College students' perception of ethics

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the college students' perception of ethics using five factors: (1) the impact of education and faculty/instructors on ethics; (2) students' attitude towards cheating; (3) the impact of technology; (4) the importance of ethics; and (5) the ethical campus environment. A survey questionnaire was created and distributed via e-mail to all students enrolled at a public university in Central Virginia during fall 2010. Data was collected from 750 anonymous respondents. Seven null hypotheses were developed and tested.

There were sufficient evidence to conclude that college students' perceive ethics instruction, and those who teach it, to be relevant and beneficial in shaping their own ethical behaviors. Students' attitude towards cheating is measured by their perception of cheating in high schools, colleges, and non-major classes. Students tend to cheat less in colleges than high schools and in non-major classes. Students also stated that they do not feel compelled to report cheaters to the proper authority. The use of technology has an impact on college ethics since it is easier to cheat in online/hybrid classes and when some kind of technology is used in a course. Further, students admitted that ethics is very important to them and that they hold themselves to the same ethical standards that they hold others to. Finally, college students believe that they are living in an ethical campus environment, where their faculty members are mostly ethical in nature and that it is never too late to learn about ethics in colleges.

Key Words: business ethics, perception of ethics, college ethics, unethical behavior, student ethics, academic integrity

INTRODUCTION

Given the recent incidences of major corporations engaging in unethical employee behaviors and the aftermath of the financial meltdown in 2008, more and more businesses are under governmental scrutiny and hence expect their employees to maintain high ethical standards at all times. Learning how college students perceived ethics can be a key for employers, as college students are the main source for new employment due to their fresh knowledge in the field, their potent interpersonal skills, and their well-built communication strategies. By gaining an insight into how college students perceive an activity to be ethical or unethical, businesses can determine how these potential hires will make ethical business decisions when confronted with similar moral dilemmas in the real world. Hence, it is understandable why many firms today are placing the ability to make ethical decisions in the real world first and foremost on their lists of desired qualifications for new hires. Further, many AACSB-accredited business school deans are under the pressure to prepare graduates for the unavoidable ethical predicaments in the business world. Many top business schools have continue to stimulate a sense of ethics, accountability, corporate social responsibility, and environmental sustainability through teaching, classroom discussions, research, institutional best practices, as well as active citizenship.

Recent research has focused on ethics education as a factor that influences ethical behavior. Conflicting results have surfaced, with disagreements on whether classroom instruction significantly affects ethical perceptions and actual behavior. If the business discipline has become corrupt in practice, then it seems necessary that ethics education be built into a required college curriculum. The challenge, however, is to determine whether the students would perceive this education as beneficial and whether it would affect the behaviors of future business leaders.

Because business community needs such an ethical mentality in its new hires, it seems prudent to conduct a research that explores the impact of ethics education on college students' values and integrity. A survey questionnaire was developed and administered to students enrolled at a public university in Central Virginia. The survey was sent to all students but was responded to at will by those who chose to participate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because of recent unethical business practices that have made news headlines, the general consensus among many individuals is that professionals in the business field are perceived to be unethical when compared to their non-business counterparts. The supporting literature for this study explores this possible connection and other connections to perceptions of ethics involving gender, age, and business education. In this research, ethics is formally defined as "the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011).

A study conducted by Desplaces, Beauvais, Melchar, and Bosco (2007) investigated the impact of business education and the academic environment on the individuals' ability to make ethical decisions. From this research, the authors found that codes of ethics and how students perceived these codes can affect how they perceive the overall ethical culture of the institution. In other words, if students perceived that such codes of ethics are being enforced properly, they will consider these codes to be effective and place a high moral expectation on the ethical culture and members of the academic institution. However, an enforced code of ethics is not the only element found to influence individuals' perceptions of ethics. The more times faculty and students discussed ethics in their business classes, the more positive an impact these discussions

