HOW DO THE ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS COMPARE WITH THE ATTITUDES OF SALESPEOPLE? A COMPARISON OF PERCEPTIONS OF BUSINESS, CONSUMER AND EMPLOYER ETHICS

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Does business experience create calloused and jaded employees? Are college students unrealistic in their perceptions and attitudes toward business and the ethical environment? These questions were the focal point of a study developed to compare ethical perceptions of salespeople and sales students. The primary purposes of the research entailed evaluations of the ethical attitudes of these two groups pertaining to their attitudes as consumers, perceptions of whether good ethics is good business, perceptions of their employers' ethics, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The findings indicate that sales students' attitudes toward the ethical environment are not unrealistic and that full-time salespeople are not necessarily calloused or jaded in their attitudes toward ethical standards.

INTRODUCTION

College students represent the employees and executives of tomorrow. Research has shown that in the field of marketing, approximately 70 percent of those receiving degrees in marketing will enter the area of selling as their initial career positions (Simon 2006; Weilbaker 2001). It is likely that the ethical perceptions and standards that the students bring to their new jobs will largely influence their future behaviors as salespeople and business executives. A knowledge of their ethical perceptions, as students, would therefore provide insights into what eventually could be their behaviors and standards in the world of business. Based on this assumption, the purpose of this research is to empirically compare the ethical perceptions of college marketing students with the ethical perceptions of salespeople to determine the base point with which future employers will have to work. In addition, this study will also evaluate the relationships existing between ethical perceptions, attitudes as consumers, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions of each of the two groups analyzed.

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The public's ethical perceptions of business people in general, and salespeople in particular, are generally quite low. A study found that business executives were rated among the lowest ranked professional categories in terms of their images (Lantos 1999; Luther, DiBattista, and Gautchi 1997; Wulfson 1998). Furthermore, *Sales and Marketing Management* (2005) reports the results of a survey that show only 17 percent of Americans trust business leaders of major corporations.

The attitudes of marketing students are important, because they have received significant exposure to ethics by virtue of their recent marketing courses. Nearly every course offered in the marketing curriculum contains an "ethics module." Has this module affected the ethical perceptions of marketing students? Do marketing students believe that "good ethics is good business?" How do these marketing students perceive the actions of corporations relative to their marketing practices? Do these marketing students feel that their current employers, albeit generally part-time employers, practice ethical behaviors? Answers to these questions will be the focal point of this research.

RELATED LITERATURE

Employees, by virtue of their life experiences, may perceive outcomes in a very individualized fashion. While these life experiences may include many variables far outside the purview of this study, two sets of experiences that may influence how one perceives the business environment might be the person's experiences as a consumer and as a citizen (Allison 1978; Bearden, Lichtenstein and Teel 1983). These two sets of experiences may be exemplified by the individual's attitudes as a consumer and that person's attitudes toward business in general. Thus, some people might believe that businesses only care about making profits, that they make unrealistic claims, sell products that can be harmful, etc. Individuals probably also have some perception of the importance of ethical behaviors to business. In this context, some might feel that ethical behavior is important to business, that "good ethics" creates "good profits," etc. These people might then argue that businesses are ethical because it is the "right and profitable thing to do" (Kraft and Jauch 1992; Singhapakdi, et al. 1995).

These two perceptions could subsequently affect how one perceives the ethical behaviors of his/her employer. If an individual believes, as a consumer, that businesses don't care about honesty, they only care about making a profit, then it may be speculated that this individual will carry over these negative perceptions as a consumer to his/her employer. Conversely, if a person feels that businesses' attitudes are essentially positive and that ethical behavior is in fact "good business," then he/she will probably perceive business through a more positive prism and thus regard his/her employer in a more positive light. According to some researchers, an individual's general attitudes may lead one to either reject certain careers due to their perceptions of the roles they will play (Sparkes and Johlke 1996), or face cognitive dissonance in their roles, leading to dissatisfaction (McFarland 2003).

