

# **SECTION 2:**

## **INTRODUCTION AND**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **BUSINESS LEADERS, FACULTY AND STUDENTS**

##### **ETHICAL VIEWS:**

##### **SELECTED YEARS, 1983 TO 2003**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Illinois Hall of Fame began an intensive study of ethics in 1983 with a mail survey of randomly selected business leaders of America's largest 10,000 corporations. Other studies of other business leaders, university faculty and students were conducted in 1988, 1989 and 1995. In order to obtain the views of these three groups in 2003, follow-up studies were commissioned by the Board of Directors of the American National Business Hall of Fame. Paul Thistlethwaite, president of Research Design Dynamics and Emeritus Professor of Marketing at WIU worked with two senior students in marketing, Ellen Sutor and Kathleen Casey to conduct the studies.

Several objectives guided the research. In order to demonstrate these in this report, a structure was created that will facilitate the appropriate comparisons.

1. To obtain updated information on each of the three groups.
2. To compare the three groups' opinions in 2003.
3. To compare the 2003 opinions with the earlier four studies.
4. To compare the 2003 business leaders' opinions with those of 1988 and 1983.
5. To compare the 2003 faculty members' opinions with those of 1989.
6. To compare the 2003 students' opinions with those of 1995.

This report will be primarily a statistical report since so many different comparisons of groups are made. Different persons can use the information to develop professional articles.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

In order to obtain the views of business leaders, faculty and students, three different methodologies were employed. The business leaders and faculty were surveyed using the methodologies of the earlier studies. The students

opinions were gathered from several universities instead of just one; the methodology employed in the earlier studies. The following two sections discuss the actual data collection procedures including response rates and the differences in the questionnaires.

## Business Leaders

The Hall of Fame has conducted three studies of business leaders. All three surveyed random selections of organizations from the 10,000 largest in the U.S. A mail survey was employed in each of these. The appropriate respondent was the chief executive officer or the president. Others were given the survey to respond to though. The response rates for these studies are presented in Table 1.

	1983 *	1988 **	2003
Population of interest			
Number Sent out	700	864	1445
Number of good responses	119	138	66
Response Rate	17	16	
<i>Source: 2003 Study of Ethics</i>			

\*Hattwick, Richard, Bong-Gon P. Shin and Larry C. Wall (1984). Business Ethics- Findings of a Survey of America's Business Leaders, Journal of Behavioral Economics, pp. 157-185.

\*\*Prasad, Jyoti, Yunus Kathawala, Matthew Monippallil and Richard Hattwick (1993). Business and Academe: A comparison of Perceptions on Business Ethics, The Journal of Socio-Economics, Volume 22, Number 1, pp. 69-83.

The response rate in 2003 was much lower than the other two groups. In the intervening 15 years, chief executives and presidents have been receiving many more surveys than in the past. This might account for the lower response rate. The lack of a follow-up postcard might have contributed to it also. Twice as many surveys were sent out this time as in the past so a follow-up postcard would not be necessary. This was not an accurate assumption. A follow-up postcard would probably have been more effective.

## Faculty

In both 1989 and 2003, university faculty were contacted by sending a letter to the Dean of a college of business and asking him or her to complete the survey and also ask three other faculty to respond. All of the selected colleges in 2003 were members of the AACSB. A follow-up postcard was sent out three weeks after the initial survey was mailed. This was too apparently too long of a time period to elapse to be effective. A problem also did arise with this survey that may have contributed to a lower response rate. Some of the faculty received questions that inadvertently had been printed with the student demographic questions rather than the faculty demographic ones. All of the deans received the correct version.

	1989*	2003
Population of interest		
Number Sent out	637 x 4	634 X 4
Number of good responses	445	269
Response Rate	17%	11%
<i>Source: 2003 Study of Ethics</i>		

\*Monippallil, Matthew, Yunus Kathawala, Richard Hattwick, Larry Wall and Bong-Gon P. Shin, (1999). Business Ethics in

## Students

The students in the 1995 study were college of business students from Eastern Illinois University. In order to obtain a wider perspective of students' ethical attitudes, faculty from the American National Hall of Fame were invited to participate in the collection of student data at their university. A few other selected faculty were also invited to participate. By January 10, 2004, a total of 1009 good questionnaires were returned for processing and analysis. An additional 84 were provided by Simona Stan at the University of Oregon. Jerry Wall at University of Louisiana at Monroe collected 189 surveys from his university. They were received in February and could not be included in the first version of this report. Redoing the many, many tables to include their data was beyond the scope of this study. They, however, will be part of the database that faculty can use to develop professional articles. The students attended college at a private university, several regional universities and two flagship universities. Table 2C presents the listing of the universities that participated and the number of students surveyed at each. Table 2.E gives information about the number of students in each of the two studies.

