

ETHICAL SENSITIVITY OF ASPIRING BUSINESS LEADERS: Indian context

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Abstract: Ethical business leaders can make a huge impact in creating flourishing communities in today's world where Corporations are immensely powerful. In the business context, the first step of ethical decision-making is recognising the ethical dimension of a business problem itself, ethical sensitivity. This study investigates the impact of ethics education in the business program as well as role of early education environment in influencing the ethical sensitivity of business students. It was found that both these variables have significant impact in the ethical sensitivity of the participants of the study. The research has implications in revisiting the ethics education in universities and the role of early education environment in developing ethical business leaders for the sustainable future of our country.

Keywords: Business, Ethical Sensitivity, Ethics Programs, Leadership, University Education, Whole-Person Education.

1. Introduction

Corporations wield great amount of power in the contemporary world. The contribution of businesses for the progress and development of a country is non-debatable. In the Indian economy, the contribution of businesses, Industry and service sectors combined, is about 85% of the GDP. At the same token, businesses can do great harm to the economy of a country and the wellbeing and the quality of life of its citizens. When businesses increase rich-poor divide by accumulation of wealth into the hands of a few, exploit the natural resources for increasing the bottom-line, pollute the environment uncontrollably and fail to ensure safe and healthy working conditions, they are doing great

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harm to the country and its people. Along with the rise of corporations in improving the lives of individuals and communities, their unethical practices in search of maximising the profits have created great negative impacts to the society at large. Financial manipulation of Enron, Worldcom, Satyam, and Punjab National Bank (PNB), people exploitation, and human rights abuse of Nike, Monsanto, and Chevron are a few examples of widely publicized business scandals. India is turning to be the epicentre of unethical behaviours and practices in the aftermath of huge scams like PNB, Satyam, Sahara, and Commonwealth Games (CWG). The interconnectedness of the business with multiple stakeholders makes the importance of ethical practices in business and its impact to the society very significant and crucial.

In this context, the importance of developing the ethical quotient of individuals engaged in business is paramount. As business leaders wield huge power, their ethical choices can make real difference in the lives of various stakeholders and society at large. The primary objective of this study is to analyse the impact of an experiential variable, undergoing the business ethics education, in improving the ethical sensitivity of the Post Graduate business students. Ethical sensitivity is considered as an important primary input in the ethical decision-making process.

One of the age-old debates is about the effectiveness of Business Ethics education. There are studies which assert that ethical behaviours can be taught and influence students personal and professional behaviours (Shurden, Santandrea, and Shruden 122). On the contrary, there are also researchers who deny that ethics education can make any significant change in the attitudes and behaviours of students (Bloodgood, Turnley, and Mudrack 32). After the Enron and World Com scandals, many business schools around the globe have incorporated courses related to business ethics or ethics modules into their business degree program. Harvard, for example, instituted a compulsory, graded ethics course in 2004 (*The Economist*). The objectives were to develop ethically sensitive business executives and to ward off criticisms against business schools that they were creating unethical, greedy corporate leaders through their business

education. The perfect example was the infamous Enron CEO Jeffrey Skilling holding an MBA degree from Harvard.

There had been a large amount of studies regarding the effectiveness of the ethics programs in improving the ethical reasoning and decision-making skills of the future managers, most of them being done in the US and European context. Just as ethics education is given less emphasis, studies of its effectiveness also are not well documented in India. This study explores whether teaching ethics makes an impact in developing ethical sensitivity among business students in the Indian context.

India has a remarkably diverse school system with equally diverse public perception about them. The religious affiliate private schools are identified with inculcating moral values and emphasis on discipline. The private corporate based schools are known for its focus on innovative practices in education and government schools are perceived as lacking in both. In this study, it is also analysed whether the type of schools has any influence on the ethical sensitivity of students.

A key antecedent of ethical decision-making, i.e., ethical sensitivity, of future business leaders is explored with respect to the impact of ethics education in business schools and their early education environment. The study uses a descriptive interpretative approach with quantitative data collection and analysis. The sample of respondents in the study are business students from various universities in Bangalore. The results are analysed and interpreted with a focus on their academic implications.

