

Deontological And Teleological Influences On Marketing Research Ethics

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Abstract

Using factorially designed marketing research scenarios this study investigates the influence of deontological and two teleological factors on marketing professionals' (1) ethics judgment and (2) decision to either reward or punish an ethical/unethical research behavior. The results indicate that marketing professionals make research ethics judgment based on deontological considerations (the inherent rightness or wrongness of a researcher's behavior). However, their decisions to either reward or discipline ethical/unethical research behaviors are guided primarily by ethical judgment and only marginally by teleological considerations (the consequences of behaviors on the organization). Implications of results for marketing research ethics and some directions for future research are discussed.

Introduction

With the scope of marketing ethics problems fairly well established, research attention has shifted to the examination of factors that underlie marketing professionals' ethical/unethical behavior—the impetus for this being emerging models of ethical decision making in organizations (e.g., Bommer, *et al.* 1987; Dubinsky and Loken 1989; Ferrell and Gresham 1985; Ferrell, Gresham, and Fraedrich 1989; Hunt and Vitell 1986; Jones 1991; Robin and Reidenbach 1987; Trevino 1986). Although most of this research has focused on the influence of individual and organizational factors (e.g., Akaah 1993; 1996; Akaah and Riordan 1989; Barnett, *et al.* 1998; Chonko and Hunt 1985; Ferrell and Skinner 1988; Kelley, Ferrell, and Skinner 1990; Robin, Reidenback, and Forrest 1996; Skinner, Ferrell, and Dubinsky 1988),

recent years have seen the emergence of a research stream focusing on the influence of moral philosophy, specifically, deontological and teleological processes (Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993; Mayo and Marks 1990; Rallapalli, Vitell, and Barnes 1998). The significance of the latter stream of research lies in the fact that it sheds light on how marketing professionals integrate this information to arrive at ethical judgment. This, in turn, should help management develop and maintain strategies that encourage ethical behavior and discourage unethical behavior (Hunt, Wood, and Chonko 1989).

While researchers generally acknowledge the importance and dynamics of ethical decision making processes, relatively few empirical studies have been reported in the ethics literature (Bellizzi and Hite 1989; Hunt and Vitell 1986; LaFleur, *et al.* 1996). Using the widely cited Hunt-Vitell process model, Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993),

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Mayo and Marks (1990), and more recently, Menguc (1998) empirically investigated the ethical decision process of marketing professionals. These studies examined the influence of deontological and teleological evaluations from the perspective of the decision-maker's organization. In an era of relationship marketing aimed at creating strong long lasting relationships with clients among other entities in the marketing process, the impact of teleological considerations such as consequences for the client's organization remain to be investigated. To contribute to this line of research, the present study was undertaken. The purpose of the present study is to examine within the context of the Hunt-Vitell framework: (1) deontological and teleological influences on marketing professionals' research ethics judgment; and (2) the influence of ethical judgment and teleological evaluations of client consequences in addition to organizational consequences on marketing professionals' decision to reward or punish ethical/unethical research behavior.