will have on the students' ability to make morally competent decisions (Desplaces et al., 2007). The importance of ethics education is reinforced by similar results found in Shurden, Santandreu, and Shurden's (2010) research, which concluded that students' perception of ethics changes over time and is also positively influenced by ethics education. Their study focused on two popular ethical theories: ethical egoism and utilitarianism. To illustrate, when an individual chooses an outcome with the greatest personal gain, like the AIG executives who accepted bonuses, s/he is acting in accordance with the ethical egoism theory. On the other hand, when an individual chooses an outcome resulting in the greatest good for the greatest number of people, s/he is acting in accordance with the utilitarianism theory. The researchers administered a 16-question survey to 193 business students during the spring semesters over a three-year time period (2006, 2008, and 2009) to evaluate their perceptions of ethical issues and whether they responded in accordance with either the ethical egoism or the utilitarianism theory. By collecting and analyzing data over a period of time and determining if their responses had changed, these researchers concluded that ethics instruction can indeed be taught and have an impact on students' personal beliefs and behaviors.

On the contrary, Bloodgood, Turnley, and Mudrack (2010) oppose the conclusions of the Shurden et al. study, claiming that ethics education does not significantly impact the students' views on cheating. In fact, the Bloodgood et al. (2010) study suggests that ethics education can have a negative impact on students who score high on Machiavellianism. It is possible that certain traits and characteristics, such as Machiavellianism, have a stronger influence over personal beliefs and behaviors than ethics education. Critics of ethics education claim that students' value systems are already formed upon entering college, that business as a discipline is unethical by nature, and that ethics instruction has yet to prevent any unethical behavior. What further complicates the issue of teaching ethics is not being able to figure out how much instruction an individual needs to change his/her beliefs or behaviors (Bloodgood et al., 2010). The amount of instruction could range from very little to an extensive amount, and it is also possible that no amount of instruction could alter a person's beliefs. However, a well-designed and well-taught ethics course could require students to think more about unethical behavior and its consequences. Bloodgood, et al. (2010) also examined students' perceptions based on academic and passive cheating to determine whether ethics education could change their tolerance of cheating, as well as whether or not Machiavellianism was an obstacle for ethics education. The results showed that enrolling in an ethics course did not result in any significant differences in the students' perception of cheating. The ethics education, nevertheless, did have an impact on those with a low Machiavellianism score, making those students less tolerant of cheating. Students with high Machiavellian scores, however, became more tolerant of cheating after taking an ethics course.

In a bigger picture, Anitsal, Anitsal, and Elmore (2009) argued that academic dishonesty can be positively correlated to unethical behavior in the work environment. These researchers explored whether students perceive active and passive academic dishonesty as two separate ideas. Examples of active cheating would include taking pictures of exams or having another individual take/write an exam/paper for you, while examples of passive cheating would be giving others a "heads up" about what is covered in a test, witnessing someone else cheating and not reporting it, or prepping for an exam using fraternity/sorority test files. The results of this research were that both active and passive cheating is perceived as separate constructs, and that under the intention to cheat, both are considered important. They also found that regardless of gender, if a student did not recognize his/her actions as cheating, s/he was far more likely to

behave in an academically dishonest way. This research suggested that students' perception of what is cheating has changed. For instance, working together on a take home exam is considered "postmodern learning" and text-messaging answers is not considered cheating by some students. In a much earlier research, Kidder, Mirk, and Loges (2002) conducted an extensive study of the values and ethics of the students and faculty at the Maricopa Community College, located in Tempe, Arizona. This comprehensive study examined every angle of ethics, ranging from faith to the perception of cheating. The Maricopa study discovered that demographics affect the importance placed on different values, and that individuals turned most to personal experience, family, and religion as sources of their ethical opinion. In a more recent study, Mahdavi (2009) investigates the impact of the following sources on helping individuals develop business ethical attitudes: parents or siblings, spouse or partner, college or university, religious organizations, supervisors, and mentors.

