THE IDENTIFICATION OF ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS USING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

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THE IDENTIFICATION OF ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS USING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

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Thesis

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Ethics?!! In today’s government, the lines of ethical justification have become multifaceted and blurred (Kujala, 2001). Because public administration ethical literature is comprised of an assortment of theories, there should be no question why there are inconsistencies when addressing ethical dilemmas. Rohr (1978) promotes high, middle, and low road approaches to understanding to ethical action. Cooper asserts that ethical decisions involve “substantive reasoning about obligations, consequences, and ultimate ends” (1982, p. 4). Gortner (1991) demonstrates an importance for incorporating personal, legal, cultural, and organizational values when ethical judgments are made. However, Ott explains that incorporating organizational culture provides “theories that are based on assumptions about organizations and people that depart radically from those of the mainline perspective” (1990, p. 479). Martinez (2009) provides the following concepts as central to affecting administrative ethics: virtue, legality, citizenship, social equity, and public interest. Regardless of the factors that can impact ethical decision making, the opening paragraph of Kathryn Denhardt’s *The Ethics of Public Service* clarifies the dilemma for the current public administration study.
Ethics in public administration suffers from the absence of a theoretical framework to supply definition, background, and a common frame of reference for the research and practice of ethical administration. No paradigm presently exists to provide a shared understanding of what “ethics” means when applied to the field of public administration (1988, p. 1).

Purpose

Although there are many theoretical approaches for ethical decision making, public administration is still “characterized by a tug of war between two dominant ethical frameworks” which are utilitarian and deontological. (Woller & Patterson, 1997, p. 103) This discussion is positioned between the foundational argument for a utilitarian framework constructed by Jeremy Bentham (1780) and a deontological framework constructed by Immanuel Kant (2009). Utilitarianism “looks beyond any given act itself to assess the contribution of an act towards the achieving of one’s purposes” (Woller & Patterson, 1997, p. 108), and “assert(s) that every action should have the goal of promoting the greatest happiness” (McAuliffe, 2006, p. 376). Whereas, “deontology does not look beyond the act itself to weigh it against a purpose or aim; it simply regards the act itself, as its duty” (Woller & Patterson, 1997, p. 108).

Although both frameworks provide guidance for ethical decision making, concerns arise regarding “leaders who accept the utilitarian calculation unreflectively with no sense of guilt about the moral norms they have broken” (Pasquerella & Killilea, 2005, p. 264). Pasquerella and Killilea are also “convinced that we would not want to be governed by people who consistently took the uncompromising ‘absolutists’ position” (2005, p. 264). Because of this paradox, the purpose of this study is to assess attitudes...
towards the Bentham and Kantian schools of thought concerning the foundation of public administration ethics.

Since the discussion of ethics in public administration literature includes both the utilitarian and deontological frameworks, (Martínez, 2009; McAuliffe, 2006; Pasquerella, & Killilea, 2005; Pasquerella, Killilea, & Vocino, 1996; Denhardt, 1988;) research questions relevant to this study assess students opinions regarding the ethical schools of thought provided by Bentham and Kant. Specifically, do students respond with preference to one of the two dominant schools of thought when considering ethical statements?

Study Design

This exploratory research was designed to develop and field test an original survey assessment. The primary objective of this instrument was to measure whether public administration students’ opinions were consistent with the central themes reflected in each ethical school of thought. Using a theoretical foundation of public administration literature regarding the Bentham and Kantian frameworks of ethics, research questions were developed. Although this is an exploratory study that includes developing a survey instrument, research questions assessing demographic variables imbedded within the survey were developed, and these questions are presented in the form of null hypotheses. The survey was administered using a convenience sample of individuals enrolled in master’s level courses in the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at The University of Akron during the 2009 spring semester. Findings from
statistical analyses and concluding remarks are provided with discussion and implications to the study of ethics in the field of public administration.

Below are the four null hypotheses used to investigate the research questions:

H1: There is no relationship between the mean level of responses for the utilitarian and deontological framework’s found within public administration ethics.

H2: No difference exists in mean scores of men and women regarding the utilitarian and deontological frameworks found within public administration ethics.

H3: No difference between group means based on ethnicity exists regarding the utilitarian and deontological frameworks found within public administration ethics.

H4: No difference between group means based on age exists regarding public administration framework statements of utilitarian and deontological responses.

Contribution

This study will contribute to the field of public administration by providing an empirical instrument that can be used to evaluate opinions regarding the dominant ethical frameworks. If the null hypotheses are not rejected, students’ responses do not reflect the body of public administrative ethical theory regarding the Bentham and Kantian schools of thought. If the null hypotheses are rejected, students’ responses reflect a view other than what public administration literature suggests.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides the foundational base of knowledge collected from public administration literature on ethics, from which a definition of ethics and public administration ethical frameworks are provided. Explanations of the utilitarian and deontological frameworks are offered along with the constructs that were used to define them. Inconsistencies with the frameworks are explained, as well as the implications they have had on ethics training and education. This chapter concludes with a brief rationale of the current research study.

Ethics Definitions

In order to begin rationale for this study, a definition of ethics is imperative. The term ethics originates from the Greek word “ethikos,” which refers to character or customs (Abelson & Nielson, 1967). Denhardt identifies ethics as “the contemporary standards of conduct that may change with time as a better understanding of absolute moral standards become evident” (1988, p. 9). “The term public service ethics refers . . . the principles and standards of right conduct in the administrative sphere of government” (Chapman, 1993, p. 16). Whether those moral standards are incorporated in personal or public service ethics, societies play a role in establishing behavior according
to culturally relevant values (Gortner, 1991). Using subjective values as the primary source of an ethical decision in public administration however, would set up the premise for a chaotic state of ethical behavior (Waldo, 1980). This study does not attempt to promote a decision as the right or wrong ethical choice. The intention is to acknowledge values being present in an ethical judgment.

The values used in this study were identified within the utilitarian or deontological schools of thought. The occurrence of these value sets distinguishes an action’s ethical nature. An action is ethical in nature based on the intent that either does or does not contain an ethical component regarding the values. The primary distinction is deciphered on the identification of an ethical component present in the intent of an action, rather than the judgment of an action being right and wrong, or moral and immoral. The interest of this study is not whether an action is right or wrong, but the presence of an over-arching set of presumptions that determines if an action is right or wrong.

Public Administration Ethical Frameworks

Public administration has adopted the use of theoretical frameworks to provide overarching sets of presumptions. Ethical frameworks within public administration “emphasize the need for ethical deliberation, provide procedural and normative guidance, foster organizational environments that encourage ethical behavior, and aid in the process of holding administrators accountable” (Denhardt, 1988, p. 3). Therefore, frameworks supply focus, definition, and a justification for decision-making.