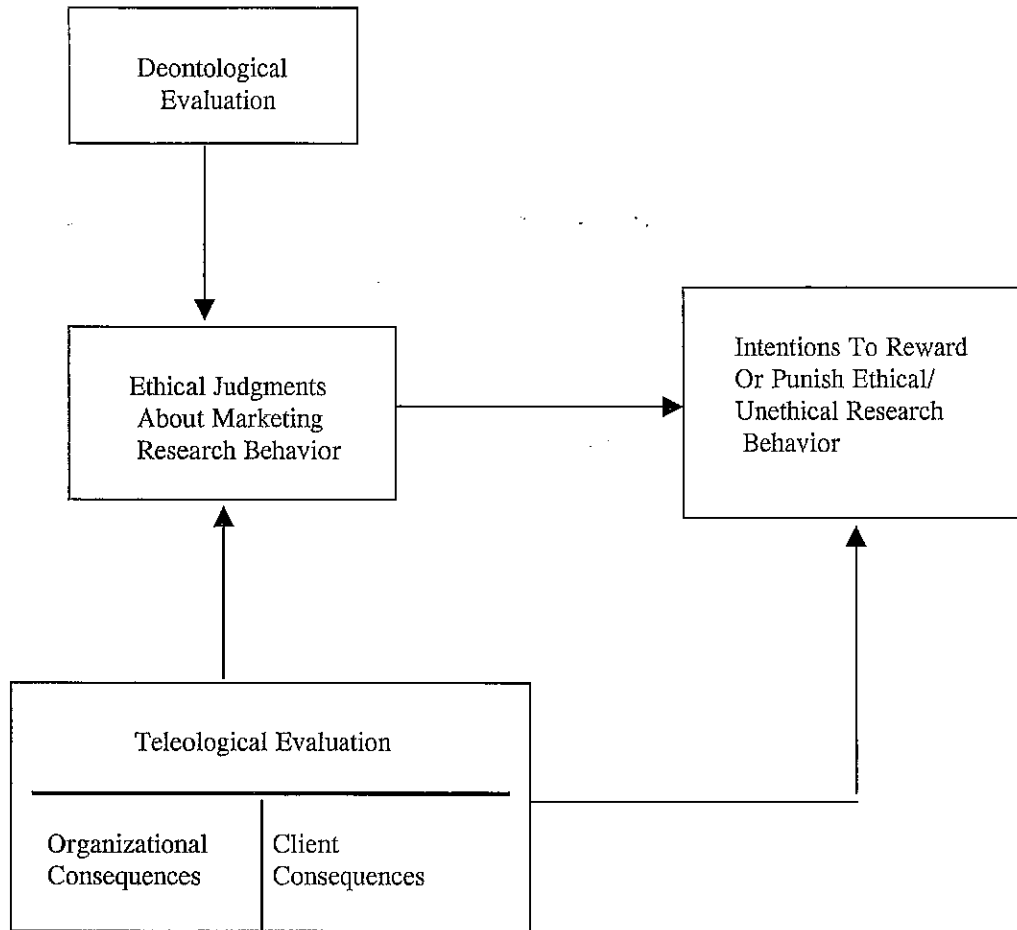
Both aspects of the study purpose were examined using factorially designed marketing research scenarios. The focus on marketing research stems from the fact that it is an area of marketing that reflects major ethical problems (Akaah and Riordan 1989; Castleberry, French, and Carlin 1993; Ferrell and Skinner 1988; Hunt, Chonko, and Wilcox 1984; Malhotra and Miller 1998; McDaniel, Verille, and Madden 1985). Furthermore, marketing research as a functional area provides quite a different operating environment than the line management salesforce supervision environment investigated by Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993) and Menguc (1998). For example, research jobs generally demand adherence to standards and rules such as the scientific method for generating information and technique application. In contrast, line management jobs generally focus on decision-making consequences, i.e., profit and losses from decisions (Akaah 1996). Additional discussion and a listing of the fundamental and philosophical differences between management and researchers can be found in Hair, Bush, and Ortinau (2000, p. 62).

The study experimental design treatment scenarios are composed of one deontological and two teleological factors. The deontological factor examines the issue of research integrity, i.e., a researcher's deliberate distortion or inaccurate reporting of the research findings of a study. Research integrity has been identified as the dominant ethical problem facing marketing researchers involving items such as falsifying figures, withholding information, altering research results, misusing statistics, or misinterpreting the results of a research project to support a predetermined personal or corporate point of view (Hunt, Chonko, and Wilcox 1984, p. 312). The teleological factors examine consequences of ethical/unethical research behavior for (1) the researcher's organization, and (2) the client firm. Thus, unlike and Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993) and Menguc (1998) studies which investigated only the organizational consequences, the present study spanned more than one teleological factor to also include client consequences. The study model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Literature and Hypotheses

Ethics has been defined as "...inquiry into the nature and grounds of morality where the term morality is taken to mean moral judgments, standards, and rules of conduct" (Taylor 1975, p.1). It involves fundamental human relationships. In marketing research, the issue of ethics revolves around a researcher's relationship with four parties in the research process, namely, the general public, respondent, client, and the researcher (Akaah and Riordan 1989; Hunt, Chonko, and Wilcox 1984; Malhotra and Miller 1998). In fulfilling his/her duties and responsibilities to these constituents the marketing researcher encounters many ethical dilemmas. For example, a researcher has the responsibility to gather accurate and reliable data for his/her client. At the same time, he/she desires a continued relationship with his/her client. In an effort to ensure this, a researcher might distort the research findings of a study to support the client's-viewpoint--thus creating a research ethics problem. While ethical problems in marketing research, generally, revolve around the balancing

Figure 1
The Study Model Based on Hunt-Vitell Theory



of a researcher's duties and responsibilities toward the parties in the research process (Bartels 1967; Hunt, Chonko, and Wilcox 1984), it does not preclude other research ethics problems such as greed or personal interest, which could lead to falsifying questionnaires to meet time schedules or to reduce project expenses.

Thus, a pertinent direction of research is the examination of how marketing professionals react to arrive at their ethical judgment. According to the ethics literature, individuals make ethical judgments based on deontological and teleological

processes (Hunt and Vitell 1986). A deontological decision process "... centers on the inherent rightness versus wrongness of a behavior, irrespective of the behavior's consequences" (Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993, p. 79). At the heart of a deontological decision process are principles of justice, basic rights, duties, obligations, responsibilities, proper conduct, and inherent rights of others (Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993; Ferrell and Skinner 1988). In contrast, a teleological decision process centers on the consequences of a behavior for parties in the decision environment. A teleological decision process has as its cornerstone "...

the relative amount of goodness or badness of the consequences of a behavior" (Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993, p. 78) or "... the moral worth of a behavior determined totally by the consequences of the behavior" (Ferrell and Skinner 1988, p. 103-4).

