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Ethics in Higher Education: A Study of the Perceived Ethical Climate of Administrators and Faculty at a Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

Ethical transgression is an ongoing problem in higher education. There is a relationship between the perceived ethical climate of an organization and the ethical behavior of its employees, and that ethical climate can be a predictor of ethical behavior. The ethical climate types are: egoistic, deontological, and utilitarian. This quantitative study measured and identified the perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at a higher education institution, and then compared the results to determine if there was a significant difference in perception. Given that administrators and faculty are critical and influential employees, predicting their ethical behavior is beneficial for higher education institutions and their leadership. This study used a survey instrument to measure the perceived ethical climate. The findings revealed that the deontological climate was the prevailing perceived ethical climate for both administrators and full-time faculty in the studied higher education institution. A deontological ethical climate positively correlates to good ethical behavior. Measuring of ethical climate is suggested and should be conducted as a common practice in higher education institutions to proactively manage the perceived ethical climate. This practice could help college and university leadership predict unethical behavior, and it would prompt the leadership to take the necessary actions to promote a positive ethical climate. Continual research is also suggested of ethics in higher education as it is critical to understanding what may cause ethical transgressions, and it would be an avenue to better manage the ethical behavior of employees to prevent future ethical transgressions.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who, unfortunately, did not have the opportunity to advance their education but continuously instilled in their children the importance of learning. My father, who was one of the most intellectual people I have ever known, constantly reinforced the importance of reading and asking questions to educate oneself. My mother, who was the smartest person I have ever known, taught us the importance of perseverance and hard work to achieve our goals. I believe that my father's intellect and my mother's perseverance coalesced to help me achieve my doctorate. I will never know how they would have reacted to this achievement, but I think they would be proud.

I would like to thank my wife and child for their continual support throughout this doctoral program. I hope this achievement provides my child with the inspiration to believe that with commitment and hard work, you can achieve anything you want. I would also like to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Jallow, and committee member, Dr. Freeman-Butler, for their support and guidance throughout this dissertation.

Lastly, I would like to thank my classmates from Cohort 6 for their ongoing encouragement throughout the program and for making the classes more meaningful and enjoyable. You helped me look forward to attending classes, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have gotten to know you and work with you throughout this challenging endeavor.

Biographical Sketch

Philip Rothman is currently an Associate Professor in Business. Mr. Rothman attended Lehman College from 1980 to 1984 and graduated with a Bachelor of Sciences degree in 1984. He attended Pace University from 1992 to 1996 and graduated with a Master of Business Administration degree in 1996. He came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2014 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Mr. Rothman pursued his research in Ethics in Higher Education under the direction of Dr. Shelley Jallow and Dr. Renee Freeman-Butler and received the Ed.D. Degree in 2016.

Abstract

Ethical transgression is an ongoing problem in higher education. There is a relationship between the perceived ethical climate of an organization and the ethical behavior of its employees, and that ethical climate can be a predictor of ethical behavior. The ethical climate types are: egoistic, deontological, and utilitarian.

This quantitative study measured and identified the perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at a higher education institution, and then compared the results to determine if there was a significant difference in perception. Given that administrators and faculty are critical and influential employees, predicting their ethical behavior is beneficial for higher education institutions and their leadership.

This study used a survey instrument to measure the perceived ethical climate. The findings revealed that the deontological climate was the prevailing perceived ethical climate for both administrators and full-time faculty in the studied higher education institution. A deontological ethical climate positively correlates to good ethical behavior.

Measuring of ethical climate is suggested and should be conducted as a common practice in higher education institutions to proactively manage the perceived ethical climate. This practice could help college and university leadership predict unethical behavior, and it would prompt the leadership to take the necessary actions to promote a positive ethical climate.

Continual research is also suggested of ethics in higher education as it is critical to understanding what may cause ethical transgressions, and it would be an avenue to better manage the ethical behavior of employees to prevent future ethical transgressions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Corruption in higher education is nothing new, probably existing since the first college opened its doors. As more people around the world seek college degrees, there is evidence that bribes, admissions frauds, and other corrupt practices are on the rise. (Lahi, 2013, para. 1)

Keenan (2015) conducted an analysis of the ethics literature in higher education and reported ethical transgressions in higher education institutions from the late 1980s until 2015, involving administrators and faculty. "Any week we turn to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* it is a veritable scandal sheet on the academy" (Keenan, 2015, p. 3). Osipian's (2012) research of ethical corruption in higher education revealed transgressions involving higher education institutions, including corrupt admission practices, embezzlement of funds, and general fraud.

The literature has also shown that ethical issues in higher education receive little attention. According to Robinson and Moulton (2005), ethical issues in higher education receive little publicity compared to ethical transgressions in business, politics, and medicine. "Serious study of ethical issues in higher education has largely been ignored" (Robinson & Moulton, 2005, p. 1). Osipian (2012) stated:

> There may be a lack of attention to ethics in higher education because most cases are settled out of court and are not reported, as well as that the scholars who would do the research are employed by colleges and universities." (p. 141)

Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988) addressed the issue of managing ethical behavior through the concept of ethical climate. Ethical climate is the shared perception of norms, values, and practices regarding appropriate ethical behavior by the employees of an organization, influencing their decision making and behavioral response to ethical dilemmas. Johnson (2015) explained:

> Ethical climate is best understood as part of an organization culture. Every organization faces a special set of ethical challenges, creates its own set of values and norms and develops guidelines for enforcing its ethical standards. Ethical climate, in turn, determines what members believe is right or wrong and shapes their ethical decision making and behavior. (p. 321)

Ethical transgressions can be traced back to the influence of ethical climates (Arnaud, 2010). The literature indicates there is a link between the perceived ethical climate and the ethical behavior of an employee. More specifically, ethical climate can be a predictor of the ethical behavior of the employees. Cullen, Victor, and Stephens (1989) posited that identifying the prevailing ethical climate of an organization constitutes the first crucial step toward creating a climate that is appropriate and effective. Measuring ethical climate in an organization is a strategy of the leadership to predict the ethical behavior of the employees within that organization.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2015), there are approximately 3,000 four-year colleges in the United States, and this number continues to grow. Administrators and faculty are at the forefront of higher education institutions, and administrators provide the leadership for the college, and they are responsible for the supervision and administration of the college affairs and

services. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that college administrators oversee academic affairs and student services, including admissions, registrar, financial aid, student affairs, and are responsible for developing academic policies, hiring faculty, and managing finances. College faculty are primarily responsible for teaching in their subject area, and working with students in helping advance their knowledge and skills. "Faculty and administrators have an important role to play in promoting integrity and to practice it within the campus community and beyond" (Couch & Dodd, 2005, p. 24).

Wimbush and Shepard (1994) found that leadership has an impact on ethical climate. Leadership influences the organizations' ethical climate by establishing the ethical culture, implementing and enforcing ethical policies and practices, as well as modeling their own ethical behavior. In Schein's (2004) work on organizational culture and leadership, he found that leadership is very important in cultivating an ethical climate. Leadership has an ethical responsibility because leadership involves influence, and leaders have more power than followers (Northouse, 2013). The leadership sets the ethical tone in any organization, and it is incumbent upon the leaders to cultivate the proper ethical climate that guides ethical behavior across the organization. Dickson, Smith, Grojean, and Ehrhart (2001) noted that ethical climate is based on organizational values, and it is the primary responsibility of leaders, including college administrators, to communicate and demonstrate the importance of ethical values to the employees, such as college faculty.

In addition to the leadership, there are other factors that can influence ethical climate. Martin and Cullen (2006) found that external organizational context and

organizational form can have an impact on perceived ethical climate. External organizational context is the legal, technological, social, and economic impact on an organization. Organizational form includes the structure, bureaucracy, and values of an organization.

Victor and Cullen's (1987) research on ethical climate was intended to help manage the ethical behavior of employees. Having the ability to identify and measure ethical climate in organizations makes it possible to address future ethical behavior (Victor & Cullen, 1987). If a prevailing ethical climate is identified that may lead to unethical behavior, the leadership members can intervene and improve the ethical climate (Wimbush, Shepard, & Markhem, 1997).

Martin and Cullen (2006) posited that there are other factors that could impact ethical behavior of employees, including organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Organizational commitment of employees consists of supporting the organization's mission and purpose and the need to be a part of the organization. Job satisfaction posits that the employees are satisfied with their jobs, promotion potentials, co-workers, and supervisors.

Martin and Cullen (2006) encouraged future research on ethical climate in various types of organizations. Al-Omari (2012) opined that there were limited studies of ethical climate in higher education, which prompted his study of the ethical climate in a higher education institution with a focus on the faculty members' perception of the prevailing ethical climate at the university. Al-Omari's primary objective for his study was to obtain empirical data of the perceived ethical climate of the faculty and to use the results

to support the development of ethical training and professional development programs to help improve the ethical climate at the studied university.

Al-Omari (2012) utilized Victor and Cullen's (1987, 1988) Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) to measure the perceived organization's ethical climate by faculty. According to Al-Omari (2012), the egoistic ethical climate was the most prevalent perceived climate amongst faculty at the university. This finding is indicative of behavior that suggests faculty act in their own self-interests ahead of the university. Al-Omari recommended that additional research be conducted in other higher education institutions, and it should include the perceived ethical climate of a variety of employees in higher education. This current study expanded upon Al-Omari's (2012) study by expanding the population to include administrators' perceptions as well.

Problem Statement

Keenan (2015) conducted research of ethics in higher education, and reported ethical transgressions in higher education institutions over the past 30 years, ranging from bribes for better grades, accreditation, and entrances to selective programs of study, preferential treatment of student athletes, and faculty misconducts. "The American university does not hold its employees to professional ethical standards because it has not created a culture of ethical consciousness and accounting at the university" (Keenan, 2015, p. 4).