Job satisfaction is a desirable outcome for most employers. Job satisfaction has been shown to be related to organizational commitment, motivation, performance, effort, and lower levels of turnover (cf. Babin and Boles 1996; Bashaw and Grant 1994; Brown and Peterson 1993) in previous studies. Dubinsky and Levy (1985) contend that a salesperson's inability to cope with ethical challenges might result in lower levels of job performance. In addition to these factors, one could expect that employees who feel that business, in general, behaves ethically would also have positive feelings of job satisfaction as a result of working in an environment in which they have feelings of pride. Thus, an argument might be proposed that one's satisfaction could be influenced by the degree to which he/she feels positive about the business environment in which he/she works.

Jones and Kavanaugh (1996) contend that ethical intentions will be lower when the perceived quality of the work experience is low. This suggests that a relationship might exist between the person's job satisfaction and their perceptions of the ethical behaviors of business (Mulki, Jaramillo and Locander 2006). Similarly, the individual's attitude toward his/her employer's ethics should have a significant influence on his/her job satisfaction. Such an argument would logically contend that if one works for an employer who is perceived as unethical, then that person's job satisfaction levels would likely be low (*Sales and Marketing Management* 2006) , as he/she might feel guilty or ashamed to be working for a firm that has low ethical standards. In support of this position, Hunt and Chonko (1987) conclude that an employee's ethical problems with his/her employer negatively affect his/her relationships with co-workers and performance. In the sales environment, one of the most negative outcomes in many situations is turnover. Turnover is costly in numerous ways. Obviously, when a firm has too few salespeople, the result will be lost sales and customer dissatisfaction. While opportunity costs and customer dissatisfaction costs are difficult to measure, the recruiting and training costs associated with sales force turnover are quite high (Darmon 1990). Valentine and Barnett (2003), suggest that a relationship exists between employee perceptions of their employer's ethical values and their organizational commitment. They contend that employees prefer ethical companies for which to work (*Sales and Marketing Management* 2006). Other research has concluded that requiring sales employees to engage in coercive sales tactics, which the salesperson may feel are unethical, can lead to lower performance, poorer health, higher absenteeism, decreased job satisfaction, and increased levels of turnover (McFarland 2003). Correspondingly, it has been argued that students might *reject careers* in personal selling, because they perceive the job to be fraught with ethical challenges (Hawes, Rich and Widmier 2004; Sparks and Johlke 1996). Based on this research, one might anticipate that employees will be more likely to *try to leave* environments that they perceive to be unethical. For example, if an employee feels that businesses are unethical, it may be argued that this individual will be unwilling to work for (interact with) business organizations. Similarly, in situations in which one feels that his/her employer is unethical, it may be anticipated that he/she will intend to leave the unethical environment his/her employer has fostered (Schwepker 1999; Weeks, et al. 2006; Weeks, et al. 2004). Such a position is reflected by Levy and Dubinsky's (1983) conclusion that salespeople working in *ethically challenging* situations can experience frustration leading to higher turnover.

HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the marketing and management literature, a well-established principle is that one's attitudes affect one's behaviors. Based on this premise, it may be argued that student attitudes are important, since students are the employees of the very near future. Thus, if students feel that businesses behave unethically, they may be less inclined to maintain careers with businesses in general, and their dissatisfaction with their career choices could be manifested by misdirected (from the employer's viewpoint) and dysfunctional behaviors. By virtue of their expanded experiences, one might assume that full-time workers would have better developed and more realistic perceptions of business ethics in general. On the other hand, it may be suggested that students, by virtue of their recent educational experiences, are more sensitized to the importance of ethical behaviors in the business environment. Thus, marketing students might be less *calloused* and more likely to believe that *good ethics is good business* than will more experienced full-time workers. Based on these assumptions, the first hypothesis states:

H_1: Marketing student attitudes toward business ethics in general will be more positive than the attitudes held by full-time workers.

Similarly, marketing students might be expected to have more positive attitudes as consumers. These attitudes might be developed based on courses which discussed marketing strategies and methods designed to attract consumers. Thus, the student's knowledge of marketing should enhance his/her perceptions of the standards established by businesses. These arguments lead to the second hypothesis:

H_2: Marketing student attitudes as consumers will be more positive than the attitudes held by full-time workers.

