

Instructional Note

The Toolkit and the Carpenter: Teaching the Critical Distinction between Business Ethics and Personal Morals

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Abstract

Business ethics' curricula frequently presents and discusses ethical paradigms through the lens of personal values and morality. Ethics professors often have challenges with evaluating students' ability to successfully address many business dilemmas because the way business ethics are taught may only prepare students to choose between the binary solution of "right" or "wrong." While business students typically receive instruction regarding a variety of ethical paradigms, they are typically presented and discussed within and through the context of personal value systems. Students are often taught, directly or impliedly, that the "Virtue Ethics" paradigm is the "right" way to resolve ethical dilemmas in organizational setting. The popular approach to teaching business ethics may only provide a basic context for teaching and learning business ethics. This paper explores the teaching of business ethics as a critical thinking toolkit, rooted in the theory of adaptive leadership, for corporate decision-making processes, separate and apart from moral value systems.

Keywords: Business ethics; ethics education; ethical Toolkit; ethics teaching; adaptive leadership.

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Introduction

Historical Presence of Ethics in Business Schools

The historical integration of ethics coursework into traditional business school curricula arose, in part, because of the need for businesses to cultivate and preserve the trust and confidence of its investors, consumers, regulators, vendors, and lenders (Gandz and Hayes 1988: 658). In the 1970's, organizational ethics¹ became an emerging field among business programs (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell 2015: 11), and in the 1980's, its place as a defined field of study for business students solidified, although "it [was] not altogether clear just what business ethics is" (De George 1987: 201).

Drucker (1981) highlighted the issue in his manuscript on business ethics and, his work, has served as a precursor to the development of popularized management theory over the past three decades. Drucker, even in his most early work believed that "every social order requires a basis in morality (Hoefle, 2005)." Suggesting that his work, and subsequent work of his followers is strongly rooted in morality. Morality, in this sense, can most aptly be characterized as maintaining a religious, and specifically, a judeo-Christian values undertone. For the purpose of this paper, moral value systems, or morality, can be defined as:

"Includes or consists of judgments (rules, principles, ideals, etc.) that pronounce actions and agents to be right, wrong, good, bad, etc., simply because of the effect they have on the feelings, interests, ideals, etc., of other person or centers of sentient experiences, actual or hypothetical" (Frankena, 1966, p. 689).

A survey of member business schools of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in the early 1990's reported that over ninety-percent of those institutions included ethics as a significant curriculum topic (Schoenfeldt, McDonald and Youngblood 1991). In 1996, a worldwide survey was conducted to reflect "the state-of-the-art of business ethics in the world today, with its challenges, initiatives, achievements, and open questions" (Enderle 1997: 1475). Interestingly, the survey's report recognized the dynamic nature of the field of business ethics, partly because of a growing awareness of "value-conflicts" among different cultures and nations (Enderle 1997: 1475). In the early 2000's, the increasing appreciation of moral diversity within the marketplace—especially within an international marketplace—and in light of several spectacular corporate, "immoral" failures—such as Enron, Worldcom, Tyco, Kmart, Countrywide, and Adelphia Communications—scholarly proposals for curriculum development attempted to broaden the framework of business ethics beyond traditionally morality-centric theories, and to identify and design a more practical, real-world approach (*cf.* Sims and Brinkman 2003: 69-70).

More recently, ethics education pedagogy has attempted to blend through the lens of separate bodies of literature including social innovation (Fernando, 2011) and in consideration of the public good (Lamb et. al, 2011). The more recent articles dedicated to ethic education argued that the principle-based model of business ethics education that dominated the field in the 1990s may lack applicability to real world business settings. Culham (2015) recently suggested the necessity of virtue ethics, but argued that although business schools do well to educate intellectual virtues, they may be lacking in effective pedagogy related to character education. The following may potentially subscribe to the virtues of character by suggesting a critical-thinking framework separate from an inherent moral value system.

¹ The term, "organizational ethics," is herein used interchangeably with business ethics and corporate ethics.