Three years earlier, in 2012, Osipian performed an analysis of federal court cases of higher education institutions. He researched cases involving ethical transgressions and concluded that corruption in higher education is a problem that has long been neglected as an area of research. Osipian (2012) posited that there may be a lack of attention to

ethics in higher education because most ethical transgressions are not reported, and the scholars who would do research on ethical problems are employed by the higher education institutions. Seven years before Osipian's 2012 paper, Robinson and Moulton (2005) researched the question "why is it that academics seek out and study the ethical problems in other professions and ignore those in their own profession?" (p. xi). Robinson and Moulton canvassed and interviewed many administrators and faculty at various colleges and universities around the United States, and they, too, concluded that ethical problems in higher education receive little attention.

The literature shows that ethical behavior is linked to the perceived ethical climate of employees, and ethical climate can be a predictor of ethical behavior (Simha & Cullen, 2011). This fact, coupled with the continual ethical transgressions involving higher education institutions, support the significance of measuring and predicting ethical climate in higher education institutions. Studying ethical climate can serve as an effective strategy for the higher education leadership to better manage the ethical behavior of their employees. In addition, there is a need to further explore ethics in higher education due to the limited research. Specifically, the Keenan (2015), Osipian (2012) and Robinson and Moulton (2005) studies of higher education concluded that ethical behavior is a problem that receives little attention.

Theoretical Rationale

Victor and Cullen's (1988) seminal research and literature on ethical climate has become the foundation for studies on the ethical climate in organizations. Ethical climate research has proliferated predominantly in the business ethics literature. The literature focused primarily on exploring and investigating the effects of ethical climate on

organizational outcomes, including ethical behavior of employees. "Ethical climates have been demonstrated to have a variety of effects, some positive and some negative, on ethical behavior" (Simha & Cullen, 2011, p. 31).

The ethical climate theory (ECT) developed by Victor and Cullen (1988) was used to support this study, providing a theoretical frame from which to measure the perceived ethical climate of administrators and faculty at a 4-year private college. The ECT was developed to provide a framework for future ethics research, "to help shape and inspire prominent streams of research in business ethics" (Martin & Cullen, 2006, para 1).

Victor and Cullen's (1988) ECT is based on Kohlberg's (1981, 1984) work on moral development and Schneider's (1983) work on organizational climate. Kohlberg (1981, 1984) proposed that as individuals develop morally, they use different types of ethical criteria, including self-interest, caring, and principle, to resolve ethical dilemmas. Schneider (1983) defined organizational climate as the shared perceptions of procedures, policies, and practices of an organization. As Schneider (1975) noted, work climates may influence the behavior of an organization's employees to a great degree. Ethical climate perception is a subset of the organizational climate perception, and it has a strong influence on behaviors of employees and organizational ethical outcomes (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

Each of the constructs of the ECT is based on the philosophical underpinnings of the three ethical theories: egoism, utilitarianism, and deontological. Kohlberg (1981) posited that these types of ethical theories are distinct and incompatible, because they cannot coexist together. Egoism refers to behavior that is concerned primarily with self-

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interests; utilitarianism applies to the basis of decisions and actions for the greatest outcome for the greatest number of people; and deontology focuses on the behaviors guided by principle, rules, laws, and codes (Al-Omari, 2012; Simha & Cullen, 2011).

An outgrowth of the ECT was the creation of Victor and Cullen's (1988) Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ). The ECQ is an instrument designed to measure the three types of ethical climates within an organization, which include egoistic, utilitarian, and deontological. Research shows that one dominant ethical climate type will emerge in an organization and ultimately define the ethical climate (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Furthermore, the research has revealed the relationship between each of the three types of ethical climates with specific ethical behavior (Simha & Cullen, 2011). Conducted studies have demonstrated a link between ethical climate types and ethical behavior of employees (Peterson, 2002; Smith, Thompson, & Iacovou, 2009; Stachowicz-Stanusch & Simha, 2012; Vardi, 2001; Wimbush et al., 1997).

The prevailing theme emerging from these studies is that deontological and utilitarian ethical climates are correlated with positive ethical behavior, and an egoistic climate correlates with negative ethical behavior. Therefore, the measurement and identification of the prevailing ethical climate type can be a predictor of future ethical behavior of employees (Simha & Cullen, 2011).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative study was to measure and identify the perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at a private 4-year college. This study also compared the perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty

to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceived prevailing ethical climate.

Research Questions

The following research questions identified and compared the prevailing ethical climate of the administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college:

1. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate for administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

2. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the administrators at the 4-year private college?

3. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

4. How does the perceived prevailing ethical climate of administrators compare to full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

Potential Significance of the Study

The literature has revealed that there is a link between the perceived ethical climate and the ethical behavior of employees. The significance of this study was to identify the prevailing perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at a 4-year, private, religiously affiliated college institution and provide the college leadership with empirical evidence to predict ethical behavior. Unethical behavior can have a significant impact on the overall institution, college leadership, administrators, faculty, students, and society as whole. Given that the administrators and faculty are critical and influential employees of an institution, predicting their ethical behavior is

beneficial for the college institution and leadership in order to take the necessary actions to enhance the ethical climate.

"An understanding of the ethical climate would help better manage ethical behavior within an organization. This is especially important because unethical behavior has proven to be extremely costly to organizations and society-at-large" (Wimbush et al., 1997, p. 1706). If unethical behavior and corruption continue to occur in higher education, the potential consequences are severe, because students will lose faith in their institutions and the academic industry, as well as setting a terrible tone for the future leaders of tomorrow. Osipian (2012) stated that from a societal standpoint, "higher education corruption is detrimental for economic development and growth" (p. 143).

A better focus on, and scrutiny of, the ethical climate would help this private college institution understand how to measure and identify the ethical climate. Furthermore, if a specific ethical climate is identified that may lead to unethical behavior, the leadership can intervene and improve that ethical climate going forward (Wimbush et al., 1997).

Another significant aspect of this study was the need to further the research of ethics in higher education. "Higher education corruption has long been neglected as an area of research" (Osipian, 2012, p. 141), and "ethical issues in higher education have largely been ignored" (Robinson & Moulton, 2005, p. 1). The importance of ethical climate research is underscored when one examines the frequent incidences of ethical transgressions in higher education institutions. If more research is performed, we can hope to be better able to control and curtail unethical behavior (Simha & Cullen, 2011).

The study of ethics in higher education is critical to obtaining a better understanding of what may be leading to unethical behavior and what may be possible to mitigate future transgressions in higher education institutions. The institution of higher education is such an important bastion in teaching and modeling ethics to tomorrow's future leaders. Therefore, it is imperative that this bastion ensure that it has the proper ethical values and behavior for which it teaches, in other words, "practice what it preaches."

Definition of Terms

The following definitions of key terms are used for this study:

Administrators – individuals in a college environment who oversee academic affairs and student services, including admissions, registrar, financial aid, student affairs, and who are responsible for developing academic policies, hiring faculty, managing budgets, and finances (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

Faculty – individuals within a college who are responsible for teaching students in a subject area, as well as helping students improve their knowledge and career skills (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

Full-Time – employees who are contracted to work 40 or more hours per week.

Unethical Behavior – refers to embezzlement of funds, improper admission practices, falsifying records, and unlawful activities (Osipian, 2012).

Ethical Dilemmas – problems, situations, or opportunities that must be evaluated as right or wrong, ethical or unethical, and require a choice among different actions (Ferrell, Fraedrich, & Ferrell, 2011).

Egoistic Ethical Climate – employee perception that the organization of employ generally promotes self-interest decisions at the expense of others (Al-Omari, 2012).

Utilitarian Ethical Climate – employee perception that the organization of employ has a vested interest in the well-being of others (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

Deontological Ethical Climate –employee perceive that the organization of employ is guided by principles, rules, and laws (Al-Omari, 2012).

Chapter Summary

The literature revealed the problems with ethical transgressions in higher education institutions, and that ethics in higher education has been neglected as an area of research. The studies of ethical climate have revealed a relationship between perceived ethical climate and ethical behavior by employees, and that ethical climate of an organization can predict the ethical behavior of its employees. This study furthers the research of ethical climate in higher education by expanding upon the Al-Omari's (2012) study. This study focused on the measurement and identification of the perceived ethical climate of a 4-year private college for administrators and full-time faculty.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the development of the ethical climate theory, as well as the research performed on ethical climate and the link to ethical behavior. The research design, methodology, and analysis is discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents a detailed analysis of the results and findings, and Chapter 5 discusses the findings, implications, and recommendations for future research and practice.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction and Purpose

The review of the literature explored the research on ethical climate, as well as to discover how ethical climate can be improved. The literature review has four key components. The first component identified some of the ethical transgressions involving administrators and faculty in higher education institutions. The second component reviewed the ethical climate theory (ECT) and the research performed on ethical climate. The third component evaluated the studies conducted on the link between ethical climate and ethical behavior of employees. The final component reviewed the best practices to help cultivate a positive ethical climate, including the important role that ethical leadership and training plays in influencing ethical climate.

Review of Literature

The Chronicle of Higher Education and *Inside Higher Ed* have reported incidences of ethical transgressions in higher education institutions by administrators and faculty members such as misappropriation of funds, improper reporting, and allowing unlawful activities. In addition, Keenan (2015) conducted an analysis of the ethics literature in higher education and reported ethical transgressions in higher education institutions from the late 1980s through 2014 involving administrators and faculty. "Professors and deans recognize the need to teach professional ethics in all the other professions, but they show no real interest in professional ethics for their own profession" (Keenan, 2015, p. 4).

Osipian (2012) performed research of federal court cases after the year 2000, involving higher education institutions on the grounds of violating the False Claims Act, Consumer Protection Act, and Higher Education Act. Osipian disclosed violations of these federal regulations that committed by administrators and faculty, such as financial fraud, including embezzlement of school funds, over billing of the government, prohibited payments to student athletes, incentive pay for recruitment, and falsifying records.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2016), the False Claims Act imposes liability on any person who knowingly presents a false claim or uses a false record to fraudulently claim payment from the federal government. Osipian (2012) identified court cases where higher education institutions falsely received federal funds in the form of student aid. The federal court case involved Chapman University, where Chapman violated the False Claims Act by providing misleading information on classroom hours (Hatch &Arnold, 2006). There was another federal case involving the University of Phoenix, where recruiters were being compensated for based on the number of students they enrolled, which is a violation of federal regulation (Blumenstyk, 2004).