2. Models of Ethical Decision-Making

Ethical decision-making refers to the process of evaluating and choosing among alternatives in a manner consistent with ethical principles. In making ethical decisions, it is necessary to perceive and eliminate unethical options and select the best ethical alternative (Josephson Institute of Ethics). Ethical sensitivity is considered as the primary input in the process of ethical decision-making. Three of the fundamental studies in ethical decision-making are briefly presented in the following sections.

2.1. Rest's Four Component Model

James Rest has developed Four Component Model, a comprehensive model for ethical decision making. Rest considered ethical behaviours as the outcome of a set of cognitive and psychological processes than being a single decision choice (2). The model he suggested had four components of psycho-cognitive processes that an individual goes through while making an ethical decision. An individual at first recognises an ethical dilemma and makes a moral judgement about it, which is dependent on one's moral motivation or intention (Rest 4). All these three psycho-cognitive processes precede the final ethical behaviour. He concluded that ethical action is the result of four psycho-cognitive processes: (i) moral perception (recognition), (ii) moral judgement (reasoning), (iii) moral intent (motivation), and (iv) moral action.

i. **Moral Perception** refers to the focal component of this study, Ethical Sensitivity. To perceive an ethical situation, a person must first imagine the various choices at disposal and the possible consequence to each of these choices that might affect the welfare of others. The important aspect here is the recognition that one's actions have consequences that may affect others. People vary in their perceptions of moral issues due to three major reasons: a) many people fail to interpret events happening to them, b) people are different in their sensitivity to the needs and welfare of others, and c) the capacity to perceive moral issues develop with age (Rest 15). Although personal and situational factors account for the differences in ethical sensitivity, Rest emphasized the importance of individual's ability to infer the effects of an action on others. One major inference is that ethical sensitivity can be measured, and certain organizational or personal variables may explain the variance among different people.

ii. **Moral Judgement** describes the choice of people regarding the morally right courses of action. Rest believed in the capacity of people to make moral judgments once they can recognise the ethical dimension during the first step (22). His idea was like the theory of Kohlberg's cognitive moral development or one's capacity for moral reasoning. In today's preferred worldview of ethical relativism, this component of judgement may appear

obsolete. As relativists consider nothing as objectively right or wrong, making moral judgements also is reproached vehemently.

iii. **Moral Intent** relates to the link between people's real behaviour and what they believe to be right or wrong. Intentions are the outcome of prioritizations between the 'moral ideal' and something less. When one's personal values compete with what is right, moral intent may become deficient (Rest 39).

iv. **Moral Action** refers to the ability to translate the good intentions to good actions. Though good intentions can be considered as a predictor of ethical behaviour, Rest argues that, where moral behaviour is concerned, perseverance, resoluteness, competence, and character are often required to act faithfully to one's good moral intentions (45).

Rest's proposition of ethical decision-making being a linear psycho-cognitive process may not always correspond to human behaviour. Human decision systems are much complex and follow different steps at different occasions. One may engage in ethical behaviour based on habits inculcated from childhood, not necessarily going through the psycho-cognitive processes Rest identified. Secondly, judgement preceding intent also may not be the case while making decisions. In fact, one's judgements are most of the time coloured by their intent. Rest has succeeded, however, in shedding light into the complex psycho-cognitive process of ethical decision-making. It has positive implications for interventions in training for conscious ethical decision-making. Our present study considers recognising ethical dilemma in the grey areas of business environment as the most important first step towards ethical decision and action.

2.2. Ferrell and Gresham's Contingency Model

O. C. Ferrell and Larry Gresham developed a model that incorporated contingency factors influencing the ethical decision-making process (92). These include individual factors, significant others, and opportunity. Individual factors refer to what one has learnt through socialisation, education system, and one's cultural background. For example, if you are knowledgeable about moral philosophies, you are more likely to integrate them into your

decision-making. Significant others mean the intimate groups one is part of. In an organizational context, your superiors and peers can influence your ethical choices through a variety of ways, which include professional or organizational code of ethics, the willingness of management to reinforce ethical behaviour, and the extent to which the individual has contact with ethical versus unethical patterns in the organization. The opportunity variable concerns the organizational aspects like professional code of conduct, corporate policies, and incentives which either promotes ethical or unethical behaviours (Ferrell and Gresham 93). The model also includes cultural and societal influences and the possibility of past decisions influencing future ethical decisions.