Public administration recognizes that different levels of ethical judgment exists (White, 1999), and Shafritz and Russell (2005) developed a hierarchy of ethics in order to
explain those dimensions of ethical thought. The first level relates to an internal view of right and wrong. The second hierarchy relates to an external view of ethics that includes adherence to professional guidelines established by associations such as the American Society for Public Administration and the International City County Management Association. The third level incorporates organizational culture’s formal and informal rules of ethical conduct. The final progression in the hierarchy includes judgments regarding social ethics that obligate actions that protect individuals while still forging progress of the group as a whole. Progression through the hierarchy provides differentiations between internal/personal and external/professional obligations (Shafritz & Russell, 2005).

Also acknowledging a hierarchy of ethical decisions, Bishop, Connors, and Sampford reason that “when principles . . . conflict with one another, . . . identify a higher or more encompassing principle in order to settle the argument. From this view, a clear hierarchy of principles should enable us to tell the difference between right and wrong” (2003, p. 69). Bowman and Wall (1997) also provide evidence a hierarchy of ethical obligations through a case study involving Surgeon General C. Everett Koop.

Along with ethical dimensions, public administration also incorporates culturally relevant values that help guide decisions (Stewart, 1991). Lewis explains that culture is particularly important to an understanding of ethical norms and behavior in public service for three reasons. First, public service itself may be considered as a subculture in which symbolic communication is both common and crucial. Second, organizations are the context for decision and action in contemporary public service and organizational norms and standard operating procedures frame decision by making by individuals. Third public service is affected by the advent of professionalism (2005, p. 46).
The promotion of differing values creates an argument for differing frameworks. Regardless of the number of differing cultural values, or dimensions incorporated within public administrative ethical frameworks, “it is widely accepted that decision makers use a framework to sort and accept ethical claims” (Lewis, 2005, p. 47).

Within public administration “two normative frameworks [utilitarian and deontology] are considered for understanding administrators decisions with respect to an ethical dilemma” (Jung, Strate, & Leiflein, 2007, p. 351). Jeremy Bentham (1780) and Immanuel Kant (2009) are credited with the establishing the two prominent ethical frameworks that occur within public administration literature (Martinez, 2009; McAuliffe, 2006; Pasquerella, & Killilea, 2005; Pasquerella, Killilea, & Vocino, 1996; Denhardt, 1988). Central arguments found within Bentham’s theory are used to construct the utilitarian framework and hope to resolve ethical dilemmas by responding to the question of “What will provide the most good for the greatest number of people?” Central arguments found within Kant’s theory are used construct the deontological framework, and hope to resolve ethical dilemmas by responding to the question of “What should be my duty?” (Sekerka & Zolin, 2007, p. 229). Both Bentham and Kant provide the foundational frameworks that this study used when assessing students ethical decision making. After defining the central arguments for each dominant theory, this study investigates master’s of public administration students’ attitudes toward those ethical frameworks.
Utilitarianism

Originally conceived by the work of Jeremy Bentham (1780), and furthered by the work of John Stuart Mill (1861), the classic utilitarian framework promotes selecting a choice of action among a set of alternatives that will produce the most optimal result (Brady & Woller, 1996). The five constructs described below provide structure for the utilitarian framework that this study addressed. These five constructs are central and unique to this framework.

Construct of Nature

The classic utilitarian construct of nature promotes looking beyond the purpose of an action in order to assess its contribution towards a larger scope (Woller & Patterson, 1997). This ideology is more commonly expressed as ends justifying means used. This unique distinction is specific to the utilitarian framework, and provides justification for an ethically questionable action in the pursuit of a more ethical action.

Construct of Implicit Principles

The classic utilitarian framework incorporates implicit principles. An implicit principle relates to a value that is used to decipher the ethical judgment of an action. These are subjective in that a person determines the level of adherence internally. The maximization of good is an implicit principle that the classic utilitarian theory promotes. Utilitarianism is concerned with The Greatest Happiness Principle, which encourages the greatest good for the greatest number of people (Bentham, 1780; Mill, 1861). According
to The Greatest Happiness Principle, “one should choose the maximum benefit and minimize the evil or negative outcome for all parties” (Lally & Schultz, 2006, p. 338).

*Construct of Situational Characteristics*

Classic utilitarian theory does not rely on adherence to rules because circumstances are subject to new information (Brady & Woller, 1996). Although utilitarian belief acknowledges that rules are important guidelines, exceptions to those rules will occur (Garafalo & Geuras, 2006). Since “strict adherence . . . might sometimes compromise maximal value, selective obedience to general rules in the context of each situation affords an alternative such that no rule is absolute or unequivocal if its violation might result in the greater good” (Lally & Schultz, 2006, p. 339). In addition, since different situations warrant different treatment, this construct does not mandate equal treatment for all, or the same treatment for the same interests. “Utilitarian administrators require the ability to distinguish from situation to situation when abandonment of decision making rules is appropriate” (Brady & Woller, 1996, p. 320).

*Construct of Consequences*

“Utilitarian theory is based on the premise that the balance of good and bad consequences of an action serve to justify whether it is right or wrong” (Lally & Schultz, 2006, p. 338). Therefore, the classic utilitarian framework is consequentialist; as the term suggests, consequentialism “is the doctrine that the value of an action lies in its results” (Nieuwenburg, 2007, p. 215). McNaughton and Rawling (1998) explain that consequences form the basis for moral judgment about the action. Thus, from a
consequential standpoint, a morally right action is one that produces a superior outcome, or consequence.

*Construct of Utility*

Because public administration is more comprehensive in scope than executing policies, the classic utilitarian belief also promotes the construct of utility, which identifies the moral worth of an action as being determined by the usefulness of the action (Stewart, 1991). Interpreting the basic assumption of utility, Brady and Woller state:

> Daily, public administrators make judgments of utility regarding everything from resources allocations hiring and firing or the prospects for one’s personal career to impacts on local state, national and even international issues. In each case the decision comes down to which course of action will produce the desired outcome. Judgments of utility are resolved through a complex process of rationally assessing and comparing alternatives and choosing the one that produces the greatest sum of benefits over costs (1996, p. 310).

