



## IMPACT OF GENDER AND AGE ON ETHICAL ATTITUDE OF MANAGERS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

SANJIVANI LOKHANDE\*<sup>1</sup> and DR. RAMESH SARDAR<sup>2</sup>

\*Department of Business Administration, North Maharashtra University

### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to address issue of manager's ethical attitude towards business relates with their gender and age. The study adopts a literature review approach to review existing journals in related field so as to arrive at recent findings. The paper find outthat there are significant difference in ethical approach in male and female managers. Females are found to be more ethical than males, while age is also showing variations in ethical behaviour of managers.

**Keywords ;** Age, Gender, ethical attitude, Ethical behaviour

### INTRODUCTION

Ethics are the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual, a social group, or society as a whole. Business ethics is very old concept but their importance emerging nowadays risingly. As India become globalised the competition increases and to survive in the competition business owners /managers adopting unethical ways. According to Rogene A. Buchholz "Business ethics refer to right or wrong behaviour in business decisions". "Business ethics is the application of general ethical ideas to business"(Postm Fredrick and Lawrence) .As manger are the ruler of the organisation, their decisions affect the organisation as the employee follow their manager.

### Factors responsible for Ethics in organization

In the article of Gellerman,Soul (1986)' Why Good Managers make Bad Ethical Choices' dwells on the key question "How can usually honest, intelligent, compassionate human beings act in ways that are callous, duplicitous, dishonest, and wrongheaded?"The author concludes that unethical behavior is prevalent, and leaders' decisions can ruin people's lives, destroy institutions, and give business as a whole a bad name.

A company's managers play an important role in establishing its ethical tone. If managers behave as if the only thing that matters is profit, employees are likely to act in a like manner. A company's leaders are responsible for setting standards for what is and is not acceptable employee behavior. It's vital for managers to play an active role in creating a working environment where employees are encouraged and rewarded for acting in an ethical manner.

### Other factors

Manager is the main pioneer of running business ethically, but there are many other factors responsible for ethical behaviour in organization such as Corporate culture, Existence and application of a written code of ethics, Formal and informal policies and rules, Norms for acceptable behavior ,Financial reward system ,System for recognizing accomplishment ,Company attitude toward employees ,How employees are selected for promotions ,Hiring practices ,Applications of legal behavior ,Degree to which professionalism is emphasized ,The company's decisionmaking processes etc.If all these factors implemented in organization ethically, then we can say the organization running successfully by following business ethics.



This paper mainly focus on manager of the organization because- Managers hold positions of authority that make them accountable for the ethical conduct of those who report to them. Managers monitor the behavior of employees in accordance with the organization's expectations of appropriate behavior, and they have a duty to respond quickly and appropriately to minimize the impact of suspected ethical violations. Managers may be responsible for creating and/or implementing changes to the ethical codes or guidelines of an organization. Managers may also be subject to a particular code of professional ethics, depending on their position and training. So, there is question raises why some organizations found in fraudulent, or adopting unethical practices?. The reason may be the manager of the organization who is the decision maker of the organization. Then again another question emerged that why all manager behave differently? The answer may be their age, gender, education, work experience, personal principles, organization size, culture etc. We cannot determined the exact factor, so many researchers contributed to this fact by doing research on managers of various organizations. This paper taken majorly two factors i.e. Age and Gender of manager. The national and international literature reviewed for analysing is that ethical attitude of manager really change by age and gender or not.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Gender and ethical attitude**

There are many factors affecting the attitude of a person. In business ,ethical approach by manager is very important, as he is the decision maker of the organisation.

According to Beltramini et al., 1984; females tend to be more ethical than males, Ergeneli & Arikani (2002) and there was no significant difference found on the ethical perceptions of Turkish male and female salespeople. Choe & Lau (2010) reveals no significant difference between males and females students of Malashiya. According to Kidder (2002) Men are expected to be task oriented while women are expected to have relation-oriented characteristics and therefore gender is considered to be a significant factor in ethical reasoning (Ruegger and King, 1992). According to Ahmad and Seet (2010) as compared to males females adopting less unethical practices, even though perception towards unethical practices are different by gender. Khalid et al. (2011) however, evidenced that matured females prone to have less ethical reasoning evaluation than males. Ali and Al-Kazemi (2005) revealed that female managers achieve higher score on certain work value measures than males. According to Vermeir and Van Kenhove, (2008) corporation action performed by males are more likely double standards in ethical behaviour as compared to females.

