Introduction

Since the 1960s, many research projects on business and marketing ethics have been conducted: Laczniak and Murphy (1981) put the figure at almost 100, and Tuflikis and Fritzke (1987) at 320. However, there has not been a positive ( descriptive), comprehensive model to guide research in this area of study. According to Murphy and Laczniak (1981), research on marketing ethics has not been innovative and systematic and lacks a global theory to direct research. Most works have been conceptual and normative or theory-driven (Vitell and Hunt, 1990). They claimed that research in this area has been inadequate because it does not investigate the global theory of marketing ethics. Furthermore, Laczniak and Murphy (1985) added that to date, reference to ethical theorization or decision rules have been limited to the citation of simple ethical maxims. And Badee (1994) noted that disagreement about business ethics is still intense, arguing that a common conceptual framework is needed in order to shape business ethics as an academic discipline. Accordingly, marketing educators feel uncomfortable when discussing ethical issues with their students and have avoided lecturing on the topic of marketing ethics (Zhu and Vitell, 1986). According to Laczniak and Murphy (1985), this is be-
cause they perceive that existing frameworks for analyzing this topic are too simple and lack theoretical rigor.

In recognition of the lack of theoretical models in this field, a descriptive model has been developed to cover the theoretical gap in the area of marketing ethics. Hunt and Vitell (1986) developed a model in the decision-making process for a situation involving an ethical problem. They called this model the General Theory of Marketing Ethics. This model identifies the influence of the cultural environment on ethical problems as suggested by Barazza (1967). Furthermore, Hunt and Vitell (1995) revised their model and created several personal characteristics that might influence the decision-making process, for example, religion and the value system. To observe the significance of Hunt and Vitell's General Theory of Marketing Ethics, this article discusses a number of studies which examine the applicability of the model. In addition, possible future research to examine other parts of this model is elaborated.

The Model

Hunt and Vitell's General Theory of Marketing Ethics model (1986) addresses the situation when a manager confronts a problem perceived as having ethical dilemmas. The model proposes that the perceived ethical problem activates the whole process illustrated by the model (see Figure 1). This means that if a manager does not face problems involving ethical dilemmas, the subsequent elements of the model do not come into play. The model assumes that how one perceives ethical problems is generally affected by four constructs: the cultural environment, the industry environment, the organizational environment, and personal characteristics.

The perceived ethical problems, then, lead to the development of a set of alternatives to solve the problems. Once the manager perceives a set of alternatives, two kinds of evaluations will take place: deontological and teleological. Deontological evaluation holds that an action is right if it accords with a moral rule and, wrong if it breaks such rules. According to the deontologist, it is not the goodness or the badness of the consequences of an action that make it right or wrong, but the kind of action it is (Beauchamp and Bowie, 1995).

In other words, one focuses on the rightness or wrongness of a specific behavior. The process also involves comparing the actions with a set of predetermined deontological norms, representing personal values or rules of behavior. In the teleological evaluation, the rightness or the wrongness of an action is based on the consequences of that action. If the consequences of one's action fit with the standard of value, the consequences of one's action are good and thus the action is right (Beauchamp and Bowie, 1995). Teleological evaluation consists of four different components: the perceived consequences of each alternative for various stakeholder groups, the probability that each consequence will happen to each stakeholder group, the desirability or undesirability of each consequence, and the importance of each stakeholder group. Beliefs about the relative goodness versus badness brought about by each alternative as perceived by the individual are the overall result of the teleological evaluation.

Furthermore, an individual's deontological evaluation (e.g., applying norms of behavior to each of the alternatives) and an individual's teleological evaluation (e.g., evaluating the sum of total of goodness versus badness likely to be produced
Figure 1. Hunt and Vitell's General Theory of Marketing Ethics

Source: Hunt and Vitell (1986)
by each alternative) influence the individual's ethical judgment (e.g., the belief that a particular alternative is the most ethical alternative). Even though it is possible that some individuals in some situations are strictly deontologists or teleologists, the authors believe that is unlikely that this would be true for many individuals in many different situations.