The Higher Education Act is a federal law that governs the administration of federal student aid programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). According to the Federal Trade Commissions (2016), the Consumer Protection Act stops unfair, deceptive, and fraudulent business practices. Osipian (2012) identified federal court cases involving higher education institutions violating the Higher Education Act and Consumer Protection Act based on kickbacks to financial aid administrators, preferred educational loans, and false advertising. Osipian's (2012) research concluded that corruption in

higher education is a problem and warrants future research. "Professors and college administrators are cheating students of their future" (Osipian, 2012, p. 152).

Ethical climate theory. Victor and Cullen's (1988) ECT is based on Kohlberg's (1981, 1984) work on moral development and Schneider's (1983) work on organizational climate. According to Kohlberg (1981), people make different decisions in similar ethical situations because of their own moral development. Kohlberg posited that individuals advance through stages of moral development as their knowledge and socialization continue throughout their lifetime (Ferrell et al., 2011). Kohlberg (1981) proposed that as individuals develop morally, they use different types of ethical criteria, including self-interest, caring, and principle, to resolve ethical dilemmas. Schneider (1983) defined organizational climate as the shared perceptions of procedures, policies, and practices of an organization.

The ethical philosophical constructs of ECT include the following three ethical theories: deontology, utilitarianism, and egoism. Northouse (2013) discussed the ethical theories that deal with the ethical behavior. The word deontology comes from the Greek word for duty (*deon*). Deontology is sometimes described as rules-based ethics. The deontology theory claims that certain actions are intrinsically right or wrong, because a person makes an ethical decision based on what is right, following moral rules. The deontological perspective centers on the actions of individuals and his or her moral obligation and responsibilities to do what is right (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2012). Deontological ethical climate focuses on the behaviors guided by principle, rules, laws, and codes, which promote decisions and actions for the good of others. Within the deontological ethical climate, organizational principles are managed by policies and

procedures (Al-Omari, 2012). The deontological ethical climate is relevant in higher

education because the institution's ethical policies serve as the principles for governing

actions to help guide employee ethical behavior.

"Ethical egoism states that a person should act to create the greatest good for

himself or herself" (Northouse, 2013, p. 425). Ethical egoism theorizes that it is an

individual's moral obligation to do what promotes his or her own good (Kagan, 1997).

Egoism is primarily based on maximizing self-interest ahead of the organization. Within

the egoistic ethical climate, the prevailing interests of the individual have the capacity to

dictate the course of action the organization may take. The egoistic ethical climate

implies that employees perceive that the organization generally promotes self-interested

decisions at the expense of others (Al-Omari, 2012). The decision comes directly from

the individual who ignores the needs or interests of others.

Utilitarianism posits that a person should act for the greatest good for the greatest

number of people, clearly the opposite of ethical egoism (Northouse, 2013). Utilitarians'

ethical perspectives see their organization as having a vested interest in the well-being of

others. The utilitarian ethical climate has the expectation that each employee is

concerned for the well-being of the other employees (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

The egoism and utilitarianism ethical theories are relevant to higher education

because administrators and faculty need to assess the consequences of their actions to

determine if it is for their own self-interests or for the greater good of the institution. The

higher education institution's ethical programs (e.g., training, communication, mentoring)

should serve to reinforce the importance of acting ethically and to maximize the social

benefits of the institution and its key stakeholders. Higher education institutions have the

obligation to establish ethical programs to help cultivate an ethical climate in order to help produce positive, ethical decision-making and ethical behavior in their employees.

Aronson (2001) evaluated ethical behavior based on the various ethical theories. He determined that the two major ethical theories employed most frequently are deontology and utilitarianism. The literature on ethics traditionally pits deontology and utilitarianism in opposition to each other and mutually exclusive. Deontology theory is considered more backward looking because the focus is on establishing and adhering to ethical policies. In contrast, utilitarianism is considered more forward looking by making decisions that produce the most favorable outcomes. Aronson (2001) concluded that ethical issues are best solved by employing both theories simultaneously. In other words, both theories should be used together in making ethical decisions.

Ethical climate. An ethical culture is rooted in an organization's value system. (Grojean, Resick, Dickson, & Smith, 2004). "The field of ethics is the study of how people try to live their lives to a standard of right or wrong behavior. How they arrive at the definition of what is right or wrong is the result of many factors, including how they were raised, their religion, and their traditions and beliefs" (Ghillyer, 2010, p. 6) – in short, it is their value system. Values are used to develop norms that are socially enforced within an organization. Integrity, accountability, and trust are examples of values (Ferrell et al., 2011).

Climate refers to the prevailing atmosphere, mood, or feeling within an organization. Vardi (2001) believed that culture is conceptualized in terms of shared and implicit values, whereas climate expresses the perceptions shared by employees that reflect the way they comprehend and describe the culture. "Climate is often regarded as

the way things are done around here" (Vardi, 2001, p. 327). An ethical climate refers to the perceptions employees have of the ethical values and practices in their respective organizations.

Victor and Cullen (1987) stated that the study of organizational ethics must include the study of the ethical behavior of employees within the organization. The ethical behavior of employees' results, to some extent, from their own moral character, developed prior to organizational entry. However, the ethical behavior of employees also results from an adherence to the prevailing values of the organization. The organizational values that pertain to ethics contribute to the ethical climate of an organization. The ethical climate of an organization is the shared perception of employees as to what is ethically correct behavior, and the decision-making process as to how ethical issues should be handled. The ethical climate has a far-reaching impact on the organization. Once we know a person well, we can describe them as caring, or self-interested, or principled. These same characteristics can apply to an organization (Cullen et al., 1989).

Victor and Cullen's (1987, 1988) research of ethical climate was influenced by Schneider's (1975) work climate research, and Kohlberg's (1981, 1984) research on moral development in individuals. Schneider (1975) studied the relationship of work climate to behavior and concluded that employees adapt to their environment by learning the appropriate behavior through climate perception. Ethical climate is a type of work climate, reflecting the ethical reasoning and ethical decision-making within the organization (Martin & Cullen, 2006).

Kohlberg (1981) proposed that as individuals develop morally they use different types of ethical criteria for moral reasoning. Moral reasoning is described as how morals

dilemmas should be resolved. The three major ethical types are self-interest, caring, and principle. These three types reflect the three major ethical theories of egoism, utilitarianism, and deontology. In Victor and Cullen's (1987) research on ethical climate, the supposition was that the ethical climates evolve along Kohlberg (1981) ethical types and corresponding ethical theories with the assumption that these types are distinct and relatively incompatible. "People who are caring are not apt to pay a great deal of heed to laws and rules; people who are principled are likely to screen out the effects of a given choice on themselves, and on other individuals. If the ethical reasoning modes are incompatible with individuals, the same is probably true of organization" (Cullen et al., 1989, p. 55).

The primary purpose of Victor and Cullen's (1987) research was to help organizations better manage the ethical behavior of their employees. They opined that through the identification of the prevailing ethical climate, the organization would be able to better predict and control the ethical behavior of the employees. Victor and Cullen (1987) stated:

> Increasingly, organizations are actively managing the ethical behavior of their employees. Firms are developing code of ethics, using moral character as a selection criterion, monitoring the ethical judgement of managers, and training managers in ethical decision making. However, the potential effectiveness of ethical management strategies should be assessed with the context of understanding the organization's ethical climate. (p. 67)

As part of the Victor and Cullen (1987) research, they wanted to develop an instrument to measure the ethical climate within an organization, specifically to measure

the type of ethical climate. They created the Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) to assess employees' perceptions of an organizational ethical climate. "An initial assumption of the ECQ is that the ethical climate in an organization, as functions of aggregated individual perceptions of ethical norms, divide along the dimensions similar to Kohlberg's three ethical types" (Cullen & Victor, 1993, p. 667). According to Cullen et al. (1989), "the best way to assess the ethical climate of an organization is to ask the employees" (p. 53).

The ECQ used in the 1987 and 1988 studies of Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988) contained 26 questions. For the pilot ECQ in the 1987 study, the questions were primarily focused on the organizational ethical procedures and practices, and were categorized by the three different ethical theories (i.e., egoism, utilitarianism, deontology) using a 4-point Likert scale. Cullen & Victor (1993) assumed:

> The respondents to the questionnaire would act as objective observers of the climates within organizations. However, because perceptions are filtered by individual psychological characteristics . . . can confound perceptions. To avoid this problem, appropriate design of the instrument required questions emphasizing descriptions rather than feelings. (p. 671)

Victor and Cullen (1987) administered the pilot questionnaire to 35 university faculty members. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire, as well as to note any ambiguity or other problems with the questions. Based on the results of the pilot, a revised questionnaire was developed with a 6-point Likert scale, and it was administered to an expanded population, including MBA students, faculty members, military base service personnel, and managers of a trucking company to analyze the

ethical climate of each of these distinct organizational environments. The results of their testing of this diverse population concluded that the managers of the trucking company and the military personnel measured very high in the deontological climate. The faculty measured very high in the utilitarianism ethical climate, and the MBA students measured high in the egoistic ethical climate (Victor & Cullen, 1987).

"The findings of distinct ethical themes that define particular corporate ethical climates has implications for both understanding as well as controlling ethical behavior in organizations" (Victor & Cullen, 1987, p. 67). Victor and Cullen (1987) opined that identifying and measuring ethical climates in organizations will enable organizations to predict and influence the ethical climate and ultimately to better manage the ethical behavior of the employees. They recommended further research be conducted to better understand the impact of ethical climate, as well as the development of intervention strategies to alter ethical climates as necessary.