Contingency model presents a very pragmatic view of the ethical decision-making in an organizational context. It appears to be a balanced explanation in rationalizing the ethical or unethical behaviours happening in day-today corporate life. The authors emphasise the role of situational factors, i.e., significant others and opportunity, that may derail on occasions the individual characteristics of a person in terms of ethical behaviour. Hence organizations are responsible in ensuring the right situational cues and support systems to influence the behaviour of the employees.

2.3 Trevino's Person-Situation Interactionist Model

In her model, Linda Klebe Trevino includes some dimensions of both the previous models. From Rest's approach, she includes the psycho-cognitive dimension of decision-making, with special reliance on Kohlberg's cognitive moral development (Trevino 602). She also integrates the situational and organizational contingency variables that moderate the process of decision-making similar to Ferrell and Gresham's model (610).

Like other models, Trevino begins with identifying a moral issue. Once recognized, the individual cognitively processes the situation, which is influenced by the individual's stage of moral development and conditioned by individual and situational moderators. According to Trevino, the cognitive response of people to ethical dilemma is a function of their level of cognitive moral development (608). It was Kohlberg who divided moral

development into three levels, each composed of two stages and as the individual develops his capacity for moral reasoning, he ascends to higher levels and stages. During the pre-conventional level, an individual's sense of morality is externally controlled. In the conventional level, an individual's sense of morality is tied to personal and societal relationships. In the highest level, post-conventional level, a person's sense of morality is defined in terms of more abstract principles and values. The effects of personal and situational moderators vary depending upon the level of cognitive moral development the person has attained (360).

Trovino goes one step further from the earlier contingency model and proposes to integrate both cognitive and behavioural approaches. She insists on the organization's role to train and nurture individual cognitive moral development and support it through providing opportunities for growth and conducive environment for ethical behaviour. The model appears over-ambitious in its expectation of both individual transformation and organizational support for ethical behaviours to take place.

The common thread of all three models is the ability to recognise a dilemma as an ethical one as the first step of any ethical decision-making process. This aspect has greater significance in the context of businesses as human mind can be deceived of not recognising the ethical aspect when too focused on business objectives. The present study has taken the variable ethical sensitivity as a commendable outcome for business students in their journey to become ethical leaders

3. Ethical Sensitivity

The ethical decision-making models have brought forth an important dimension, ethical sensitivity, the ability of the individual to recognize an ethical dilemma. The reason behind so many corporate scandals is that people do not recognize certain unacceptable behaviour in business as unethical in the first place. Ethical sensitivity, thus, can be viewed as the starting point of engaging in ethical behaviour and making ethical choices. It determines whether an individual recognizes an ethical problem and engages in ethical decision-making.

Ethical decision making for an individual depends upon the moral code one has internalized. The decision-making situation emerges when alternative courses of action consistent or inconsistent with those moral codes arise. Shelby Hunt and Scott Vitell note that "when placed in a decision-making situation having an ethical component, some people never recognize that there is an ethical issue involved at all" (12). It is the variations in individuals' ethical sensitivity that determines whether an individual has the knowledge and ability to apply the moral code or codes relevant to a given decision making situation. One learns to be ethically sensitive by learning the moral codes. Application of moral codes is context specific, which implies that ethical sensitivity also differs according to different situations. This means one who is highly sensitive ethically in a particular situation may not be so in a different situation. The possible reasons for such variations can be either internal factors like cognitive biases, motivation or external factors like ill-conceived organizational goals and situational pressures.

Hunt-Vitell model emphasizes the importance of formal and informal moral codes that originate from the cultural, professional, industrial, and organizational environments influencing the ethical sensitivity. The way an individual perceives an ethical problem is influenced by these moral codes. Thus, ethical sensitivity is a unique personal characteristic depending on one's internalization of specific moral codes and has strong impact on the ethical decision-making process.

3.1. Methodology

The present research is quantitative, using field survey method. The study is conducted with 259 students from five business schools in Bangalore, India. Twenty business-related ethical scenarios are used as the tool to measure the ethical sensitivity of the students. This is an adapted and extended version from the one devised by Longenecker and team (Longenecker, McKinney, and Moore). The scenarios represent various business situations that a manager or businessperson could encounter, like embezzlement of expense report, fraud in different areas of

business, and similar hypothetical business situations. There are situations of serious unethical concerns as well as ambiguous ones. The rating scale used is a seven-point scale from 1 (not acceptable) to 7 (always acceptable). The students choose a score for each of the situations. The mean score of 20 scenarios would give each student's overall measure of ethical sensitivity.

