MORAL REASONING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION: A CROSS-CULTURAL EXPLORATION

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Summary

The paper explores findings of an assessment of moral reasoning and learning outcomes associated with undergraduate business ethics in schools from two diverse contexts, the United States and Brazil, including a required course in conceptual foundations of business ethics and optional elective courses. Findings of the longitudinal study indicate empirical support for applied curricula and a rubric based on the Four Component Model of Morality (Rest and Narvaez, 1999) is presented as one promising and productive framework. The paper explores approaches with potential for developing emerging business leaders with proclivity toward and capacity for ethical leadership, and discusses the role of institutional support for student development in the area of business ethics.

Keywords: business ethics education, moral development, undergraduate business students, ethical decision-making

INTRODUCTION

As the economy lumbers out of its global slump, scholars, business school administrations, and societal and other stakeholders at all levels continue to scrutinize business education, particularly in the area of ethical decision making and behavior. Competition for employment is fierce and corporate leaders are called to account for outcomes across the triple bottom line of financial, ethical and environmental performance.

Assessment of learning outcomes – measurable, meaningful indicators that pedagogy and content are effective in enhancing skills and influencing behavior – receives ever increasing attention as business schools around the world respond to calls for accountability. Concurrently, schools face mounting pressures: from corporate recruiters and from industry; from accreditation organizations; a climate of rankings-fever and competition; students, and parents of students, clamoring for a solid return on investment; and other demands to indicate what schools are “doing” and whether it “works”. The formative role of business schools must be considered.

Attention to ethics is critical in times of crisis and scandals often generated by greed, unconscious consumption and pleasure. It is important to notice that not only universities and families, but also enterprises act as storehouses to foster attitudes of integrity and maturity. Ethical capitalism will lead to seeking profits with a spirit of building a society driven by freedom and peace (Arruda, 2012).

The market is reacting and focusing on emerging professionals – our business students. For example, a recent study exploring the future of business asserts that "Restoring and enhancing the reputational capital of business … has a twofold importance for today's business leaders – first, to address the decline in trust in business among wider society [in the wake of the scandals] and secondly, to understand and realize the opportunities inherent in the new direction being shaped by the Millennial generation" (Deloitte, 2011, p. 3). These emerging professionals are primed to meet this call – "Millennials believe that business has a societal purpose… They have high expectations that business is best suited to taking a leadership role in solving some of society's biggest challenges….." (Deloitte, 2011, p. 3). This report, presented as a resource for business leaders, reflects just one example of the recognition of this proclivity and demand for implementable skills in social impact management.

Within this context, scholars explore learning outcomes associated with various curricular interventions, with a necessary eye on measurement. The objective of this study is to explore one approach to equipping emerging business professionals with the acumen for success, and a measure of impact on students' capacity for effective, ethical decision making. We explore a three-year longitudinal assessment of learning outcomes related to moral reasoning capacity with undergraduate business students at a premier U.S. college of business. Findings from the longitudinal study are complemented by highlights from results administering the same assessment with students at a top-tier business school in São Paulo, Brazil.

OVERVIEW & THEORY

Curricular experiences at a highly competitive university in the United States provide one example

of a pedagogical approach to business ethics education. Consistent with outcomes from other studies (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau and Thoma, 1999; Neubaum, Pagell, Drexler, McKee-Ryan and Larson, 2009; Christensen, Barnes and Rees, 2007; and Caldwell, 2010), this research indicates that students who complete a course with dedicated ethics content indicate resonance of concepts and theoretical foundations of ethical decision making, but show room for growth in translating this "knowing" to "doing" (McManus Warnell, 2010). Thus, while dedicated ethics curricula are associated with significant learning outcomes for students in the area of moral reasoning, the opportunity to translate *moral intention* to *application and behavior* in the business context remains.

Two undergraduate business schools were considered in this exploration. A longitudinal study represents data from the University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business (ND-MCOB) in Indiana, United States. Since its inception, ND-MCOB has explicitly included attention to values and integrity, and this ethos is clearly reflected in the business school. Three class cohorts of students participated in this study (n = 1,208), representing 70% of undergraduate business students at this university. The university's college of business expresses its mission "to build a premier Catholic business school that fosters academic excellence, professional effectiveness and personal accountability in a context that strives to be faithful to the ideals of community, human development and individual integrity." Further, the college is representative of top-tier business education in the United States, consistently recognized in various national rankings of business schools, for example, most recently ranked the nation's top business schools by Bloomberg BusinessWeek (2012). Commitment to ethics in the curriculum has also been recognized, as evidenced by the top ranking in business ethics as a specialty area (Bloomberg Businessweek, 2012). Finally, the graduate program is recognized globally among top business schools addressing social and environmental management in curriculum and research (Aspen Institute Beyond Grey Pinstripes, 2011) and Corporate Social Responsibility (Financial Times, 2010). ND-MCOB is a signatory of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), the foremost global initiative aimed at fostering corporate responsibility in business education.

All undergraduate business students are required to take a 1.0-credit course, BAET 20300: Introduction to Business Ethics, which introduces the conceptual foundations of ethical theory and explores topic-based examples in multiple dimensions of business. During the survey period, the course was taught by one of four instructors. Two instructors are tenured faculty in management and marketing, and both focus their scholarship and teaching on ethical dimensions of their respective fields. A third instructor is a management teaching professor who focuses on business ethics and sustainability, and the fourth is an adjunct faculty member and priest who also serves the university in administrative capacities. Each instructor uses the same textbook and the group meets regularly to coordinate the general presentation of material. While each instructor incorporates some unique information, the topics and framework are consistent. Students are introduced to the various theoretical perspectives of ethics in business. Also included is a focus on the meaning and value of work, moral rights and responsibilities at work, and business' environmental responsibilities. Case studies are explored through readings, video clips and review of corporate documents. The final exam is cumulative. Each course shares a set of course objectives, below, including three sequential components aimed at moral action as the cumulative step in moral formation.

The course will:

1. Raise ethical awareness—the course will introduce and explore the ethical dimensions of business. The objective is to enhance awareness of and sensitivity to the broad range of ethical issues in business.

2. Improve ethical knowledge—the course will introduce key terms and concepts. The objective is to understand the major theoretical foundations of ethics, moral judgment and decision making.

3. Enhance ethical judgment—the course will provide and improve skills of ethical decision making. The objective is to move beyond identifying and understanding ethical issues in business to identifying and acting on the appropriate course of action.

Instructors explicitly indicate in the language of the course objectives and class lecture that the goal of successful ethics education has three parts— awareness, knowledge, and action/behavior. This framework is consistent with the Four Component Model of Morality (Rest and Narvaez 1999) and allows for ready exploration of course outcomes within this framework. Thus, in evaluating the required course, we are attempting to explore the ability of students to:

1. successfully identify ethical issues—key facts, considerations and concepts,

2. appropriately incorporate terms and theoretical concepts of business ethics into analyses of such issues, and

3. display aptitude in identifying the appropriate resolution of ethical dilemmas, and proclivity toward ethical decision making.