Hunt and Vitell (1986) postulate that ethical judgments influence personal behavior through the intervening variables of intentions. Hunt and Vitell propose that intentions constitute a conceptualization of the likelihood that any particular alternative will be chosen. They believe that both ethical judgments and intentions should be better predictors of behavior in situations where ethical issues are central, rather than peripheral. The model also proposes that ethical judgments often differ from intentions because the teleological evaluation may independently affect the variable of intentions construct. That is, an individual may perceive a particular alternative as the most ethical alternative and, despite this, intend to choose another alternative because of certain preferred consequences. Hunt and Vitell suggest that, when behavior and intentions are inconsistent with ethical judgments, one consequence will be a feeling of guilt. So, when two individuals may engage in the same behavior, one may feel guilty since the other's behavior was consistent with his or her ethical beliefs. Moreover, situational constraints, such as opportunity, may also influence behavior that is inconsistent with intentions and ethical judgments. After the behavior, the actual consequences will be evaluated. Finally, a feedback loop leads from actual consequences to personal characteristics as a learned experience. This is the major learning construct of the model.

Empirical Studies on General Theory of Marketing Ethics

Many studies have been conducted to examine Hunt and Vitell's model. (Vitell and Hunt, 1990; Mayo and Marks, 1990; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 1990; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 1991; Hunt and Vayghas- Parraga, 1992; Armstrong, 1993; Singhapakdi, Vitell and LeeKuIhitanit, 1994; and Clark and Dawson, 1995). Vitell and Hunt (1990) conducted a study to test part of the model. The researchers explored how 200 sales and marketing managers responded to business scenarios which involved ethical problems. The study was divided into two parts. The first part was designed to verify the usefulness of the scenario to test the model, as well as to examine the reliability and validity of the major constructs to be used in the empirical testing. The second part was performed to test the research hypotheses.

The first part used a sales management scenario as suggested by Hunt and Vitell (1986) concerning specific sales management situations that involve a "kickback" by sales people to the purchasing agent. In the researchers' questionnaire, respondents were offered several specific alternatives in order to constrain the evoked set of all possible alternatives that respondents might have. In general, the results of the first study indicated that most respondents perceived the scenario as involving an ethical problem, and the major constructs used to test the model were found reliable and valid enough to warrant further research.

The second study was organized to test several research hypotheses based on the following testable propositions: (1) ethical judgments concerning each alternative are a function of both the dein-
nological and teleological evaluation, (2) the intention to adopt a particular alternative is a function of ethical judgments and the teleological evaluation, and (3) the teleological evaluation for each alternative is a function of the desirability or undesirability of the consequences of each alternative, the probabilities of the consequences and the importance of the different stakeholder groups affected by the various consequences. In total, there were 6 major hypotheses and 33 sub-hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested with Linear Structural Relationships (LISREL) using maximum likelihood to estimate the parameters. The results showed that ethical judgments were formed by both deontological norms and the probabilities of consequences for self and the firm, except for alternative 2. Certain background factors such as the number of years of experience in the current position seem to moderate the relationship between an individual’s deontological evaluation and ethical judgments. One’s intentions were determined by ethical judgments and the perceived probabilities of positive consequences. However, intentions were not dependent upon the likelihood of negative consequences. The respondents seemed to be more concerned with positive consequences (reward) than with negative consequences (punishment). The researchers argue that this may show that reward systems for ethical behavior probably are more effective than punishments for unethical behavior. Another argument is that because many firms do not punish unethical behavior by employees, respondents felt that negative consequences were unlikely to occur. In short, decision makers tended to depend on both deontological and teleological evaluations when making business decisions in a situation with ethical content, and tended to form inten-

tions for behavior based on ethical judgments and teleological evaluation. Additionally, the number of years experience in the position, age, the degree of job satisfaction, and the number of years of business experience might moderate the relationship between deontological evaluation and ethical judgment.