The next set of hypotheses is based on the perception that marketing students are often part-time workers and thus participants in the business world. However, by virtue of their business education, they are probably more aware of *proper and improper* management behavior. Being attuned to how the "textbook" suggests managers should behave when contrasted with the actual behavior of their managers might create a dissonance that could be manifested in several ways. In addition, being *short-timers*, part-time employees probably will not invest as much of themselves in the work environment. Therefore, the extent to which marketing students are socialized into the organization, buy in to corporate policies and behaviors, and devote themselves to accomplishing their employers' goals will likely be less than one would expect from full-time employees. These arguments lead to the following three hypotheses which state:

H_3: Marketing student attitudes toward the employers' ethical behaviors will be more negative than the attitudes held by full-time workers.

H_4: Marketing student job satisfaction levels will be less than the job satisfaction levels held by full-time workers.

H_5: Marketing student turnover intentions will be greater than the turnover intentions of full-time workers.

As stated previously, one might expect that an individual's attitudes as a consumer, which are gleaned from his/her experiences, would be reflected in his/her attitudes toward a myriad of business subjects. For example, if one has positive attitudes as a customer, does this indicate that this individual would also have positive attitudes toward business ethics in general, his/her employer's ethics specifically, and correspondingly have greater levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of turnover intentions? Thus, research question one is stated as:

Q_1: Will respondents' attitudes as customers correlate with their attitudes regarding general business ethics, their employers' ethics, their levels of job satisfaction and their levels of turnover intentions?

Research question two is designed to assess relationships existing between salesperson and student attitudes regarding the efficacy of "good" business ethics and the respondents' attitudes regarding whether they perceive that their employer is ethical, and the respondents' levels of job satisfaction and turnover intentions. If one feels that *good ethics is good business*, does this feeling correlate with the perception that his/her employer practices "good" ethics? Second, do feelings that businesses should engage in ethical behaviors affect employees' and students' levels of job satisfaction and turnover intentions? Thus, research question two states:

Q_2: Will respondents' perceptions of the degree to which "good ethics is good business" correlate with their attitudes regarding their employers' ethics, their levels of job satisfaction and their levels of turnover intentions?

The third research question evaluates relationships existing between salesperson and student attitudes regarding whether their employers engage in ethical behaviors. Will the perceptions of their employers' ethics affect their levels of job satisfaction and their turnover intentions? Thus research question 3 states:

Q_3: Do respondents' perceptions of the degree to which their employer engages in ethical behaviors influence their levels of job satisfaction and their levels of turnover intentions?

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology consisted of three steps. The first step entailed the selection of an appropriate sample. Salespeople and prospective salespeople were identified as the samples of interest for this research. Salespeople were selected because they seem to be the ones accused of some of the least ethical behavior. Students enrolled in Advanced Marketing (Marketing Management) classes were selected as the student sample because they have been exposed to ethics education and because they are very likely (at least 70 percent) to be the salespeople of the future.

Given the research objectives of determining if differences in ethical perceptions exist between salespeople and students and of evaluating the relationships that exist between the respondents' ethical attitudes toward their employers, businesses in general, attitudes as consumers, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, it was determined that sample consistency was desirable. Thus, students from one university enrolled in one course (Advanced Marketing) were selected as the student sample. Additionally, one type of salesperson was selected to comprise the sample -- retail salespeople.

Retail salespeople were selected for a variety of reasons. First, research has found that retail salespeople receive little formal training and socialization with regard to ethics (Burns 1999; Dawson 1997; Dubinsky and Levy 1985). Second, retail salespeople are significant in number and are important participants in the marketing channel. Third, retail salespeople engage in most of the traditional selling roles and face many of the ethical challenges facing all salespeople. Fourth, as Dubinsky and Levy (1985) point out, retail sales managers should be particularly concerned with a salesperson's ability to deal with ethical situations because an inability to properly respond to ethical dilemmas is likely to result in "lower job performance, unhappy customers and ridicule." Correspondingly, retail sales expenses consume a significant portion of the retailer's operating expenses and promotional expenses and are an important factor in the retailer's success (Chonko, Caballero and Lumpkin 1990; Hawes, Rao and Baker 1993). Fifth, retail salespeople have occupations that closely parallel the frames of reference of the student sample. Thus, differences that exist between the two groups might be logically attributed to their attitudes based on real work experiences, rather than to differences based on *different* work experiences. Finally, as stated by McIntyre, Thomas and Gilbert (1999, p. 43) "The ethics of retail practices is an understudied phenomenon in general."