Empirical research evidence about the relative influence of deontological and teleological evaluations on ethical judgment is not unequivocal. Mayo and Marks (1990) reported ethical judgment to be jointly influenced by deontological and teleological evaluations. Additionally, they also reported the influence of teleological evaluation process as outweighing deontological evaluation process. In contrast, Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993) and Menguc (1998) reported that managers' decisions are guided primarily by deontological considerations, and only secondarily on teleological considerations in forming ethical judgment about salesperson behaviors. The present study investigates the influence of deontological and two teleological considerations (organizational and client consequences) on ethical judgment within the context of marketing research. Specifically, it is hypothesized that:

H_{1a}: Marketing professionals' ethical judgment about research ethics are influenced by deontological and teleological evaluation processes; and

H_{1b}: Marketing professionals' ethical judgment about research ethics is influenced primarily by deontological evaluations and secondarily on teleological evaluations.

Besides their influence on ethics judgment, deontological and teleological processes have been found to influence management's decision on the use of punishment to curb undesirable employee behaviors, and reward to promote desirable employee behaviors. In the context of salesforce supervision, this has been demonstrated in empirical investigations by Bellizzi and Hite (1989), Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993), and more recently by Menguc (1998). However, the severity of punish-

ment or generosity of reward has been found to differ, depending upon the consequences of the ethical/unethical behavior for the salesperson's organization (organizational consequences). Rosen and Jerdee (1974) observed that unethical behaviors of negative organizational consequences attract more severe punishment by management than unethical behaviors of positive organizational consequences. Bellizzi and Hite (1989) also observed that marketing managers find it more difficult to curb unethical selling practices by "star" salespersons than to curb unethical practices by "non-star" salespersons. Similarly, Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993) found that sales and marketing managers believe that punishment of a salesperson for an unethical behavior should be more severe when the consequences are negative for the organization than when they are positive. Epstein, McEwen, and Spindle (1994) found that stockholders view negatively the punishment of employees for unethical behaviors of positive organizational consequences. They also observed that stockholders appear willing to reward employees for unethical behaviors of positive organizational consequences. Hunt and Vitell (1986) postulate that in most decision environments individuals' intentions are congruent with their ethical judgment. However, since teleological evaluation process affects intentions by a direct path (Figure 1), discrepancy between ethical judgment and intentions may occur when a less ethical alternative has certain highly preferred positive consequences for an individual or the individual's organization (Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993).

In the context of marketing research, the deliberate distortion of research findings of a study is a deontologically unethical behavior that calls for punishment and, the required accurate reporting of research findings of a study, a deontologically ethical behavior that might result in reward. Using a marketing research scenario (Mayo and Marks 1990) and a salesforce supervision scenario (Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993), both studies reported that ethical judgment and teleological evaluations are significant predictors of marketing professionals' intention to intervene through re-

ward or discipline of ethical/unethical behavior. However, Mayo and Marks (1990) reported greater impact of teleological evaluations than ethical judgment on intention to intervene, while Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993) suggested that managers' decisions to either reward or discipline salespeople's behavior are primarily guided by ethical judgment and only secondarily by teleological considerations. Given the somewhat conflicting results reported in literature, the present study investigates the influence of ethical judgment and teleological evaluation process (organizational and client consequences) on marketing professionals' intention to reward or punish ethical/unethical research behavior. Specifically, it is hypothesized that:

H2a: Marketing professionals' assessment of reward or discipline for ethical/unethical research behavior will be based on ethical judgment and teleological evaluations; and

H2b: Marketing professionals' assessment of reward or discipline for ethical/unethical research behavior will be influenced primarily by ethical judgment and secondarily by teleological evaluations.

Method

Sample and Data Collection

The data were obtained by self-administered questionnaire mailed to a sample of 1800 marketing professionals (marketing executives and researchers). The 1995 American Marketing Association directory comprised the sampling frame. The sample was chosen on a systematic sampling basis from the directory. To limit the study to marketing practitioners, educators and students listed in the directory were excluded from the sampling frame. Also, to confine the study to domestic marketing practitioners, individuals listed in the directory with foreign addresses were excluded from the sampling frame.

The mailing consisted of the questionnaire itself, a cover letter, and a stamped pre-addressed re-

turn envelope. As response inducement, each respondent was promised a copy of the study results on request. Of the 1800 questionnaires mailed, 87 were returned by the post office as undeliverable and 360 usable questionnaires were received, representing a 21.0% response rate. The response rate was deemed encouraging in comparison with that of past studies involving the use of the American Marketing Association directory as the sampling frame (e.g., Barnett, et al. (1998) reported a 19% response rate; Sparks and Hunt (1998) reported a 7% response rate; Singhapakdi (1999) reported a 23% response rate).