In Victor and Cullen's (1988) study, they built upon their Victor and Cullen (1987) study to further the research of ethical climate. Specifically, they made some adjustments to their ECQ, as well as proposed ethical climate theory. Since the inception of ECT, ethical climate research has expanded tremendously, and empirical research performed has shown a link between perceived ethical climate and ethical behavior of employees. Most of the ethical climate researchers leveraged ECT and the ECQ.

In the Cullen et al. (1989) study, the researchers continued to test and validate the ECQ. Furthermore, they explored what organizational leadership can learn from the results of the ECQ and provided suggested actions to alter and improve the ethical climate going forward. Cullen et al. (1989) stated:

The effectiveness of an ethical climate has important implications for the ethical

behavior of the organization. Effective climates may contribute to the quality and

regularity of employees' ethical choices. A key factor in effectiveness is a good

fit between the organization's ethical climate and its strategy. (p. 61).

Cullen et al. (1989) posited that it is essential for an organization's leadership to assess

the ethical climate of their organization to determine if the ethical climate fits with the

ethical values and the strategic goals of that organization. Based on their assessment, the

leadership determines if the ethical climate needs to be enhanced or altered through the

strengthening of ethical communication and training programs; revision or development

of ethical policies; and changes in monitoring or supervision.

Since the inaugural work of Victor and Cullen (1987), there has been a

proliferation of research conducted on the ethical climate. There have been a number of

studies focusing on linking ethical climate to ethical behavior, as well as determining best

practices, including the importance of ethical leadership and training programs to

enhance the ethical climate.

Linking ethical climate to ethical behavior. Simha and Cullen (2011)

researched and evaluated the ethical climate literature linking ethical climate to ethical

behavior. They identified a number of studies which used Victor and Cullen's (1987,

1988) ECT and ECQ to measure and identify the ethical climate in various organizations,

as well as investigating the effects of ethical climate on organizational outcomes,

including ethical behavior. Several studies have been conducted linking ethical climate

to ethical behavior of employees (Deshpande,1996; Deshpande & Joseph, 2009; Fu &

Deshpande, 2012; Fritzsche, 2000; Leung, 2008; Peterson, 2002; Rothwell & Baldwin,

2007; Saini & Martin, 2009; Shacklock, Manning, & Hort, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Vardi, 2001; Wimbush & Shepard, 1994).

Stachowicz-Stanusch and Simha (2013) studied the effects of ethical climate on organizational corruption, using a population of hospital administrators and management employees. Organizational corruption was defined as the abuse of authority for personal benefit. Their study concluded a negative correlation between a deontological ethical climate and organization corruption, in that a perceived adherence to laws and ethical policies would help reduce organizational corruption. Wimbush et al. (1997) studied the perceived ethical climate of retail store employees. They concluded that there was a negative relationship between utilitarian (e.g., caring, service oriented) to unethical behaviors, including lying, stealing, and disobedience. Peterson (2002) studied alumni who graduated from undergraduate business school, and concluded that the egoistic climate correlated positively with unethical behavior.

According to Simha and Cullen (2011), the prevailing theme emerging from the research is that deontological and utilitarian ethical climates are climates associated with positive ethical behavior, and egoistic climates are associated with negative ethical behavior. Therefore, based on their research findings, organizational leaders should strive to encourage and establish utilitarian or deontological ethical climates, while striving to prevent an egoistic ethical climate in their respective organizations.

Simha and Cullen's (2011) research also shows that particular types of organizations tend to have particular ethical climate types. Accounting and law firms are more than likely to have deontological climates, because they are predominately rules- and laws-based industries. Organizations that operate in high volatility and

competitiveness are most likely to be egoistic in their ethical climates. Similarly, organizations with a humanistic mission (e.g., non-for-profit) tend to have a utilitarian ethical climate.

Best practices in building an ethical climate. Johnson (2015) and Grojean et al. (2004) identified key principles and practices in building a positive ethical climate, including the importance of leadership, development of ethical policies and programs, and the significance of ongoing communication. The predominant theme for the suggested best practices provided by Johnson (2015) and Grojean et al. (2004) is that the leadership has a significant influence on the ethical climate of an organization through the consistent communication of ethical values, as well as the implementation of ethical policies and programs.

Healthy ethical climates "are marked by humility, zero tolerance for individual and collective destructive behaviors, justice, integrity, trust, concern, structural reinforcement, and social responsibility" (Johnson, 2015, p. 322). Johnson explained humility as "being is made of three components. The first of these is self-awareness. The second element is openness, which is a product of knowing one's weaknesses. The third component is transcendence . . . that there is a power greater than self" (Johnson, 2015, p. 85).

Regarding zero tolerance for individual and collective destructive behaviors, Johnson expressed that an organization "set forth clear ethical expectations and punish [the] offender" (Johnson, 2015, p. 332). Organizations needs to significantly reduce destructive behavior by creating zero tolerance policies, constantly monitoring for possible violations, and move quickly to address any violations.

For organizations to be just Johnson (2015) stated that "treating people fairly or justly is another hallmark of an ethical organizational climate" (p. 332). Johnson noted that "integrity is ethical soundness, wholeness, and consistency" (Johnson, 2015, p. 334). Regarding trust, Johnson (2015) expressed: "ethical organizations are marked by a high degree of trust. Not only do members trust one another, but also, together, they develop a shared or aggregate level of trust that becomes part of the group's culture" (Johnson, 2015, p. 336). Johnson also stated that being process focused or to have "concern for how an organization achieves its goals is another important indicator of a healthy ethical climate" (Johnson, 2015, p. 338).

According to Johnson (2015), organizations need to reinforce ethical behavior through the organizational structure and policies (structural reinforcement). Ethical conduct is more likely when workers are responsible for ethical decisions and have the authority to choose how to respond (Johnson, 2015). Johnson (2015) concluded with social responsibility, stating that "concern for those outside an organization is another sign of a healthy climate" (p. 339).

To build an ethical climate, Johnson (2015) suggested that leaders rely heavily on the three tools: (a) core ideology, (b) code of ethics policies, and (c) ethics training. The term core ideology refers to the central culture of an organization. Core values such as: ethics, respect, trust, empathy, and courage, are the primary components of core ideology. Organizations formalize core values through the development of a code of ethics. Code of ethics policies provide a set of rules that reflect an organization's value system that cultivates an ethical climate.

Grojean et al. (2004) suggested the following seven best practices that leaders can leverage to help cultivate the ethical climate within their organizations:

1. Use values-based leadership – leadership approaches help to increase an organization's ethical values leading to greater congruence of values between the employees and the organization.

2. Set the example – the behavior of leaders is a powerful communication mechanism that conveys the expectations, values, and assumptions of the ethical climate.

3. Establish clear expectations of ethical behavior – through the development of ethical policies, practices, and training. Ethical policies are integrated through ongoing communication and reinforcement including employees' orientation, development, and training programs.

4. Provide feedback, coaching, and support regarding ethical behavior – coaching and mentoring interventions that include feedback focused on specific aspects of ethical behavior reduce ambiguity of ethical dilemmas, help increase ethical awareness, and direct attention to appropriate ways to address ethical issues.

5. Recognize and reward behaviors that support organizational values – rewards, both formal and informal, provide powerful reinforcement for ethical behavior, which leads to a stronger ethical climate.

6. Be aware of individual differences among subordinates – different personal characteristics, such as personality, values, ethics, and integrity, impact ethical behavior as well as the perceived ethical climate.

7.   Establish leadership training and mentoring – providing training specifically for leaders to help them identify situations of an ethical nature and determine appropriate ways to handle situations reduces ambiguity and cultivates the ethical climate.

Ethical leadership. Leadership influences the ethical climate by establishing the ethical culture, enforcing the ethical policies and practices, as well as modeling the leadership members' own ethical behavior. According to Wimbush and Shepard (1994), leadership has a significant impact on ethical climate. In Schein's (2004) work on organizational culture and leadership, he found that leadership is very important in cultivating ethical climate. Johnson (2015) stated that, "leaders act as ethics officers for their organizations by exercising influence through the process of social learning and by building positive ethical climates" (p. 319).

Leadership has an ethical responsibility because leadership involves influence, and leaders have more power than followers (Northouse, 2013). Dickson et al. (2001) noted that ethical climate is based on organizational values, and it is the primary responsibility of leaders to communicate and demonstrate the importance of ethical values to the employees. Johnson (2015) noted that "when it comes to ethics, followers look to their leaders as role model and act accordingly" (p. 320). Johnson (2015) suggested that leaders enhance their credibility, more specifically, the perception that they are ethical, by living up to the values they espouse. Leaders need to be open and honest and set high ethical standards that they follow themselves.

Johnson (2015), Northouse (2013), and Kalshoven, Den Hartog, and De Hoog (2011) defined the characteristics and principles of ethical leadership. These leadership characteristics and principles have many commonalities, including justice, fairness,

honesty, trust, openness, and providing a foundation for the development of sound ethical leaders, which, in turn, helps build a positive ethical climate.

Johnson (2015) characterized ethical leadership in terms of virtues. First, virtues take time to develop but are woven into the life of leaders, and they persist over time. Second, virtues shape the way leaders behave because being virtuous makes them sensitive to ethical issues and encourages them to act morally. Third, virtues operate independently of the act, whereby a virtuous leader will not abandon his or her principles to please followers.

According to Johnson (2015), important virtues for leaders include:

- Courage – Leaders must have courage to be ethical. They recognize that moral action may be risky, refusing to set their values aside to placate others. Leaders strive to create an ethical environment even when faced with opposition from their superiors or subordinates.

- Integrity – Leaders are true to themselves, reflecting consistency as to what they say publicly and how they think and act privately.

- Humility – Humility encourages leaders to build supportive relationships with followers that foster collaboration and trust. They are more willing to serve others, putting the needs of followers first while acting as role models.

- Reverence – Leaders respect the input and opinion of others. They are not concerned about a power struggle or about winning or losing but, rather, with reaching the common goals.