Mayer and Marks (1990) examined the Hunt and Vitell model in the context of marketing research ethical dilemmas. They explored how marketing researchers handle an ethical dilemma that centered on a study containing questionable reliability and validity in marketing research. The main objective was to provide an empirical test of some of the core relationships proposed by the Hunt and Vitell model. As suggested by Hunt and Vitell (1986), it also utilized business scenarios in the field of marketing research as stimulus material. Three alternative actions were offered to the respondents for these scenarios. Alternative (A) basically suggested that the study be completed and the report written without reporting the flaws. Alternative (B) suggested that the researchers write a report recommending product revisions and discuss, but minimize any problems with the instrument reliability and validity, and alternative (C) suggested that they stop the study, consult the client and redvelop the questionnaire. This study also involved six measures: deontological norms, desirability of consequences, deontological evaluations, teleological evaluations, ethical judgments and intentions. General path analyses models were conducted to represent marketing research managers’ decisions for the thrre alternatives. Then for each decision, four regression analyses were carried out. One regression was performed to investigate the effect of deontological norms on deontological evaluations; the second was done...
to learn the effect of desirability of consequences and teleological evaluations: a third explored the joint influence of deontological and teleological evaluation on ethical judgments; and the fourth the joint effect of ethical judgments and teleological evaluation on intentions. Other results indicated that ethical judgments were influenced more by teleological than deontological evaluations, and that intentions and ethical judgments were significantly related to the two alternatives, (A) and (B), but not (C). In such cases, intentions were driven more by a teleological evaluation than by ethical judgments. Respondents who rated alternative (C) as the most ethical but who intended to implement alternative (B), showed that the client has some responsibility and that the agency should not be held totally liable. In general, the results are quite supportive that there were significant differences among the core variables in the model. However, the relationship between ethical judgment and intentions to adopt an ethical alternative is attenuated when its implementation does not result in preferred consequences. Mayo and Marks (1990) also noted that the causal link between deontological norms and deontological evaluators was problematic. They argued that this problem may be due to the particular operationalization chosen for the deontological norms construct in the study. Singhapakdi and Vitell (1991) also identified that the operationalization of deontological norms might be a problem in the study to have the Hunt and Vitell model. They found a high degree of "end loading" of responses to all deontological statements as the respondents tended to strongly agree with each of these statements.

Singhapakdi and Vitell (1990) conducted another partial test for Hunt and Vitell's General Theory of Marketing Ethics. The focus of this study was on the relative influence of ethical policies of organizations, Machiavellianism, locus of control, and gender on certain decision-making components in marketing situations having ethical content. As assumed in the Hunt and Vitell (1986) model, there are various background factors impacting on decision making in marketing, such as the cultural environment, the industry environment, the organizational environment, and personal experience. It is postulated that the individual's perceived ethical problems were a function of the individual's background factors. In addition, it is postulated that an individual's perceived alternatives (perception of possible actions, perception of no wrong) is a function of the individual's perceived ethical problems and all the background factors. Based on these two postulates, the dependent variables of this study are perceived ethical problems and perceived alternatives, and the independent variables are the background factors. However, this study did not examine all the background factors and how they influence the perceived ethical problem and perceived alternatives, including only the organizational environment (ethical policies of the organization) and personal environment (Machiavellianism, locus of control and gender). The industry environment and the cultural environment were excluded because of the potential difficulty of utilizing these factors (Dubinsky and Loshin, 1989).