To maintain as much homogeneity in the sample as possible, 18 retailers engaged in the sale of "shopping goods" were identified as potential study participants. Each of these retailers was contacted by one of the principal researchers in the study. Fourteen of the retailers, employing a total of 156 salespeople, agreed to participate in the research.

The second sample consisted of marketing students. Marketing students were selected as the sample of interest because they are the ones who will become the sales representatives of the future. A total of 114 marketing students were surveyed. These students were selected from Advanced Marketing classes (senior level) because they had been exposed to the *maximum* number of marketing classes available. Based on this fact, it was determined that these students had received educational information pertaining to both the importance of ethics and the importance of business in the U.S. economy. Thus, students who were taking Advanced Marketing at an AACSB accredited university of approximately 3,500 (undergraduate) business majors represented the student portion of the sample.

Since the objectives of the research were first to identify differences between salesperson and student perceptions regarding ethics and attitudes, and second to uncover relationships existing between the respondents' perceptions of general business ethics, employer ethics, attitudes as consumers, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, the next step in the process required the development of a research instrument. Since these dimensions of interest had been assessed in previous studies, established scales were sought. The measurement of salesperson attitudes pertaining to general business ethics was facilitated through the use of a scale developed by Singhapakdi, et al. (1995). The original version of this instrument consisted of seven questions using a nine-point Likert-type scale. The Singhapakdi, et al. (1995) scale was derived from a scale originally developed by Kraft and Jauch (1992). The scale itself was named the "Good Ethics is Good Business" scale and measures the respondent's perception of the relationship between a business' social responsibility and profitability. High scores on the scale are indicative of perceptions that ethical behavior has a positive impact on a business' profitability and long-term viability. For the purposes of the present research, the scale was reduced by two questions (which were judged in pretests to be redundant with other scale items) and was revised to a seven-point scale designed to be more consistent with the other scales used in the research and more common-place in current research. In Singhapakdi, et al's. (1995) study, the scale had an alpha coefficient (Cronbach 1960) of .72. In this study, the scale's mean value is 30.1 and the alpha coefficient value is .91 (well above the .70 level established by Nunnally 1978).

The second scale used in the study was developed to evaluate the respondent's perceptions of his/her employer's ethics. This scale was also developed by Singhapakdi, et al. (1995). The scale, which was termed the "Corporate Ethical Value" scale, originally was developed by Wood, Chonko and Hunt (1989) with the intent of measuring an employee's perceptions of his/her manager's ethical behavior, the degree to which managers were concerned about ethical issues, and how such behavior was evaluated in the organization. Hunt, Wood, and Chonko's (1989) version of the scale used a seven-point Likert-type scale and Singhapakdi, et al. (1995) used a nine-point version. The earlier version had an alpha coefficient (Cronbach 1960) of .78 and Singhapakdi's version had an alpha coefficient of .85. As applied to the present research, the scale uses a seven-point Likert-type scale and has a mean value of 26.2 with an alpha coefficient of .79.

The salesperson's "attitudes as a consumer" were assessed using the "Alienation: Consumer Alienation from the Marketplace" scale (Allison 1978). The original version of this instrument included 35 items scored on a seven-point Likert-type scale. The validity of this scale was assessed by Bearden, Lichtenstein and Teel (1983) who used 22 of the 35 original scale items. The alpha coefficient (Cronbach 1960) for the scale was .84. The instrument used in this analysis was the Bearden, Lichtenstein, and Teel (1983) version of the scale and was reduced to 15 items due to the fact that the pre-test sample indicated that these items were perceived as redundant and/or irrelevant. These reductions did not seem to damage the scale's reliability coefficients, as the alpha coefficient for this scale is .85 and the mean is 52.6.

Job satisfaction was measured by a modified version of the "Job Satisfaction" scale developed by Wood, Chonko and Hunt (1986). This scale assesses satisfaction from the salesperson's perspective. Previous use of the scale has resulted in an established reliability, with an alpha coefficient of .89 (Cronbach 1960). The current survey uses six of the questions to assess job satisfaction. In this study, the scale has an alpha coefficient of .89 and a mean value of 31.4.