The Present State of Ethics Curricula

In an effort to subscribe to proposals to change the framework of business ethics curricula, and in consideration of questioning the effectiveness of an historical morality-centric framework for teaching business ethics, a persistent theme of ethics curricula seems to be the significant emphasis on “moral” conduct and dilemmas, versus “ethical” conduct and dilemmas. This is the case whether the pedagogy uses an “applied perspective focusing on conceptual frameworks, risks, issues, and dilemmas” (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, 2015, x), or “flashpoint” topics and jurisprudential case law (Halbert and Ingulli, 2012, xiii), or a compilation of “the best writing on business ethics along a broad spectrum of issues” (Ciulla, Martin and Solomon 2014: xxiii). The teaching of business ethics often focuses on developing a sensitivity in students toward “moral awareness” (understanding moral obligations and responsibilities), “moral understanding” (acquiring theories, frameworks, and models to articulate the moral dimensions of business decisions), and “moral reasoning” (demonstrating the ability to critically assess different moral positions) (Rossouw, 2002, p. 412). Indeed, the teaching effectiveness of business ethics curricula is often gauged by whether coursework “positively influence[s] students’ moral efficacy, moral meaningfulness, and moral courage” once the students leave school for the marketplace (May, Luth and Schwoerer 2014: 67).

Teaching methodologies may vary, but many strategies seem to share a dependence on an interplay between moral values and ethical paradigms. This approach may unintentionally relegate business ethics to a philosophical exercise conditional on shared morals, instead of presenting unique ethical paradigms as means of communication and daily problem-solving within organizational environments. The development of a tool-kit, presented in subsequent sections, introduces a strategy for ethics educators to integrate ethical decision-making practices separate from morality and values.

Recent literature on the relation of teaching ethics and stakeholder theory seems to imply the necessity of evaluation legal methods for organizational practice (Buhmann, 2015), in line with the critical-thinking toolkit proposed in this article. Many business faculty members who teach ethics, either as a stand-alone course or as an embedded element of another course, employ an instructional agenda which routinely asks “students to apply their personal values to resolve ethical dilemmas” (Oddo 1997, p. 293), instead of utilizing ethical paradigms—separate from individual perspectives about morality—as an analytical tool to dissect, understand, and resolve a majority of non-morally-related business dilemmas. The same paradigm continues to emerge in recent textbooks in the field that, for instance, openly refer to the goal of the book being “to help students understand and use their current values and convictions in making business decisions...” (Ferrell et. al, 2012).

The Limitation of a Morality-Centered Approach

While business students typically receive instruction regarding a wide variety of philosophically defined ethical paradigms (*cf.* Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell 2015: 152-167) (*cf.* Halbert and Ingulli 2012: 9-29), these paradigms are often presented and discussed as interlocked with moral value systems and analyses. “*Business Ethics is defined as the study of those decisions of managers and corporate management which involve moral values*” (Gandz and Hayes 1988: 657) (*italics in original*). This approach may expose business students to the hazards of, and resolutions for, illegal and high-risk activities,² but may not completely provide them with the analytical tools

² The array of moral dilemmas in business, such as misuse of company time and resources, lying, conflicts of interest, bribery, discrimination, sexual harassment, abusive or intimidating behavior, consumer fraud,

necessary to negotiate the innumerable business dilemmas which have little, or no, direct moral implication or consequence.

Programs of study for many ethics courses, and contingent upon textbooks in the field, fall back on very basic, often compliance-centric, moral issues, dilemmas, and values in an effort to teach students “right” from “wrong” (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell 2015: 60-85). This is not necessarily to fault, courses and texts are often introductory and provide an initial framework, it may do little however to prepare them to real world challenges. For instance, a commonly used business ethics textbook, *Business Ethics Ethical Decision Making & Case Studies* (9th eds.) suggest that, “For example, the success of some campaigns to end racial or gender discrimination in the workplace provides evidence that attitudes and behaviors can be changed with new information, awareness, and shared values. (Ferrell et. al, 2012, xii). The question therein lies; how do managers make ethical decisions when no recognizable shared value system is present?”

Although this approach is admirable and may help a future business person to distinguish legal from illegal activity, or beneficial from overtly harmful activity, it may not completely provide an education about the ways in which individual business professionals, and corporate organizations, identify and address the myriad of complex, and often ethically ambiguous, concerns which arise in the day-to-day operations of most businesses.³ A homogenous-morality-presumption, in the authors’ opinion, leaves business students less able to successfully resolve dilemmas and mitigate risk in disparate, real-world business environments because the manner in which business ethics are taught only prepares students to choose between dualistic notions of “right” or “wrong” (*cf.* Gandz and Hayes 1988: 657).