Given course objectives and considering the Four Component Model, we developed four measures across which we expected change pre- to post-course. Analyses will focus on student change from orientation to completion of an ethics course, specifically, change related to moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation and commitment, and moral character and competence. We expected change reflecting enhanced sensitivity to moral issues, more sophisticated analysis of key terms and concepts, increased aptitude for describing and identifying appropriate resolutions to the case dilemma, and increased proclivity toward ethical decision making.

.Second, the results of the longitudinal study at ND-MCOB are complemented with a small but compelling set of qualitative responses from a top South American business school. Fundação Getulio Vargas is a hallmark of the education field due to its excellence and quality in its undergraduate and graduate programs, applied research activities and consulting services. Today, it is composed of 11 Schools and Units, located in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Brasilia. Since its creation in 1954, The School of Business Administration of São Paulo (FGV-EAESP) has stood out for its pioneering character. It was the first management school outside the United States, the first Undergraduate Program and Professional Masters Program in Business Administration in Brazil, and the first Brazilian private school to offer students reimbursable scholarships. The School's first accreditation was by AACSB (The Association to

Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) in 2000. Since then, the School has continued to internationalize. In 2001, FGV-EAESP was accredited by EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) of the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) and, in 2004, by the Association of MBAs (AMBA), thereby becoming the first business school in Latin America to receive the "triple crown". FGV-EAESP has maintained these accreditations and was appointed fourth best business school in Latin America for its Academic Master in Business Administration (CMAE) and Professional Master in Business Administration (MPA) programmes in a survey published by *America Economia*. Like ND-MCOB, FGV-EAESP is a signatory of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME).

FGV-EAESP does not include a mandatory ethics course for business majors, however, students are able to explore these concepts in several courses, including Fundamentals of Philosophy, Sociology, Sustainability and Human Resources. Spink (2012) understands that when one goes deep into scientific work, ethical and moral issues are simultaneously assumed. Based upon a governmental requirement, all faculty members are asked to mention or discuss ethical issues in their specific classes. Selected students are exposed to three-week sustainability and social responsibility programs developed in low-income areas during school holidays. Projects include mapping the socioeconomic conditions of the local population and organizing the business inclusion of its small producers. Such an experience has brought significant awareness of social justice and responsibility, personal and business ethics, and individual and corporate citizenship to the sophomore participants.

This paper explores outcomes associated with the sophomore-level required course in business ethics theory at ND-MCOB, considers a sample of results from FGV-EAESP, and briefly compares contexts. We envision this paper as a preliminary exploration of these topics.

METHODOLOGY

The case study analysis was conducted in two diverse contexts, first, a longitudinal study at the University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business (ND-MCOB), comparing pre- and post-course results with three class-year cohorts, and second, a one-time assessment of responses from a small sample of students from the School of Business Administration of São Paulo (EAESP) at Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV). Our goal was to complement findings of the longitudinal study with qualitative data from students in a different institutional context and to lay a foundation for further comparison.

University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business

Units of Analysis

The units of analysis of this case study are the students in the University of Notre Dame Mendoza College of Business (ND-MCOB) class of 2012 and 2013 who have taken the required ethics course, *BAET 20300: Introduction to Business Ethics*, taught by one of four different instructors, and who have completed both the pre- and post-course survey instruments.

The pre-course survey was administered at orientation to the Mendoza College of Business. The students were asked to read an article depicting a business ethical issue and input their responses via the online tool called SurveyMonkey. They were not notified that this would recur sometime later. During their sophomore year in the College the students were required to take the ethics course and at the conclusion of the course they were asked to respond to the same case they analyzed during orientation, again utilizing the SurveyMonkey tool.

553 students in the class of 2012 responded to the pre-course survey, 562 students participated at post-course, 462 took both the pre- and post-course surveys. Thus we can perform a longitudinal study of these 462 students to explore changes in their perceptions of business ethics and in their analysis of a case (n=462). In the class of 2013, 671 students responded to the pre-course survey, 566 students participated at post-course, and 491 took them both (n=491). Cohort 1 of this study, with results reported in an earlier publication (McManus Warnell, 2010), the graduating class of 2011, is comprised of 556 business students, representing 26.1% of all university undergraduates; Cohort 2, class of 2012 is comprised of 569 business students or 27.1% of all university undergraduates; and Cohort 3, class of 2013, 621 business students or 32.5% of all university undergraduate students. The study is

representative of undergraduate business students, with n=255 (Cohort 1), n=462 (Cohort 2), n=491 (Cohort 3), representing 45.8%, 81.2% and 79.1% of the student populations, respectively.

The students were also asked to identify several demographic characteristics including gender and academic major (accounting, finance, management, marketing, or other), and questions regarding their perceptions of the influence of religion in their lives, their political views, and service/volunteer experiences. Table 1 and Table 2 show the demographic profile reflecting gender and academic majors of the two cohorts.

Table 1 Demographics of students in the ND-MCOB class of 2012

Major	Gender		Sum
	Female	Male	
Accounting	54	63	117
Finance	42	139	181
Management	37	31	68
Marketing	61	30	91
Other	2	3	5
Sum	196	266	462

Table 2 Demographics of students in the ND-MCOB class of 2013

Major	Gender		Sum
	Female	Male	
Accounting	66	73	139
Finance	44	155	199
Management	36	34	70
Marketing	52	29	81
Other	1	1	2
Sum	199	292	491

Data Collection, Processing, and Analysis

We used Survey Monkey as the data collection platform because we have a subscription available for use by faculty in the College of Business. The students' text responses are automatically recorded in the SurveyMonkey file and exported as a data file in Microsoft EXCEL 2003 format.

We used SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys (version 2.1) to conduct a content analysis of the four open-ended case study questions in each of the pre- and post-course surveys. All the text responses are imported to the software by the unique ID of each student. Items/categories are created based on the scoring rubric of each question. Key words and phrases are extracted from the text responses to define each item/category as shown in Figure 1. For example, for question 2 "Can you identify any major principles/theories that would relate to this case?" the text response is automatically classified into the "Deception" item/category if any of the following words are detected: cheat, deceive (deceiving), deceit, entice (enticing), fooling, lure (luring), scam, seduce, swindle, trap, trick, and etc., or into the "Honesty" item/category if any of the following words or phrases are detected: accurate information, all the details, all the information, symmetric information, aware of, disclosure, full knowledge of, full information, fully disclosing, honest(y), transparent (transparency), and etc. The categorization results are double checked to detect the subtlety and nuance in survey answers and some text responses are excluded from a certain item/category while others are forced into it. Figures illustrating text analyses can be found in the Appendix.