ANOVA test is employed to measure the difference in ethical sensitivity between students who have completed the business ethics course and those who have not completed it. Similarly, ANOVA test is also used to understand the difference in ethical sensitivity among students who have completed primary education in different types of schools.

3.2. Ethical Scenarios

i. An executive earning Rs 50,000 a month exaggerated his travel expense account by about Rs 2,000 which he has spent for his personal needs.

ii. In order to minimize the cost, the HR department introduced lay off policies for senior employees, at the same time hiring fresh graduates to meet the labour requirements.

iii. The HR manager promoted one of his long-term friends to a higher position in preference to a better competent employee with whom he had no personal ties.

iv. Whenever there is a dip in the productivity, the training manager used to arrange personality development workshops which are his passionate area of training.

v. A company, to minimize the cost of production, did not mind polluting the surroundings way beyond the permissible limits. As the manager of production department, you did not want to change the processes to maintain the profit margin.

vi. A Consumer Electronics company's foreign partner decided to export a specific product to developing markets as this product was banned in the domestic market due to some health impacts. As the Marketing Manager, you are aware of the situation, still decided against disclosing about it to the consumers as there are profit considerations.

vii. An employer came across some confidential personal information about one of his employees which he used against the promotional decision of the person.

viii. In order to end and take advantage of the labour-management conflict, the management decided to 'incentivize' a few of the union leaders by offering them huge sums of money.

ix. Being the Chief Accountant of an Accounting firm, you decided to help the management to hide their financial mismanagement by making 'some adjustments' in the financial reports for additional monetary benefits.

x. A pharmaceutical company used to offer vacation packages and valuable gifts to the doctors who in turn recommend to patients the products of the company.

xi. Because of pressure from his brokerage firm, a share broker recommended a type of share that he did not consider to be a good investment.

xii. A small business received one-fourth of its gross revenue in the form of cash. The owner reported only one-half of the cash receipts for income tax purposes.

xiii. A company paid a Rs 500, 000 'consulting' fee to an official of a foreign country. In return, the official promised assistance in obtaining a contract that will produce Rs 1 crore profits for the contracting company.

xiv. A company Chairman found that a competitor had made an important scientific discovery, which would sharply reduce the profits of his own company. He then hired a key employee of the competitor in an attempt to learn the details of the discovery.

xv. A corporate director learned that his company intended to announce a share split and increase its dividend. Based on this information, he bought additional shares and sold them at a gain following the announcement.

xvi. An engineer discovered what he perceived to be a product design flaw which constituted a safety hazard. His company declined to correct the flaw. The engineer decided to keep quiet, rather than taking his complaint outside the company.

xvii. An employer received application for a supervisor's position from two equally qualified applicants but hired the male

applicant because he thought that some employees might refuse being supervised by a female.

xviii. A cigarette manufacturer launched a publicity campaign challenging a campaign by the Ministry of Health office that cigarette smoking is harmful to the smoker's health.

xix. As part of the marketing strategy for a product, the producers changed its colour and marketed it as 'new and improved', even though its other characteristics were unchanged.

xx. An owner of a small business firm obtained a free copy of copyrighted computer software program from a business friend rather than spending Rs 5000 to obtain his own program from the software dealer.

3.3. Results

Table 1 presents the mean scores of ethical sensitivity as a comparison between two cohorts of business graduate students, one group which has undergone an ethics course in the university and the other has not. As the graph represents, there's clear pattern emerging from the responses of two cohorts. The group that has undergone ethics training is observed to show a greater amount of ethics sensitivity.