Most ethics research examine the impact of variables such as gender, major/discipline, age, student classification, nationality, and culture on the students' perception of ethics (e.g., Anitsal, et al., 2009; Borkowski & Ugras, 1998; Klein, et al., 2006; Kitahara, Westfall, and Mankelwicz, 2011; MacKewn & Van Vuren, 2007; Mahdavi, 2009; Molnar, Kletke, & Chongwatpol, 2008; Shurden, et al., 2010; Tang & Chen, 2008). However, most of the past research were conducted in the traditional, in-class, face-to-face environment, and have totally neglected to investigate the impact of technology on students' ethical behaviors. Although there is a suspicion among college instructors that technology may increase the ease and creative ways of cheating, there was, however, limited research to support this notion (Kitahara, Westfall, and Mankelwicz, 2011). With the tremendous increase in the use of classroom technology and the offerings of online classes, there is an urgent need to inspect this unknown piece of puzzle. A research conducted by Molnar, Kletke, and Chongwatpol (2008) showed that undergraduate students tends to think that it is more tolerable for them to cheat using IT than without the use of IT. Further, when IT is utilized, respondents perceived that it is more acceptable for them to cheat than for others to cheat. In a subsequent study, Kitahara, Westfall, and Mankelwicz examined the impact of using the Troy Remote Proctor[TM] system to monitor examination rooms for their business students. Their research suggest that new technology does help to deter cheating in the short run, but students soon develop creative and effective strategies to counteract the new technology.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

Based on the research findings uncovered in the literature review, the current research attempts to examine the perception of ethics from a college student's point of view using various variables. Seven competing null hypotheses were developed to test and explain the college students' perception of ethics on campus. The purpose of the null hypothesis is to test if the variables are uncorrelated (or if there is any association between the variables). If there is insufficient evidence to support the null hypothesis, then the alternate hypothesis will be accepted.

1. Null Hypothesis (H_0): College students perceive that college education has no influence on their ethical behaviors.
2. Null Hypothesis (H_0): College students perceive that faculty and instructors does not play a part in shaping their ethical behaviors.
3. Null Hypothesis (H_0): College students believe that cheating is not prominent among students.

4. Null Hypothesis (H_0): College students believe that their peers did not engage in unethical behaviors.
5. Null Hypothesis (H_0): College students believe that technology does not play an important role in cheating.
6. Null Hypothesis (H_0): College students do not believe that ethics is important to them.
7. Null Hypothesis (H_0): College students do not think that they are living in an ethical environment on campus.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An online survey was administered to all full-time and part-time students enrolled at a mid-sized, liberal arts, public university located in Central Virginia. This section will describe the development of the survey questionnaire and the sample population.

Survey Questionnaire

The survey consisted of 22 questions that covered demographics, sources of ethics education, ethicality of different majors, perceptions of cheating, and the impact of education on ethics. The first section of the survey solicited basic demographic information from the students, which include sex, designated college, major/department, and student classification. With the extensive number of majors offered on campus, it was necessary to combine some disciplines together based on their common knowledge to reduce the number of selections for respondents. These classificatory questions can be used in future research to evaluate potential differences between the participants.

In Section II, students were asked to choose three majors/departments that they perceived to be the most ethical. The rankings from this question will provide valuable insight into the students' perception of ethicality across varying majors. The next question pertained to the sources of the students' ethical beliefs and behaviors, by asking them to disclose where they had acquired their ethical standards, with the choices of family upbringing, religion, personal experiences, and education.

To determine the college students' perception of ethics, participants were asked to provide responses on 15 interdependent items, requesting information pertaining to the students' perception of cheating as it applied to themselves and their peers, and their perceptions of faculty and the impact of education on individual values and ethical decision-making abilities. Fourteen of these questions were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 representing Strongly Disagree to 5 representing Strongly Agree. The rankings from these questions allowed the researchers to analyze the students' perception of cheating as well as whether the students thought college education could have a significant impact on their ethical behaviors.

Most of the questions in the survey were derived from the Maricopa Community College study due to its successful implementation nearly ten years ago (Kidder et al., 2002). The survey questionnaire was created and pretested with a small sample to reveal any potential problems in the design of the initial questionnaire. After a few minor modifications and an approval from the university's Human Subjects Research Review Committee, an e-mail describing the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the participation, and the hyperlink to the survey was delivered to the entire student body.