The extrapolation method of Armstrong and Overton (1977) was utilized to test for nonresponse bias. Profile of "late" respondents (25% of the sample) was compared to "early" respondents (75% of the sample) across organizational characteristics (size, role, existence and enforcement of ethics code), demographics (gender, age, education, income), ethical judgment, and intention to intervene. There were no significant differences between "early" and "late" respondents across variables except education level. However, since education level serves only to profile respondents, nonresponse bias is deemed not to affect results of the investigation.

Table 1 is a summary of the characteristics of the sample. As the table shows, the sample respondents had varied demographic and organizational backgrounds. Also, the sample compares favorably in characteristics with that of past studies involving the use of the American Marketing Association directory as a sampling frame (Akaah and Riordan 1989; Singhapakdi 1999; Sparks and Hunt 1998)). The respondents spanned a wide range of industries. A majority of them were of the rank of manager or higher (77%), of executive role (78%), employed by firms of 100 or more employees (68%), in firms with ethics codes (59%), with code enforcement unknown (45%), with at least a college degree (93%), business majors in college (66%), female (52%), married (72%), 30 years of age or older (83%), and earning \$50,000 or more per annum in household income (82%).

Table 1
Characteristics of Sample

Organizational characteristics	
<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Percent^a</i>
<i>Industry category</i>	
Manufacturing	22.9
For-profit services (banking, insurance, real estate)	24.3
Research agency	14.5
Health care	12.3
Telecommunication	5.0
Advertising agency	4.2
Not-for-profit services (education, government)	2.3
Distributive trade (retailing, wholesaling)	6.7
Marketing consulting	6.1
Transportation	1.7
<i>Size of organization (number of employees)</i>	
Less than 10	6.5
10 to 49	15.6
50 to 99	9.1
100 to 249	15.0
250 to 499	9.9
500 to 999	8.5
1,000 to 4,999	18.4
5,000 or more	17.0
<i>Organizational title/rank</i>	
CEO/president/owner/partner/principal	7.6
Senior vice president/vice president	18.7
Director	24.2
Manager/project director	26.9
Analyst/consultant	7.4
Account executive/sales representative	8.5
Other	7.6

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Treatment Scenarios

The context of the treatment scenarios was marketing research ethics. As noted previously, the scenarios described one deontological and two teleological factors. The deontological factor was conceptualized at two levels, i.e., a researcher's deliberate distortion of the research findings of a study (a deontologically unethical research behavior) and a researcher's accurate reporting of the research findings of a study (a deontologically ethical research behavior). The teleological fac-

tors pertained to the consequences of the deontologically ethical/unethical research behavior for the researcher's organization (organizational consequences), and for the client (client consequences). Each teleological factor was conceptualized at two levels, i.e., positive and negative consequences. Thus, underlying the treatment scenarios was a 2³ completely randomized factorial design. The eight treatment scenarios of the study are presented in Appendix A.

Table 1 (continued)
 Characteristics of Sample

Organizational characteristics	
<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Percent^a</u>
<i>Organizational role</i>	
Management	78.5
Researcher	21.5
<i>Existence of code of ethics</i>	
Yes	59.1
No	26.9
Don't know	14.0
<i>Enforcement of ethics code</i>	
Strictly enforced	41.7
Neither strictly nor loosely enforced	41.7
Loosely enforced	7.8
Don't know/no response	8.7
<i>Demographic characteristics</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	47.5
Female	52.5
<i>Age</i>	
20-29	16.7
30-39	35.9
40-49	29.5
50-59	14.8
60 or more	3.1

(continued on next page)

The treatment scenarios were pretested before their use in the study. The pretest involved a panel of three experts and 32 MBA students. The MBA students had recently completed a course in business ethics where research ethics was taught as a major component of the course. The experts were faculty members with extensive backgrounds in ethics and society courses. The pretest involved showing subjects the treatment scenarios and asking them to indicate whether the action/behavior of the researcher in each scenario was ethi-

cal/unethical. Subjects correctly identified a deontologically ethical research behavior as ethical and a deontologically unethical behavior as unethical. Checks were made as to whether or not subjects could discern the levels of the teleological factors. In each case, subjects responded correctly--indicating that they accurately identified negative consequences as negative and, positive consequences, as positive. Additionally, the wording/phrasing of the scenarios was pretested to ensure its clarity.