As suggested by Hunt and Vitell (1986), Singhapakdi and Vitell (1990) utilized a prospective scenario to enhance accuracy in the measurement due to the possible sensitivity of the ethical questions. The scenario used in this research
involved sales management situations with ethical content. Two different versions of the scenario were developed (ethical and unethical organization) in order to operationalize the ethical policies of organization construct. Another personality variable used in this study was locus of control, both external and internal. A manipulation check was conducted to make sure that the scenario contained an ethical issue. The results showed that the means scores (6.23 and 5.55 for the ethical and the unethical, respectively) are significantly greater than the neutral level for both ethical and unethical scenarios, as well as for both groups combined. A reliability test of two independent variables, Machiavellianism and locus of control, was carried out and showed that the coefficient alpha were .74 and .79, respectively. Regression analysis were carried out between independent variables and every dependent variable (perceived ethical problems, positive action, negative action, and no action). The results supported the proposition that high Machiavellian marketers tend to perceive ethical problems as less serious than low Machiavellian marketers, indicating that Machiavellianism is a significant determinant with regard to various marketing problems with ethical content. It was also found that individuals in an organization with an expected code of ethics will tend to perceive ethical problems more seriously than individuals in an organization that does not have a code of ethics. This indicates that marketing practitioners in ethical organizations tend to agree more with punitive alternatives as the possible course of action than do those in unethical organizations. Regression analysis with nonpunitive action as dependent variable show that perceived ethical problems, ethical policies of organization and Machiavellianism were significant predictors. Though the coefficients of perceived ethical problems and ethical policies are significant, the direction of the relationships is opposite to the stated hypothesis. The researchers argue that the nonpunitive alternatives may have been perceived by the respondent as an alternative remedy for the ethical dilemma illustrated. The results also show that there were significant relationships between the no action alternatives and the independent variables, perceived ethical problem, ethical policies of organizations, and Machiavellianism. In other words, that ethical policies of organizations were determinants of perceived alternatives. The other results indicate that gender, as well as locus of control were not significant determinants in the marketer’s ethical decision making.

Singhapakdi and Vitali (1991) conducted another study focused on demographic aspects of professional marketers. The demographic norm is a set of preconceived guidelines that represent personal values or rules of behavior. Hunt and Vitell’s model assumed that these background factors are directly influenced by the demographic norms of the marketers. In this study, the researchers assumed that there were two background influencing factors: the organizational environment and the personal environment. Two other factors, the cultural environment and the industry environment were excluded. Organizational culture, Machiavellianism, locus of control and gender are postulated to influence the demographic norms of marketers. Organizational culture was operationalized based on the existence and enforcement of ethical codes in an organization. Flavorn analysis was organized to ensure the highest quality measures on the demographic norm statements. Based on the principal component analysis, one factor...
for was estimated: The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the deontological norms, Machiavellianism and the locus of control were calculated and were equal to 0.76, 0.74, and 0.79, respectively. To test the hypothesis, Singhal and Vitell (1991) organized a multiple regression analysis. The results show that there is no significant relationship between organizational culture and ‘marketer’s’ deontological norms. It was also found that Machiavellianism and locus of control were significantly related to deontological norms. The researchers explained that the influence of organizational culture on a marketer’s deontological norms is relatively weaker than the two personality dimensions. It can also be concluded that marketers with a high level of Machiavellianism will tend to be less ethical and will be less likely to agree with guidelines or rules of behavior. It also means that people with an external locus of control will tend to be less ethical in the deontological norms. Another result suggested that gender has no relationship to the individual’s deontological norms.

Hunt and Vareno-Puliga (1992) conducted a study to learn how sales and marketing managers would handle ethical problems relating to salespeople who were misrepresenting their customers by recommending expensive products. They utilized two scenarios which were used to explore the extent to which marketers rely on deontological considerations and utilitarian considerations in framing ethical judgments, and the extent to which marketers rely on utilitarian judgments and utilitarian considerations in rewarding or disciplining salespeople. The experimental design was supervised based on 2 x 2 randomized design to investigate situations in which salespeople were engaging in (1) deontologically unethical behaviors having negative consequences for the firm, or (2) deontologically ethical behavior having positive consequences for the firm, or of (3) deontologically ethical behavior having negative consequences for the firm, and or (4) deontologically ethical behavior having positive consequences. This is based on Hunt and Vitell’s (1980) General Theory of Marketing Ethics and Etzioni’s moderate deontology, both of which emphasized the moral dimensions in decision-making. Etzioni’s moderate deontology assumes that a core assumption of the neoclassical economic paradigm is that people work to maximize utility. In this study, deontological evaluation as well as utilitarian evaluation were treated as dummy variables with 0 for the unethical condition and negative consequences, respectively; and 1 for the ethical evaluation and positive consequences, respectively. Ethical judgment was measured on a seven-point scale. For instance, to reverse respondents were asked to choose one of two actions which they believed would be the most appropriate to take.