The respondents' intentions of leaving their employer were used as a surrogate measure of turnover. This scale was a four-item scale developed by O'Reilly, Chapman and Caldwell (1991). The results in this study show that the scale has an alpha coefficient value of .88 and a mean value of 17.9. To summarize, the scale names, mean values and alpha coefficients are provided in Table 2, with the tests of the hypotheses.

Following the development of the survey, the final step of the research required the collection of the data. As mentioned previously, 14 retailers employing 156 salespeople agreed to participate. Each of the retailers agreed to distribute the survey to its salespeople along with a statement encouraging participation in the study. Following distribution of the surveys, participating salespeople returned completed questionnaires to the researchers by using response envelopes that were provided. This was designed to ensure each respondent's anonymity and to encourage accurate responses. A total of 124 surveys were returned and of that number 119 were deemed usable. Thus, the effective response rate is 76 percent. For the student sample, surveys were distributed and administered during class time for three Advanced Marketing classes conducted during a semester. A total of 114 students were in attendance in these classes and four surveys were deemed unusable, thus the student sample consisted on 110 students.

Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the sample. As indicated in the table, for the retail salesperson sample, a slight majority of the respondents were male. Approximately 41percent had completed at least a Bachelor's degree and the majority had incomes exceeding $30,000. In addition, the typical respondent worked an average of 42 hours per week, had over ten years experience in sales and was over 36 years of age.

The characteristics of the student sample also consisted of a slight male majority. However, as the table indicates, the majority of students were less than 25 years of age, and worked less than 30 hours per week. In addition, the vast majority of students had less than four years of sales experience, and all students reported annual incomes of less than $30,000.

Insert Table 1 About Here

RESULTS

Table 2 provides the statistical results of t-tests conducted to evaluate the validity of the research hypotheses (in addition to the previously mentioned scale characteristics). The first hypothesis held that marketing students would possess attitudes that were more positive toward general business ethics than would full-time workers because marketing students had recently been exposed to information indicating that "good ethics is good business" and because full-time workers would be expected to be more aware of the real-world behaviors of business. However, as shown in the table, the first hypothesis is rejected, as no significant differences exist with regard to the perceptions of the general ethical behaviors of business. It appears that both the marketing students and full-time workers in our samples essentially have the same perceptions regarding the concept that "good ethics is good business."

Hypothesis two was developed based on the premise that marketing students' knowledge of marketing strategies and tactics would lead them to perceive that marketing strategies are not deceptive nor are they designed to mislead customers. The research results support the second hypothesis. Significant differences exist between full-time workers and marketing students in terms of their attitudes as consumers. As shown, students have significantly more positive attitudes as consumers than do full-time workers.

As stated, hypotheses three, four and five were developed based on two primary arguments. First, marketing students have been exposed to "proper" managerial practices and behaviors by virtue of their college curricula. Based on this exposure, it may be expected that real-world experiences might conflict with "ivory tower" teachings resulting in some form of dissonance. Second, being part-time employees, marketing students might be expected to maintain a feeling of detachment from their employers. Such detachment might be anticipated due to the fact that the student knows he/she is going to be employed for only a short period of time and thus the socialization of the marketing student is not as critical as for the full-time employee. In combination, these two factors lead to the arguments that marketing students would have significantly more negative perceptions of their employers' ethical behaviors (H3); significantly higher turnover intentions (H4); and significantly lower levels of job satisfaction (H5). The research results support two of these three hypotheses. Hypothesis three is not supported, as no significant differences exist between marketing students' perceptions of their employers' ethical behaviors and the perceptions held by full-time workers.

The fourth and fifth hypotheses are supported, however. With regard to the fourth hypothesis, the turnover intentions of the marketing students are significantly higher than the turnover intentions of the full-time employees included in the research. Correspondingly, job satisfaction levels are significantly different, as full-time workers are significantly more satisfied with their jobs than are marketing students.