- Optimism – Leaders who have a positive attitude and are hopeful about the future are more likely to persist in the face of adversity. They help their

followers deal constructively with setbacks, encouraging them to persist to achieve desired results.

- Compassion – Compassion is an important element of altruism, an orientation toward others than oneself. Leaders recognize that they serve the purposes of the greater good of the organization.

- Justice – Justice is treating others fairly and equally through the establishment of equitable rules and standards.

Northouse (2013) discussed the following five basic principles of ethical leadership:

1. Leaders who respect others allow those people to be themselves and the leaders value individual differences. They listen to others and are tolerant of opposing views. In short, leaders who show respect treat each person fairly and value others' opinions.

2. Service means that the leader is a steward of the vision of the organization. Being a steward means clarifying and nurturing a vision that is greater than oneself.

3. Ethical leaders are concerned about fairness and justice, and they make it a top priority to treat everyone equally.

4. Honesty is a very broad principle. It concerns being open and transparent with others. Honesty includes being authentic and truthful, representing reality as fully and completely as possible.

5. Building community is an essential principle, where the leader and followers agree on a common goal that is for the greater good. They search for goals that are

compatible with everyone. In other words, an ethical leader considers the purposes of everyone involved and is attentive to the interests of the broader community.

Kalshoven et al. (2011) characterized ethical leadership using the following seven dimensions: (a) justice – establish rules and be impartial, fair, and objective; (b) shared leadership – foster empowerment and encourage participation; (c) clarification of roles – determine roles and responsibilities, and define expectations; (d) solicitude (caring) – be respectful and caring, and have an open mind; (e) wide perspective – envisage the common good and encourage improvement; (f) ethical direction – define the ethical mission and values of the organization; and (g) integrity – develop trust and be transparent in your actions.

Bouchamma and Brie (2014) conducted a qualitative study of leadership leveraging the seven dimensions of ethical leadership as defined by Kalshoven et al. (2011). In their study, they interviewed 11 leaders using open-ended questions regarding their experiences and dealings with the community of practice to identify the important characteristics of a good ethical leader. They defined community of practice as a group whose members regularly participated in collaborative-learning and knowledge-sharing activities. Based on their study, they concluded that leaders who are transparent and share leadership responsibilities are more ethical. In addition, communication and solicitude are strong characteristics of ethical leadership. Lastly, the clarification of roles and responsibilities and providing a clear ethical mission help promote an ethical culture within organizations. This further reinforces the need to establish clear ethical policies and continuously communicate, mentor, and train in order to help build and support a positive ethical climate. Ethical policies, along with programs, such as ethical training,

mentoring, and communication to reinforce these policies, help further enrich the ethical behavior of administrators and faculty in higher education. A college's ethical policies can help eliminate unethical behavior, relieve ethical dilemmas, and demonstrate a commitment to ethical conduct (Rezaee, Elmore, & Szendi, 2001). Ethical policies delineate an organization's value system and act as a rulebook for its employees.

Brown and Trevino (2006) conducted exploratory research designed to understand what the term ethical leadership means to proximate observers of senior executives. Through structured interviews with 20 individuals in a variety of industries, the researcher asked the participants to think about an ethical leader with whom they were familiar and to answer questions about the characteristics and behaviors of that leader. The interviews concluded that there were many common personal characteristics of ethical leaders. Ethical leaders were thought to be honest and trustworthy, as well as fair and principled, in their decision making. Another important aspect of ethical leadership revealed that the leaders' proactive efforts to influence ethical behavior of the followers, where leaders set clear ethical policies, frequently trained and communicated with their followers about ethics, and ensured that policies were adhered to (Brown & Trevino, 2006).

Ethical training. An ethical training program is an important part of building a positive ethical climate within an organization. Johnson (2015) stated that:

Formal ethics training plays an important role in creating and maintaining ethical climate. When part of the socialization process, ethics training can help prevent new employees from engaging in corrupt activities. Training for experienced employees can heighten awareness to moral danger signs, reduce destructive

behaviors, foster trust, promote integrity, reinforce values, and clarify ethical
policies and expectations. (p. 351)

Valentine and Fleischman (2002) conducted a study of the correlation between ethical training and employees' perception of an organization's ethical environment. They randomly surveyed business professionals and concluded that there is a positive correlation between the employees of an organization with an ethical training program and their perception of the organization's ethics.

According to Johnson (2015), organizational ethical training programs should:

- Reinforce the organization's culture and standards – Training sessions should include direct supervisors and organization leadership to communicate an organization's ethical culture, values, ethical policies, etc., as well as reinforcing the importance of ethical behavior.

- Focus on the organization's unique ethical problems – Each organization encounters a different set of ethical challenges. The training should include actual ethical dilemma examples from the organization or the industry to serve as case studies.

- Tap into the experiences of participants – Encourage the participants to provide their own experiences with some ethical dilemmas and their decision-making process. The key is to encourage open and honest dialogue amongst the training participants.

- Integrate ethical behavior into the entire curriculum – Ethical training should not just be a one-time-only event but, rather, integrated into all aspects of

employee training and development programs administered by the

organization.

Ferrell et al. (2011) posited that:

Training can educate employees about the firm's policies and expectations,

relevant laws and regulations, and general social standards. Training programs

can make employees aware of available resources, support systems, and

designated personnel who can assist them with ethical advice. They can also

empower employee to make ethical decisions" (p. 228).

In accordance with the literature, an important step in developing a positive

organizational ethical climate is implementing a training program and communication

system to educate the employees about an organization's ethical values, ethical policies,

and ethical programs (Johnson, 2015).

Chapter Summary

The literature search revealed that there is an issue with ethical behavior in higher

education, given that ethical transgressions continue to occur in higher education

institutions, particularly involving administrators and faculty. The literature also revealed

there is a link between ethical behavior and perceived ethical climate for employees.

Studies performed demonstrated a correlation between ethical climate type and ethical

behavior, and the identification of the prevailing organizational ethical climate type could

be a predictor of ethical behavior. More importantly, through the proactive identification

of ethical climate type, the leadership can then take the necessary actions to improve the

ethical climate within an organization.

Last, the literature revealed that there has been limited research of ethics in higher education, which prompted Al-Omari (2012) to conduct a study at his university to identify and measure the perceived ethical climate of the faculty members. Al-Omari's primary purpose was to provide empirical data to support the improvement of the ethical climate through ethical training programs and professional development programs. This current study expanded upon the Al-Omari (2012) study to include the perceived ethical climate of administrators, in addition to full-time faculty, at a 4-year private college institution to provide empirical evidence to predict the ethical behavior of the respective employees. Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

This quantitative study measured the perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at a 4-year private college institution. Expanding upon Al-Omari's (2012) study, which leveraged Victor and Cullen's (1988) Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) to measure the perceived ethical climate of the faculty members, this current study measured and compared the perceived ethical climate type for the administrators and full-time faculty. The ethical climate types are: egoistic, deontological, and utilitarian.

The purpose of this research was to identify and compare the perceived ethical climate for administrators and full-time faculty at a 4-year private college. The literature revealed that the identification of the prevailing perceived ethical climate type can be a predictor of the ethical behavior of the employees (Simha & Cullen, 2011).

The non-experimental research design for this study was intended to determine the prevailing ethical climate type perceived by each of the employee positions: administrators and full-time faculty, and then to compare these two participant groups to determine if there was a significant difference in perception. Determining the prevailing ethical climate type involved the scoring of the ECQ, based on the participants' responses and calculating the mean scores and standard deviations for each ethical climate type. Mean scores were calculated by summing the participants' responses for each ethical climate type and dividing by the number of items that made up each type. The mean

score represents the average of the respondents' scores. The standard deviation measured the variation of the scores from the mean.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used as the statistical test to compare the two participant groups' perceived ethical climate type to determine if there was a significant difference in perception. A one-way ANOVA was utilized for the one independent variable, which is the employee position. An ANOVA is used when examining the difference in means between two or more groups (Vogt & Johnson, 2011).

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate for administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

2. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the administrators at the 4-year private college?

3. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

4. How does the perceived prevailing ethical climate of administrators compare to full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

Research Context

The research setting for this quantitative study was a private 4-year, non-union, religiously affiliated liberal arts college located in a suburban community in the downstate New York State area with a full-time enrollment (FTE) of approximately 1,100 students. At the time of the research, the college employed a total of 222 employees. There were 91 administrators (41% of total employees), and 45 full-time faculty (22% of total employees). Only administrators and full-time faculty were

included in this study. Administrators worked 40 hours per week, and full-time faculty

had to teach a minimum of 27 credit hours per year.

The organizational structure of the college consisted of the college president with

seven senior-level administrators directly reporting into the president. These senior

administrators are responsible for the oversight and governance of the college with

assistance by the directors, associate directors, and assistant directors reporting to the

administrators. These college administrators are responsible for the leadership and

administration of college activities from recruitment through graduation, including

admissions, institutional advancement, registrar activities, student life/development,

marketing, communications, and finance, as well as maintaining the academic programs,

developing institutional policies, and supervising faculty.

Research Participants

This study included a sample from two research participant groups: administrators

and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college. The total population for each of the

participant groups were: 91 administrators and 45 full-time faculty. The participants

were anonymous, and their responses are being kept confidential. The college was

identified without its proper name and mentioned only as a 4-year private college. As an

employee of this college, the researcher did not participate in completing the survey.

Data Collection/Instrument

The Ethical Climate Questionnaire (Appendix A), which was used in the Al-

Omari (2012) study, was the survey instrument for this quantitative data collection. Al-

Omari used 24 items from the Victor and Cullen ECQ (1988) to measure and identify the

perceived ethical climate of the faculty members. Each of the 24 items are assigned to an

ethical climate type: egoistic, utilitarian, and deontological. There are eight items for each ethical climate type. Using the Likert-scale format, the ECQ instrument is designed to elicit the perceived ethical climate of the participants' institution. In completing the survey, the participants rated how valid a statement was regarding their institution, using the ratings: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, and Strongly Agree = 5.