After all the text responses are categorized, a Microsoft EXCEL spreadsheet is generated for each question as shown in Figure 2. The rows are the unique IDs and the columns are all the items/categories of the question. It shows "true" if the text response is sorted into one certain item/category and "false" if it is not. According to the scoring rubric as showed in the Appendix the total point is calculated for each student in the spreadsheet. And finally all the item sums of the four open-ended questions in the pre- of post-course surveys are merged in to a single data set for each student with her/his demographic characteristics by the unique ID.

School of Business Administration of São Paulo at Fundação Getulio Vargas

Units of Analysis

A small group of students at the School of Business Administration of São Paulo at Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV-EAESP) completed the same case study analysis. Though the number of responses precludes comparison of the student data between the two schools, it is illustrative to consider the FGV-EAESP data qualitatively, and explore some similarities and differences.

Data Collection, Processing, and Analysis

An invitation to participate in the study was sent in two mailings to 600 students registered in the first three semesters of the Undergraduate Program of Business Administration at FGV-EAESP. The students received the message from a well-liked instructor; however, no incentive or requirement was provided for participation. The students received the original invitation and two reminder emails.

Fourteen (14) students participated in the survey. Unlike the ND-MCOB cohorts, the FGV-EAESP students did not complete the survey as part of a course, nor did they complete it as a pre- and post-intervention instrument. Rather, the FGV-EAESP students took the survey one time, and did so without incentive or requirement. Rationale for this project design and implications will be discussed below. The FGV-EAESP data is included as an interesting opportunity to explore some similarities and differences, though longitudinal or comparison analyses or not included.

The survey design was identical for both the ND-MCOB and FGV-EAESP studies. Students were asked to identify the same set of demographic characteristics in both surveys; Table 3 shows the demographic profile of the FGV-EAESP respondents.

Table 3 Demographics of students in the FGV-EAESP cohort

Major	Gender		Sum
	Female	Male	
Accounting	2	3	5
Finance	0	5	5
Management	1	2	3
Marketing	1	0	1
Other	0	0	0
Sum	4	10	14

A critical difference in the units of analysis was the mechanism of obtaining participants. The ND-MCOB students participated at pre- and post- as part of a requirement for a class, or at the invitation, sent multiple times, of the Dean of the college. The FGV-EAESP student participation was entirely elective and results will be presented following the discussion of the longitudinal study at ND-MCOB.

Materials and Procedure

The instrument developed for this Case Study Analysis was used with an earlier cohort of ND-MCOB students, with results published in *the Journal of Business Ethics Education* (McManus Warnell, 2010). Discussion of materials and procedure is adapted from this preliminary report. Longitudinal comparisons of these earlier results will be included below and include only the data from ND-MCOB. Because of the small number of responses to the FGV-EAESP study and the lack of pre- and post-intervention comparison data, this discussion of materials and procedure is specific to the ND-MCOB study. FGV-EAESP data will be discussed as complementary results following this analysis.

Case Study Analysis data were coded using a standardized rubric exploring change in sophistication of analysis and incorporation of relevant terms and concepts. Two research assistants were provided a rubric of keywords by category to assign scores based on content analysis. After specific training on application of the rubric, research assistants scored twenty case study responses each and returned them to this author for review. After consistency was determined, all case studies were analyzed. The scoring rubric for this assessment, the "Case Study Response", is a four-item assessment based on the Four Component Model of Morality (4CM) (Rest and Narvaez, 1999) and exams development of moral reasoning capacity. The Four Component Model of Morality was developed by Rest (1983) and further developed and applied by Rest and Narvaez (1995) among others. The model addresses the ways that moral behavior occurs and allows for conceptualization of successful moral functioning and the capacities it requires.

Thus, effective moral functioning requires four integrated abilities: moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation and commitment, and moral character and competence. Moral sensitivity focuses on the ability to identify and discern problematic situations with ethical dimensions. Moral judgment requires that the person move beyond recognizing that ethical dimensions are present in a given situation to explore which line of action is morally justified. Moral motivation and commitment involves the prioritization of values—moral values are prioritized over other personal values. Finally, moral character and competenceacknowledges that sensitivity, judgment, and prioritization of moral values must lead to moral character and competence, or moral behavior will fail. Moral character and competence is "having the strength of your convictions, having courage, persisting, overcoming distractions and obstacles, having implementing skills, and having ego strength" (Nucci and Narvaez 2008).

The model is not linear—the components are clearly interactive. Further, Rest notes, in contrast to other models of moral function, the Four Component Model of Morality assumes co-occurrence in all areas of moral functioning of cognition and affect. Thus, moral behavior is not the result of separate processes. Rather, each of the four components involves both cognitive and affective processes. In the rubric designed for this investigation, Items 1 and 2 are associated with Moral Sensitivity, or the ability to recognize and articulate ethical dimensions of a situation. Item 3 is also associated with the Moral Sensitivity component. Here, the results were scored to determine breadth of analysis regarding perspective taking, which is a prerequisite to moral action (Nucci and Narvaez 2008). Thus, scores reflected identification of relevant stakeholders, including whether students improved their ability to recognize multiple stakeholders at three levels of analysis—micro-, mezzo- and macro-level analysis. In addition to recognizing the Four Component Model, here the approach seeks consistency with the college's goal of fostering understanding of ethical dimensions at the individual, organizational and societal level. Finally, Item 4 (suggested resolution) is associated with the Moral Motivation component, and, broadly, to the Moral Judgment and Moral Character and Competence components of the model. While character and competence ultimately concern measuring action, which is beyond the scope of this study for reasons noted below, our goal for Item 4 was to explore identification of, and related proclivity toward, moral action. Detail on the rubric follows.

Scores for both Item 1 (*Is there an ethical issue in this case? If yes, define what you think the ethical issue(s) is/are.*) and Item 2 (*Can you identify any major principles/theories that would relate to this case?*) are thus indicators of the Moral Sensitivity measure, that is, whether students can appropriately identify and articulate ethical issues. Our rubric explored outcomes along a continuum, with zero points indicating no identification of ethical issues, and a progressive score. The score is also cumulative, that is, students received points for indicating multiple levels of analysis/more than one conceptualization of relevant concepts. Further, students were given one additional point for appropriate explanation of concepts and their relevance, beyond simply identifying relevant terms to describing interactions and relevance to the dilemma(s). One point is associated with legalistic/compliance-based notions of relevant concerns, for example, privacy law violations in the credit card marketing case. Two points were given for advanced notions, including ethical principles involved in privacy, not simply violation of legal notions. Other terms indicating a two-point score include exploitation broadly presented, i.e. “taking advantage of” students, and simple conceptions of deception, false advertising, unfavorable terms for students, dishonesty and/or conflict of interest. Three points were given for inclusion of major theoretical concepts, including duty-based or deontological ethics, responsibility, integrity, utilitarian ethics, virtue/virtue ethics, ethical obligations, the meaning and value of work, the fallacy of relativism, notions of corporate social responsibility, or models of work including human fulfillment, liberal or classical conceptions. Finally, one point was added to the score for appropriate description of these terms’ relevance, beyond simply acknowledging their relation to the case.