*Deontology*

Originally conceived by the work of Immanuel Kant (2009), the deontological framework promotes ethical action as adherence to moral obligation. By definition of this framework, ethical judgments are determined by moral principles from which rules are logically deduced (Woller & Patterson, 1997), and “the moral worth of these rules is not dependent on any underlying principle or on the outcome of an action” (Bishop, Connors, & Sampford, 2003, p. 219). The five constructs described below provide the structure for the deontological framework that this study addresses. These constructs are central and unique to this framework.
Construct of Nature

The deontology construct of nature promotes ethical actions by the degree of fulfillment to an obligation from a direct rule (Schminke & Wells, 1999). The “foundation of work derives from the obligations and mandates of the profession” (Stewart, 1991, p. 156), and according to Sekerka and Zolin public administrators “frequently assume that following the rules are a necessary baseline for ethical behavior” (2007, p. 227).

Construct of Explicit Principles

“Another aspect of deontology is its absolutists or peremptory character” (Nieuwenburg, 2007, p. 220). “In deontological ethics, a set of explicit rules guides decision making, and each rule is absolute which prescribes specific behaviors” (Bishop, Connors, & Sampford, 2003, p. 219). Explicit principles are fixed rules used to decipher the ethical judgment of an action. These principles are applied to a decision independently of any desired outcome. Expressing the influence of rules on decision makers, Merton (1957) also argues that administrators tend to adhere to organizational procedures, which become valid in their own right.

Construct of Universal Characteristics

Deontology incorporates universal characteristics into the framework as generalized judgments that are agreed upon as moral, and adopted by society as a whole. “A community has accepted these roles as the authoritative rules for governing societal
behavior” (Bishop, Connors, & Sampford, 2003, p. 219), and “everyone must admit if a law is morally valid” (Kant, 2009, p. 2).

Construct of Consequences

“In deontological ethics, consequences are immaterial” (McAuliffe, 2006, p. 376), and the theory does not promote consequences as determinants of moral action; rather, an act will remain morally sound even if it results in unfortunate consequences (Garafalo & Geuras, 2006). Specifically, Garafalo and Geuras state that “all rational beings should be treated as ends in themselves and not merely as means” (2006, p. 106).

Construct of Duty

Promoting the construct of duty, Kant’s second formulation states that, a will is good “not because of what it effects or accomplishes, nor because of its fitness to attain some purpose end... [but because] it is good in itself” (2009, p. 7). According to the deontological framework, the moral worth of an action is defined by the duty of the action, with Finer asserting that “externally sanctioned duty is. . . the dominant consideration for public administration” (1941, p. 186).

Inconsistencies

Because “no other distinction has been so important for Western ethical theory than the one between deontology and utilitarianism, . . . most developments in public administration ethics place themselves in one of these two ethical camps” (Woller & Patterson, 1997, p. 108). Although “the utilitarian and deontological moral theories both
provide important considerations in framing the ethical issues . . . neither provides clear cut answers” (Lally & Schultz, 2006 p. 341). Specific inconsistencies regard empirical evidence and practical application. The theories are abstract with little meaningful relevance, and fail to resolve moral dilemmas (Solomon, 1992). Because of their inconsistencies with practical application “ethical problems in government have no clear resolution in part because public servants do not have a clear public ethic to guide their deliberations” (Bowman, 1997, p. 251).

Each framework also creates its own ethical concerns of validity. Whitman states that the “coldly calculating nature of utilitarian thinking, along with its emphasis solely on the consequences of actions, tends to ignore other equally important aspects of moral value and moral life” (2006-07, p. 31) Specifically, the utilitarian framework also squanders innovation because standards that define an ethical choice are subjective, with no established criterion. With no criterion stating when administrators should seek more ethical answers, the best one can hope for is a satisfactory decision (Brady & Woller, 1996; Maclntry, 1981; Tribe, 1973). Adherence to the utilitarian framework also reduces performance. A need for efficiency limits time allotments for reviewing situational characteristics, as well as alternative choices that maximize good (Heiner, 1986). Additionally, performance is reduced if uncertainty exists about information required to make a decision (Heiner, 1986).

Inconsistencies with the deontological framework also arise from its prescriptive rather than descriptive nature. Universal truths are hard to decipher because of differences between cultures (Stewart, 1991). In addition, strict adherence to rule guided behavior may produce negative results because “rules are imperfect, and if not carefully
constructed, they can be hasty, overly broad, too restrictive, misaimed, and vague” (Brady & Woller, 1996, p. 321). Rules can also be misapplied, which accounts for inconsistent enforcement (Brady & Woller, 1996).

Ethics Training

Not only are there inconsistencies with each theory, but ethics training does not adequately prepare public officials (Brady & Woller, 1996). “Conflicting advice is given to practitioners by the public administration ethics literature because existing theories . . . lack external validity and construct validity” (Bowman & Wall, 1997, p. 251). Although public administration has structured training that provides a code of ethics, as well as exposure to ethical dilemmas, “ethics training tends to be rule or compliance oriented, legalistic, and superficial, and therefore also tends to include cynicism, boredom, and passivity” (Garofalo, 2003, p. 491). Ethics training lacks a genuine component of reality, which would bridge theory with decision-making. Because of this gap, individual and organizational perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors are not affected (Garofalo, 2003).

Ethics Education

Providing a valid educational base is imperative for the utility and retention of the subject. The issues regarding ethics training prompts ethics education to consider how applicable the information is in practice. Identifying the realistic components of public administration ethical thought is a critical step in creating a valid educational base. Public administration literature promotes three main methods in which ethics education is
conveyed. Textbooks are the most common method of public administration ethics education (Garofalo & Geuras 2006; Lewis, 2005; Gortner, 1991; and Cooper, 1982). Commonly, case studies that exemplify ethical behavior are also utilized because of the real life perspectives they provide for students (Rugeley & Van Wart, 2006; and Bowman & Wall, 1997). The use of fiction like *Let it Bleed, The Back Ice, Antigone, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* and *Harrison Bergeron* are also utilized because of the ethically complex content (Gormley, 2001; and Marini, 1992). Regardless of the ways in which ethics education is formatted, Brady and Woller state that, “the existing literature on administrative ethics, has not yet addressed, much yet answered” the validity of the competing frameworks (1996, p. 311).

Current Study

Public administration literature often categorizes the discussion of ethics into either a utilitarian or a deontological framework, yet “to ignore either theory would produce a fragmented picture of administrative decision making” (Brady & Woller, 1996, p. 320). It is apparent that not only do both theories have foundational cracks, but both are also inconsistent with how decision makers decipher ethical action. Studies have attempted to construct the reality of decision-making, but according to Brady and Woller, “an attempt must be made to examine the relation of each model to the existence of rule-guided behavior” (1996, p. 318). This study evaluates opinions regarding the dominant ethical frameworks by creating a survey composed of positive statements from each of the constructs identified for the utilitarian and deontological frameworks.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides the structure of the study, as well as the rationale behind the research hypotheses. An explanation for the construction of the survey is provided by discussing the primary objective of the instrument, its constructs, and development methods. This chapter concludes with information regarding the participants.

