in other types
Affiliation to organization	46% relate to Ethics Officers or similar role, 35% are managers, 5% are trainers
Occupation	min. 40% are compliance professionals, 48% occupy managerial roles
Duration in current position	44% are min. 5 years in the role; 19%: up to 10 years; 21%: over 11 years, 15%: less than a year

Terminology and key recurring concepts

Terms in the country's language(s) and in English

We have received a diversity of concepts, phrases, interpretations and associations for “business ethics” in Russian (Table 2).

Involvement of the respondents in activities relevant to business ethics:

57% of the respondents are involved in compliance management,

49% involved in training programs (where 40% are engaged in trainings facilitation and development) and policymaking; 24% participate in training programs development by institutions offered to business; 8% involved in training programs for government departments, state or other organizations;

36% are involved in ethics management;

25% participate in corporate governance;

18% relate to consulting or advisory services for organizations;

15% participate in research;

11% perform the role of compliance ambassadors.

Focus areas of business ethics

The respondents specified the following areas of compliance and business ethics they are dealing with:

Anti-corruption, sanctions law and compliance, teaching in universities, public services, contract management, promotion of ethics among the society, ethics rating (measuring ethics in the organizations), expert of compliance award committee, administration of a compliance committee, monitoring of risky transactions, approval of business transactions, consulting, performing overall compliance functionality.

Themes in the teaching of business ethics

Almost all Russian government universities include some courses by using ethics, corporate social responsibility or sustainable development in the curriculums of the bachelor and master programs in management. The government educational standard of bachelor program for management assumes that there should be such a course; but it does not provide any details about its content. Some Russian universities include courses in business ethics and sustainability in their bachelor or master programs because they need to receive international accreditation like EQUIS or AACSB.

Private business schools provide their MBA students with courses in business ethics or ESG transformation when they feel the demand for such courses (which is not always the case). A good initiative was taken by the Moscow School of Management

Table 2 The term “business ethics” in Russian language

Бизнес-этика, деловая этика	Business ethics
Корпоративная этика	Corporate ethics
Корпоративная культура	Corporate culture
Культура делового поведения	Culture of business conduct
Корпоративное поведение	Corporate conduct
Культура поведения и общения	Culture of behavior and communication
Профессиональная этика	Professional ethics
Нормы этического поведения на работе	Norms of ethical conduct at work
Культура деловых отношений	Culture of business relations
Добросовестное и честное ведение бизнеса	Diligent and honest business conduct
Добросовестность	Integrity
Прозрачность	Transparency
Трудовая этика	Work ethics
Порядочность	Decency
Аккуратность	Accuracy
Нулевая терпимость	Zero-tolerance
Этика бизнес-процессов	Ethics of business processes
Этичный бизнес	Ethical business
Этические принципы или этические проблемы, которые могут возникнуть в деловой среде	Ethical principles/standards or ethical issues that may arise in business environment
Социальная ответственность	Social responsibility
Корпоративная ответственность	Corporate responsibility
Персональная ответственность	Personal responsibility
Набор правил поведения для бизнеса	Set of rules for business conduct
Справедливость	Fairness, justice
Забота и уважение	Careness and respect
Надежность	Reliability
Понятия	Concepts
Комплаенс	Compliance
Соблюдение законодательства	Compliance with laws
Выполнение обязательств	Execution of obligations
Чистота бизнеса	Business clarity
Нормы (Кодекс) этического поведения	Norms (Code) of ethical conduct
Клиентоориентированность	Customer-orientation
Внутренние установки сотрудников компании при принятии бизнес решений	Internal attitudes of employees when taking business decisions
Набор правил, стандартов, принципов, ценностей, норм поведения сотрудника в организации	A set of rules, standards, principles, values, norms of behavior for an employee in organization
Совокупность общих принципов профессиональной служебной этики и основных правил служебного поведения	A set of general principles of professional work ethics and basic rules of official conduct
Устав моральных ценностей и норм в бизнесе	Charter of moral values and norms in business

Table 2 (continued)

Баланс интересов всех сторон, способность прислушаться к иному мнению, не пересечение красных линий и личного пространства	Balance of interests of all parties, ability to listen to different opinions not crossing red lines and personal space
Умение выражать свою точку зрения, не ущемляя и не принижая достоинств другой стороны	Ability to express one's point of view without belittling the merits of the other party

SKOLKOVO supported by Rusal company that organized Business Ethics Days in 2019 and 2020 (as a part of international Global Ethics Day movement) with hundreds of participants from Russian companies to promote the idea of the need for responsible and ethical business.