The results indicate that the patterns of response are similar for the two scenarios. The authors conclude that the practice of overestimating plant capacity utilization to gain a negotiating advantage was ethically wrong, but they believed that it is less serious than the practice of misrepresenting their customers. The authors also observe that it is ethically more correct (or a substitute) to avoid overstating plant capacity when the consequences are negative. Marketers also believe that it is ethically more correct (or a substitute) to avoid overstating plant capacity when the consequences are negative than when they are positive. Further, in the deontologically unethical condition, marketers will intend to intervene by using discipline when a salesperson overstates plant capacity utilization. Similarly, marketers have less ten-
dency to highly reward a salesperson for no-stating plant capacity utilization when the consequences are negative, than if the consequences are positive. Moreover, in the psychologically ethical condition, salespersons believe that a salesperson should be rewarded for avoiding this practice. Nevertheless, marketers will intervene by giving rewards when the practice has positive consequences. The results of the regression analysis show that both psychological and teleological evaluations are significant predictors of ethical judgment. Another regression analysis shows that ethical judgment and teleological evaluations are significant predictors of intentions. The researchers claimed that this study represented the strongest test of the Hunt and Vitell model since it used structural equation modeling techniques to analyze the data (Hunt and Vitell, 1990).

Singhapakdi (1993) extended the study of Singhapakdi and Vitell (1990) by examining the interaction effects of Machiavellianism and the ethical culture of an organization on two perceptual components of the Hunt and Vitell model: perceptions of ethical problems and perceptions of remedial alternatives—positive, nonproductive and no action. This study assumed that the ethical culture of an organization tends to compel or reinforce ethical decisions of high Machiavellians. Furthermore, Singhapakdi noted that ethical culture provided high Machiavellians less freedom to improvise. It is expected that the ethical culture of an organization will have a greater positive effect on ethical perceptions of high Machiavellians marketers than on those of low Machiavellian marketers. The factors of this study are Machiavellian orientation (high and low) and organizational ethical culture (less ethical and more ethical). Concerning the perception of ethical problem, the results showed that both main effects, Machiavellian orientation and ethical culture are significant. According to the researchers, this meant that high Machiavellian marketers tend to be less sensitive to ethical problems. The results also showed that there is an interaction between the two factors. For perceived alternative, the results showed that both Machiavellian and organizational ethical culture tend to have a positive effect on ethical decision making. High Machiavellian marketers tend to agree less with both punitive and nonproductive alternatives, and tend to agree more with the do-nothing alternative. The ANOVA result also showed that the interaction effect was significant for the nonproductive and do-nothing alternatives. They concluded that ethical culture of an organization tends to have a more positive effect on high Machiavellian than on low Machiavellian marketers' perceptions of remedial alternatives.

Singhapakdi and Vitell (1993) have contributed to the research literature in the area of theory of marketing ethics. In their recent study, they explored the relative influence of two levels of value orientations, personal values and professional values, toward marketing practitioners' ethical judgments. Their study aimed to provide an additional partial test of the Hunt and Vitell model. It is postulated that ethical judgments of a marketer can be explained partially by his or her personal and professional values. The researchers utilized a nine-item List of Values (LCV) developed by Kahle to operationalize personal values, in line with the research instruction developed by Wecks, Condor and Kahle. The professional values were operationalized as the values relating to an individual’s professional conduct that are...
commonly shared by members of a profession. To measure ethical judgments, the researchers utilized the scenario technique asking the respondents to rate their or her agreement or disagreement with the actions illustrated in three business scenarios developed by Dorfman and Tinkham (1975). Based on three multiple regression analysis, one for each of the three scenarios, the results showed that the ethical judgments of a marketer can be partially explained by his or her professional values. As the scenarios involved identical business situations, the negative signs of all coefficients for professional values suggest that a marketer who has high standard of professional ethics will tend to disagree with the unethical action described. Another result of this study indicates that ethical judgments of a marketer are related to various dimensions of his or her personal values system. Self-respect as a personal value was found to be a significant predictor of ethical judgments for two scenarios. Influenced by the negative sign the relation between self respect and ethical judgments means that individuals with a high degree of self respect are more ethical.