Research Design

A quantitative research design with primary data collection was utilized in order to field test an original survey instrument. The purpose of the survey instrument was to evaluate opinions regarding dominant frameworks within public administration ethical thought. Central variables relate to utilitarian and deontological frameworks. Specifically the constructs of nature of an action, implicit principles, situational characteristics, consequences, and utility represent the independent variable of the utilitarian framework. Constructs of nature of an action, explicit principles, universal characteristics, consequences, and duty represent the independent variable of the deontological framework. Dependent variables relate to the demographic characteristics of gender, ethnicity, and age.
Research Hypotheses

Since Bowman stated that “in both practice and theory, the ethical implications of administrative and political conduct remain largely unexplored” (1983, p. 71), “more scholars have been engaged in this enterprise than any other period in recent memory” (Menzel, 2005, p. 147). As a result, there are many ways in which ethical frameworks affect decision making. Several factors are attributed to influence the ways ethics are applied (Kujala, 2001). The primary variables of interest are the dominant ethical frameworks within public administration. Since the discussion of ethics in public administration literature includes both the utilitarian and deontological frameworks, this study sought to empirically evaluate opinions regarding the constructs that comprise each frame (Martinez, 2009; Denhardt, 1988; Pasquerella, Killilea, & Vocino, 1996). This study evaluates preference for the utilitarian and deontological frameworks through the use of constructs that define those frameworks. All items were positively stated in order to promote agreement with the framework of origin. Assuming the responses between the framework scales differentiate,

HA1: Regarding public administration ethical frameworks, utilitarian responses will correlate with deontological responses.

While framework preference is expected to be the primary explanatory variable, the impact of other demographic factors is also explored. Specifically, gender is a variable of interest. Resulting from an empirical study of public accountants regarding willingness to partake in ethically questionable activities, Cohen at al. (1998) concluded that women have a higher sense of ethically sound considerations. Assessing cross-cultural application, the Stewart-Sprinthall Management Survey provided results that
suggest Polish women were more likely to prefer “a model of ethical reasoning characterized by concern for abstract principles” (Stewart, Siemienska, & Sprinthall, 1999, p. 237).

**HA2:** Regarding the utilitarian and deontological framework’s found within public administration ethics, women will respond with greater preference than their male counterparts.

Ethnicity is also a variable of interest. Although the “relationship between race and ethics has not been extensively explored” (Adkins & Radtke, 2004, p. 284), Stewart (1988) promotes culturally relative value judgments that help decipher ethical decisions.

**HA3:** Regarding the utilitarian and deontological framework’s found within public administration ethics, at least one difference between group means based on ethnicity exists in the sample population.

The final demographic variable of interest is age. With predominant voice for deontology, Kohlberg (1969) asserts becoming more aware of ethical issues with maturity. Because maturity is difficult to measure through survey methods, age of respondent was be substituted.

**H4:** Regarding the utilitarian and deontological framework’s found within public administration ethics, at least one difference between group means based on age exists in the sample population.

**Instrument Development**

The survey instrument was developed based on a preliminary idea by Kujala (2001). In a quest to construct a multidimensional approach for ethical decisions, she analyzed responses from four ethical scenarios. The criterion used for analysis represented six theoretical bodies within ethics. Because this study focuses on two dominant public administration theories, the need for alterations was obvious. However,
identifying constructs that can be used to gauge adherence to theory was key in proving the validity of each framework.

**Constructs**

Theoretical research was conducted that identified premises for both the utilitarian and the deontological frameworks. Ten central themes were identified and adopted as constructs for each theory. As previously defined, constructs for the utilitarian framework were the nature of an action, situational characteristics, implicit principles, consequences, and utility. Constructs for the deontological framework were the nature of an action, universal characteristics, explicit principles, consequences, and duty.

**Dimensions of the Constructs**

Each of the constructs was formatted into statements for the survey instrument. Statements were posed in a way that promoted agreement with one of the traditional frameworks. If responses to the statements mimic theoretical responses, ethical thought should arise solely from one of the two frameworks. Agreement should occur with one set of ten statements, prompting disagreement from the second.

Shafritz and Russell’s (2005) hierarchy of public administration ethics, as well as Bowman and Wall’s (1997) evidence for the differentiation of ethical obligation, provided the theoretical piece used to incorporate a dimensional feature of ethical opinion. The dimensional aspect posed statements that assessed obligations to a personal and public administration ethical incorporation. Table 3.1 provides the utilitarian ethical
frame. Table 3.2 provides deontological ethical frame. These twenty questions were renumbered and included in the administered survey packet provided in Appendix B.
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<th>Public Administration</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nature</strong></td>
<td>I feel that personal ethical decisions are best when the results justify any methods used.</td>
<td>When making ethical decisions, bureaucrats need to consider each person as an individual.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Situational Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>When making ethical judgments, I believe it is important to incorporate the situation at hand.</td>
<td>A public administrator should ensure that each person is guaranteed the greatest possible liberty that does not interfere with the liberty of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implicit principles</strong></td>
<td>I believe my ethical judgments are based upon the internal qualities of an action.</td>
<td>In public administration, the purpose of all social and political institutions is to promote the greatest amount of happiness for the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consequences</strong></td>
<td>I believe that the rightness or wrongness of an action should be evaluated by its consequences.</td>
<td>Regarding the public sector, some ethical rules are made to be broken because actions should be evaluated based on consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utility</strong></td>
<td>The righteousness of an action is determined by how useful it is</td>
<td>Political and administrative decisions should be guided by applications such as cost-benefit analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1 Utilitarian Ethical Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Public Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature</strong></td>
<td>I feel that each decision has an ethical element which cannot be overlooked for the greater good.</td>
<td>Regarding public administration ethical decisions, the rightness of an action is independent of the nature of the action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universal Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>I believe there are universal characteristics that dictate my ethical decisions.</td>
<td>Considering the public sector, ethical criteria are determined by conformity to an existing universal moral standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explicit Principles</strong></td>
<td>It is important to me that I act according to explicit principles.</td>
<td>Public administrators are obligated to make certain ethical decisions based on principles found outside the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consequences</strong></td>
<td>Some actions are wrong no matter what consequences arise.</td>
<td>Public administrators should be unconditionally honest rather than those who lie about “hot button” issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty</strong></td>
<td>I believe that in order to act in the morally right way, people must act according to duty.</td>
<td>Public administrators should treat people as a means, and at the same time as an end to meeting an objective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.2 Deontological Ethical Frame
Operationalization of the Constructs

Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement to each statement using a Likert scale. A response of one denoted “Strongly Disagree” and a response of five denoted “Strongly Agree”.