The vulnerability of this framework is that it presupposes all business professionals, and *ipso facto* all businesses, should share common morals of “right and wrong” and “good and bad.” In addition, it may suppose a shared set of innate moral values, which, in practicality may be context and industry-based. Unfortunately, this framework not only ignores the diversity of individual views on morality (Kagan, 1989; Turiel, 2007), but may ignore the vast range of practical dilemmas in business which are dissociated from (an equally vast range of) moral values and standards.

Adaptive Leadership Model

The basis of the critical thinking toolkit presented in this article is routed in the tenants of the adaptive leadership model (Heifetz & Linsky, 2009). As the previous section implies, there may be limitations to presenting ethics education training to students strictly through models of morality and virtue ethics. The intent of the toolkit is to provide a holistic presentation of ethics education by complimenting existing efforts with every day managerial decision-making practices. Students would be charged with examining ethical dilemma in common managerial decision practices and use the critical-thinking toolkit to work through the problem. The fundamental nature of this toolkit presented in this article suggests that conditions of ethical decision-making are, in practicality, often removed from typical elements of ethics discussed in classrooms, such as corporate greed and corruption.

financial misconduct, insider trading, theft, and violation of privacy interests, are almost entirely defined by, and supervised by, statutory and regulatory provisions, both at the state and federal levels. Whether there is a statistically significant benefit to presenting these types of activities as “moral” or “immoral,” versus “illegal” or “non-compliant,” would be a compelling area of future research.

³ This observation—and the general perspective of this article—is appropriate for for-profit enterprises, not-for-profit enterprises, quasi-governmental entities, and governmental/public agencies.

The adaptive leadership model suggests that the most difficult managerial problems often have no clear solution, are deeply rooted, and messy. Although it is often easy for business students to identify ethical discrepancies when reviewing a case of Enron, for instance, they are less able to identify and connect with deep rooted ethical dilemmas that span from messy, adaptive challenges. There are five main tenants of adaptive leadership subscribed in this article:

1. Get on the balcony (look at the problem holistically)
2. Identify the adaptive challenge
3. Consider the decision-making environment
4. Present the problem
5. Give the work back

The intention of the model is to suggest that deep-rooted, messy, problems often exist in an uncomfortable space that managers typically want to ignore. The model encourages managers to lean in to the discomfort, embrace the mess, and then ask others to aid in the solution of long-term, sustainable, change. The toolkit presented in subsequent sections attempts to apply the nature of the adaptive leadership model to ethics education instruction.

Overview of Learning Objective

The intention of the article is two part, (1) To identify and describe the distinction between "morality" and "virtue ethics," and the implied relation to business ethics education, and (2) Suggest the instructional benefit of an adaptive leadership critical-thinking assessment related to business ethics education – separate from the historic morality and virtue ethics paradigm.

Ethics vs. Morality

The separation of the two terms, virtue ethics and morality, and in relation to business ethics education, can be very challenging because the vocabulary and theory of moral value systems and the philosophy of ethics have long been inextricably interwoven. As the concept of "corporate identity" has increasingly become more theoretically refined (Kitch, Tourky, Dean and Shaalan 2013), and as organizations are increasingly described as "moral agents" (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell 2015: 215-217) with "corporate moral responsibility" (Dubbink and Smith 2011: 223), it would appear to be an anathema to propose that business ethics should be separate and discrete from moral values. However, insisting on a distinction between the two concepts would more precisely reflect marketplace reality and would foster a coherent connection between academic instruction and practical application.⁴

Role of Moral Values

Moral values—whether personal or organizational— often helps determine the culture⁵ of an organization and a company's perception of value regarding its assorted

⁴ It is not the intention of this article to suggest an amoral approach to the teaching, or the practice, of business ethics. The authors believe ethics—a systematic methodology for determining action—is fundamentally dependent on, or at least best understood against, the context of morality—a systematic set of personal values and beliefs. Arguments for the amorality of ethics have been made (Marks 2013), but they are distinct from the purpose of this article.