University	Contact	Number Returned	Percent
Colorado State U.	John Olienyk & O.C. Ferrell	79	8%
Eastern Illinois U.	Yunus Kathawala	186	18
Illinois Wesleyan U.	Fred Hoyt	45	4
Kennesaw State U.	Kamal Fatehi	198	20
Loyola Marymount U.	Edmund Gray	156	16
Southeast Mo State U.	Ken Heischmidt	57	6
Southwest Mo State U.	Charlie Pettijohn	58	6
U. of Akron	Mike d'Amico	109	11
U. of Illinois Champaign	John Kindt	21	2
Western Illinois U.	Joe Dobson	100	10
			101%
*U. of Louisiana at Monroe	Jerry Wall	189	
*U. of Oregon	Simona Stan	84	

Source: 2003 Study of Ethics

\*Not included in this report.

	1995 *	2003
Population of interest	College of Business students	Students taking classes in the College of Business.
Number of good responses	191	1009

Source: 2003 Study of Ethic

\* Prasad, Jyoti, Nancy Marlow and Richard Hattwick (1998).

Gender-Based Differences in Perception of a Just Society, Journal of Business Ethics, Volume 17, pp. 219-228.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The researchers thought the questionnaire would be the easiest part of the research process. They were mistaken. This part of the research became a very complicated part. The studies from 1983 to 1995 did not include the same questions for all studies nor was the wording of the same question exactly the same. Some of the differences were unintentional. For example, the wording of the questions in the report for the 1983 study had slightly different wording for some of the questions that had been on the questionnaire. All questions from the studies were entered into an Excel spreadsheet so that a visual examination of the questions could be made. Anyone interested in looking at this spreadsheet should contact Paul. The first page of the spreadsheet is given as Appendix A. Consequently, in most instances, the most recent wording was used.

Also, in doing all of the investigation of the wording of the questions, an error was made in the current study. In the previous studies, a five-point Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree scale had been utilized with No Opinion being the midpoint for most of the questions. In the 2003 survey, questions 30 to 38 were to have had the Influence set of answers. But the Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree set of answers was mistakenly used instead. The possible answers should have been Extensive Influence, Some Influence, No Opinion, Little Influence and No Influence. Therefore, the extent of influence can be gained by interpreting a questions such as To what extent are ethical standards of business executives influenced by peer group pressure? as Peer Group pressure influences the ethical standards of business executives with the degree of agreement being the possible answers.

Table 2.F gives the number of questions asked of each group for each survey. The first survey in 1983 had 93 questions. All three of the 2003 questionnaires had approximately 50 questions, instead of more questions, to try to increase response rate.

Year of the Study	Group Surveyed	Number of Questions	
		Attitudinal	Demographic
1983	Business Leaders	85	9
1988	Business Leaders	48	5
1989	Faculty	48	5
1995	Students	51	4
2003	Business Leaders	47	7
2003	Faculty	47	5
2003	Students	47	4

Source: 2003 Study of Ethics

One of the major goals for the 2003 study was to keep the survey to no more than two pages, plus a cover letter. Also, the same attitudinal questions were to be asked of all three groups in 2003. Consequently, a review of the questions that had been asked ALL three groups from 1983 to 1995 revealed that only 29 had been asked of business leaders, faculty and students. These became the first 29 questions on the 2003 survey. Then, nine questions that had been asked of both the business leaders and the faculty were included. These were the infamous influence questions that need to be reinterpreted from the original wording of the questions. The last nine questions had been asked of both business leaders and students. There were NO questions included on the 2003 questionnaires that had been asked of only one group. The demographic questions were changed for the three groups. Note that some of the faculty received a survey that had student demographics. For those instances, the information concerning having taken an ethics course and gender was still recorded for the faculty.

As indicated above, the seemingly relatively simple updating of the ethical views of three groups became complex since three different research designs had to be employed. Also, the original 84-attitudinal questions had to be analyzed for consistency in wording in subsequent surveys. Other ethical questions were added to the faculty survey. All subsequent surveys had no more than 48 attitudinal questions. Therefore deciding what to ask became a somewhat complex question. The research team consulted with Dick Hattwick concerning which form of the question should be used. The questionnaires for the business professionals, faculty and students are provided in Appendices B to E.

## METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Given the complexity of the research design and the relatively few questions that had been asked of all three groups in earlier studies, the analysis therefore became a little more complex. Only 29 of the 47-attitudinal questions had been asked of all three groups in earlier studies. Therefore, the tables of analysis in this study had to accommodate the other 18 questions. The research team tried to make the tables of information as consistent and easy to use as possible. When a question was Not Asked of a particular group, then a NA was entered into the table. For the students in the 1995, some of the information asked on the survey was not presented in the journal article. Therefore, a NI for No Information (but asked) was included on the tables. For this current study, any nonresponse for the attitudinal questions was coded as a 3 for No Opinion.

Because there is so much information to be presented, the tables were segmented into logical sections. Also, within each section, where possible, a more summary like table with the question, the year, the group, the percent who agreed, the average response, the standard deviation and the number of respondents is presented. The second table, where possible, presents the percentage of respondents who gave each of the Agreement answers.