Themes in business ethics research

As most of the participants were involved in training and not academia, few were involved in research. However, some respondents were involved and shared details of their publications on business ethics with the following titles:

- Ethics in real estate: Oxymoron or reality;
- A drop in the ocean (published by ACFE);
- Sourcing compliance, Compliance Center of Competence;
- Ethics management in companies, importance of moral examples, anti-corruption;
- How to enhance compliance through informal relations

Themes in training on business ethics

Many large Russian companies have ethics and compliance officers who organize some internal trainings for their employees. These trainings are usually devoted to code of conduct or anti-corruption policy. The learning materials can be developed by some external provider(s) as well as internally by the corporate university.

A driving initiative in the development of professional business ethics education was taken by the Russian Business Ethics Network (RBEN) — a national association of specialists in ethics, compliance and sustainable development from business and academia (founded in 2015 by Maxim Storchevoy as a chapter of the European Business Ethics Network EBEN). In 2018, RBEN developed the first professional course *Managing Ethics in Companies*, designed for practicing managers in ethics and compliance who needed theoretical knowledge in moral philosophy and business ethics as well as practical skills in organizing a compliance system in the organization. The course was initiated by Ilсур Akhmetshin — a practicing leader in promoting business ethics and compliance in Russia who also contributed a lot to the

growth of RBEN community.⁴ About 100 of ethics & compliance managers in Russia have completed this course between 2018 and 2023. Another important contribution of RBEN to the professional development of managers in ethics and compliance consists of regular offline and online round tables and workshops devoted to recent practical dilemmas, changes in regulation, best practices, etc.

In 2020, HSE University established the *Institute of Compliance and Business Ethics* — the first specialized department of a university dedicated to professional education of managers in compliance and ethics — led by Irina Grekova, one of the initiators of compliance professional development in Russia. The Institute offers general professional training programs for managers and directors in compliance as well as some specialized courses in data privacy, anti-corruption, etc. The Institute also delivers the master program *International Compliance and Business Ethics* — a two-year course with defending a thesis and receiving a master's degree. The course is conducted by the leading practical experts in ethics and compliance from various Russian companies.

Before this program, the first professional certification in compliance in Russia was provided by ICS (International Compliance Services), an exclusive provider of ICA (International Compliance Association) training programs.

The participants believe that a range of topics related to ethics is currently important, irrespective of the type of the organization that addresses them. Key topics are:

Anti-corruption, managing conflict of interest, sanctions, data privacy, code of conduct, risk-management, risk-assessment, including ethical risks, giving gifts, ethics in negotiations, ethics in conflict, hotline.

The respondents prioritised the topics in business ethics education in the following way. The top three themes are.

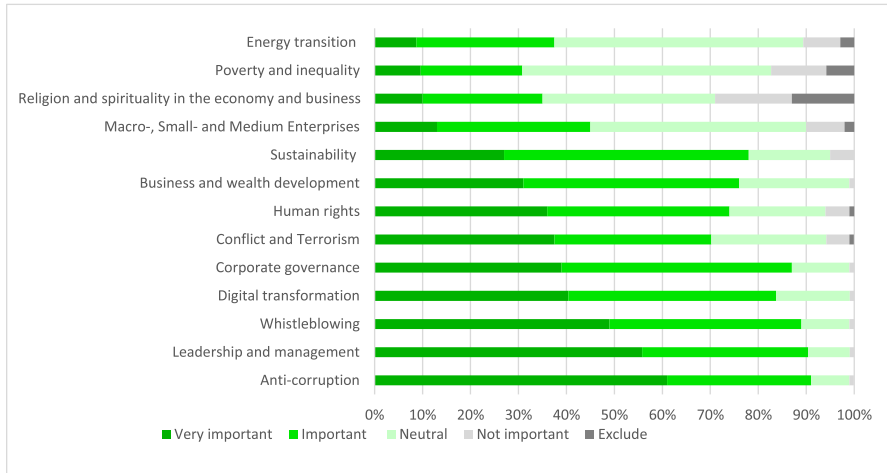
- **Anti-corruption** (67% of respondents rated as of high importance and 32% as important);
- **Leadership and ethical management** (60% rated as high importance and 37% as important);
- **Whistleblowing** (53% rated as high importance and 44% as important).

The next three are digital transformation (44% and 47%), corporate governance (43% and 52%), conflict and terrorism (41% and 35%), followed by human rights (38% and 42%), sustainability (29% and 55%) and business and wealth creation (33% and 49%). Regarding poverty and inequality, energy transition, religion and spirituality in the economy and business, and micro, small and medium enterprises, a majority of the respondents find these topics not important for the time being. See the prioritization of business ethics themes in Table 3.

Some additional topics are relevant as well:

Business and authority – Interactions and responsibilities of all participants in the company's ethics management process – Protection of insider information – Interfaith relations – Government relations – Conscious consumption – Political

⁴ At that time, he occupied a role of a Vice-president and Ethics & Compliance Director in VimpelCom, a large telecom company.