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristic	**TOTAL**	**WORKERS**	**STUDENTS**
	Percent (Number)	Percent (number)	Percent (number)
Gender:			
Male	52.9% (118)	53.1% (60)	52.3% (57)
Female	47.1% (105)	46.9% (53)	47.7% (53)
Education:			
Some College	30.4% (70)	58.8% (70)	--
Bachelors Degree	62.2% (143)	27.7% (33)	100% (110)
Masters Degree	7.4% (16)	13.5% (16)	--
Income:			
Less than $30,000	66.5% (153)	36.1% (43)	100% (110)
$30,000-$39,999	17.0% (39)	32.8% (39)	--
$40,000-$49,999	4.8% (11)	9.2% (11)	--
$50,000 or greater	11.7% (26)	21.8% (26)	--
Age:			
Less than 25	48.4 % (107)	12.6% (14)	84.6% (93)
25-35	23.1% (51)	30.6% (34)	15.4% (17)
36-50	22.2% (49)	44.1% (49)	--
Over 50	6.3% (14)	12.6% (14)	--
Hours worked per week:			
Less than 20	17.8% (41)	7.5% (9)	29.1% (32)
20-29	22.6% (52)	5.0% (6)	41.8% (46)
30-39	13.0% (30)	7.5% (9)	19.1% (21)
40 and over	46.5% (107)	80% (96)	10.0% (11)
Sales Experience (years):			
Less than 1 year	24.4% (560	15.8% (19)	33.6% (37)
Between 1 and 2 years	20.0% (46)	19.2% (23)	20.9% (23)
Between 2 and 4 years	13.5% (31)	8.3% (10)	19.1% (21)
4 years and over	42.2% (97)	56.7% (68)	26.4% (29)

The research questions identified in the study were addressed using correlation analysis. The findings are shown in Table 3. Research question one was designed to determine whether respondents' customer alienation scores were correlated with their attitudes regarding general business ethics, their employers' ethics, their levels of job satisfaction and their levels of turnover intentions. As shown in Table 3, the research

TABLE 2
Scale Means (sd), Alpha Coefficients and t-Test Results

Scale Name	**Sample Mean (sd)**	**Alpha Coefficient**	**Student Mean (sd)**	**Salesperson Mean (sd)**	**t-Test (p)**
Good Ethics is Good Business **a**	30.1 (5.8)	.90	30.1 (5.3)	30.1 (5.3)	.1 (.96)
Employer's Ethics **a**	25.4 (6.6)	.76	24.7 (6.2)	26.1 (6.9)	1.6 (.11)
Customer Alienation **b**	49.8 (10.8)	.78	46.9 (7.6)	52.5 (12.6)	4.1 (.0001)
Job Satisfaction **a**	29.8 (8.2)	.85	28.1 (7.6)	31.3 (8.5)	3.0 (.003)
Turnover Intentions **a**	14.9 (7.3)	.84	11.6 (5.8)	18.0 (7.3)	7.4 (.0001)

a: high scores are positive
b: low scores are positive

TABLE 3
Correlation Analysis

Variable:

Students:	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
1) Customer Alienation **b**	**1.0**	---	---	---	---
2) Good Ethics is Good Business **a**	-.07	**1.0**	---	---	---
3) Employer's Ethics **a**	-.12	.17	**1.0**	---	---
4) Job Satisfaction **a**	-.01	.27 ii	.45 i	**1.0**	---
5) Turnover Intentions **a**	-.06	-.24 iii	.09	.23 ii	**1.0**
Salespeople:					
1) Customer Alienation **b**	**1.0**	---	---	---	---
2) Good Ethics is Good Business **a**	-.04	**1.0**	---	---	---
3) Employer's Ethics **a**	-.36 i	.36 i	**1.0**	---	---
4) Job Satisfaction **a**	-.18 iii	.31 i	.60 i	**1.0**	---
5) Turnover Intentions **a**	-.14	.25 ii	.54 i	.70 i	**1.0**

question is answered negatively for the student sample, since no correlations exist between the students' customer alienation levels and their perceptions of ethics and their job satisfaction and turnover intention levels. For the salesperson sample, however, significant correlations do exist between a salesperson's level of customer alienation and his/her perceptions of the employer's ethics and job satisfaction. In both cases, the more "alienated" the salesperson, the lower his/her perceptions of the employer's ethics and the lower the level of job satisfaction.