Validation of the Instrument

The twenty statements were randomly assigned numerical order within the survey. Multiple choice items were added to determine basic demographic information. Because the survey instrument was designed to be anonymous, an informed consent waiver was attached to each survey. Berman references face validity as “assessing the common sense of the measures” (2007, p. 53). Ensuring the face validity of these statements, the survey packet was reviewed by three thesis committee members including a specialist in ethics, as well as a specialist in research design methods and evaluation. Additionally, feedback was obtained from three research associates working within social policy research, as well a pilot group containing five individuals. Upon consideration of all suggestions and revisions, the finalized survey packet is provided in Appendix B.

Participants

A convenience sample of participants included individuals enrolled in master’s level courses within the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at The University of Akron during the 2009 spring semester. After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval from The University of Akron, as well as permission to recruit participants from the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies, each
A professor teaching in that department during the 2009 spring semester at the University of Akron was approached via a standardized email regarding the solicitation of students in their class/es for the voluntary participation in this study. Voluntary participation from the 9 classes yielded 63 surveys.

Conclusion

In conclusion this exploratory study was designed to field test an original survey instrument through the use of primary data collection. This 20 item survey sought to evaluate opinions regarding preference to the Bentham and Kantian schools of ethical thought. Survey questions were developed in order to investigate relationships between dependent variables relating to demographic characteristics and the independent variables of utilitarian and deontological frameworks. Level of agreement with the statements was recorded using a Likert scale ranging from one (“Strongly Disagree”) to five (“Strongly Agree”). After expert review and feedback from researchers and a pilot group were incorporated into the instrument, a convenience sample of participants enrolled in master’s level courses was administered in the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at The University of Akron during the 2009 spring semester.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Introduction

The following chapter provides results obtained from the data collected for this study. Rationale is provided to explain the statistical analysis used for each hypothesis.

Participants’ Results

A convenience sample of voluntary participation from nine master’s level courses yielded 63 surveys from individuals enrolled in the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at The University of Akron during the 2009 spring semester. Of those 63 surveys received, five were identified as incomplete with one or more statements having no response. Specifically, only 2 of the 5 failed to respond to more than one statement. A response was calculated from the overall average of subset scores for the three surveys missing one response. With this modification complete, 61 of the 63 (96.8%) surveys collected were viable for further analysis.

The breakdown of demographic information presented here relates to the convenience sample of master’s of public administration students at The University of Akron only. Because this exploratory research was designed to develop and field test a survey, no comparisons to the overall master’s of public administration student body were made. In terms of personal demographics, gender was represented with 32 males
(52.5%) and 29 females (47.5%). The majority (75.4%, n = 46) of the participants were under the age of 36. Roughly half (54.0%) of the respondents identified their ethnicity as Caucasian (n = 33), with an additional 12 of the respondents reporting African American (19.7%). Table 4.1 reflects the demographic information regarding the 61 participants.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Demographics Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/ Pacific Islander</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 &amp; below</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 &amp; above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding previous volunteer and professional experience, multiple choice questions allowed respondents to report their contributions to the public sector. Not only has the majority of the participants volunteered in the public sector (73.8%, n = 45), but they have also (68.9%, n=42) contributed professionally; only 33 (54.1%) participants reported currently being employed in the public sector.
Instrument Validity and Reliability Results

The following analyses were used in order to statistically test the instrument’s validity and reliability. Factor Analysis and Cronbach’s Alpha were conducted in order to investigate the statistical significance of the instrument’s assessments of the utilitarian and deontological ethical statements.

Factor Analysis

Attempting to assess internal validity, responses from all 20 statements were first analyzed with a principle component factor analysis using a verimax rotation method. Berman states that “a factor analysis is a well established technique that uses correlations among variables to identify subgroups” (2007, p. 280). The goal of the principal component analysis with a verimax rotation is to identify existing factors and extract maximum variance by pronouncing higher and lower loadings for each factor (Tabachnik & Fidell, 1989). As an initial test for the internal validity of this instrument, a principle component analysis leads to a “cleaner and more interpretable factor solution” (Kujala, 2001, p. 236). For the purpose of interpretation, acceptable factor analysis correlation standards are considered only if their values are at least .50 (Berman, 2007). Results from the overall loadings of the statements are as follows. Nineteen of the twenty statements loaded into nine overall factors with correlations of .50 or higher. Factor 7 is the only factor composed of one statement. One statement loaded into two factors with acceptable correlations. Table 4.2 provides the findings of the factor analysis.
Utilitarian Constructs

Nine of the ten utilitarian statements loaded into factors that provided the following information. The utilitarian statement reading “Political and administrative decisions should be guided by applications such as cost-benefit analysis,” was the only statement that did not load with acceptable correlations. The other nine utilitarian statements loaded into the factors except factors 6 and 7. All five statements assessing the personal dimension loaded into factors 1, 5, and 8. Four of the five statements assessing a personal dimension of utilitarian beliefs loaded into factors 2, 3, and 4. Factor 3 was solely composed of utilitarian statements that addressed a public administration dimension. The only statement that loaded into two factors with acceptable correlations was “A public administrator should ensure that each person is guaranteed the greatest possible liberty that does not interfere with the liberty of others.”