Table 1 (continued)
 Characteristics of Sample

Organizational characteristics	
<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Percent^a</i>
<i>Marital Status</i>	
Single	18.9
Married	72.2
Divorced/separated/widowed	8.9
<i>Education</i>	
Some college	6.1
Bachelor's degree	22.5
Some post bachelor's work	18.3
Master's degree	41.7
Some post master's work	7.8
Doctorate degree	3.6
<i>Major</i>	
General business	7.9
Business-marketing	44.4
Business-accounting	2.5
Business-management	7.6
Business-statistics	0.8
Business-finance	1.7
Engineering	2.0
Other technical	2.5
Humanities	9.3
Other-liberal arts	20.3
<i>Income (before taxes)</i>	
Less than \$29,999	2.9
\$30,000-\$49,999	15.1
\$50,000-\$69,999	17.1
\$70,000-\$79,999	10.7
\$80,000-\$99,999	14.5
\$100,000-\$119,999	14.8
\$120,000-\$139,999	8.7
\$140,000-\$159,999	4.3
\$160,000-\$179,999	2.6
\$180,000-\$199,999	2.0
\$200,000 or more	7.2

^a N=360.

To ensure that study respondents were blind to the factor-level manipulations, each was required to respond to only one treatment scenario. The scenarios were randomly assigned to sample members, implying a total of 225 individuals per treatment scenario. The return rate per scenario

ranged from 37 to 53 respondents. For each scenario, respondents provided two kinds of evaluations. The first pertained to their perceptions of ethicality of the researcher's action/behavior in the scenario. Respondents' evaluations were elicited using a 7-point scale with descriptive anchors

ranging from "very unethical" (coded 1) to "very ethical" (coded 7). The second evaluation pertained to disciplinary choice of action (punishment or reward) respondents deemed most appropriate given the researcher's behavior in the treatment scenario presented. Respondents were asked, "Assuming you were Brandon's boss, which *one* of the following set of actions do you believe would be most appropriate to take given Brandon's action/tactic?" The set of choice alternatives, as compiled and tested by Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993, p. 81) were: (a) Give Brandon a pay raise and promotion (coded 9), (b) Give Brandon a pay raise, (c) Give Brandon *strong* encouraging feedback, (d) Give Brandon *mild* encouraging feedback, (e) Take no action, (f) Give Brandon a *mild* (verbal or written) reprimand, (g) Give Brandon a *strong* (verbal or written) reprimand, (h) Cut Brandon's pay, and (i) Terminate Brandon's employment (coded 1).

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Each survey respondent was randomly assigned one of the eight treatment scenarios. To assess the similarity of respondents across the treatment scenarios, their demographic and organizational profile was examined. The results of chi-square tests (at $p = .05$) indicated that respondents' demographic (gender, age, education, and income) and organizational (size, role, existence and enforcement of ethics code) characteristics to be similar across the eight treatment scenarios. Additionally, since ethics literature suggests marketing management and researchers as differing in ethical judgments (Akaah and Riordan 1989; Skinner, Ferrell, and Dubinsky 1988), preliminary tests were conducted to determine the need for separate subsample analysis of the data. The classification of respondents into management or researchers category was based on two pieces of information collected from respondents, i.e., their organizational role and main responsibilities (executive vs. research). Only respondents who could be clearly classified as management or re-

searchers on the basis of both pieces of information were included in the preliminary analysis (seven respondents who did not meet the criteria were excluded). The results of *t*-tests between management and researchers subsamples indicated that there were no significant differences (at $p = .05$) in their ethical judgment and intervention to reward or punish in each of the eight treatment scenarios. Therefore, all further data analyses were carried out at the combined sample level.

Prior to regression analyses to test the study hypotheses, a correlation matrix of the regression variables was generated. The correlation matrix presented in Table 2 reveals that ethical judgment is significantly related to deontological evaluation ($r = .809, p = < .01$). Likewise, intention to intervene is significantly related to ethical judgment ($r = .752, p = < .01$) and, of course, deontological evaluation ($r = .902, p = < .01$). In theory and as expected, deontological and both teleological factors are uncorrelated given the factorial experimental design.

Ethical Judgment

The first study purpose, namely, influence of deontological and teleological evaluation processes on research ethics judgment, was examined by regression analysis. Respondents' evaluations of the ethicality of the researcher's action/behavior in the scenarios comprised the criterion variable, and the deontological condition, organizational, and client consequences were the predictor variables. Table 3 presents a summary of the regression results. Since none of the interaction effects were statistically significant, only the main-effects regression model results are discussed. The results indicate that only the deontological condition predictor variable yielded statistically significant effects ($p < .05$), while the two teleological predictor variable (organizational and client consequences) were statistically not significant in accounting for the variability in marketing professionals' research ethics judgment. The magnitude of the standardized coefficient for the deontological condition ($b = .809$) relative to organizational conse-