Item 3 scores (*Who has an interest or stake in this situation?*) correspond to sensitivity to stakeholders in the ethical dilemma. Thus, a score of two points indicates identification of primary stakeholders, including students and parents, or other, primary stakeholders immediately affected by the issue. If students indicated more than two individuals/groups of individuals affected from this primary group, they were awarded four points. Students were given four points for indication of awareness of organizational or secondary-level stakeholders, including banks, retailers, alumni associations, and the like. Five points were given for identification of societal ramifications, including contribution of credit concerns to the U.S. financial crisis, for example. Here the scores can be cumulative, so a maximum score for this item is thirteen, which indicates identification at all three levels of analysis—individual, organizational and societal.

Item 4 (*What is your suggestion for resolving this case?*) involves the components of Moral Judgment and Moral Motivation and Commitment. The component of Moral Character and Competence is more challenging to measure—action is difficult to measure without design of a social-psychological study. Our goal for item 4 was identification of, and indication of proclivity toward, moral action. Thus, identifying specific and actionable resolutions to moral dilemmas indicates judgment and motivation, which are precursors to commitment. This item is an exploration of intent, acknowledging that capacity for and proclivity toward action precedes action.

Item 4 was scored with zero points indicating no resolution, and one point a simple request for securing students’ permission for use of their contact data, again reflecting fewer points for compliance-based resolutions. Two points were given for resolutions consistent with general information and disclosure themes. Three points were given for more proactive information and disclosure solutions; for example, those that involve some reduction in the marketing appeals. Four points were given for resolutions suggesting responses that require action on the part of one or more organizational stakeholders (banks, the colleges/universities). Finally, five points were given for recommendations of proactive solutions that involve policy or process changes; for example, offering financial literacy classes at the college/university, financial literacy “pre-tests” for approval, university negotiation of better terms for students, refusal of credit to students under age 21, formation of nation-wide programs with fixed rates for students, and cessation of marketing to undergraduates.

Again this item’s score was cumulative, so a maximum score indicates suggested resolutions that thoroughly address each level of concern—compliance, information and disclosure, organizational change, and policy/procedural change. All students were provided the case study and response template during orientation to the college of business in August of their sophomore year. This analysis is identified as the Pre-Test/Intervention. The intervention here is defined as successful completion of the BAET

20300: Introduction to Business Ethics required, sophomore-level course. The case study presented at both pre- (taken during orientation) and post- (taken at course end) intervention concerned credit card marketing to university and college students.[1] The four-page case included data related to industry marketing protocol, examples from real-world application, and testimony from industry experts. The case topic was selected as timely, immediately relevant to students, and one that also included industry and policy implications. At both pre- and post-test, students were asked to read the case individually. They were provided with the article and a response template via a secure online interface. Responses were entered into the web site. The template requested response to each of the four items. For each of the four items, analyses will explore change between pre- and post-course.

RESULTS

University of Notre Dame-Mendoza College of Business

In this case study we have four open-ended questions. In the rubric designed for this investigation, question 1 and 2 are associated with Moral Sensitivity, or the ability to recognize and articulate ethical dimensions of a situation, question 3 is also associated with the Moral Sensitivity component, and question 4 (suggested resolution) is associated with the Moral Motivation component, and, broadly, to the Moral Judgment and Moral Character and Competence components of the model. Our expectation was to see positive change scores on average for each question. Since we have two cohorts, first we checked the results of each class individually, and then attempted to find common traits in these two cohorts.

Results of students in the class of 2012

The descriptive statistics for item scored responses of the students in the class of 2012 are shown in Table 3.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics for item scored responses

Question	**Pre**		**Post**	
	Mean(sd)	Low - High	Mean(sd)	Low - High
1. Is there an ethical issue in this case? If yes, define what you think the ethical issue(s) is/are.	2.65(1.84)	0 - 10	6.60(.97)	3 - 7
2. Can you identify any major principles/theories that would relate to this case?	1.26(1.67)	0 - 9	6.73(.95)	0 - 7
3. Who has an interest or stake in this situation?	9.06(2.95)	0 - 20	9.24(2.12)	2 - 11
4. What is your suggestion for resolving this case?	2.40(2.64)	0 - 13	10.85(2.63)	0 - 13

Scores for both question 1 (*Is there an ethical issue in this case? If yes, define what you think the ethical issue(s) is/are.*) and question 2 (*Can you identify any major principles/theories that would relate to this case?*) are indicators of the Moral Sensitivity measure, that is, whether students can appropriately identify and articulate ethical issues. In the pre-course survey, 412 students (89.18%) answered "Yes" and 50 students (10.82%) answered "No." All the 462 students (100%) answered affirmatively in the post-course survey. In the post-test, we expect greater levels of identification of issues as well as increased sophistication in describing the dilemma(s). The mean score on question 1 in pre-test is 2.65 (n = 412), it increases to 6.60 in the post-test, and the mean change is 3.95 points, a statistically significant increase at 95% confidence level as shown in Table 4. The mean score on question 2 at pre-test is 1.26 (n = 412), it increases to 6.73 in the post-test, and the mean change is 5.46 points, which is also a statistically

[1] Silver-Greenburg, Jessica and Elgin, B. (2008), "The College Credit Card Hustle", *BusinessWeek* (July 17). Available at http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_30/b4093038700850.htm.

significant increase. These changes indicate that the ethics course did contribute to the development of Moral Sensitivity among the students in the class of 2012.

Table 5 Detailed t-test results

Question	Mean change	95% CI	t	p	Standardized mean gain
1	3.95	3.76, 4.13	42.19	***	2.69
2	5.46	5.29, 5.63	63.51	***	4.02
3	0.18	-0.15, 0.50	1.07		0.07
4	8.44	8.12, 8.76	52.04	***	3.21
Item sums	18.03	17.41, 18.65	57.43	***	3.52

The third question (*Who has an interest or stake in this situation?*) is also associated with the Moral Sensitivity component. Here the results are scored to determine breadth of analysis regarding relevant stakeholders, including whether students improve their ability to recognize multiple stakeholders at three levels of analysis, micro- to macro-level analysis – the individual, organizational, and societal stakeholders. The mean score for question 3 in pre-test is 9.06 (n = 462). In post-test, mean score for question 3 is 9.24, a 0.18 point increase which is statistically insignificant. We cannot reject the null hypothesis that the mean scores of pre- and post-course surveys are different. It appears that the students in this cohort did not show significant change on their identification of stakeholders after taking the course.

Question 4 (*What is your suggestion for resolving this case?*) involves the components of Moral Judgment and Moral Motivation and Commitment. And our goal for this question is identification of, and indication of proclivity toward, moral action. The mean score for question 4 in pre-test is 2.40 (n = 462), it increases to 10.85 in the post-test, and the mean change is 8.44 points which is statistically significant. This change is the greatest increase among the four measures for the students in the class of 2012, possibly indicating exploration of key terms and concepts about suggested solutions might be the major focus of the ethics course.