Sample Population

This study was conducted at a mid-sized, liberal arts, public university located on a 60-acre campus in the center of Virginia. In the fall of 2010, the university has a total population of 4,831 students, with 4,074 undergraduates, 401 graduate students, and 356 non-degree seeking students. The female/male ratio of the study body was approximately 2 to 1. The majority of the students (96%) were from Virginia, and the international student population was less than 1%. Minority students made up 12% of the student population. The three most popular degree programs included Liberal Arts (22%), Business/Marketing (17%), and Social Sciences (9%). The average class size was around 21, with a student to faculty ratio of 18 to 1.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

After the survey questionnaires were administered, useful data were collected, organized, summarized, and meaningful descriptive statistics of the sample population are extracted using the SPSS software program. The following subsection will describe the demographics of the respondents, namely, the student classification, gender, college and major discipline, and the sources of the respondents' ethical beliefs. The next subsection will describe the factor analysis procedure, which resulted in five underlying factors.

Demographics

Table 1 (Appendix) provided the sample characteristics of the participants. When the survey was administered to the entire study body, 750 voluntarily responded, with 540 females and 210 males, resulting in a 15.5% response rate. The class standings of the respondents were evenly dispersed among undergraduates: 226 (30.1%) were freshmen, 143 (19.1%) were sophomores, 182 (24.3%) were juniors, and 155 (20.7%) were seniors. Forty-one graduate students made up a very small 5.5% of the sample population, while 3 respondents classified themselves as "other", which means they could be a non-degree seeking student, a staff, or faculty member taking a class. Table 1 also categorized the respondents into one of the three colleges: Business and Economics, Arts and Sciences, and Education and Human Services. Students who have not chosen a major were classified as Undecided. The sample consisted mostly of respondents from the College of Arts and Sciences (42.7%), with the College of Business and Economics and the College of Education and Human Services being closely represented at 27.7% and 25.1%, respectively. These percentages are relatively close to the proportion of students enrolled in the three colleges. Less than 5% of the sample population had not decided on a major or belonged to a college.

Hypothesis Testing and Discussions

There were fifteen 5-point Likert questions on the survey questionnaire that measured the respondents' attitudes toward ethics on campus and the role that their faculty played in shaping their ethical beliefs. The correlation matrix revealed that most of the fifteen items are significantly correlated with one another, either positively or negatively, at the 0.005 significance level. The test statistics for Bartlett's test of sphericity showed that the approximate chi-square value was 2241.18, with 105 degree of freedom, which was also significantly high at the 0.005 level. In addition, the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was

0.727, which was significantly larger than the desirable value of 0.5. These two tests, couple with the reasonably large sample population, strongly suggest that factor analysis is an appropriate technique to be performed to the data set.

Therefore, factor analysis was conducted on the data set to reduce the fifteen variables to a more manageable manner so that underlying constructs (factors) that might help to explain the ethical climate on campus can be identified. The Principle Component Analysis extraction method was used to extract the primary variables, which were rotated using the Varimax procedure with the Kaiser Normalization rotation method. Based on Kaiser criterion's suggestion, the fifteen exploratory variables were reduced to five factors having eigenvalues of 1 or higher. Each factor composed of variables with a factor loading of 0.4 or higher. The factor loadings (coefficients) represented the correlations between each factor and its variables.

Five factors, with their corresponding variables, mean, standard deviation, and the factors' rotated loading, are summarized in Table 2 (Appendix). The standard deviation ranges from 0.692 to 1.265, indicating that the data points are clustered closely around the mean. Both factors 1 and 2 explained nearly 15% of the variances individually, while factors 3 through 5 explained 11.22%, 10.07%, and 9.15% of the variances, respectively. The five factors together explained a cumulative 59.69% of the total variance.