Table 2
Correlation Matrix

	Deonto evaluation	Teleo-Organ evaluation	Teleo-Client evaluation	Ethical judgment	Intention to intervene	Mean	SD
Deonto evaluation	1.0					0.54	0.50
Teleo-Organization evaluation	.006	1.0				0.53	0.50
Teleo-Client evaluation	.003	.036	1.0			0.48	0.50
Ethical judgment	.810*	.019	.029	1.0		3.90	2.86
Intention to intervene	.902*	.073	.087	.752*	1.0	4.35	2.57

* $p < .01$

Table 3
Regression Results of Ethical Judgment

Dependent variable	Predictor variable	Parameter (unstandardized)	Parameter (standardized)	t	p-value	R ²
Ethical judgment	Intercept	1.375	---	7.516	.0001	.6557 ^a
	Deontological (D)	4.640	0.809	25.755	.0001	
	Teleo-Organizational (TO)	- 0.129	-0.023	- 0.716	.4743	
	Teleo-Client (TC)	0.167	0.029	0.931	.3526	
Ethical judgment	Intercept	1.352	---	5.867	.0001	.6587 ^b
	Deontological (D)	4.814	0.839	14.358	.0001	
	Teleo-Organizational (TO)	0.068	0.012	0.257	.7976	
	Teleo-Client (TC)	- 0.003	-0.001	- 0.013	.9899	
	D x TO	- 0.635	-0.101	- 1.470	.1424	
	D x TC	0.037	0.006	0.082	.9347	
	D x TO x TC	0.540	0.067	1.097	.2735	

^a Adjusted R² = 0.6528 F = 221.563 p = .0001

^b Adjusted R² = 0.6528 F = 111.313 p = .0001

quences ($b = -.023$) and client consequences ($b = .029$) further validate these results. Thus, since marketing professionals' ethical judgment about research ethics appear to be influenced only by deontological evaluations, the results do not provide support for H_{1a}. Consequently, while H_{1b} is true, it is moot given that teleological evaluations do not significantly influence marketing professionals' ethical judgment about research ethics.

Appropriateness of Reward or Discipline

The second study purpose, namely, influence of ethical judgment and teleological evaluation processes on marketing professionals' assessment

of the appropriate choice of reward or punishment for an ethical/unethical research behavior, was also examined by regression analysis. Respondents' chosen level of punishment or reward of the researcher in the treatment scenarios was the criterion variable and ethical judgment, organizational consequences, and client consequences were the predictor variables. Table 4 presents a summary of the regression results. Since none of the interaction effects were statistically significant, only the main-effects regression model results are discussed. The results indicate that ethical judgment and organizational consequences produced statistically significant effects ($p < .05$), while the effect of client consequences was not significant in ac-

Table 4
Regression Results of Intention to Intervene

Dependent variable	Predictor variable	Parameter (unstandardized)	Parameter (standardized)	t	p-value	R ²
Intention to intervene	Intercept	1.362	---	6.944	.0001	.5763 ^a
	Ethical judgment (EJ)	0.674	0.751	21.550	.0001	
	Teleo-Organizational (TO)	0.422	0.082	2.352	.0192	
	Teleo-Client (TC)	0.306	0.060	1.709	.0884	
Intention to intervene	Intercept	1.243	---	4.641	.0001	.5771 ^b
	Ethical judgment (EJ)	0.706	0.787	12.320	.0001	
	Teleo-Organizational (TO)	0.610	0.119	2.006	.0456	
	Teleo-Client (TC)	0.347	0.068	1.141	.2547	
	EJ x TO	-0.054	-0.060	-0.745	.4571	
	EJ x TC	-0.015	-0.016	-0.201	.8412	
	EJ x TO x TC	0.013	0.012	0.173	.8629	

^a Adjusted R² = 0.5727 F = 158.237 p = .0001

^b Adjusted R² = 0.5697 F = 78.685 p = .0001

counting for the variability in marketing professionals' assessment of the appropriate choice of reward or discipline for ethical/unethical research behavior. Thus, the results support H_{2a} in that marketing professionals' choice of reward or punishment for ethical/unethical research behavior is based on ethical judgment and teleological considerations. The results are also supportive of H_{2b} in that marketing professionals' assessment of reward or discipline for ethical/unethical research behavior was primarily based on ethical judgment and only secondarily on teleological considerations. The magnitude of the standardized coefficient for ethical judgment ($b = .751$) relative to organizational consequences ($b = .082$) and client consequences ($b = .060$) further validate these results.

The pattern of marketing professionals' choice of discipline or reward for the significant organizational consequences in the previous analysis is presented in Table 5. Respondents' choice of disciplinary intervention for researchers' behavior of deliberately distorting the research findings was to *cut pay* (mean of 2.05) when organizational consequences were positive, but a harsher disciplinary action of to *terminate employment* (mean of 1.64)

when organizational consequences were negative. Correspondingly, respondents' choice of reward for accurately reporting the research findings was to *give strong encouraging feedback* (mean of 6.62) when organizational consequences were positive, but when organizational consequences were negative, the choice of reward was to *give mild encouraging feedback* (mean of 6.35).

