Relationship between Students’ Attitudes toward Hypothetical Marketing Moral Dilemmas and Three Moral Emotions: Total Guilt, Post-transgressional Guilt and Anticipatory Guilt

Carl Malinowski, Pace University

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between student attitudes about nine hypothetical marketing moral dilemmas and three measures of moral emotion: (1) total guilt, (2) post-transgressional guilt and (3) anticipatory guilt. As hypothesized, students higher in total guilt, participants higher in post-transgressional guilt and respondents higher in anticipatory guilt were more likely to: (a) believe an ethically questionable action is wrong, (b) anticipate guilt if they considered doing the same thing and (c) say they would not do it. Implications of these findings are that moral emotions of employees could influence their ethical decision making. Also important is getting students to be in touch with their ethical feelings as part of their business education. Such ethics training at the managerial level toward organizational decision-making makes for a globally competitive advantage.

Keywords: Students, ethical scenarios, attitudes, moral emotions, guilt