Table 1: Mean Ethical Sensitivity Score based on Ethics training

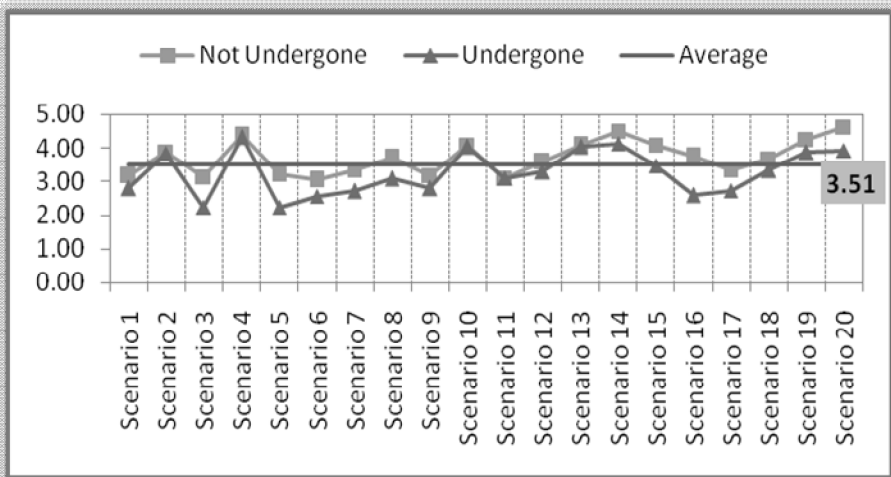


Table 2 shows the results of the ANOVA statistic depicting whether the difference between the above two cohorts in ethical

sensitivity is statistically significant or not. The results show clearly that cohorts differ significantly in terms of their ethical sensitivity scores obtained from their responses to the different real-life scenarios that has ethical undertones.

Table 2: ANOVA study on the ethical sensitivity differences

		N	Mean	Std. Dev	F Score	Sig.
Overall Ethical Sensitivity Score	Ethics course not undergone	148	3.71	1.12	8.05	0.00
	Ethics course Undergone	111	3.25	0.94		
	Total	259	3.51	1.07		

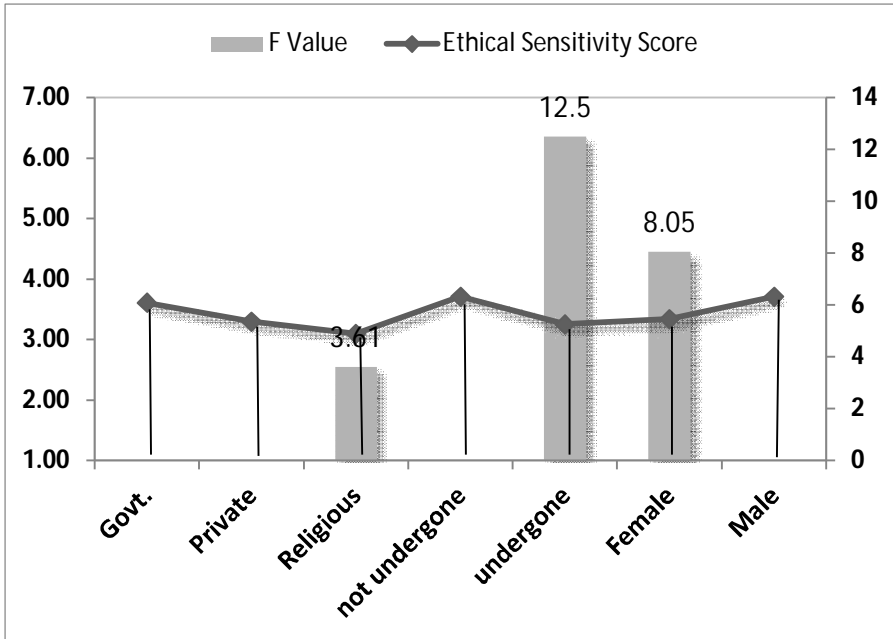
Early educational context has huge impact on the moral development of one's personality that influences one's behaviours as well as life choices. The study investigated whether there is an observable impact in the ethical sensitivity score that is correlated with the primary education providers. The findings are presented in table 3 and 4. The educational context of a student is distinguished in terms of whether the person has obtained primary education from a government school, private school, or a religious run school.

Table 3: The Significance Based on Primary Education Context

		N	Mean	Std. Dev	F Score	Sig.
Overall Ethical Sensitivity Score	Government	49	3.61	0.83	3.61	0.03
	Private	134	3.29	0.93		
	Religious	41	3.10	1.01		
	No responses	35	-	-		
	Total	259	3.33	0.94		

The study has found that there are differences between students in their ethical sensitivity score depending on their primary educational context. Students from religious management schools reported higher ethical sensitivity in comparison with their counterparts from either private schools or government schools.

Table 4: Ethical sensitivity score and significance



5. Reimagining Ethics Education at University level

'Can ethics be taught?' is a cliché question coming up every now and then among academic circles and in curriculum committees at University level. The study proves that there is statistically significant difference (Table 1 & 2) between students who have undergone an ethics course and those have not, in terms of their responses to real life business situations. The dilemma should not be whether or not, rather how ethics can be taught effectively.