Discussion

One major finding is that deontological considerations (the inherent rightness/ wrongness of an actor's behavior) underlie marketing professionals' research ethics judgment. The importance of deontological considerations in marketing professionals' ethics behavior is corroborated by Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993) and Menguc (1998) who observed that sales and marketing managers rely primarily on deontological considerations in forming their ethical judgment. Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga (1993) also reported organizational consequences to be a significant predictor (although small in terms of explained variance) in forming marketers' ethical judgment. However, the two teleological factors (organizational and cli-

Table 5
Pattern of Mean Intentions to Intervene

	Deontological unethical condition		Deontological ethical condition	
	Teleological-Organizational		Teleological-Organizational	
	Negative consequences n = 77	Positive consequences n = 86	Positive consequences n = 102	Negative consequences n = 88
INTENTIONS TO INTERVENE				
Mean (SD)	1.636 (1.03)	2.047 (1.13)	6.618 (1.02)	6.352 (1.22)
F-value (p)	5.860 (.0167)		2.674 (.1039)	

ent consequences) had no significant influence on marketing professionals' research ethics judgment.

Although the reason for this is unclear, two plausible opinions are offered. The first conjecture is that, perhaps, marketing professionals view job demands and operating environment of researchers as different from other functional areas (for e.g., salesforce). Generally, researchers operate as staff personnel and their job demands adherence to standards and rules (e.g., the scientific method). In contrast, sales personnel have direct line management control and their job focuses on the consequences of their decisions, i.e., gains and losses from their actions (Akaah and Riordan 1989). In fact, "puffery" or non-malicious lying maybe considered part of the tool kit for salespersons. Consequently, the conjecture is that marketing professionals apply teleological moral philosophies that "... pertain to the moral worth of a behavior determined totally by the consequences of the behavior" in the case of sales personnel, and deontological philosophies "... principles of justice, basic rights, or rules designed for necessary and proper conduct..." in the case of researchers. Therefore, it is surmised marketing professionals' research ethics judgment appears to be influenced by values of deontological reasoning alone. The second conjecture relates to the intensity of the deontological treatment stimulus in the study that may have precluded considerations of teleological factors. As one anonymous reviewer has suggested that perhaps the study experimental scenario

which depicts compromising research integrity by lying about the results may be viewed as *too* intensive a deontological condition as to over shadow the teleological consequences presented in the scenario. It is conceivable that the teleological factors would be more likely to come into play when the deontological ethical violations were less egregious. Obviously, follow-up studies are needed for more conclusive results.

Another major finding is that both, ethical judgment and teleological evaluations significantly influence marketing professionals' choice of appropriate punishment or reward for ethical/unethical research behavior. Also, among the teleological evaluations only organizational consequences were significant but client consequences were not significant. Regarding marketing professionals' choice of appropriate reward/discipline for ethical/unethical research behavior, it appears to be guided primarily by ethical judgment and only marginally by teleological-organizational considerations.

The study results regarding marketing professionals' assessment of appropriateness of reward/punishment appear consistent with those reported in the literature concerning salespeople (Bellizzi and Hite 1989; Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga 1993; Menguc 1998). Generally, marketing professionals are of the viewpoint that punishment for unethical research behavior should be more severe when organizational consequences are

negative than when organizational consequences are positive. On the other hand, marketing professionals believe *mild encouraging feedback* to be appropriate reward for ethical research behavior. This low-key reward, much like a "pat-on-the-back," suggests that marketing professionals expect and view ethical research behavior as a norm, "this is the way we do things," rather than something that warrants expectation of additional rewards.

Implications

The study is based on the Hunt-Vitell model and provides mixed support of the model within the context of marketing research ethics. The results suggest that marketing professionals' ethical judgment may be influenced by only deontological evaluation process. But, on a more positive note, the study results validate the Hunt-Vitell model regarding marketing professionals' reliance on ethical judgment as well as teleological evaluation process in assessing the appropriateness of reward/discipline for ethical/unethical research behavior. Thus, while soundness of the Hunt-Vitell model cannot be denied, additional validation is clearly in order for more unequivocal results.

The functional area of marketing research, by nature, provides an operating environment of professionalism replete with rigorous and well-defined rules of conduct. Not surprisingly, the study results allude to this culture wherein marketing professionals' research ethics judgment are based upon the inherent rightness versus wrongness of a behavior (deontological evaluation process), irrespective of organizational or client consequences (teleological evaluation process). This implies that organizations can enhance research ethics by developing a corporate culture that nurtures strict adherence to standards and rules. A step in this direction would be to establish research ethics codes such as those of the American Marketing Association and its New York Chapter that spell out the kinds of deontologically unethical research behaviors marketers should avoid (Hunt, Chonko, and Wilcox, 1984). Clearly, codes must not only exist

but also be enforced uniformly and equitably (Ferrell and Skinner, 1988; Rosen and Jerdee, 1974). It is conceivable that such a corporate environment would deter unethical behavior to some extent. As Akaah and Riordan (1989, p. 119) point out "... marketing professionals who perceive fewer ethical problems in their organizations tend to disapprove more strongly of unethical/questionable research practices than those who perceive more ethical problems."