Factor 1 Impact of Education and Faculty/Instructors on Ethics

Null Hypothesis (H_0) # 1: College students perceive that college education has no influence on their ethical behaviors.

Null Hypothesis (H_0) # 2: College students perceive that faculty and instructors does not play an important part in shaping their ethical behaviors.

The first and second hypotheses examined how college students perceive the impact of education and the role of the faculty and instructors on their ethical values. As illustrated in Table 2, four items loaded relatively high on factor 1, describing how college students perceive ethics instruction, and those who teach it, to be relevant and beneficial in shaping their own ethical behaviors. This factor is labeled as the impact of education and faculty and instructors on college ethics.

Respondents were asked to express their attitudes toward ethics education in item # 18 "Education should play a big role in teaching students about ethics". This item received a mean of 3.79 on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating that majority of the participants (70.67%) either agree or strongly agree with the statement, as opposed to 7.47% who challenged the claim and 21.87% who had no opinion on this topic. Items # 20-22 solicited respondents' attitudes towards faculty and instructors' ability to help students develop values in their classes, to incorporate ethics training into their classes, and whether or not they enforce ethical standards onto their students. All three items have a relatively high mean of 3.54, 3.28, and 3.62, respectively. A high percentage of the participants also agree or strongly agree with all three items: 58.67%, 43.6%, and 62.13%, respectively. Less than 20% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the faculty and instructors' involvement in their ethical training.

In a previous study conducted by Shurden, Santandreu, and Shurden (2010), the researchers concluded that students' perception of ethics is positively influenced by ethics education and that their perception also changes over time. Although Bloodgood, Turnley, and Mudrack (2010) suggested that ethics education does not significantly impact the students' views on cheating, the four items in factor 1 clearly provided sufficient evidence to support Shurden, et

al.'s study but challenged Bloodgood et al.'s findings. Hence, there is sufficient evidence to reject the two null hypotheses and therefore to accept the two alternate hypotheses that college education and faculty/instructors do play an important role in forming the students' ethical behaviors.

Factor 2 Attitude towards Cheating

Null Hypothesis (H_0) # 3: College students believe that cheating is not prominent among students.
Null Hypothesis (H_0) # 4: College students believe that their peers did not engage in unethical behaviors.

The researchers hypothesized that on the whole, college students do not believe that cheating occurs in the academics. Participants were asked to express their attitude towards cheating as it relates to themselves and their fellow classmates. High factor loadings in Table 2 (Appendix) indicated that factor 2 is highly correlated with the following four items and this factor may be labeled as attitude towards cheating:

- # 10 "I have never cheated on my school work while in high school", with a mean of 3.01.
- # 11 "I have never cheated on my school work while in college", with a mean 3.99.
- # 12 "When I see other students cheat I feel compelled to report them", with a mean 2.88.
- # 13 "It is acceptable for me to cheat in a non-major class", is negatively correlated with factor 2 and has a mean of 1.68.

Although 46% of the participants admitted that they have cheated in high schools (# 10), only 12.27% admitted that they cheated in colleges (# 11). Similarly, 37.6% of the respondents claimed that they have never cheated in high schools (#10), while an overwhelming 73% of the respondents claimed that they have never cheated in colleges (#11). It is comforting to observe that, while many students agreed that it is acceptable to cheat in high schools, they did not share the same opinion about cheating in higher institutions. We can infer from this finding that students have a lower tolerance to cheating in colleges and that their perceptions have changed with the transition from high schools to colleges. There are many reasons to support this finding. For instance, college instructors may be more stringent with the University's Honor Code and hence they may make it harder for students to cheat on the tests. The data results in this finding, however, is in contrast to the previous research conducted by Klein, et al. (2007), which suggested that 86% of students had cheated in colleges and that 50% of the students had engaged in multiple kinds of cheating. Item # 13, on the other hand, was quite straightforward – with the majority of the participants – 87% of them – agreeing that it is not acceptable for anyone to cheat even in a class that is outside of their discipline. Nevertheless, it was alarming to observe that respondents seemed to be torn over item # 12, when they were asked if they would feel compelled to report cheaters to the appropriate authority. While 35% of the respondents will not report cheaters to the proper authority, nearly 39% of them chose to remain neutral, and only 26% will do the right thing. It is unclear if the 74% of the respondents who preferred to keep quiet understand that their inaction is actually a violation of the University's Honor Code. In summary, students believe that there is more cheating going on in high schools than in higher education institutions. However, they are unwilling to report cheaters to the proper authority.