In sum, we detect an 18.03-point mean change in the total scores of all the four open-ended questions, which is statistically significant. Though no specific hypotheses are posited regarding difference by gender and academic majors, Figure 3 suggests the manner of change was consistent across those variables.

Figure 3 Item sums by gender and academic majors of cohort 2012

Results of students in the class of 2013

The descriptive statistics for item scored responses of the students in the class of 2013 are shown in Table 5.

Table 6 Descriptive statistics for item scored responses

Item	**Pre**		**Post**	
	Mean(sd)	Low - High	Mean(sd)	Low - High
1. Is there an ethical issue in this case? If yes, define what you think the ethical issue(s) is/are.	2.79(1.81)	0 - 13	4.00(2.54)	0 - 19
2. Can you identify any major principles/theories that would relate to this case?	1.41(2.06)	0 - 15	7.59(4.45)	0 - 21
3. Who has an interest or stake in this situation?	8.96(2.99)	0 - 21	10.23(2.91)	2 - 24
4. What is your suggestion for resolving this case?	2.21(2.43)	0 - 11	3.72(3.55)	0 - 24

In the pre-course survey, 450 students (91.65%) agreed there was an ethical issue in this case and 41 students (8.35%) answered "No." 31 more students (all together 97.96%) answered affirmatively in the post-course survey. The mean score on question 1 in pre-test is 2.79 (n = 450), it increases to 4.00 in the post-test, and the mean change is 1.21 points, a statistically significant increase at the 95% confidence level as shown in Table 6. The mean score on question 2 at pre-test is 1.41 (n = 450), it increases to 7.59 in the post-test, and the mean change is 6.18 points, which is also a statistically significant increase. This change is the greatest increase among the four measures for the students in the class of 2013 as compared to the 5.46-point increase for the students in the class of 2012. These changes suggest that the ethics course also contributes to the development of Moral Sensitivity among the students in the class of 2013.

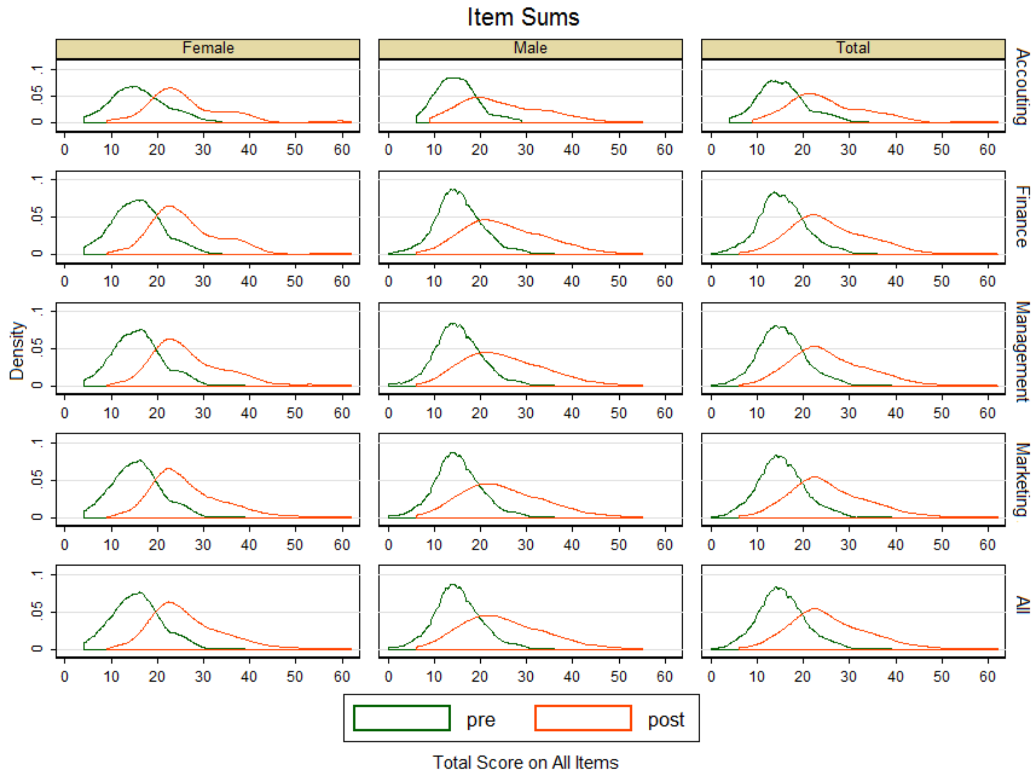
Table 7 Detailed t-test results

Item	Mean change	95% CI	t	p	Standardized mean gain
1	1.21	0.95, 1.48	9.11	***	0.55
2	6.18	5.75, 6.60	28.50	***	1.78
3	1.27	0.97, 1.58	8.19	***	0.43
4	1.51	1.19, 1.83	9.18	***	0.50
Item sums	10.17	9.39, 10.96	25.51	***	1.41

The mean score for question 3 in pre-test is 8.96 (n = 491). In post-test, mean score for question 3 is 10.23, a 1.27 point increase which is statistically significant. Unlike the situation of the students in the class of 2012, it seems that the ethics course did help the students in the class of 2013 to identify the stakeholder(s) in the situation.

The mean score for question 4 in pre-test is 2.21 (n = 491), it increases to 3.72 in the post-test, and the mean change is 1.51 points which is statistically significant. This change is much less than the 8.44-point increase for the students in the class of 2012.

Figure 4 Item sums by gender and academic majors of cohort 2013



In sum, we detect a 10.17-point mean change in the total scores of all the four open-ended questions, which is statistically significant. But it is less than the 18.03-point mean gain for the cohorts of 2012, indicating that the students in the class of 2013 gained more on the development of Moral Sensitivity than on the components of Moral Judgment and Moral Motivation and Commitment. And Figure 4 also suggests the manner of change is consistent across gender and academic majors of cohort 2013.

Common Traits of Cohort 2012 and 2013

First, more students realized it was an ethical issue for both cohorts of 2012 and 2013 after they took the required ethics course, suggesting a preliminary increase in sensitivity.

Second, almost all of the item score mean increases are statistically significant between the pre- and post-course surveys.

Third, as shown in Table 4 and Table 6, the standardized mean gains for question 2 are 4.02 and 1.78 for the cohort 2012 and cohort 2013 respectively which rank the first among the four open-ended questions, the standardized mean gains for question 3 are 0.07 and 0.43 which rank the last, and the standardized mean gains for question 1 and question4 rank in the middle. Results thus indicated the greatest change in measures of Moral Sensitivity, with statistically significant change in cultivating Moral Judgment and Moral Motivation and Commitment, and in helping them identify stakeholders.