In addition to the ECQ, there were questions included on the survey asking the participants for descriptive statistical data, such as age, gender, educational level, and length of time working at the 4-year private college. This data helped describe the research participants.

The ECQ has been widely used by researchers over the past 20 years, and it has been found to be valid and reliable. Studies have been performed to measure and identify the ethical climate in various organizations leveraging the ECQ (e.g., Smith et al., 2009; Stachowicz-Stanusch & Simha, 2013; Vardi, 2001; Wimbush et al., 1997). The reliability of an instrument refers to the consistency with which the instrument measures a concept. A benchmark alpha that equals .70 or greater is considered a reliable measure. The alpha for the ECQ ranges from .76 to .85 (Cullen & Victor, 1993).

According to the Al-Omari (2012) study, he confirmed the validity of the instrument by presenting the instrument to post-secondary experts for confirmation that the item statements were clear and linked appropriately with the respective ethical climate types. For reliability, Al-Omari conducted a pilot test of select faculty members and found that the ECQ was satisfactory to support the objectives of his study.

The ECQ was set up on SurveyMonkey by inputting the ECQ statements along with the Likert-scale. SurveyMonkey is an online website that electronically administers surveys. Along with the ECQ, questions were input into SurveyMonkey, asking the participants for descriptive statistical data including age, gender, educational level, and length of time working.

After the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained (Appendix B), with permission from the Provost Office of the college, the researcher sent an e-mail (Appendix C), via the Provost's central e-mail distribution list, to the total population of the respective participants' work e-mail addresses. The e-mail included a description of the study, as well as a direct link to the Ethical Climate Questionnaire via SurveyMonkey. When the participants clicked the link on the e-mail, it automatically took them to the ECQ on SurveyMonkey. The research participants completed the ECQ by responding to the survey items. SurveyMonkey is a secure website requiring a unique password to access the survey data results.

The research participants had 10 days to complete the survey. A reminder e-mail was sent to the participants 1 week after the initial e-mail to encourage more participation in the survey. The participants' completion of the ECQ served as their consent to participate in the study. The researcher targeted a response rate of 30% of the total population for each of the research participant groups: 91 administrators and 45 full-time faculty, targeting 28 administrators and 15 full-time faculty. The researcher monitored the responses on SurveyMonkey every day to track the response rate.

Data Analysis Procedures

The survey responses collected via SurveyMonkey from the research participants were downloaded into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis software. The responses were checked to ensure completion and alignment with SPSS. SPSS aggregated and analyzed the survey responses in order to calculate and compare the mean scores to address the research questions. Inferential statistics was used to make generalizations about the populations' perception of the ethical climate at the 4-year private college. The ECQ was scored to calculate the mean and standard deviations for each ethical climate type based on the participants' responses. The ethical climate types used were: egoistic, deontological, and utilitarian. The mean scores were calculated by summing the participants' responses to each item and dividing the number of items by ethical climate type. Each of the items was based on a 5-point Likert-scale, with a response of strongly disagree being given 1 point and a response of strongly agree given 5 points.

A one-way ANOVA was used as the statistical test to compare the mean scores of the two participant groups' perceived ethical climate to determine if there was a significant difference in perception. The descriptive statistical data was analyzed and summarized using the SPSS frequencies feature. SPSS frequencies worked best with nominal data being surveyed from the research participants including age, gender, educational level, and length of time working at the 4-year private college

The research methodology was designed to address the following research questions:

Research question 1. *What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate for administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?* For research question 1, the participant groups' responses were added for each of the ethical climate types to determine the highest mean score. Mean scores were calculated by summing the participants' responses for each item and dividing by the number of items by ethical climate type. The highest mean was used to identify the prevailing ethical climate type for both administrators and full-time faculty.

Research question 2. *What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the administrators at the 4-year private college?* For research question 2, the highest mean score of each ethical climate type was calculated to identify the prevailing ethical climate type for administrators.

Research question 3. *What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?* For research question 3, the highest mean score of each ethical climate type was calculated to identify the prevailing ethical climate type for full-time faculty.

Research question 4. *How does the perceived prevailing ethical climate of administrators compare to full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?* For research question 4, a one-way ANOVA was used as the statistical test to compare the differences in means between the two participant groups' perceived ethical climate. In addition, the *p*-value was calculated to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the two participant groups.

Summary

  This chapter provided the design and methodology for conducting this quantitative study. This study was primarily focused on determining what type of ethical climate is perceived by two participant groups: administrators and full-time faculty who worked in a private 4-year college, and to compare the two participant groups and determine if there was a significant difference in perception.

  This chapter further outlined the data collection and analyses for this study to address the research questions. Chapter 4 reviews the results of the survey.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This quantitative study was conducted at a 4-year, private, non-union, religiously affiliated liberal arts college. The purpose of this research was to identify and compare the perceived ethical climate for administrators and full-time faculty at a 4-year private college. The literature research revealed that there is an issue with ethical behavior in higher education, such that ethical transgressions continue to occur in higher education institutions, particularly involving administrators and faculty. According to Keenan (2015), ethical transgressions continue to occur in higher education institutions, including faculty misconduct, misappropriation of funds, preferential treatment of students, and falsifying records. The literature also revealed that there is a link between ethical behavior and the perceived ethical climate for employees, and that the identification of the prevailing ethical climate type could be a predictor of ethical behavior (Simha & Cullen, 2011).

The study was designed to address the following research questions, as well as to gather descriptive statistics of the respective participant groups, which included administrators and full-time faculty.

1. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate for administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

2. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the administrators at the 4-year private college?

3. What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

4. How does the perceived prevailing ethical climate of administrators compare to full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?

The Ethical Climate Questionnaire was the survey instrument used to measure and identify the prevailing ethical climate of the administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college. The ECQ consists of 24 items. Each of the 24 items was assigned to an ethical climate type: egoistic, utilitarian, and deontological. There are eight items for each ethical climate type. Using of the Likert-scale format, the participants indicated the extent to which they perceived the statements were true about the college using the following ratings: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5.

Reliability of the survey was determined by using Cronbach's alpha (a coefficient of reliability), and it was computed that the survey was reliable for each of the three ethical climate types: egoistic = .754, deontological = .88, and utilitarian = .90. Scores above .70 indicated that the items in the survey are reliable. Descriptive statistics were computed to measure and analyze the demographic data of the research participants, including their age, gender, highest level of education, and years working at the 4-year private college. The primary purpose of gathering and evaluating the demographic information was to help describe the research participants.

Data Analysis and Findings

Demographics. Table 4.1 provides a breakdown of the respective respondents who participated in the study. There was a total of 76 respondents who completed the

survey and answered the demographic data questions. The 76 respondents comprised 44

administrators and 32 full-time faculty, representing an overall 55.9% response rate of the

total population of 136.

Table 4.1

Research Participants' Position at College

Role at College	Number	Percent
Administrators	44	57.9
Faculty	32	42.1
Total	76	100.0

As depicted in Table 4.2, responses to the question concerning gender ($N = 76$)

indicate that 52.6% ($n = 40$) of the respondents were female; 43.4% ($n = 33$) were male,

and 4.0% ($n = 3$) respondents preferred not to answer the question.

Table 4.2

Research Participants' Gender

Gender		Position Administrator	Faculty	Total
Female	Count	23	17	40
	% of Total	30.3%	22.3%	52.6%
Male	Count	21	12	33
	% of Total	27.6%	15.8%	43.4%
I prefer not to answer	Count	0	3	3
	% of Total	0%	4.0%	4.0%
Total	Count	44	32	76
	% of Total	57.9%	42.1%	100%

Table 4.3 depicts the age and percentages for the respondents in the study. The ages ranged from under 30 years of age to over 70 years of age. The median age for the total respondents fell in the 40-69 years of age, with 52.3% ($n = 23$) of administrators less than 50 years old, compared with 31.3% ($n = 10$) of full-time faculty who were less than 50 years old.

Table 4.3

Research Participants' Ages

Ages		Position Administrator	Faculty	Total
Younger than 30	Count	3	0	3
	% of Total	4.0%	0%	4.0%
30-39	Count	7	5	12
	% of Total	9.2%	6.6%	15.8%
40-49	Count	13	5	18
	% of Total	17.1%	6.6%	23.7%
50-59	Count	11	9	20
	% of Total	14.5%	11.8%	26.3%
60-69	Count	9	8	17
	% of Total	11.8%	10.5%	22.3%
70 or older	Count	1	2	3
	% of Total	1.3%	2.6%	4.0%
I prefer not to answer	Count	0	3	3
	% of Total	0%	4.0%	4.0%
Total	Count	44	32	76
	% of Total	57.9%	42.1%	100%

Table 4.4 depicts the highest level of education of the respondents. The majority (94.7%) of total respondents possessed at least a bachelor's degree, which would be

expected in a higher education institution, with 90.6% (n = 29) of full-time faculty having at least a master's degree, compared with 65.9% (n = 29) of the administrators who had master's degrees.

Table 4.4

Research Participants' Highest Level of Education

Highest Level of Education		Position		
		Administrator	Faculty	Total
Doctorate	Count	6	15	21
	% of Total	7.9%	19.7%	27.6%
Master's	Count	23	14	37
	% of Total	30.3%	18.4%	48.7%
Bachelor's	Count	12	2	14
	% of Total	15.8%	2.6%	18.4%
High School	Count	1	0	1
	% of Total	1.3%	0%	1.3%
I prefer not to answer	Count	2	1	3
	% of Total	2.6%	1.3%	4.0%
Total	Count	44	32	76
	% of Total	57.9%	42.1%	100%

As shown in Table 4.5, which reflects years working at the college, the majority (69.8%) of the respondents (N = 76) had been working at the college for 10 years or less, 75% (n = 33) of the administrators having worked at the college 10 years or less, compared with 62.5% (n = 20) of the full-time faculty. Only 9% (n = 4) of administrators had been working at the college for more than 20 years, compared with 25% (n = 32) of the full-time faculty.