Factor 3 Impact of Technology

Null Hypothesis (H_0) # 5: College students believe that technology does not play an important role in cheating.

Factor 3 is labeled as a technology factor, since it addressed the ease of cheating in an online or hybrid (a combination of face-to-face and online) class (item # 15) and the ease of cheating when technology is used (item # 16). In considering technology, more than half of the respondents (57.47% and 50.27%, respectively) agreed that it is easier to cheat in an online/hybrid class and when technology is involved, yielding a relatively close means of 3.63, and 3.42, respectively. Nearly one-third of the sample population preferred to remain neutral while a much smaller portion either disagree or strongly disagree that technology plays an important role in college cheating. In summary, the findings seem to support the rejection of the hull hypothesis and therefore the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis that technology does play an important role in academic cheating.

Factor 4 Importance of Ethics

Null Hypothesis (H_0) # 6: College students do not believe that ethics is important to them.

Factor 4 measures how college students perceived the importance of ethics in their lives using two items. Both items yielded a relatively high mean: 4.28 for # 8 "Ethics is very important to me", and 4.20 for # 9 "I hold myself to the same ethical standards that I hold others to". This overwhelming confidence in their own ethical standards is evident by the majority votes on whether they agree or strongly agree with the two statements: 89.87% for item # 8 and 87.20% for item # 9. On the contrary, less than 13% of the participants either strongly disagree, disagree, or preferred to remain neutral on this topic. Hence, we have sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and may conclude that college students do believe that ethics is important to them.

Factor 5 Ethical Environment on Campus

From Table 2 (Appendix), it seems clear that an overwhelming proportion of the participants (85.33%) considered the faculty and instructors in their majors to be ethical human beings (item # 17). In contrast, only 2% of the participants disagreed with this statement and a little more than 12% chose to remain neutral on this issue. On item # 19, more than 71% of the sample population believes that it is not too late to teach college students about ethics. On the other hand, a small percentage of 12.8% disagree while nearly 16% chose to remain neutral on this issue. However, when participants were asked if they think that their peers abid by the University's Honor Code (item # 14), it is less clear on how college students weighed on this issue. With a mean of 2.91, more than one-third of the sample population (38.8%) neither agree or disagree with this statement. Exactly one-third of the sample population believe that their peers abid by the University's Honor Code while less than 28% of them believe otherwise. It is interesting to know that college students perceive their faculty members to be mostly ethical in nature and that they believe it is never too late to learn about ethics, but yet they are unsure if their peers are honest human beings. Since the results seems to support items # 17 and 19, but mixed evidence was found to support item # 14, factor 5 will therefore consist of only two items, and this factor may be labeled as the ethical environment on campus.

Future research

An exploratory data analysis conducted on the data set revealed several important research findings. While the current research provides a macro view of how college students perceived ethics on campus, future research will focus on a more in-depth examination of the differences in their perception with regard to their gender, academic discipline, and student classification. Future research would involve confirmatory data analysis and bivariate cross-tabulation to investigate the cross-classification of ethical behaviors with each of the variable.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to determine the college students' perception of ethics using five factors. These five factors are: (1) the impact of education and faculty/instructors on ethics; (2) students' attitude towards cheating; (3) the impact of technology; (4) the importance of ethics; and (5) the ethical campus environment. The findings in this study presented several practical implications for both the academic and professional worlds, as well as recommendations for future research.