Limitations and Future Research

As in the case of any study involving ethics, the present one is not without limitations. Conceivably, some respondents could have given socially desirable or "holier than thou" responses in order to appear more ethical than they really are (Fry and Hock 1976; Staw and Swajkowski 1975). This study involved a factorial experimental design to generate the treatment scenarios, and a fairly large size randomly drawn sample. However, it does not eliminate potential social desirability bias. Therefore, the need to explicitly address this issue in ethics research is emphasized and additional discussion follows in the directions for future research section below. Another limitation concerns the specificity of the factor levels presented in the treatment scenarios. Although the factor levels in the scenarios were manipulated according to a full factorial experimental design, on hindsight, the operational specificity of factor levels could have been presented with greater clarity. For example, as one reviewer suggested that a better way to operationalize the deontological condition would have been to use statements such as: "*Because it is wrong to lie* (or as another anonymous reviewer suggested "*the right thing to do*"), *Brandon reported the actual study results despite known expectations of management of the client firm.*" Similarly, on hindsight, the intensity of the factor levels can be listed as another limitation. As discussed in the preceding section, it is likely that the extreme intensity of the deontologically unethical condition overshadowed the potential effects of teleological processes in the respondents' research ethics judgment and choice of interven-

tion. Whether a higher/lower discrete level of positive/negative consequences would affect respondents' ethical/unethical evaluations differently remains undetermined.

The study limitations offer directions for future research. Given the sensitive nature of the ethics topic, future investigators need to take necessary precautions to reduce concerns about social desirability bias. One approach would be to use Reynold's (1982) thirteen-item short-form version of the widely used Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne and Marlowe 1960) as an external measure to examine the degree to which responses to ethical questions correlate with this scale. Alternatively, the impression management and self-deception scales by Paulhus (1991) could be used to address the social desirability bias (Mick 1996). To ensure validity of the results, as suggested by an anonymous reviewer, it would be desirable to replicate the present research ethics study using a directory of marketing researchers as the sampling frame rather than the American Marketing Association directory. Additionally, it would be desirable to replicate the study with less egregious deontological factor levels in the study scenarios. Less intense deontologically unethical condition such as violating confidentiality, deception, or distortion of research results attributed to human or machine errors rather than deliberate attempt to compromise research integrity would more likely enable teleological factors to come into play. Also, researchers could experiment with a different conceptualization of the "levels" of the factors in order to learn if this leads to different conclusions. Findings of a study by Fritzsche (1988) lead one to believe that the results might differ somewhat, depending on the range of levels assumed by the factors. Not all the stakeholders in the research process were involved in the study experimental design. Therefore, researchers might also extend the present study by incorporating additional treatment factors. This might involve the inclusion of factors that capture the consequences of an ethical/unethical research behavior for stakeholders such as the general public, respondents, or the researcher himself. Additionally, emerging

literature on the role of trust in marketing research relationships (Moonman, Deshpande, and Zaltman 1993; Moonman, Zaltman, and Deshpande 1992), offer new opportunities to investigate the influence of trust on marketing professionals' ethics judgment and appropriate disciplinary intervention choices. Finally, future research might also explore the use of a different stimulus measurement format that could offer respondents more flexibility to express their action, given the likelihood for multiple rational behavioral responses to an ethical/unethical scenario. □

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Appendix A
Experimental Treatment Scenarios and Factor Levels

Deontologically unethical condition with negative teleological-client and negative teleological-organizational consequences

Brandon Hicks, a research project director at Marketing Consultants, Inc. has been asked by his boss to oversee a \$150,000 research project for one of the firm's major clients, Allframe Manufacturing. Management of the client firm anticipated research findings that would support introduction of the firm's new brand of storm windows. However, the actual study results were contrary to what management of the client firm had desired. To ensure continued business with the client firm, Brandon deliberately distorted the study results to support the viewpoint held by management of the client firm. Neither Brandon's boss nor management of the client firm knew of his tactic. Allframe Manufacturing acted upon the reported research results and introduced its new brand of storm windows--resulting in \$7,000,000 loss in revenue. Subsequently, Marketing Consultants, Inc. lost its business with the client firm.

Deontologically unethical condition with negative teleological-client and positive teleological-organizational consequences

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Inc. lost its business with the client firm when news of Brandon's tactic came to light.

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