Deontological Constructs

All ten deontological statements loaded into factors that provided the following information. Deontological statements loaded into each factor except factor 3. Factor 7 was the only factor that loaded by itself. All five statements assessing the personal dimension loaded into factors 1, 6, 7, and 8. All five of the statements assessing a personal dimension of Deontological beliefs loaded into factors 2, 4, 5, 6 and 9. Factors 6 and 7 were solely composed of Deontological statements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I believe my ethical judgments are based upon the internal qualities of an action. (UT PE)</td>
<td>.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I believe that in order to act in the morally right way, people must act according to duty. (DE PE)</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I believe that the rightness or wrongness of an action should be evaluated by its consequences. (UT PE)</td>
<td>.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is important to me that I act according to explicit principles. (DE PE)</td>
<td>.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Public administrators should be unconditionally honest rather than those who lie about “hot button” issues. (DE PA)</td>
<td>.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When making ethical decisions, bureaucrats need to consider each person as an individual. (UT PA)</td>
<td>.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A public administrator should ensure that each person is guaranteed the greatest possible liberty that does not interfere with the liberty of others. (UT PA) ***</td>
<td>.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In public administration, the purpose of all social and political institutions is to promote the greatest amount of happiness for the community. (UT PA)</td>
<td>.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A public administrator should ensure that each person is guaranteed the greatest possible liberty that does not interfere with the liberty of others. (UT PA) ***</td>
<td>.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regarding the public sector, some ethical rules are made to be broken because actions should be evaluated based on consequences. (UT PA)</td>
<td>.863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public administrators are obligated to make certain ethical decisions based on principles found outside the situation. (DE PA)</td>
<td>.778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I feel that personal ethical decisions are best when the results justify any methods used. (UT PE)</td>
<td>.745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public administrators should treat people as a means, and at the same time as an end to meeting an objective. (DE PA)</td>
<td>.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I feel that each decision has an ethical element which cannot be overlooked for the greater good. (DE PE)</td>
<td>.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Considering the public sector, ethical criteria are determined by conformity to an existing universal moral standard. (DE PA)</td>
<td>.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Some actions are wrong no matter what consequences arise. (DE PE)</td>
<td>.618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The rightness of an action is determined by how useful it is. (UT PE)</td>
<td>.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I believe there are universal characteristics that dictate my ethical decisions. (DE PE)</td>
<td>.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regarding public administration ethical decisions, the rightness of an action is independent of the nature of the action. (DE PA)</td>
<td>.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When making ethical judgments, I believe it is important to incorporate the situation at hand. (UT PE)</td>
<td>.503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Denotes the statement loaded into two factors
UT = Utilitarian construct; DE = Deontological construct
PE = Personal dimension; PA = Public administration dimension
Cronbach’s Alpha

Cronbach’s Alpha provided another dimension to measure internal consistency among the two groups of items (Walonick, 1994). Rather than reviewing how the independent statements addressed the constructs within the survey, Cronbach’s Alpha validates the reliability of how each set of 10 statements assessed the theoretical framework. A Cronbach’s Alpha of .688 was calculated for all 20 items. The average mean score for this set of statements was 76.38 with a standard deviation of 7.488. Dropping the lowest correlated item (Some actions are wrong or matter what consequences arise. \( r = .101 \)) would raise the overall Cronbach’s Alpha to .692.

Utilitarian Constructs

Analyzing the survey by the ten statements that composed the utilitarian framework provided a Cronbach’s Alpha of .570. The average mean score for this set of statements was 39.25 with a standard deviation of 4.693. Dropping the lowest correlated item (Political and administrative decision should be guided by applications such as cost-benefit analysis and not guided by personal attitudes. \( r = .061 \)) would raise Cronbach’s Alpha to .595.

The five personal utilitarian statements in a Cronbach’s Alpha of .500. The average mean score for this set of statements was 20.64 with a standard deviation of 3.141. Dropping the lowest correlated item (When making ethical judgments, I believe it is important to incorporate the situation at hand. \( r = .075 \)) would raise Cronbach’s Alpha to .527.
The five public administration utilitarian statements resulted in Cronbach’s Alpha of .234. The average mean score for this set of statements was 18.61 with a standard deviation of 2.445. Dropping the lowest correlated item (Political and administrative decision should be guided by applications such as cost-benefit analysis and not guided by personal attitudes. \( r = -.010 \)) would raise Cronbach’s Alpha to .326.

\[ \text{Deontological Constructs} \]

Analyzing the survey by the ten statements that composed the deontological scale provided a Cronbach’s Alpha of .513. The average mean score for this set of statements was 37.13 with a standard deviation of 4.023. Dropping the lowest correlated item (Regarding public administration, and I believe that the rightness of an action is independent of the nature of the action. \( r = .038 \)) would raise Cronbach’s Alpha to .539.

The five public administration deontological statements resulted in a Cronbach’s Alpha of .187. The average mean score for this set of statements was 18.10 with a standard deviation of 2.189. Dropping the lowest correlated item (I prefer a public administrators who are unconditionally honest rather than those who lie to me about hot button issues. \( r = .049 \)) would raise Cronbach’s Alpha to .258.

The five personal Deontological statements resulted in a Cronbach’s Alpha of .585. The average mean score for this set of statements was 22.66 with a standard deviation of 3.219. Dropping the lowest correlated item (I feel that each decision has an ethical element which cannot be overlooked for the greater good. \( r = .192 \)) would raise Cronbach’s Alpha to .593.
Hypothesis Testing Results

The following analyses were used in order to statistically evaluate the four null hypotheses posed for this study. Statistical analyses of Cluster Sampling Analysis, Pearson’s Correlation, Independent Sample t-Test, as well as Analyses of Variances were conducted in order to investigate the statistical significance of the null hypotheses.

*Cluster Sampling Analysis*

According to Berman “cluster analysis aim to identify key dimensions along which observations rather than variables differ” (2007, p. 281). This analysis provides an idea of how many overall group responses were found. Public administration literature provides rationale for two definitive clusters of responses. This implies that individuals who respond high to utilitarian scores should respond low to deontological scores, and the vice versa. However, a two step cluster analysis of those surveyed grouped the responses into one cluster of high utilitarian and high deontological scores. There were no distinct utilitarian or deontological score clusters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilitarian</th>
<th>Deontological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High UT/ Low DE</td>
<td>High UT /High DE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low UT / Low DE</td>
<td>Low UT / High DE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theory provides argument for shaded areas.**

Figure 4.3 Utilitarian and Deontological Theoretical Responses
**Pearson’s Correlation**

With cluster analysis results suggesting no group differentiation in responses, how the one cluster responded was addressed by a Pearson’s Correlation. Null hypothesis (H1) states that there is no relationship between the mean level of responses for the utilitarian and deontological framework’s found within public administration ethics. “Person’s Correlation measures the association in significance and strength between two continuous variables” (Berman, 2007, p. 204). Although Likert scales measures are ordinal, having five categories allows treatment as such (Berman, 2007). In attempt to discover the relationship between framework scores, the overall utilitarian mean score (m = 3.57) was correlated with the overall deontological mean score (m = 3.71). A moderate positive Pearson’s Correlation (r = .473) was found to be significant at the .000 level. This study rejects null hypothesis 1, which states there is no relationship between utilitarian and deontological responses. The correlations between utilitarian and deontological responses is (.473) moderately positive. Figure 4.4 expresses the findings.
Independent Sample t – Test

To address how gender influences mean levels of the utilitarian and deontological scores, Independent t- test were generated. This test statistic was used to address H2 that states no difference exists in mean scores of men and women regarding the utilitarian and deontological frameworks found within public administration ethics. “Independent t-Tests are used to test whether the means of a continuous variable differ across two different groups” (Berman, 2007, p.180). Results indicated a lack of statistically significant results between men and women responses to both the utilitarian and deontological items. This study fails to reject null hypothesis 2, and states that no statistically significant difference exists in mean scores between men and women’s
utilitarian and deontological responses. Table 4.5 provides information regarding mean levels of male and female scores.