In the first and second hypotheses, participants were asked if their college education and their faculty/instructors have any influence on their ethical behaviors. This research provided sufficient evidence to conclude that faculty and instructors' influence can be exerted through their ability to help students develop values in their classes, to incorporate ethics training into their classes, and to enforce ethical standards onto their students. By teaching ethics in college classrooms, students are older and more ready to learn about the real world consequences of their actions. Knowing that education and faculty/instructors play an important role in educating our young people, it is therefore essential for academians to be ethical themselves before they can raise ethical future leaders.

The students' attitude towards cheating is measured by their perception of cheating in high schools, colleges, and non-major classes. The current research indicated that students tend to cheat less in colleges than high schools and in non-major classes. In contrast, students also stated that they do not feel compelled to report cheaters to the proper authority. Another finding in this study is that cheating behaviors and the tolerance to cheating increases with the use of technology. Many major corporations and academic institutions are pushing for more online connectivity and instructional learning; however, the excessive use of technology may erode the ethical nature of participants. The price of convenience and self-paced learning is ultimately the integrity of the users, which is compromised when they cheat to get ahead. With more and more classes being offered online or hybrid format (a combination of face-to-face and online), this may lead to a compromise in a student's education as well. If they cheat more often due to more technology being offered, then their overall learning decreases.

The fourth factor addressed the students' perception of the importance of ethics. Majority of the respondents reported that ethics is very important to them and that they hold themselves to the same ethical standards that I hold others to. Finally, the last factor investigated the ethical environment on campus. Students, in general, seems to think that their faculty and instructors are ethical human beings and that it is never too late for them to learn about ethics in higher education institutions.

This is indeed good news for businesses that are hiring. According to our study, individuals fresh out of college seems to have a stronger ethical nature and awareness, thanks, in part, to their education. The business field is not necessarily filled with corrupt, immoral people.

Rather, college education and students' personal lives are shaping future business leaders and encourage ethical decision making.

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APPENDIX

Table 1 Gender, Student Classification, and Colleges

	Count	Percent
Gender		
Male	210	28%
Female	540	72%
Total	750	100%
Student Classification		
Freshman	226	30.1%
Sophomore	143	19.1%
Junior	182	24.3%
Senior	155	20.7%
Graduate	41	5.5%
Other	3	0.4%
Total	750	100%
College		
Business and Economics	208	27.7%
Arts and Sciences	320	42.7%
Education and Human Services	188	25.1%
Undecided	34	4.5%
Total	750	100%

Table 2 Ethics Factors and Descriptive Statistics

Q #	Components	Mean	Std Dev	Factor Loading
Factor 1 Impact of Education and Faculty/Instructors on Ethics				
18	Education should play a big role in teaching students about ethics.	3.79	0.871	0.630
20	Faculty and instructors help students develop values in their classes.	3.54	0.873	0.730
21	Faculty and instructors incorporate ethics training into their classes.	3.28	0.911	0.770
22	Faculty and instructors should enforce ethical standards onto their students.	3.62	0.939	0.649
Factor 2 Attitude towards Cheating				
10	I have never cheated on my school work while in high school.	3.01	1.265	0.724
11	I have never cheated on my school work while in college.	3.99	1.061	0.797
12	When I see other students cheat I feel compelled to report them.	2.88	1.018	0.635
13	It is acceptable for me to cheat in a non-major class. (negative correlation)	1.68	0.764	-0.666
Factor 3 Impact Technology				
15	It is easier to cheat in an online or hybrid class than a regular class.	3.63	0.919	0.884
16	It is easier to cheat when technology is involved, e.g., Blackboard, calculator, etc.	3.42	0.956	0.856
Factor 4 Importance of ethics				
8	Ethics is very important to me.	4.28	0.753	0.839
9	I hold myself to the same ethical standards that I hold others to.	4.20	0.835	0.789
Factor 5 Ethical Environment on Campus				
14	I don't think that our students abide by the University's Honor Code.	2.91	0.970	0.623
17	I consider the faculty and instructors in my major to be ethical human beings. (negative correlation)	3.54	0.692	-0.467
19	By the time people reach college age it is too late to teach them about ethics.	2.21	0.987	0.638