Table 3 Prioritization of business ethics themes

apathy – Maintaining and developing business skills in conditions of global uncertainty – Ethics in sales – Development of educational programs on business ethics for universities – Responsibility of top-managers – Rumours and gossips – Business reputation – Ethical dilemmas.

Other important training topics for different types of organizations are relevant as well:

In non-degree training programs:

Ethical competencies of employees: content, methods of development and assessment – Emotional stability in negotiations – Influence of ethics on business processes – Business ethics from scratch: all the basic points – Review of worldwide compliance practices (non-ISO) used by companies – Development of compliance managers – Business ethics in horizontal relations, vertical relations, outside the organization – Ethical aspects in using a polygraph – Ethical dilemmas in business, code of ethics as the key to a company's corporate culture – Cultural characteristics of management and communications – Managing ethics in the organization – Modern business etiquette – Ethics in Russian industrial companies – Ethical leadership – Ethical values.

In training programs (practical and vocational training) for businesses:

Legal nihilism – The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF), information security, big data, financial technology, artificial intelligence, leadership – Values of business, ethical principles, combating unethical behavior – Communications between company departments – Team involvement, motivation – The role of managerial personnel in the corporate culture – Features of doing business with high-risk countries: Turkey, China, UAE, Cyprus, Offshore jurisdictions – Business ethics in regions – Harassment – Training in methods/tools that can be used to engage staff in creating an ethical culture – Antitrust practices.

In training programs for governmental departments or institutions:

Compliance appeal in public procurement – Managing emotions, effective communication – Ethics and responsibility of a government official – Nepotism as the root of evil in state and public organizations – Compliance risk management in public procurement – Compliance risks in books and records and other types of reporting of state and public organizations – Problems of excessive compliance control and the lack of an effective mechanism for compliance investigations in the public educational system (e.g. healthcare system) – Giving gifts, providing business hospitality to government officials. Declaration of income/expenses – Implementation of anti-corruption standard ISO 37001 in public service – The influence of ethics on the level of well-being of citizens and regions – Ethics in interaction with consumers of public services – An approach to the provision of state and municipal services based on the principle of “human-centricity” – personal qualities, empathy and tolerance – Commission on ethics.

In training programs for other types of organisations:

Compliance in procurement – Automation of compliance processes: need, development, implementation – Providing sponsorship – Ethics as a guide to decision making – Compliance basics for executives – Ethical standards in relations with consumers.

Major business ethical issues in the next five years

Some participants believe that fighting corruption and managing conflicts of interest will still remain important in the next five years. Other topics on the rise are:

Ethics of artificial intelligence: corruption in AI; ethics in digitalization; digital currencies; norms of behavior on the Internet; privacy of employee and customer data; responsibilities of companies for data protection;

Sustainability and ESG: ethical obligations of companies to the environment; ecological principles; global warming; climate, space, population growth;

Politics: geopolitics; political instability and doing business under sanctions; maintaining partnerships; ethics in procurement;

Equality and diversity: fairness and equality in the workplace; effective strategies to combat discrimination; equality in expressing an honest opinion, regardless of position, respectful attitude towards all categories of employees; ethics towards minorities; democracy, respect and dignity; tolerance to other religions; cultural issues and values;

Ethics of a leader, ethical management; the role of managers in observing the principles of business ethics, moral leadership, creating a healthy atmosphere in the team; search for a local (Russian) approach to the definition and content of generally accepted ethical standards for Russian business; development of corporate thinking; ethics in relations between employer and employee.

Conclusion

To conclude, business ethics has now become a regular and well-developed area in Russian academia and business. Russian universities introduce courses in business ethics or CSR as well as educational programs. Few of the institutions conduct some research in these fields. Some Russian business ethics scholars publish their papers in the leading international journals and several management journals promote research in business ethics, CSR and ESG. Large Russian companies provide ethical training for their employees. Usually, the programs are conducted by compliance officers or organized by professional external providers. To a large extent, all these practices have been borrowed from Western business practices. Similarly, they have been implemented under the pressure of foreign regulators (for example, on anti-corruption) and expectations of international stakeholders (including social and ecological responsibility). Unfortunately, the political events after February 2022 interrupted the majority of partnerships and cooperation between Russian large businesses and universities and Western countries. Nevertheless, we attest a genuine interest to business ethics among managers and people working in Russian companies and the intention to deal with many diverse and specific issues they raised in answering the questionnaire. We can also observe the emergence of professional training courses on business ethics. And we may assume that businesses, which already accepted ideas and practices of professional ethics and conduct, will request Russian academia to increase the research field in ethics and CSR.

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Declarations

Competing interests The authors declare no competing interests.

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