Table 4.5

Research Participants' Years Working at the College

Years Working in College		Position		
		Administrator	Faculty	Total
Less than 5 years	Count	15	11	26
	% of Total	19.8%	14.5%	34.3%
5-10 years	Count	18	9	27
	% of Total	23.7%	11.8%	35.5%
11-15 years	Count	5	2	7
	% of Total	6.6%	2.6%	9.2%
16-20 years	Count	2	2	4
	% of Total	2.6%	2.6%	5.2%
21-25 years	Count	2	3	5
	% of Total	2.6%	4.0%	6.6%
More than 25 years	Count	2	5	7
	% of Total	2.6%	6.6%	9.2%
Total	Count	44	32	76
	% of Total	57.9%	42.1%	100%

The four research questions for this quantitative study and the relevant results of the data analysis follow:

Research question 1. *What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate for administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?*

The study results, depicted in Table 4.6, show the perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college was: egoistic ($M = 2.8$, $SD = .66$), deontological ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .71$), and utilitarian ($M = 3.28$, $SD = .73$). The mean score (M) represents the average of the respondents' scores. The standard deviation (SD) measures the variation of the values from the mean.

Table 4.6

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations by Ethical Climate Type for Total Sample

Ethical Climate	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Egoistic	70	2.80	.66
Deontological	72	3.54	.71
Utilitarian	72	3.28	.73

Of the three ethical climates, the participants identified the deontological as the prevailing ethical climate, with the highest mean score of 3.54, followed closely by utilitarian with a mean score of 3.28. Deontological ethical climate posits that the employees perceive that the organization is guided by principles, rules, and laws (Al-Omari, 2012). In a prevailing deontological ethical climate, the administrators and full-time faculty perceptions are influenced by organizational principles and guidelines, which are used to direct their behavior and decision making. The ECQ statements, such as "it is very important to follow strictly the college's rules and policies," "people are expected to comply with the laws and professional standards over and above other considerations," and "successful people in this college strictly obey the college's policies," are captured in the deontological ethical climate type.

The prevailing theme that emerged from the literature on ethical climate is that a deontological ethical climate is linked to positive ethical behavior. Simha and Cullen (2011) evaluated the ethical climate literature linking ethical climate to ethical behavior, and they identified a number of studies concluding that a deontological ethical climate positively correlates to good ethical behavior.

However, the literature showed that a deontological ethical climate has also been criticized for being too focused on the conformity to rules or laws without consideration of the consequences of the decision making. Aronson (2001) posited that rules should only serve as a guide and should not be used strictly the basis of the ethical decision making. In other words, before following a rule or an organizational policy, the consequences of the decision making should also be taken into consideration.

Research question 2. *What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the administrators at the 4-year private college?*

As shown in Table 4.7, the perceived ethical climate of the administrators was: egoistic ($M = 2.79$, $SD = .70$), deontological ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .63$), and utilitarian ($M = 3.30$, $SD = .61$). Of the three ethical climates, the administrators identified deontological as the prevailing ethical climate, with the highest mean score of 3.49.

Table 4.7

Mean and Standard Deviation for Each Ethical Climate Type by Participant Group

Ethical Climate	Position	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Egoistic	Administrator	38	2.79	.70
	Faculty	32	2.81	.63
Deontological	Administrator	41	3.49	.63
	Faculty	31	3.61	.84
Utilitarian	Administrator	41	3.30	.61
	Faculty	31	3.25	.88

Research question 3. *What is the perceived prevailing ethical climate of the full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?*

As depicted in Table 4.7, the perceived ethical climate of full-time faculty was: egoistic ($M = 2.81$, $SD = .63$), deontological ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .84$), and utilitarian ($M = 3.25$, $SD = .88$). As a result, the full-time faculty of the 4-year private college identified deontological ($M = 3.61$) as the prevailing ethical climate with a mean score of 3.61.

This is an important finding in contrast to the Al-Omari (2012) study. Al-Omari measured the prevailing ethical climate of faculty at a university and identified that the prevailing ethical climate was egoistic. According to Al-Omari (2012), "the egoistic ethical climate implies that employees perceive that the organization generally promotes self-interested decisions at the expense of other stakeholders" (p. 277).

Research question 4. *How does the perceived prevailing ethical climate of administrators compare to full-time faculty at the 4-year private college?*

Table 4.8

ANOVA Measuring Group Differences

Ethical Climates		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Egoistic	Between Groups	.279	1	.279	.010	.922
	Within Groups	1946.521	68	28.625		
	Total	1946.800	69			
Deontological	Between Groups	17.681	1	17.681	.533	.468
	Within Groups	2320.319	70	33.147		
	Total	2338.000	71			
Utilitarian	Between Groups	3.921	1	3.921	.113	.737
	Within Groups	2419.065	70	34.558		
	Total	2422.986	71			

Table 4.8 provides the details of the one-way ANOVA results. The one-way ANOVA is an inferential statistical test comparing the prevailing ethical climate types'

mean scores between the administrators and the full-time faculty at the 4-year private college to identify any significant difference in perception. The data shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the participant groups of administrators and full-time faculty for either of the three ethical climate types. The respective p values (*Sig.*) for each of the ethical climates were well above the critical p value of .05, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the participant groups. The respective p values were: egoistic = .922, deontological = .468, and utilitarian = .737. Although the results of this study concluded that both administrators and full-time faculty perceived the prevailing ethical climate at the 4-year private college as deontological, there was a difference in the perception within the respective groups by ethical climate type.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine and compare the perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college. This study used the Ethical Climate Questionnaire as the survey instrument to address the research questions. For research question 1, the participant groups' results were summed for each of the ethical climate types to determine the highest mean score. For research questions 2 and 3, the highest mean score was calculated for the ethical climate types for each of the participant groups. For research question 4, a one-way ANOVA was used as the statistical test to compare the participant groups' perceived ethical climate to determine if there was a significant difference in perception between the participant groups. In addition to addressing the research questions, descriptive statistical data was collected to help better describe the participant groups.

According to the results of the study, deontological was the prevailing ethical climate perceived by both the administrators and full-time faculty followed closely by utilitarian. Although the results of this study concluded that there was no significant difference between the administrators and full-time faculty ethical climate type, there was a difference in perception within the respective groups by ethical climate type.

According to the literature, the deontological ethical climate posits that the employees' perception was that the organization was guided by principles, rules, and laws, which influenced their behavior and decision making. In addition, there is a positive correlation between a deontological ethical climate and ethical behavior.

The descriptive statistical analysis of the participant groups revealed a fairly even split in gender of the administrators (52.6%) and full-time faculty (43.4%), which is representative of the college. The median age for the total respondents ($N = 76$) was in the 40-69 years of age, with 52.3% ($n = 23$) of the administrators who were less than 50 years old, compared with 31.3% ($n = 10$) of the faculty who were less than 50 years old. The majority (94.7%) of the respondents possessed at least a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, which would be expected in a higher education institution, with 90.6% ($n = 29$) of full-time faculty having at least a master's degree, compared with 65.9% ($n = 29$) of the administrators having master's degrees. In addition, the majority (69.8%) of the respondents had been working at the college for 10 years or less. Only 9% ($n = 4$) of the administrators had been working at the college for more than 20 years, compared with 25% ($n = 32$) of the full-time faculty.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The primary purpose of this quantitative study was to measure and compare the prevailing perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at a private 4-year college. The final chapter of this dissertation summarizes the findings of this study, the implications, as well as future research and practice recommendations. The research questions focused on identifying the prevailing perceived ethical climate type for administrators and full-time faculty at the private 4-year college, and to determine if there was any significant difference in the prevailing ethical climate. The ethical climate types are: egoistic, deontological, and utilitarian. The findings in this study concluded that the prevailing perceived ethical climate for both administrators and full-time faculty for the 4-year private college is deontological, and there was no significant difference in perception between these two participant groups.

Implications of Findings

The literature revealed that there is a correlation between the perceived ethical climate of an organization and the ethical behavior of its employees, in that ethical climate can be a predictor of ethical behavior. Cullen et al. (1989) identified the prevailing ethical climate as an important step in predicting and managing the ethical behavior of employees.

Consequently, measuring ethical climate can provide higher education leaders with empirical evidence to predict unethical behavior in order to make the necessary

investments to improve the ethical climate. The ability to predict ethical behavior is an important practice for institutions of higher education in order to proactively manage the ethical climate and prevent future ethical transgressions. Al-Omari (2012) stated that, "with current societal trends such as economic distress and continual ethical dilemmas, examining potential strategies for supporting positive ethical climates is more essential than ever" (p. 276).

This quantitative study measured and identified the prevailing perceived ethical climate of administrators and full-time faculty at a 4-year private college institution, and provided the college leadership with the empirical evidence to predict ethical behavior. The implications of the findings produced by this study provided the college leadership with a better understanding of the ethical climate, which will help them to more effectively manage the ethical behavior of their employees. Given that the administrators and faculty are significant and influential employees in a higher education institution, predicting and managing their ethical behavior is beneficial to the college leadership, as well as to the college.

According to the findings of this study, the prevailing perceived ethical climate of the administrators and full-time faculty at the 4-year private college was deontological, and there was no significant difference in perception between these two groups. Martin and Cullen (2006) found that in a deontological ethical climate, organizational decisions are perceived to be guided by external codes, such as the laws or professional standards, as well as local rules, such as code of conduct policies.

This result posits that both the administrators and full-time faculty perceive that this 4-year private college is guided by principles, rules, and laws, and that these

organizational tenets influence their decision making and behavior. As a result, the

administrators and full-time faculty are compliant by strictly following the college's

policies, professional standards, and applicable regulations. They perceive that by

following the rules and standards, they will be successful within the college.