Ethics education as a normative science focuses on from assessing students' attitudes and perceptions of the business world to ethical aspects of their behaviour. Lawson argues that what the students perceive as ethical behaviour in business is important, because their actions in the business world will be based on their perceptions of ethical behaviour (195). As observed in the present study an enhanced awareness and recognition of an ethical dilemma amidst the cut-throat business environment itself can be the first step towards ethical behaviours that calls for reimagining of ethics education at University level.

In the Indian higher education setting, the challenges for reimagining are manifold. It appears that very few, be it the management or the academicians, truly believe in the difference ethics training can make in the professional and personal lives of the aspiring future leaders. I have personally observed in my 14-year long association with multiple business programs at the University level, ethics courses are never considered a priority. Mostly, the faculty allocation for ethics courses becomes a matter of convenience than expertise. Conviction on the relevance of ethics programs by key decision-makers is the first step towards change. It is evident that unethical behaviour on the part of managers and corporations can lead to financial failure and also profound impact on its stakeholders and stability of society as a whole (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz 92). Crane found that business students need to be taught skills and tools to help manage difficult and problematic ethical situations (150). It is high time Indian higher education wakes up to reality and shoulder the huge responsibility it has in grooming future ethical leaders.

As an implication for practice of her person-situation interaction model of ethical decision-making, Trevino emphasises the role of higher education institutions in providing conducive environment for ethical behaviour (615). The challenges before University is not limited in designing a meaningful curriculum for the ethics course, finding the right person to deliver it in the classroom, and providing resources for ethics research, but, most importantly, in role-modelling ethical behaviour and being committed to develop an ethical culture in the institution. It is reimagining the core value of the institution itself before making any changes in the specific ethics courses to the students.

4.2. Effectiveness of Teaching Business Ethics

Present study reinforces the premise that ethics education for business students enhances their ethical sensitivity in certain business contexts. Those who consider teaching business ethics as ineffective cite three major reasons: i) by the time students enter University, they would have already developed their ethical standards, ii) they perceive an inherent contradiction between

what they learn and the profit maximization focus of businesses, and iii) the ever growing number of corporate scandals proves that there is no impact for ethics education (Williams and Dewett 112). However, most theorists suggest that given the proper implementation, an ethics curriculum can be designed for effective learning and there are empirical evidences as well, demonstrating that the introduction of an ethics component into the classroom can often lead to improvement in ethical sensitivity, moral reasoning, and even ethical behaviour (Crane and Matten).

The effectiveness of teaching business ethics primarily lies in recognising the ethical dimension in a business problem. Large number of people falls into an ethical slippery slope in their work life primarily because they approach a problem merely as a business problem to resolve. They fail to see the ethical significance of the dilemma. The infamous example of Ford motor company introducing to the market the Ford Pinto car clearly knowing it has engineering design defect that can cause accidents and death is a case in point. Ford Management perceived it as business problem, did cost-benefit analysis and decided to go ahead, failing to recognise the ethical issue involved there. The result of the current study is a pointer towards what an effective ethics program can aim at achieving. Other desirable outcomes presented by a few studies are: ethics education helps to develop moral reasoning skills (Kavathatzopoulos 384; Shaub 20), develops courage to challenge well supported assumptions and the status quo, builds personal character (Hartmann 167), and moral competence (Desplaces et al. 84).

Even in the absence of conclusive answers to the debate of whether higher ethical sensitivity leads to greater ethical practices and outcomes, Universities are bound to continually explore ways of making ethics education more effective. As educational institutions do not have any control over situational factors (Ferrell and Gresham) students might encounter in real life, training them for moral imagination and skills for using an ethical framework for making decisions would be the objectives of ethics education. An emphasis on developing learning outcomes for moral development (Trevino) would help future leaders in making ethical choices.

4.3. Balancing Cognitive and Behavioural Development

An analysis of the scenarios where greater improvement happened due to ethics training reveals that significant changes are in the realm of awareness than behavioural. The vignettes related to sustainability and environmental protection, disclosure norms, whistleblowing, privacy, and confidentiality issues are the ones which makes impact among students through their ethics training (Table 1). A closer look into them shows that all these correspond to a cognitive level change among the students. Specific behavioural scenarios like account fudging for personal benefit, financial reporting, gift receiving, bribing, etc. does not show significant difference after the ethics education (Table 1).