The second research question was developed to answer whether the respondents' perceptions of the degree to which *good ethics is good business* is correlated with their attitudes regarding their employers' ethics, their levels of job satisfaction and their levels of turnover intentions? The findings indicate that relationships do exist between the respondents' perceptions that "good ethics is good business" and other variables for both samples. The students' perceptions regarding the concept that "good ethics is good business" is positively correlated with both their levels of job satisfaction and their turnover intentions. For the salesperson sample, scores on the "good ethics is good business scale" are correlated with a salesperson's perception of his/her employer's ethics, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

Research question three was formulated to address whether respondents' perceptions of the degree to which their employer engages in ethical behaviors will correlate with their levels of job satisfaction and their levels of turnover intentions. As shown in Table 3, student perceptions of the degree to which their employer is ethical correlates significantly with only one variable, job satisfaction. However, for the salespeople, the degree to which the employer is perceived as being ethical correlates positively with both job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

DISCUSSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study may suggest some important implications for marketing managers and their organizations. Since marketing students represent the employees of the future, their attitudes toward businesses and their ethics are important. This importance is derived from the fact that students' beliefs will likely affect their behaviors. These behaviors are significant in terms of the students' selections of their careers, future employers, and their behaviors once they gain full-time employment upon graduation. Such behaviors may include not only their productive activities, which are likely to be related to their perceptions (positive or negative) of business, but also their turnover intentions as well as their organizational citizenship behaviors. For example, if student attitudes toward businesses are negative, these negative attitudes might result in dysfunctional and unproductive employee behaviors. Thus, assessing the attitudinal base with which employers and organizations have to work might provide insight into challenges and/or opportunities that exist as businesses attempt to adapt to the employees of the future, the marketing students of today.

One of the most important implications of this study which might be drawn from the findings pertains to the fact that both students and current employees seem to be equally supportive of business ethics in general. The findings show that both groups seem to agree that "good ethics are good business." Such an agreement might suggest that students will grow in their perceptions of the ethical behaviors of businesses in general so that their attitudes toward their employers might be expected to continue to be positive. If this indeed is the case, these future employees could be expected to be supportive of business goals and should therefore be willing to work toward those goals and correspondingly require lower investments from their employers in terms of resources to induce satisfactory behavior.

Even more encouraging to future employers are the students' positive attitudes as consumers. The findings indicate that students are significantly less alienated in their attitudes as consumers than are full-time employees. This finding suggests that perhaps the marketing courses to which the students recently have been exposed have resulted in enhanced attitudes toward businesses and their marketing strategies. Thus, the students are entering the workplace with positive attitudes, which may be exhibited by their positive behaviors in implementing their employers' marketing strategies and tactics in the workplace.

A seemingly interesting finding was that no differences existed in terms of the two groups' perceptions of their employers' ethics. The hypothesis that full-time salespeople would possess more positive attitudes toward their employer's ethics was not reflected in the findings. This result might imply that students' perceptions of their employers' ethics are positive, which could indicate that employers are meeting their expectations with regard to ethical practices. It was anticipated that marketing students would have lower perceptions of their employers' ethics based on the fact that these students would perceive that "ethics should be practiced" due to the input they had received from a myriad of business and other courses. However, the finding that no differences exist suggests that marketing students' expectations are being met with regard to their ethical standards. Thus, corrective actions may not be required in terms of improving the ethical expectations of "new hires" in the workplace.

The finding that salesperson ratings of their job satisfaction and turnover intentions were superior to the marketing students' ratings was anticipated. It was based on the expectation that, since students were reporting their part-time work experiences, they certainly had high turnover intentions. Correspondingly, the fact that the marketing students did not rate their job satisfaction as positively as did full-time employees probably also reflects the students' knowledge that they were not going to be long-term participants in their current careers and thus did not find them satisfying, but rather merely a source of income.

A review of the findings as they relate to the research questions provides interesting implications. For example, it appears that while higher levels of customer alienation are significantly associated with lower levels of perceived employer ethics and job satisfaction for salespeople, no such relationship was found for the marketing students. Why? While this issue obviously requires additional assessment, perhaps it may be attributed to the fact that salesperson experience in the "real-world" contributes to greater levels of alienation as consumers and in turn, this alienation has its repercussions in terms of the salesperson's perceptions of his/her own employer's ethics as well as on his/her own job satisfaction. Thus, perceptions that are developed through experience may lead to alienation, which then is manifested in lower levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of perceived employer ethics. Marketing students, by virtue of their limited experience may not allow their alienation levels to adversely impact their job satisfaction or their perceptions of their employer ethics. Consequently, marketing students may be reliably selected as "new" employees with minimal concerns regarding the impact of their experiences on their levels of job satisfaction or on their perceptions of their employers' ethics.