<u>School of Business Administration of São Paulo at Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV-EAESP)</u>

Statistical analysis of FGV-EAESP data was not attempted due to the small number of responses (n=14) and responses may not be representative of the student body. However, the data provides interesting cross-cultural comparisons to explore several commonalities and differences, and to consider the role of institutional support in learning outcomes related to business ethics education. In this globalized business context, further cross-cultural studies will be illuminating. Included below is a sample of qualitative responses to survey items from FGV-EAESP students. In addition to the demographic information on this sample provided above, it is interesting to note that of fourteen respondents, five indicated that they have completed a course dedicated to the study of business ethics, while nine indicated they have not. The institutionalization of theories and concepts of business ethics and relation to student perspectives will be discussed below.

Fourteen students at FGV-EAESP completed the online survey, which was identical to the survey completed by students at ND-MCOB. Twelve students responded affirmatively to the question, “Is there an ethical issue in this case?” with two students indicating no. In response to Item 1*, If yes, define what you think the ethical issue(s) is/are*, students cited such concerns as privacy of the students being violated (mentioned in ten responses), the possibility of exploitative or predatory lending to inexperienced students through credit card practices (mentioned in eight responses), and the profit the universities stand to gain from these practices (mentioned in six responses).

For item 2, *Can you identify any major principles/theories that would relate to this case?*, one student noted that this case is an example of “Kant’s deontology as applied to professional matters.” This student was the sole respondent invoking classical ethics theory in his/her response. Other responses included, “Just a common sense of what is fair and what is not,” “abusive economic interests,” and “credit risk”. Two students provided more substantive responses, including

> “I don’t believe that such a case is related to ethical issues, mostly because ethics is something really relative. I believe that the students got into debt it is their fault, because they chose to open the bank account knowing about the dangers of spending more than what they have. I’m sure the bank gave them some contracts to read and sign, but I don’t believe they actually read it, just filled up the paperwork to get the credit or as the article said [the free gifts] (sic)”.
>
> and
>
> “Being the university is a public place and an institution of the state, and a bank is a business, there is a conflict between the notion of public and private. Should the students inside an academic place be marketized in this predatory way (sic)”?

The first response above is similar to some of the ND-MCOB student responses. Many students indicated that the issue involved personal choice and that individual students’ failure to investigate terms of the credit adoption was the issue at hand.

Both comments lead to the idea that, despite the orientation of different instructions, class moral orientation might not be enough to shape the future practitioner's ethical professional behavior (Bertero, 2012). Formal training helps, provides the language and concepts to articulate and support "common sense" and a deeper understanding of universal principles, but an important role can be that of business ethics courses that apply the students' ethical values into the reality of enterprises.

For item 3, *Who has an interest or stake in this situation?*, students consistently identified the banks, universities, and students as stakeholders in the case. Two students included student/alumni associations as well. No students included stakeholders at the macro or societal level, or discussed larger implications of such activities.

For item 4, *What is your suggestion for resolving this case?*, responses fell into one of two categories. First, six students indicated responses related to enhancing financial literacy/education for students, with responses such as offering "better and maybe mandatory seminars instructing students on how credit and debt cards work, how to keep track of their personal finances, and also the risks and advantages of having a credit card…. [with such seminars] mandatory for undergraduates or first year students," and providing "education and information for the students to enlighten them on the responsibility of having a credit card and the danger of debts". These responses provide an interesting comparison with the ND-MCOB data. Several students at FGV-EAESP explicitly note the role of the universities in providing financial literacy training to their students, perhaps acknowledging a more comprehensive notion of the appropriate role of educational intuitions, while students at ND-MCOB generally indicated this sentiment at pos-test, after taking an ethics course, if they expressed this perspective at all.

Second, for item 4, nine students explicitly mentioned securing permissions for use of student contact information, indicating that the possibility of privacy violation or improper use of personal information was the major ethical issue. These responses from FGV-EAESP are quite consistent with the majority of responses from ND-MCOB.

Item 4 presents unique challenges, noted above, and rich opportunities for research. A natural extension of this item relates to moral behavior – the "holy grail" of business ethics education. Questions abound: How do we measure behavior/action? Can we define social or ethical impact? Can we acknowledge more explicitly the role of influence on behavior by studying narratives, role models, and reflections, thus effectively extending these "modes of discovery" (Audi, 2012) into the classroom? Can we think creatively about how to assess moral behavior (perhaps here exploration of their activities post-college, i.e. participation on not-for-profit, social service or civic boards of directors or other service orientations, active citizenship through political advocacy or other indicators of prosocial behavior, and, most compelling, analysis of decisions made in the workplace context)?

DISCUSSION

Role of Institutional Support in Student Outcomes in Business Ethics

Despite enhanced attention to business ethics in the curriculum post-financial crises of the late 1990s and 2000s, much work remains to be done. Assessment of business ethics curricula is increasingly demanded by accreditation bodies, university and college administrators, and the market. Resources continue to emerge as scholars explore outcomes (Swanson & Fisher, 2011). Regulators scramble (or amble) to meet calls for accountability in business, but regulation is only one part of creating a system peopled by effective ethical business leaders – business education must continue to rise to the challenge. Scholars provide specific examples including structures with intrinsic potential to effect positive change in the classroom like structuring self-exploration toward principled interests (Koehn, 2005), holistic approaches that incorporate resources from moral psychology by recognizing the role of developing intuition (Zhong, 2011), enhancing assessment of learning outcomes and whether integration across the business curriculum is an effective method (Assudani, Chinta, Manolis & Burns, 2011).

The Assudani et al study (2011) reflects a not uncommon finding – there is agreement that ethics should be taught; however, it is unclear on how to do so. Scholars do respond with practical suggestions as "road maps" to incorporating such topics successfully (Langmead, Sedaghat, & Unger, 2010; Cornelius, Wallace, & Tassabehji, 2007; Sims and Felton, 2006; Weber, 2006; Falkenberg & Woiceshyn, 2008; Baker & Comer, 2011; among others). These writings provide rich resources for educators. Felton and

Sims (2005) have offered some of the most robust and specific suggestions on effective ethics teaching, including "targeted outputs" or specific learning goals accompanied by outcomes assessment, exploration of course values, discussion of the complexities of business ethics, acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of ethics to the functional areas of business, inclusion of cultural values in the discussion, consideration of stakeholder interests, considering sustainability and long-term outcomes, enhancing fluency and comfort around discussing ethics in the workplace, heightening notions of accountability, the need for continuous improvement (here also reinforcing an integrated approach to pedagogy – ethics education cannot be limited to a stand-alone course without reinforcement throughout the curriculum), and explicit attention to the values of the companies with whom they will be working (Felton & Sims, 2005). Additionally, particularly with undergraduates who likely lack experiences necessary to apply concepts they encounter in their course material, engagement around real-world scenarios, opportunities to apply the concepts, and highly interactive learning environments are key (Felton & Sims, 2005).