The literature posited that a perceived deontological ethical climate is linked to

positive ethical behavior (Simha & Cullen, 2011). Therefore, the findings of this study

provide empirical evidence to predict that both the administrators and full-time faculty at

this college will behave ethically. Martin and Cullen (2006) posited that a positive

ethical climate is positively associated with job satisfaction and organization

commitment, leading to a reduction in employee turnover and improved job performance.

Limitations

One of the limitations in conducting this study involved the research methodology

employed. This quantitative study focused on measuring the prevailing perceived ethical

climate of the participant groups. This study could have been augmented with qualitative

research including one-on-one interviews with some of the participants to get a better

understanding as to why they opined that the prevailing ethical climate was

deontological. Hearing directly from the participants would have provided a more in-

depth understanding of what influenced their perceptions and why they predominately

agreed with the Ethical Climate Questionnaire statements relating to the deontological

ethical climate, including the importance of strictly following college policies, as well as

complying with professional standards and laws above other considerations.

Another limitation of this study was only investigating one type of higher

education institution. The research setting for this study was a 4-year, private, non-union,

religiously affiliated liberal arts college located in a suburban community in the downstate New York State area.

A final limitation for this study was that the sample participants were only from a population of administrators and full-time faculty. Given the wide use of part-time/adjunct faculty in colleges and universities, a better focus and scrutiny of such employees' perceptions would have added value to understanding the better management of ethical behavior in higher education.

Recommendations

The continuous study of ethics in higher education is critical to achieving a better understanding of the practices that college and universities can employ to measure, assess, and mitigate the potential for unethical behavior and future ethical transgressions. In addition, the literature revealed that there has been limited research conducted regarding ethics in higher education. According to Keenan (2015), Osipian (2012), and Robison and Moulton (2005) studies of ethical behavior in higher education receive little attention and have been long been neglected as an area of research. An aspect of this study was to further the research of ethics in higher education and to encourage similar studies of ethics at other colleges and universities. The continual study of ethics in higher education will foster a deeper awareness and understanding of the problem of ethics in higher education and solutions to help sustain the integrity and sanctity of this critical institution to our society.

Recommendations for future research. Future research should be conducted on ethical climates in higher education, including modifying the research methodology, as well as including different types of higher education institutions and expanding the

population of the research participants. Additional studies should be performed that augment quantitative analysis with qualitative research to gain a better understanding of what influences the participants' perceptions of a specific ethical climate type. One suggestion is to expand the ECQ to provide text with each statement for the participants to explain their rationale for their responses. This would allow the participants with an opportunity to explain why they agreed or disagreed with a particular ECQ statement. Another suggestion would be to conduct interviews of some of the participants to obtain a deeper understanding of their responses to the ECQ statements.

Future qualitative research, in conjunction with qualitative measures, of ethical climates in higher education could help gain a more in-depth understanding of the participants' responses to help better determine what influenced their perception of a specific ethical climate type. Qualitative research could provide an additional depth and richness to the perceptions of the participants, which the statistical data does not reflect.

Future research on ethical climate should be expanded to include different types of higher education institutions, including public and community colleges. Future studies could determine if the type, as well as the size, of the higher education institution could have an influence on the perceived ethical climate of their employees.

In addition, future research of other higher education institutions should be expanded to include part-time/adjunct faculty perceptions of ethical climates. In Al-Omari's (2012) study of the perception of ethical climate at a university, the research participants only included full-time faculty. This study expanded the research participants' population to include administrators' perceptions of ethical climate at the 4-year private college, and it compared the administrators' and full-time faculty members'

perceptions to identify any significant differences. This study should be replicated to include part-time/adjunct faculty, along with full-time faculty and administrators, to measure and identify the prevailing perceived ethical climate and then to compare these three participant groups to identify any significant differences.

        Recommendations for practice. Higher education institutions need to measure and identify the prevailing perceived ethical climate of their employees. Measuring ethical climate should be conducted as a common practice in higher education institutions to proactively identify the perceived ethical climate. This practice could help college and university leadership predict unethical behavior, and it would prompt the leadership to take the necessary actions to promote a positive ethical climate.

        The literature has provided suggested best practices to proactively cultivate positive ethical climates, including the important role that the leadership plays in influencing a specific ethical climate. The leadership sets the ethical tone, and it is the responsibility of leadership to establish an ethical culture and implement ethical policies and programs that would inform and shape the ethical behavior of the employees. Best practices to foster a positive ethical climate were suggested by Johnson (2015), Grojean et al. (2004), and Wimbush and Shepard (1994), where leadership can influence a positive ethical climate through the reinforcement of ethical values and institutionalization of policies and programs, including training, mentoring, and ongoing communication.

        Higher education leadership can leverage these suggested best practices to help cultivate a positive ethical climate within their respective institutions. They should establish code of ethics policies to help guide their employees' ethical behavior,

including their administrators and faculty. A code of ethics policies can provide a set of rules that reflect the institutions' ethical values and can direct ethical behavior and decision making. In addition, higher education leaders need to implement training programs to educate employees on their institutions' code of ethics policies, applicable laws and regulations, as well as expectations of behavior. In addition, the ethical training programs would provide employees with the available resources and support systems to help foster ethical behavior and ethical decision making, including ongoing mentors who could assist with ethical advice as well as report potential unethical transgressions.

Conclusion

Ethical transgressions continue to be a problem in higher education. Therefore, the continual study of ethics in higher education is critical to better understand what may be causing the problem, and what specific practices college and universities can do to better predict and manage the ethical behavior of their employees to prevent future ethical transgressions. Measuring ethical climate perception in higher education institutions is a key first step to predict and manage the ethical behavior of employees. Identifying the ethical climate would provide higher education leadership with the evidence to support the need to make investments in improving the such ethical climate at their colleges or universities. Al-Omari (2012) used the findings of his study as empirical evidence to support the development of training programs and professional development opportunities for the faculty to help enhance the ethical climate at his university.

There are many best practices to foster a positive ethical climate at a higher education institution. A positive ethical climate starts with leadership. The leadership establishes the ethical culture and ethical policies and programs, such as training and

mentoring, to enlighten and encourage ethical behavior. The leadership needs to

continuously communicate and reinforce the importance of ethical behavior, and take the

necessary actions to promote a positive ethical climate for employees.

Higher education is such an important institution, committed to shaping the future

the leaders of tomorrow. Therefore, it is critical that there continues to be a focus and

scrutiny of ethics in higher education to continuously promote ethical behavior and

mitigate future ethical transgressions.

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Survey/Ethical Climate Questionnaire

Background Information
1   What is your primary job at the college? 　a.　Administrator 　b.　Faculty **2   What is your age?** a. less than 30 years old b. 30 - 39 c. 40 - 49 d. 50 - 59 e. 60 - 69 f. over 70 years old **3   What is your gender?** a. Male b. Female **4   What is your highest level of education?** a. Doctorate b. Masters c. Bachelor d. High School **5   How many years have you been working at this college?** a. Less than 5 years b. 5 - 10 c. 11 - 15 d. 16 - 20 e. 21 - 25 f. more than 25

Ethical Climate Questionnaire	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
Egoistic Ethical Climate					
1. In this college, people are out mostly for themselves					
2. People are expected to further the college's interest, regardless of the consequences					
3. There is no room for one's own personal morals or ethics in this college					
4. Work is considered sub-standard only when it hurts the college's interests					
5. In this college, people protect their own interest above other considerations					
6. People are concerned with the college's interests					
7. Decisions are primarily viewed in terms of contribution to profit					
8. People in this college are very concerned about what is best for themselves					

Deontological Ethical Climate	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
9. It is very important to follow strictly the college's rules and policies					
10. The first consideration in a decision is whether the decision violates a law					
11. People are expected to comply with the law and professional standards over and above other considerations					
12. Everyone is expected to stick by college's rules and policies					
13. Successful people in this college go by the book					
14. In this college, people are expected to strictly follow legal or professional standards					
15. Successful people in this college strictly obey the college's policies					
16. In this college, the law or ethical code of their profession is the major consideration					

Utilitarian Ethical Climate	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
17. In this college, people look out for each other's good					
18. The most important concern in this college is each person's sense of what is right and wrong					
19. In this college, our major concern is always what is best for the other person					
20. Our major consideration is what is best for everyone in the college					
21. It is expected that you will always do what is right for the students and the public					
22. People are very concerned about what is generally best for employees of the college					
23. What is best for each individual is a primary concern for this college					
24. The effect of decisions on the students and the public are a primary concern in this college					

Appendix B

IRB Approval Letter

ST. JOHN
FISHER
COLLEGE

October 10, 2016

File No: 3614-091516-05

Philip Rothman
St. John Fisher College

Dear Mr. Rothman:

Thank you for submitting your research proposal to the Institutional Review Board.

I am pleased to inform you that the Board has approved your Expedited Review project, "Ethics in Higher Education: A Study of the Perceived Ethical Climate of Administrators and Faculty at a Higher Education Institution."

Following federal guidelines, research related records should be maintained in a secure area for three years following the completion of the project at which time they may be destroyed.

Should you have any questions about this process or your responsibilities, please contact me at irb@sjfc.edu.

Sincerely,

Eileen Lynd-Balta

Eileen Lynd-Balta, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
ELB: jdr

Appendix C

E-mail to Survey Participants

Date 2016

Dear Colleague,

I am currently a doctoral candidate at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY studying for my Ed.D. in Executive Leadership. I am requesting your participation in my dissertation study on ethical climate in higher education. This research seeks to gain information on the perception of ethical climate in higher education. Your responses will provide valuable information for this study.

The attached electronic survey administered via Survey Monkey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Survey Monkey is a secure website requiring a unique password to access the survey data results. The survey responses will be kept strictly confidential. The survey data will be coded and aggregated so the individual names and responses are not associated with the surveys. No individual or institution will be identified during this study in order to protect anonymity.

Note that the completion of the electronic survey will be considered your consent for participation in the study.

This study has been reviewed and approved by ████████████████████████████ and St. John Fisher College (SJFC) IRB. If you have any questions about being a participant in this study, please contact ██████ IRB or feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail. Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Philip Rothman