The relationships existing between responses on the "good ethics is good business" scale also show stronger correlations as they relate to salespeople. Salespeople who feel that "good ethics is good business" have significantly higher levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of turnover intentions, and have more positive attitudes regarding their employers' ethics. Marketing students who believe that "good ethics is good business" have higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of turnover intentions, but their attitudes regarding their employers' ethics are not significantly related. This might imply that perceptions regarding the efficacy of the practice of ethical behavior may be reflected in both groups' levels of job satisfaction and turnover intentions. However, these sentiments also are related to salesperson attitudes toward the ethics of their employers. This suggests that salespeople who have experience in the workforce might be more attuned to the relationships between their attitudes regarding the ethical perceptions of business and their attitudes pertaining to their own employer's ethical standards.

Finally, perceptions of their employers' levels of ethical behavior were significantly related to the students' levels of job satisfaction. Again, however, stronger and more numerous significant correlations were found with regard to the salesperson sample. Salesperson perceptions of employer ethics were found to be significantly related to both turnover intentions and job satisfaction. In this case, the fact that students' levels of turnover intentions were unrelated to their perceptions of their employers' ethics is not surprising, since students typically are "planning" to leave their employers after getting their degrees. Thus, these findings support previous research that holds that an employer's level of ethics affects the salesperson's job satisfaction levels (and generally turnover intentions), the findings provide further support for the concept that "good ethics is good business."

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As is often the case with research of this type, this study has several limitations. First, the samples consist of retail salespeople engaged in the sale of shopping goods and students enrolled in Advanced Marketing courses at a Midwestern university. Therefore, the results are limited to these particular groups, and should not be generalized. Additionally, since the salespeople were selected based on their manager's willingness to allow participation, and the students were volunteers (self-selected), the sample-selection process was not randomized.

Yet another limitation of this study is that the survey instrument assessed *perceptions* of potential behaviors, rather than *actual* behaviors. Consequently, the results are limited to the degree that perceptions match behaviors that may or may not actually have occurred. In general, such a linkage is a tenuous one at best. Further, other behaviors and outcomes could have been assessed in the research, including efforts and actual performance results.

Future research should assess these factors as it builds on these findings. One area of future research would involve replicating this study with additional samples. The focus could be placed on business-to-business sales situations. Perhaps future research could also focus on salespeople who possess greater levels of education and/or income. Students enrolled in sales courses also could provide interesting subjects, as could students from a variety of educational endeavors.

Future projects also might evaluate a variety of different outcome variables. For example, future research could examine the degree to which negative perceptions of the employer's ethics affect the salesperson's efforts for the employer. Other research might consider the customer-orientation levels of salespeople who work for employers with different ethical levels. One might investigate salesperson performance and ethical attitude combinations. With regard to the student sample, investigations could assess relationships between a prospective employer's levels of perceived ethical practices and the degree to which this affects the attractiveness of the firm as a potential employer. In fact, further research could measure the degree to which tradeoffs may exist between an employer's perceived level of ethical behavior and other aspects of the employment offer and the student's willingness to accept employment.

Regardless of the direction of future studies, this research provides insights as they relate to the positive relationships between ethical perceptions and the attitudes of both salespersons and students This research provides additional support for the concept that "good ethics is good business" by showing relationships between perceptions of customer alienation, aspects of business ethics and job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In fact, this study extends the relationship to include not only the respondent's employer's ethics, but also the ethics of other businesses and perceptions as a consumer. The findings also indicate that students do not necessarily have higher perceptions than "active" workers. However, the results show that active salespeople do have expectations of ethical standards and these expectations have significant relationships to many other ethical perceptions. In conclusion, the findings suggest that businesses should behave ethically and should promote their ethical behaviors as a means of building job satisfaction and reducing unwanted turnover.

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