![Table 4.5 Independent t – Test Gender Results](image)

### Analysis of Variance

Addressing the relationship of ethnicity to the mean levels of utilitarian and deontological scores, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was calculated. Both H4 and H5 contain variables that require an ANOVA to address the hypothesis. An Analysis of Variance is used for testing means of a continuous variable across more than two groups (Berman, 2007). Both dependent variables of ethnicity and age meet this requirement.

Because of an insufficient number of responses observed in the Hispanic/Latino category, responses were combined with the responses of Asian/Pacific Islander. This modification was completed in order to increase statistical leverage of that group. Because insufficient numbers of responses were observed in the 46 – 55, and 56 and above categories, the three responses observed in those age brackets were filtered out rather than included into
a substantially different age group. These measures comply with the assumptions of the ANOVA. However, results indicate a lack of statistically significant responses between the groups of differing ethnicities, and age. This study fails to reject null hypothesis 3, and states that no statistically significant difference in mean scores exists between ethnicity groups’ utilitarian and deontological responses. This study also fails to reject null hypothesis 4 and states that no statistically significant difference exists in mean scores between age groups’ utilitarian and deontological responses. Tables 4.6 and 4.7 provide information regarding how ethnicity and age related to mean level responses relating to with the utilitarian and deontological subscales.

Table 4.6 ANOVA Ethnicity Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>UT Mean</th>
<th>UT SD</th>
<th>DE Mean</th>
<th>DE SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Asian/ Pacific Islander</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: ANOVA Ethnicity Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>F-Test</th>
<th>p.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT Mean</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>9.82</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE Mean</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.7 ANOVA Age Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Bracket</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>UT Mean</th>
<th>UT SD</th>
<th>DE Mean</th>
<th>DE SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 – 25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 – 35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***3 respondents who reported being in the 46 and above age brackets were filtered out in order to comply with ANOVA assumptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>F-Test</th>
<th>p.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>9.85</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>9.80</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

In conclusion, the principle component factor analysis of the survey items extracted nine factors. The instrument as a whole, calculated a Cronbach’s Alpha of .688. Because of a lack of statistically significant results, null hypotheses two, three, and four failed to reject and state that there were no differences in mean scores between gender, ethnicity, and age to the utilitarian and deontological framework’s found within public administration ethics. H1 that reads there is no relationship between the mean level of responses for the utilitarian and deontological framework’s found within public administration ethics was rejected and implies that there is a relationship between responses to the two.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

A number of discussion points regarding the results and implications, as well as directions for future research, are discussed in this chapter. Discussion points address the limitations of the study that included a small highly cohesive convenience sample of participants. Discussion points also address the implications of this sample that include weak statistical power, as well as homogenous responses. Future research would benefit from exploring the preferences of the utilitarian and deontological frameworks with a larger more representative sample.

Theory and Frameworks are Simplifications

This study was constructed from public administration literature that emphasized a dichotomy of two frameworks of ethics (Martinez, 2009; McAuliffe, 2006; Pasquerella, & Killilea, 2005; Pasquerella, Killilea, & Vocino, 1996; Denhardt, 1988;). The classic utilitarian framework conceived by Jeremy Bentham (1780) and the deontological framework constructed by Immanuel Kant (2009) are the two most prominent ethical frameworks within public administration literature. Evaluating responses regarding the primary frameworks based on survey questions developed from the public administration literature was central to the focus of this study and the findings suggest that students did
not respond from a primary framework because the responses were not dichotomous. 
The Pearson’s Correlation suggests that the more one identifies with the constructs of one 
theory, the more the one will identify with the constructs of both. Results from the factor 
analysis provided nineteen separate items that better define nine factors/constructs people 
acknowledge as ethical.

Although “it is widely accepted that decision makers use a framework to sort and 
accept ethical claims” (Lewis, 2005, p. 47), this study suggests the re-evaluation of those 
frameworks. Specifically, implications of this study suggest that students’ perceptions of 
ethical statements reflect a broader stance when defining the constructs of ethical 
thought. Although, “the utilitarian and deontological moral theories both provide 
important considerations in framing ethical issues, neither provides clear cut answers” 
(Lally & Schultz, 2006, p. 341). Students’ opinions suggest a cohesive preference for 
ethical frameworks, rather than the dichotomous view.

Research Design

The primary objective of the sample design is to select a subset of the population 
being targeted which will reflect the views of the larger population (Berman, 2007). 
Results generated from a representative sample can be translated with distinction if the 
views of the subset accurately reflect the views of the entire population. The intent of 
this study was to evaluate ethical views of public administration students, and because 
obtaining a response from every individual in the targeted population would not have 
been realistic, a convenience sample of participants was utilized. Since this study was 
“exploratory in nature, a convenience sample was appropriate” (Walonick, 1994, p. 33).
The voluntary convenience sample yielded 61 viable survey responses from individuals enrolled in master’s level courses in the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at The University of Akron during the 2009 spring semester. Results from this study were inconclusive when trying to discover statistically significant relationships between demographic variables and the utilitarian or deontological scores. Because of the high degree of congruence across all statements, there were with no statistically significant inferential results.

The implications of the small select group of participants were visible with this study’s findings. The small sample lacked the power to provide statistically significant results that permit generalizable findings. The findings reported were also homogenous, which detracted from generalizability.

Future Research

Future research would benefit by exploring the positively correlated relationship of ethics that was articulated by this study. Exploring this perspective of ethics can be executed through strengthening the survey instrument. The identified constructs were formatted into statements based on knowledge from the dominant theoretical frameworks. Rather than making ethics doctrines compete with each other, it would be beneficial to identify central themes that arise from all pre-existing ethical frameworks.

Future research would benefit by selecting a sample that is more representative to the overall public. Selecting a random sampling method that provides each member of the population the same probability of being selected would be beneficial for acquiring this objective. Although this study utilized convenience sampling, probability methods
that may result in greater diversity include random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling (Berman, 2007). Future research would also benefit from expanding the sample size. Because sample size is critical to the error expected in the estimate, larger samples provide statistical leverage that works against that error (Walonick, 1994). A future sample of over 150 participants would provide the needed leverage against the expected error.