⁵ Here, we are speaking of a company's authentic moral values, not necessarily what is described in its policies, public statements, or public persona.

stakeholders, profits, reputation, and long-term sustainability. This is seemingly the case when the organization's leadership sets the tone for follower's citizenship behaviors (Peng Lin et. al, 2010). Moral values, admittedly, provide a necessary contextual background for business activities and even provide clear guidance when identifying and resolving certain, limited dilemmas. Undoubtedly, there are situations in which the implication of moral values and ethical paradigms neatly overlap, such as instances of abusive behavior, misuse of company resources, fraud, discrimination, bribery, conflicts of interest, and financial misconduct (Zuber, 2014). Business students should be aware of these issues, and others like them, and should be taught how to participate in, and manage, corporate programs which mitigate the likelihood of such activities from occurring or from going unnoticed or unreported. However, these types of moral-versus-immoral dilemmas, and the types of moral-versus-immoral dilemmas often emphasized in business ethics curricula, may not reflect the vast majority of daily challenges faced by most business organizations.⁶ Indeed, many of the moral-versus-immoral types of dilemmas are already defined by, and identified and dealt with through, the application of applicable laws, regulations, and industry standards (e.g., mandatory boundaries).

These examples, along with an infinite number of other daily challenges, represent several ethical dilemmas which arise in most business environments, but business students may not be well-versed by the current state of business ethics curricula to understand and resolve these dilemmas using ethical paradigms and principles. Students may often fundamentally be taught to "apply their personal values to resolve ethical dilemmas" (Oddo 1997, p. 293), but the ethical dilemma may be further aligned with corporate or industry values, rather than a set of personal principles. To know which candidate should be offered a job, or which customer should receive a loan, or which marketing campaign to choose, or whether hourly wages should be increased, may not necessarily align with personal values, but rather the ethicality be determined systematically which is learned and developed by the individual's exposure and understanding of organizational culture and his/her place in it. To an end, the "moral judgments" and "moral perceptions" and "moral values" may only help inform a business person as to the correct decision.

The Role of Virtue Ethics

Virtue Ethics often identifies ethical conduct with "good" moral character and conventional, *i.e.*, westernized, morals. This particular ethical paradigm has, therefore, appeared to provide a working bridge between morality-centric pedagogy and business dilemma resolutions which may have little to do with moral values (Solomon, 2003). "Virtue ethics [in business environments]... shares with empiricism [an] emphasis on character as well as an affinity with the social sciences" (Solomon 2003: 43). Business student are often taught, directly or impliedly, that the "Virtue Ethics" paradigm is the "right" way to resolve ethical dilemmas in organizational settings because Virtue Ethics identifies ethical conduct with "good" moral character and conventional, *i.e.*, westernized morals, typically emphasizing integrity, honesty, and fairness (*cf.* Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell 2015: 63-65). However, this attempt to

⁶ Notably, in a survey of 658 articles that appeared in *Strategic Management Journal* between 1996 and 2005, it was found that "[t]he most prominent ethics theme during the review period was environmentalism, accounting for 30% of all ethics articles" (Robertson 2008: 745). In rough comparison, a recent survey of business owners across all industries, identified the following seven concerns as "the top seven worries of today's business owners": (1) medical cost inflation, (2) increasing employee benefits costs, (3) legal liability, (4) broad economic uncertainty, (5) tech and data/cyber risks, (6) complying with laws, and (7) attracting and retaining talent (Fallon 2014). Each of these seven issues possess a multitude of ethical dilemmas and the need for managers to have the capacity and ability to make correct decisions, yet none of them (at least directly) have anything to do with "environmentalism."

ethic-ize moral values for business purposes could be considered a bait-and-switch approach, resulting in the same limitations encountered by teaching morals as the device by which business dilemmas can be resolved.

Like a moral value system, which underpins a company's corporate culture, Virtue Ethics has an appropriate role to play in the day-to-day dilemmas faced by business persons. The merits (and oft-times legality) of resolving dilemmas with integrity, honesty, and fairness should be taught and should be acknowledged, but (referring to earlier examples) how would students, who have fundamentally been taught to act honestly and fairly, be any better able to determine which candidate should be offered a job, or which customer should receive a loan, or which marketing campaign to choose, or whether hourly wages should be increased? How would integrity, honesty, and fairness help inform a person as to the correct *business* decision to make in any of these instances? A myopic emphasis on Virtue Ethics cannot, therefore, be the cure-all salve to a business ethics curricula which remains principally reliant on teaching moral value systems. Even if a business student exits a business program as a committed Virtue Ethicist, he/she is no better equipped to identify and resolve the greater part of day-to-day business dilemmas, than if he/she exited a business program, having memorized the Federal Sentencing Guidelines for Organizations. Instead, business ethics curricula needs to arm students with an ethical decision-making toolkit, designed to deal with the infinite nuances of organizational dilemmas and daily interpersonal relationships.