Learning from others is critical. The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative is an iteration of the United Nations Global Compact principles for business that recognizes internationally accepted values can inform and guide business decision-making. The PRME embody continuous improvement recognizing management education's role in shaping "a new generation of business leaders capable of managing the complex challenges faced by business and society in the 21st century" (United Nations, 2012). With the recent crisis in the financial markets, it is clear that the sum of individual benefits does not lead to the collective benefit. It is perhaps not surprising that unethical behavior in the corporate world by certain individuals is associated with those individuals' dishonest practices while at school (Innarelli, 2012). Attention to ethics in business schools can be readily informed by the PRME network and resources including the Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports. These reports, provided by PRME-member institutions, provide details on individual schools' attention to curricula, research and co-curricular activities. There are currently 435 university and college signatories of the PRME initiative, 272 of which have uploaded SIP reports (United Nations, 2012). Using SIP reports, schools can benchmark best practices, learn from others, and share what works. Manuel Escudero (2011), PRME secretariat, writes eloquently of the future of management education and notes that the financial crisis has acted "as an additional catalyst for a process of redefining business education," adding "a note of urgency" and creating a mood of "rethinking business education with a sense of imperative innovation" (p. 202). Escudero discusses globalization, the information technology revolution and governance gaps as the three primary changes effecting business today (Escudero, 2011). These three phenomena are clearly interrelated with management education and development of future business leaders. The potential for impact on the world economy and the human community is tremendous. Escudero writes:

> The issue we have to address as business educators is this: if the new trend of corporate sustainability has already evolved into a new proposition for value creation in the twenty-first century, we should be reporting this to our students, and preparing them to work in this new environment…. Further, if we are supposed to train our students in business, we should change our own vision of the firm and its role vis-à-vis society in the twenty-first century, by adhering to a new paradigm or theory of the firm where companies set the limits of profit maximization in terms of the long-term sustainability of the company itself and the sustainability of society and the planet (p. 207).

Explicit attention to ethics in the curriculum, including skills-based, multidisciplinary approaches that have indicated success in action orientation toward ethical behavior such as *Giving Voice to Values*[2], provides the foundation for this type of education. The PRME as a community for learning specific strategies is critical.

Like the origins of the U.S. and global financial crisis, ethical issues are not simple "yes/no" decisions. *Giving Voice to Values*, for example, allows students to explore and respond to oversimplification of

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[2] The *Giving Voice to Values* curriculum collection is based and supported at Babson College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, USA. The University of Notre Dame was one of several pilots and the first to offer a dedicated *Giving Voice to Values* elective course. *Giving Voice to Values* was created with The Aspen Institute as Incubator, and, along with Yale School of Management, Founding Partner. It can be found at www.GivingVoiceToValues.org.

ethical choices, conflicts of interests and values among the stakeholders and decision-makers, and practice actionable alternatives. The case study analysis our students completed is another useful illustration of the need for explicit attention in the curriculum. The complexity of the case, like that of the financial crisis, illustrates how even well-educated business students might struggle to make ethical decisions when facing issues in real time. These findings indicate that although significant improvement can be seen after taking a dedicated course, the engagement of these issues must continue through courses that embed ethical decision-making in practical, experiential study.

The question is often asked – should ethics be treated as a “stand alone” course in the curriculum, or “woven” throughout the core functional areas – the answer, of course, is both. Dedicated courses allow for exploration of conceptual, theoretical foundations of ethics, and, importantly, can include opportunities for both an abstract (conceptual) and narrative (cases, stories, personal experience) approaches (Audi, 2012). In his discussion of virtues, defined as praiseworthy traits of character with a far-reaching capacity to influence conduct, Audi (2012) presents a virtue orientation – clearly embedded in philosophical tradition – affects attitudes in management practices and aids in decision-making in business. Thus, “practical ethics as a set of standards for a morally good life must take account of virtue: both the evaluation of persons and the guidance of their conduct are inadequate apart from a discriminating use of virtue concepts” (Audi, 2012, p. 282),

Survey response rates may be indicative of the institutional support consideration. The ND-MCOB student response rates were much higher than those of FGV-EAESP. An optimistic observer from Notre Dame might posit that their students are more concerned with these issues than their counterparts at FGV. However, this conclusion is not supported with any comparison data. The response rates most likely reflect the reality that a “carrot” (incentive) or “stick” (threat of repercussion) must be offered to students to ensure response. Critically, the question remains – can this intention be translated into action? We conclude by asserting that intention must preclude action, and it is the role of business education to provide the foundations for development of principled intention, to provide channels of access to these issues. These include rich curricula, engaging faculty, opportunities to engage with practitioners in the field – a space and place to study and practice ethical decision-making. We find the discussion of whether to mandate a specific ethics course or to embed ethics throughout business education within the functional areas resolved. The answer is both. Some institutional support, providing the extrinsic motivation, a time and place, and validation of student attention to these issues, can only foster students who are intrinsically motivated toward effective ethical business decision-making.

An additional note regarding the inclusion of a U.S.-based and South American business school in this exploration concerns this forward momentum for emerging leaders. Brazil, the world’s sixth-largest economy, is rich in young talent with global fluency – Brazil houses the second highest number of Facebook users after the United States, and increasingly hosts tech innovators and other investors scouring for startups (Darlington, 2012). Proclivity toward social media and information exchange illustrates that Brazil’s young people, like those in the United States in and in so many of the world’s economic giants, will contribute to the character of the world business economy.

This progression to an action orientation is demanded by the market and recognized by those who educate and train emerging leaders. Research supports students studying business possess explicit values considerations and are primed to contribute to values-driven organizations. These horizons are international. As business becomes necessarily global, scholars around the world explore the role and purpose of business school and advocate for business as a prosocial enterprise (Losada, Martell & Lozano, 2011; Escudero, 2011). The PRME offer a resource for global business education.

CONCLUSION

Business faces tremendous challenges and opportunities in the immediate future, including globalization, technology, climate change, emerging economies, poverty and other social challenges, and the wake of the financial crisis (Enderle, 2011). For a meticulous discussion of these challenges and their implications, which is beyond the scope of this paper, see Georges Enderle’s insightful article in *Business & Professional Ethics Journal* (2011). Scholars and educators who prepare the next generation of global leaders can be hopeful. Audi (2012) offers a discussion of virtue ethics as a resource in business – for practitioners, and for students. Aspirational approaches, rooted in philosophical tradition and equipped with skills-based, relevant and robust pedagogy are key.