Conclusion

This study posed a question regarding present day agreement with the constructs of two dominant ethical frameworks found within public administration literature. With an ever increasing number of theories and factors that impact ethical decisions, do students’ opinions still reflect the utilitarian and deontological frameworks found within public administration literature? After defining the Bentham and Kantian schools of thought, an original survey instrument was used to evaluate responses to those ethical frameworks. This exploratory research collected primary data through an original 20 item survey instrument that sought to evaluate opinions regarding preference to the Bentham and Kantian schools of ethical thought. Survey questions were developed in order to investigate relationships between dependent variables relating to demographic characteristics and the independent variables of utilitarian and deontological frameworks.

After expert review, as well as feedback from researchers and a pilot group, a convenience sample of participants enrolled in master’s level courses in the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at The University of Akron during the 2009 spring semester yielded 61 complete surveys. Hypothesis testing was used to address
differences in group means. While the statements within the instrument provided valid, reliable, statistically significant results, all inferential statistics were inconclusive. A descriptive Pearson’s Correlation (.479) was found to be statistically significant at the .00 level. This implies that higher preferences for deontological scores related to higher preferences for utilitarian scores.

Limitations of the study included a small and cohesive convenience sample of participants. Implications of this sample include in weak statistical power, as well as homogenous responses. Future research would benefit from exploring the preferences of the utilitarian and deontological frameworks with a larger more representative sample.

In conclusion, this study’s findings suggest interesting implications for the study of public administration ethics. Replication is needed to determine the validity of the findings that suggest a public preference for a symbiotic relationship between the utilitarian and deontological frameworks.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Date: February 6, 2009
To: Lesley Trankamp
789 Shadybrook Drive, Apt. L
Akron, Ohio 44312

From: Sharon McWhorter, IRB Administrator

Re: IRB Number 20090207 "Identification of Ethical Frameworks using Public Administration Students"

Thank you for submitting your Exemption Request for the referenced study. Your request was approved on February 6, 2009. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

☐ Exemption 1 - Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.

☐ Exemption 2 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.

☐ Exemption 3 - Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.

☐ Exemption 4 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.

☐ Exemption 5 - Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.

☐ Exemption 6 - Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact me to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Cc: Julia Beckel, Advisor
Cc: Stephanie Woods, IRB Chair

Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Akron, OH 44325-1902
330-972-7666 • 330-972-6381 Fax
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APPENDIX B

SURVEY PACKET

Informed Consent Information

MPA Student,

Researchers are conducting a study involving the identification of ethical frameworks. This study involves a survey that includes no identifying information. You are asked to respond with your honest opinions to ethical questions.

The process will take no longer than 20 minutes. Although you receive no direct benefits from your participation, the results of this study will be shared with your professors which may enhance class discussions.

Your participation is welcomed, but also voluntary. Feel free to stop at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions regarding this study please leave a message for the principal investigator at 330-972-7618. This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron, Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call Sharon McWhorter, Associate Director for Research Services at 330-972-7666.

Thank you!

Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences
Akron, OH 44325-7904
330-972-7610 230-972-6076 Fax
The University of Akron is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Institution.
Anonymous Ethics Evaluation

M.P.A. Student:

Evaluator is interested in your opinions about ethical behavior. Please take 15 minutes to complete this survey. Upon completion return the survey to the administrator. Do not fill out the survey if you have previously one in another class. The information will be analyzed for a thesis argument, and may be used as a discussion piece for your class.

Instructions:
This questionnaire is confidential and your name will not be associated with the answers. Your first impressions are the ones the evaluator wants to see. Please respond to every item.

Part 1:
For this section please consider your personal ethical standards.
CIRCLE the most appropriate number to the following questions.

1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE
5 = STRONGLY AGREE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much do you agree with the following statements?</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that each decision has an ethical element which cannot be overlooked for the greater good.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The rightness of an action is determined by how useful it is</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I believe there are universal characteristics that dictate my ethical decisions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Public administrators should treat people as a means, and at the same time as an end to meeting an objective</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When making ethical judgments, I believe it is important to incorporate the situation at hand.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Public administrative decisions should be guided by applications such as cost-benefit analysis.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Disagree or Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Regarding public administration ethical decisions, the rightness of an action is independent of the nature of the action.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Some actions are wrong no matter what consequences arise.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Considering the public sector, ethical criteria are determined by conformity to an existing universal moral standard.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I believe that in order to act in the morally right way, people must act according to duty.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I believe my ethical judgments are based upon the internal qualities of an action.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>A public administrator should ensure that each person is guaranteed the greatest possible liberty that does not interfere with the liberty of others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Regarding the public sector, some ethical rules are made to be broken because actions should be evaluated based on consequences.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Public administrators are obligated to make certain ethical decisions based on principles found outside the situation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>When making ethical decisions, bureaucrats need to consider each person as an individual.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Public administrators should be unconditionally honest rather than those who lie about “hot button” issues.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>In public administration, the purpose of all social and political institutions is to promote the greatest amount of happiness for the community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I believe that the rightness or wrongness of an action should be evaluated by its consequences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Disagree or Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. It is important to me that I act according to explicit principles.

20. I feel that personal ethical decisions are best when the results justify any methods used

Part 2:
For this section please consider your personal work history in the public sector, along with other demographic information. CIRCLE the most appropriate LETTER to the following questions.

1. I have worked public sector.
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. I have volunteered in the public sector.
   a. Yes
   b. No

3. My current employment status is:
   a. Employed in the public sector
   b. Employed, but not in the public sector
   c. Not applicable

4. All together, I have contributed professionally to the public sector
   a. Never worked in the public sector
   b. Up to 2 years
   c. 3 to 5 years
   d. 6 to 10 years
   e. 11 to 20 years
   f. 21 years and up
5. Including credit hours from this semester, what is your current credit hour status in graduate school?
   a. 1 to 15 credits
   b. 16 to 30 credits
   c. 31 to 45 + credits

6. Gender
   a. Female
   b. Male

7. What is your age?
   a. 25 and below
   b. 26 to 35
   c. 36 to 45
   d. 46 to 55
   e. 56 and above

8. What is your race?
   a. African-American
   b. Asian/Pacific Islander
   c. Caucasian
   d. Hispanic/Latino
   e. Native American
   f. Other

9. What is your nationality? ________________________________

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!
Please return the completed survey to the administrator.