Toward a Critical-Thinking Toolkit

Appendix A provides a glimpse in to common ethical paradigms that often dominate business ethics classroom discussion. These are some good paradigms to explore, and ethical decision-making cases that explore the interaction of corporate greed, public mistrust, and corruption, are certainly worthy of business ethics classroom discussion (through such cases of Enron, BP, and Wells Fargo, to name a few). The intention of the toolkit is not for business ethics educators to shift away from 'ethical vs. moral' model, but rather, recognize that a significant number of day-to-day activities, and day-to-day decisions, may have little to do with moral sensibilities.

A critical-thinking toolkit first assumes that business leaders may face several ethical decision-making opportunities where cases of greed and corruption are not in play. The critical thinking toolkit is a way for students to evaluate decision-making opportunities to 'pluck out' potential ethical implications and decidedly consider the possible implications. The critical thinking toolkit borrows some of the conceptual model of adaptive leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2009), in that it suggests that managers solicit a deeper holistic understanding of problems to find a strategy most pursuant with ethical decision-making. In addition to the ethical paradigm models, and congruent with some of the underpinnings of the adaptive leadership model, ethics education should present opportunities for:

1. Transparency – remove hidden agendas, allow for authentic collaboration efforts and collective decision-making
2. Iterative thinking – in relation to iterative design process, encourage students to seek holistic understanding of the problem, people, and environment.
3. Authenticity – present opportunity for those involved to build mutual understanding of each other, their positions, and backgrounds.
4. Positivist approach – Ability to re-present challenges as opportunities
5. Agility – ability to constantly seek new information, and use new information to adapt, explore, and reposition.

Implementation

Implementation efforts to subscribe to a critical-thinking toolkit related to ethical decision-making must provide opportunities to explore an ethical dilemma through common managerial practices. While in depth case studies of corporate greed and corruption provide a nice exploratory question for students to pursue, the implementation of the toolkit is contingent upon designing experiential scenarios in which the student finds relatable. The common ethical dilemmas can then each be viewed through the lens of an element of the critical-thinking toolkit. An example of how each could be used in practicality is provided in the subsequent section:

Hiring Practice exercise with the toolkit.

When a hiring manager decides which candidate is to be offered a job, his/her decision cannot summarily be labeled as “morally” right or wrong, but it can be deemed as “ethical” or “unethical,” depending on the ethical paradigm which is intended to drive hiring decisions. The critical-thinking toolkit could present an ‘iterative’ approach by having students explore each candidate holistically, both separately and in connection to perceived experience and qualification. A question to ask:

- *Does a resume tell the whole story? A resume may tell us the candidate’s experience, but does it tell us what they are good at?*

Loan Assurance exercise with the toolkit.

When a lending institution refuses to extend financing to a customer, such a decision is not necessarily “immoral,” but it certainly could be considered “ethical” or “unethical.” The ‘authentic modeling’ element of the toolkit could teach students how to build a personal connection. A question to ask:

- *On paper, the application may give us a risk assessment, but are there other tendencies we could explore as a lender to get a better picture?*

Marketing campaign exercise with the toolkit.

When a marketing executive chooses one marketing campaign over another, his/her decision is not a question of morality, but it is almost definitely a decision driven by the tenets of a particular ethical paradigm. Question to ask:

- *What might the choosing of one campaign compared to another demonstrate in terms of product authenticity? Might the decision be deeper than ‘look and feel’ of campaign?*

Increasing employee wages exercise with the toolkit.

When a business decides to increase its employees’ hourly wages, which then decreases or eliminates near-term quarterly dividends, such a decision is not properly cast as moral or immoral, but could be “ethical” or “unethical.” Question to ask:

- *When a business attempts to increase productivity by capitalizing on needs of its employees, is the business or employee the primary benefactor?*

Implementation Considerations

Business organizations routinely co-opt a mixture of ethical paradigms in order to process a vast array of operational decisions, conflicts, problems, and stakeholder concerns and interests (e.g. Halbert and Ingulli 2012: 9-29). Depending on a company’s goals, risk tolerances, strategies, industry, and stakeholders, a business person may encounter any number of situations in which the most appropriate,

applicable, or useful ethical paradigm changes from one to another. For instance, a hiring manager may find the tenets of utilitarianism, relativism, and free market theory best inform his/her evaluation of candidates and his/her decision as to which candidate should be hired. A banker may find that free market theory best informs his/her decision as to whether a loan should be extended to a particular borrower. A marketing executive may find that virtue ethics, free market theory, and teleology best inform his/her choice of a particular marketing campaign. A business owner may find that free market ethics and utilitarianism best inform his/her decision to raise employees' hourly wages. These examples illustrate the practical functionality of ethical paradigms as tools for decision-making processes which are entirely, or mostly, divorced from fundamental moral values. Ethical paradigms provide principles and assumptions which handily overlay the multitude of variables a business person needs to consider when processing decisions and encountering dilemmas, regardless of their level of intensity.