Emphasis is to be given in balancing the cognitive and behavioural dimensions of teaching ethics. Unless awareness leads to attitudinal and behavioural changes, the purpose of ethics education remains unachieved. A comprehensive relook at the mode of teaching learning processes related to ethics education is essential. An outcome focused competency-based approach in delivering the ethics course in the classroom is preferred over the emphasis on ethical theories in the ethics curriculum. This must be complemented with pedagogical practices that support competency building that targets ethical action of the learners.

4.4. Impact of Early Childhood School Environment

The quality of early childhood and primary education in a vast and developing country like India remains a lot to be desired. The study revealed that there exists a significant impact of primary school environment in the measure of ethical sensitivity of graduate level students. It is a known fact that religious managed schools around the world insists on some level of value education, often dependent on the specific religious faiths. The finding that such a practice has major impact on the ethical choices of individuals in their adult lives, is significant.

In the present Indian context, where politicization of religion and religious communalism are on the rise, religious affiliated education may not be appealing to all. But the positive impact it leaves in terms of nurturing the character of young children should be adopted by every school system. Whole person

education, value-based education, socio-emotional development etc. are practices that must be integrated in any type of schools. Policy initiatives in this regard can create long lasting positive societal impact for our country. The reference to holistic education and ethics education in the early education system in the recent draft of National Education Policy is a welcome step in this direction (Ministry of Human Resource Development 76).

5. Conclusion

The world requires a paradigm shift in the way it conducts the business to ensure a sustainable future for the coming generations. The enormous power the corporations wield today, and their incessant pursuit of profit maximization is damaging our planet in unparalleled ways. The paradigm shift is towards more ethical corporations and ethically sensitive business leaders. As an emerging economy, India has a greater role to play in realizing this shift by preparing its future managers to internalize ethics. The findings from this study that both effective ethics teaching at business schools and early education environment can have positive impact in enhancing the ethical sensitivity of business students is relevant in grooming ethical leaders for the future of our country.

Indian higher education should recognise the importance of ethics education at University level, not as a descriptive science but as a normative discipline. It includes a stream of considerations starting from curriculum design based on the specific needs of the discipline, ensuring right faculty facilitates the teaching learning process, faculty development, etc. This requires a shift from the current mindset of a significant majority that ethics cannot be taught. Indian universities need to rediscover the mandate of Cardinal Newman's *Idea of a University* which keeps the formation of human person, moral and intellectual, to become worthy citizens of the country, at the centre of the existence of a University (The National Institute of Newman Studies).

An accompanying factor is the effectiveness of ethics education itself. A change from compliance approach to value-based approach is long overdue in the Indian higher education

system. Value based approach explores constantly the needs of each stakeholder and responds to meet those needs. In the context of effective ethics education, the student is the primary stakeholder and all choices related to content, process, and assessment needs to be student centric.

The ever-pertinent criticism against Indian education system is the over-emphasis on content over competence. The present study also found that students who have undergone ethics training shows greater ethical sensitivity related to awareness level scenarios, not so to the behaviour-focused responses. While recognising the ethical dimensions of business problems itself is an important outcome, equally important is the appropriate behavioural responses. Teaching and learning process adopting practices like experiential learning, intervention strategies, and simulation-based learning contribute towards behavioural changes. Systemic changes towards learner-centric classrooms in education institutions is a pre-requisite for competence-based education.

Christian educational institutions in India have always given emphasis on value education from primary classes. The study has assumed, based on familiarity with a number of schools with different religious affiliations, other religion affiliate early education providers also have emphasized on value education from lower classes. The finding from the study endorses the positive impact value education can make in the later life of a person. Though it appears common sensical, policy intervention for evidence based and scientifically supported whole person education to be part of primary education can have huge long-term positive dividend for the society.

The future of a country is influenced to a great deal by the systems, processes, and environment of the educational institutions of that country. In the context of this quantitative study, this article explored one key variable, ethical sensitivity, and its significance in nurturing ethical leaders. The study is limited by the small sample size, geographical location, and the limited scope of quantitative approach itself. More qualitative and broader investigation in the area of ethical decision-making can further extend this study in the future.

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