Teaching ethics in business administration undergraduate programs is crucial. A philosophical perspective is essential for a conceptual foundation in moral and ethical reasoning. Those who posit that this approach is too arid or complex for most undergraduate students may do well to explore the intellectual habits that may exist in the Millennial generation. It is a university's role to broaden their comprehension, supporting the development of their maturity as human beings and as professionals. It is critical to dedicate time and space to exploring business ethics explicitly, including analysis of theoretical concepts in context and in practice by building on this conceptual foundation to the business functional areas of accountancy, finance, marketing and management. We do our students a disservice if we prepare them to recognize and understand core ethical concepts but fail to equip them with the skills necessary to apply it to analysis of issues in their field and to their own personal and professional decision making. The authors see opportunities for fruitful further studies and cooperation in this regard and look at the findings as most useful.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1. Working interface of SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys (version 2.1)

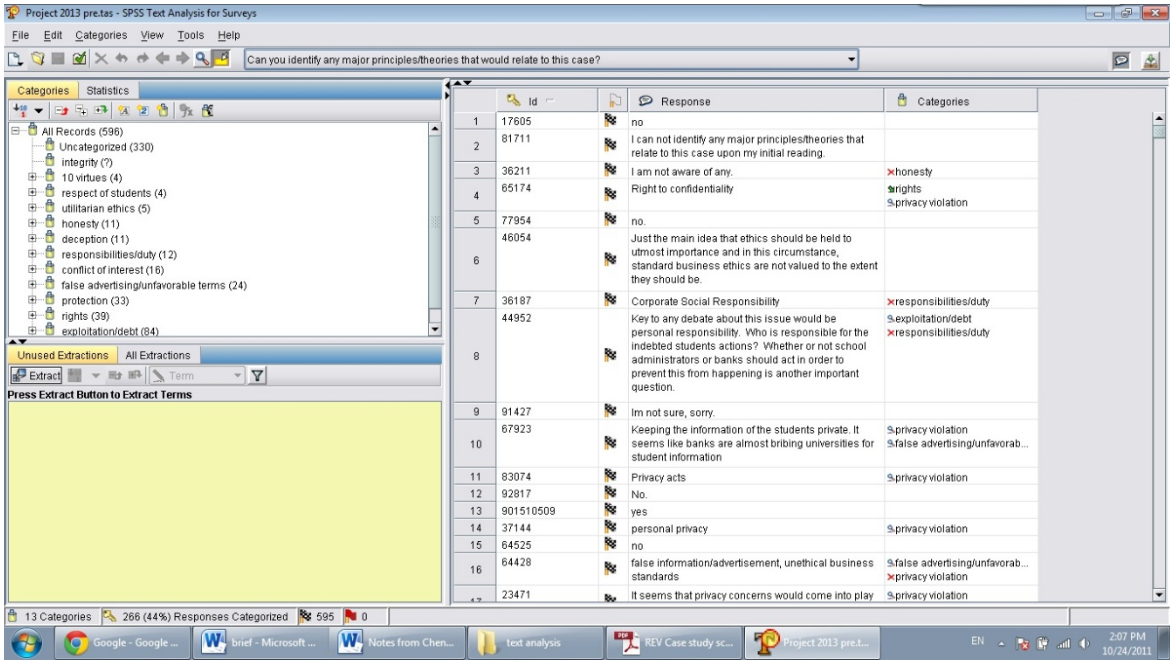
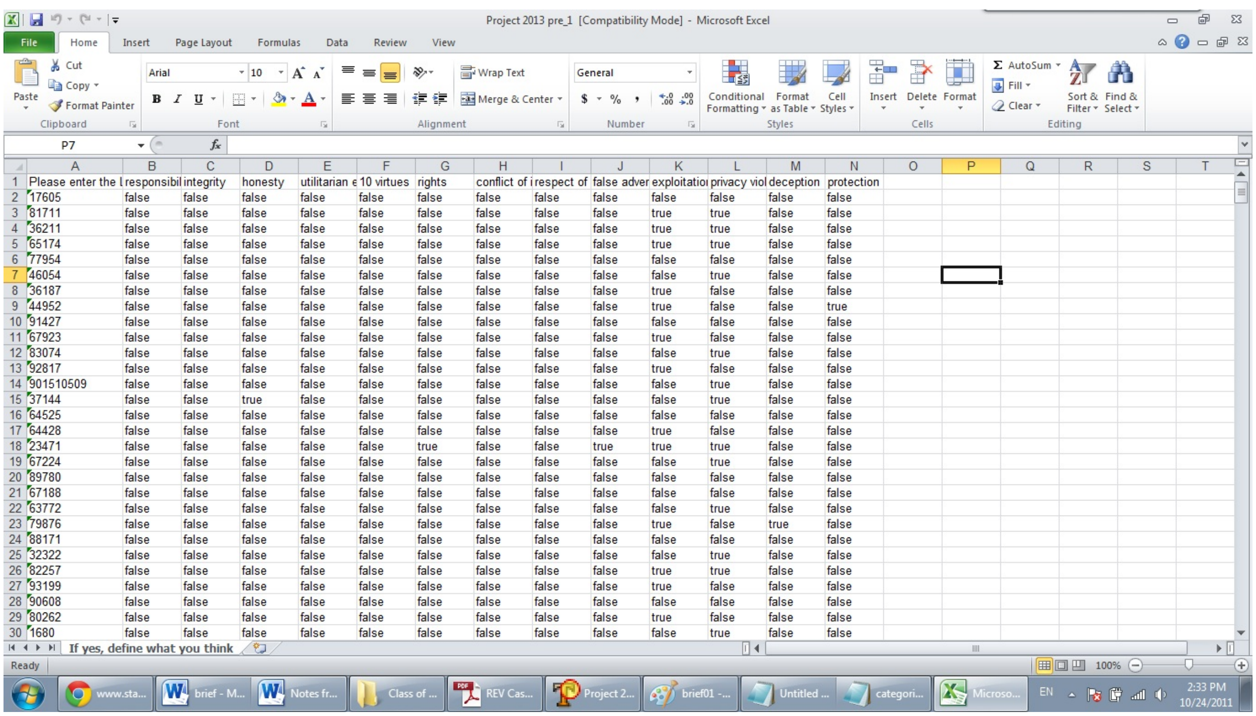


Figure 2 Microsoft EXCEL spreadsheet for question 2 of cohort 2013



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Please enter the l	responsibil	integrity	honesty	utilitarian e	10 virtues	rights	conflict of i	respect of	false adver	exploitatio	privacy viol	deception	protection
2	17605	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false
3	81711	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	true	false	false
4	36211	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	true	false	false
5	65174	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	true	false	false
6	77954	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false
7	46054	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false
8	36187	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false	false
9	44952	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false	true
10	91427	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false
11	67923	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false	false
12	83074	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false
13	92817	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false	false
14	901510509	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false
15	37144	false	false	true	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false
16	64525	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false
17	64428	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false	false
18	23471	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false	true	true	true	false	false
19	67224	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false
20	89780	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false
21	67188	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false
22	63772	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false
23	79876	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	true	false
24	88171	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false
25	32322	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false
26	82257	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	true	false	false
27	93199	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false	false
28	90608	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false
29	80262	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false	false
30	1680	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	false	true	false	false