Ethical Paradigms as a Practical Tool of Communication and Resolution

Business objectives, which, in a capitalistic marketplace, are weighted toward creating sustainable profits, may not naturally correlate to moral propositions, such as human rights, or ecological stewardship, or philanthropy. While moral propositions should be a component, or a "side-constraint" (Marcoux 2000), to business objectives, they do not provide a constructive language for business persons to identify, analyze, discuss, and resolve business dilemmas. Ethical paradigms do. By providing objective principles of "correct" conduct (*i.e.*, true to the methodology of a particular paradigm's premise), ethical paradigms give businesses and business persons shared vocabularies and procedures for dilemma-resolution, regardless of whether the players share common moral belief systems. For example, a business which is grappling with a multi-site hourly wage dilemma (perhaps with a manufacturing facility in the Philippines, an assembly plant in Taiwan, and a packaging and shipping facility in the United States) can analyze and resolve its problem by using a utilitarian (cost-benefit-analysis) approach, coupled with a distributive justice approach, without needing to determine whether each disparate jurisdiction would conclude that its wage-and-hour decision is "moral" or "immoral" and, therefore, "right" or "wrong."

Additionally, the use of ethical paradigms combined with the adaptive leadership inspired critical-thinking toolkit to facilitate the identification and resolution of business dilemmas allows involved persons to better recognize and conciliate conflicting internal goals. For instance, if a budget officer typically uses a free market theory analysis to determine whether an expenditure should be made (*i.e.*, to maximize profit within allowable legal boundaries), an operations officer, who needs the expense to be approved, can address the budget officer's concerns by demonstrating how the expense ultimately increases profits through enhanced productivity, efficiency, etc. This framework of business ethics as a functional, decision-making system aligns with the increasing needs of businesses to work across cultural, economic, and legal divides (Lewis, 2000; Samovar, Porter and McDaniel, 2009).

Conclusion

While conventional, moral underpinnings may provide a primary context for teaching and learning business ethics, business ethics curricula should also advance the idea that ethics are a critical thinking tool of corporate decision-making processes, separate and apart from moral value systems. Ironically, while the premise of this framework has had tentative beginnings in scholarship (a multi-paradigm approach for resolving business dilemmas), its potential has continued to be hindered by over-arching morality-centric objectives, such as "stakeholder theory" (*cf.* Jones, Felps and Bigley

2007). The emphasis business ethics curricula often places on “moral” conduct and dilemmas, versus “ethical” conduct and dilemmas, may not equip business students of obtaining a complete toolkit by which to identify and resolve the overwhelming majority of marketplace dilemmas. What occurs in the classroom, and what drives scholarly inquiry, rather should be with an eye toward what exists in the marketplace. Therefore, this article suggest that business students need further analytical and communicative tools for succeeding and thriving within a marketplace with a panoply of moral, cultural, economic, and legal diversity.

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Appendix 1: Common Ethical Paradigms Used in Business Decision-Making

Utilitarianism	Evaluates ethicalness based on actions which create the greatest good for the greatest number of stakeholders; cost-benefit analysis
Justice	Evaluates ethicalness based on the concept of fairness; uses three, distinct approaches: interactional, procedural, and distributive
Teleology	Evaluates ethicalness based on whether an action produced a desired result (colloquially referred to as “the ends justify the means”)
Virtue Ethics	Evaluates ethicalness based on concepts of conventional morals, such as “good moral character” and honesty and integrity
Relativism	Evaluates ethicalness based on an individual’s, or a group’s, subjective experiences
Egoism	Evaluates ethicalness based on actions which lead to the greatest personal benefit or gain as defined by an individual
Deontology	Evaluates ethicalness based on individual “rights” and the intentions associated with specific behavior, instead of an action’s consequences; uses categorical imperatives
Ethics of Care	Evaluates ethicalness based on whether an action acknowledges and cares for other affected stakeholders; presupposes interconnectedness
Free Market Ethics	Evaluates ethicalness based on maximizing economic profits while remaining legally compliant