Another study conducted by Juujarvi et al. (2010) have shown that variations in ethical reasoning between genders is due to status of self determination and care reasoning. Furthermore, Mellahi and Guermat (2004) evidenced that male and female business managers and executives having different ethical perception towards managerial values and managerial practices which influence managerial decisions at some extent. Peterson et al. (2001) indicated that the reason underlying gender variations in ethical reasoning and ethical sensitivity are unclear.

According to Miesing & Preble (1985) founded that females having religious conviction are more ethical as compared to males because they having little religious conviction. But, the study conducted by Rest (1986) shows no significant difference between males and females. Ruegger & King (1992) There exist a significant relationship between gender and ethics as females found to be more ethical in their perceptions of ethical business

conduct as compared to males.

**Figure 1: Table of researcher findings showing relation between gender and ethical attitude**

Researcher	Findings
Beltramini et al., (1984)	YES
Kidder (2002)	YES
Ruegger and King, 1992	YES
Ahmad and Seet (2010)	YES
Khalid et al. (2011)	YES
Ali and Al-Kazemi (2005)	YES
Vermeir and Van Kenhove, (2008)	YES
Juujarvi et al. (2010)	YES
Mellahi and Guermat (2004)	YES
Miesing&Preble (1985)	YES
Ruegger& King (1992)	YES
Ergeneli&Arikan (2002)	NO
Choe& Lau(2010)	NO
Rest (1986)	NO

### Age and ethical attitudes

Previous investigations linking age to ethics have been mixed although most studies have indicated an increase in ethicality with age. Freeman (2007) revealed that age is an important factor in determining the ability in ethical reasoning. Findings by Allmon et al. (2000) suggest that older youths exhibit more ethical inclinations. Mujtaba et al. (2009) that found a significant difference between age and ethical reasoning. Barnett and Karson (1989) found that younger respondents acted less ethically in ethics scenarios compared to older respondents. Borkowski and Ugras (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of 35 studies conclude that the attitude and behaviours become more ethical as people matured in age. Likewise, Mujtaba and Afza (2011) mentioned to the significant differences between the respondents with younger age and those with older age. Peterson et al.(2001) found that younger participants had lower ethical standards. They also noted a significant interaction between age and gender where most notably younger males were found to be more vulnerable to external factors. Chanet al.(2002) indicated that younger Chinese executives are more inclined to engage in unethical activities for profits than their older counterparts. McCabe et al.(2006) suggested that older individuals tend to have more ethical wisdom than younger ones.

On the other hand some researcher found there is no relation between age and ethical attitude of a manager. Lam & Hung (2005) find no link between age and ethical attitude: "No systematic relationship is found between age and the likelihood of being ethical". Cortese(1989) asserted that age did not seem to be a significant variable in explaining moral judgment. Kohut and Corriher (1994) found no significant age difference in relation to ethical decision making. Bastons(2006) evidenced that age and decision making process not aligned with maturity of them as the maturity level of people are different due to other factors like life experiences and family background.

**Figure 2: Table of researcher findings showing relation between Age and Ethical attitude**

Researcher	Findings
Freeman (2007)	YES
Allmon et al. (2000)	YES
Mujtaba et al. (2009)	YES
Barnett and Karson (1989)	YES
Borkowski and Ugras (1998)	YES
Mujtaba and Afza(2011)	YES
Peterson et al.(2001)	YES
Chan et al.(2002)	YES
McCabe et al. (2006)	YES
Lam & Hung (2005)	NO
Kohut and Corriher (1994)	NO
Bastons (2006)	NO

## CONCLUSIONS

The literature review showed that the age and gender factors affecting the ethical attitude of managers. It is also found out that most of the researcher support that females are more ethical than males. The ethical practices and decision making of females showing higher level of ethical approach as male counterparts. Whereas, Age is also responsible for changing the ethical attitude towards business of the managers. From the literatures reviewed it seems that older managers are more ethical than younger one. As the younger generations get easily affected by the external factors.

Hence, we can conclude that Age and gender can be responsible for ethical attitude and behaviour of managers.

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