Referring to the Hunt and Vitell model, Clark and Dawson (1990) examined the influence of personal religiosity as a source of ethical norms on ethical judgment. In this study, the researchers considered this in a foundation and a background factor (personal experiences, in Hunt and Vitell's model) in ethical judgments. They operationalized religiosity construct in terms of intrinsic-intrinsico-extrinsic religiosity. According to Clark and Dawson (1996), intrinsically religious people were motivated not to internalized beliefs and attempts to develop a life-style appropriate to those beliefs, while extrinsically religious is naturally personal and utilitarian. The results of this study showed that there were significant differences in individual evaluations of the ethical content of the business scenarios across the intrinsic-exttrinsic groupings. The other results of this study revealed that there was no support for the expectation that intrinsic assessments of action described in scenario 3 was significantly less ethical than the actions in either scenario 1 or scenario 2. The researchers observed that religion is presented as one of the foundations for personal moral decision making.

The Model in an International Marketing Setting

Dabholkar and Loken (1985) noted that the existing theoretical frameworks often include variables that are narrowly defined, such as social environment (Hunt and Vitell's model), and are difficult to operationalize. For the same reason, Singhapakdi and Vitell (1990, 1991) excluded cultural environment from their studies. In response to Dabholkar and Loken (1985), and Singhapakdi and Vitell (1990, 1991), Armstrong (1993) conducted a study to test a part of Hunt and Vitell's General Theory of Marketing Ethics, and examine the relationship between the cultural environment and the perception of ethical problems.

In this study, Armstrong (1993) operationalized culture using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (1980) with its dimensions: Large versus Small Power Distance (PDI), Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV), Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS), and Strong versus Weak Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). The ethical problems encountered in this study are an adapted and refined version of a questionnaire used in an exploratory study.
conducted by Armstrong, Ryan, Marks, and Mayo (1990). The research was designed to evaluate the frequency of the ten ethical problems in different environments (country, industry, and organization) and the importance of the ethical problems to the organizations. Armstrong (1993) collected samples from different Masters of Business Administration programs in Australia, Malaysia and Singapore. Respondents were asked, How frequently does the ethical problem described occur within your: country?, industry?, and organization?, on a six-point scale (1 = not at all, 6 = a great deal). They were asked to indicate what importance his or her organization attaches to these ethical problems. A convenience sampling method was utilized to collect the data. Factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted and selected factors with Eigen values greater than or equal to 1. All factors were found and explained 97 per cent of the variance. Three factors were similar to those developed by Hofstede, namely, Individualism, Uncertainty Avoidance and Power Distance. Another factor, which was strongly associated with occupational advancement, could not appropriately be labeled as Career Advancement, OQVA and Correlation Analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings of this research support the hypothesized relationships between culture and ethical perceptions. The results showed that there were significant differences between the three cultures (Australia, Malaysia and Singapore) for three of the cultural dimensions: Individualism, Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance, whereas idiosyncrasy was not significantly different. Armstrong (1992) also suggested that perceived ethical problem scores were significantly different across the three cultures. The other results of this study showed that Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) and Individualism (IDV) were positively related to the ethical perceptions score, but Masculinity (MAS) and Power Distance (PDI) were not significantly related. The positive relationships mean that the higher the Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) and Individualism (IDV) scores the more likely the individuals are more ethical. As far as known, this study is the first to test a part of Hunt and Vitell's General Theory of Marketing Ethics in an international setting.

Sinhapakdi, Vitell and Laherkhutthai (1994) conducted a study similar to Armstrong (1993) whose main purpose was to explore the cross-national nature of marketing ethics to compare American marketers and Thai marketers in terms of their moral philosophies, ethical perceptions, and ethical judgments. The researchers did not examine the cultural dimensions of both two countries but used the cultural typologies developed by Hofstede (1984). According to Hofstede, he United States represents a more individualistic and masculine culture and is weaker in Uncertainty Avoidance and smaller in Power Distance than Thailand. The researchers utilized The Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) developed by Forsyth (1980) to measure personal moral philosophies. This consists of two main scales to measure idealism and relativism, and has a nine-point Likert-type agree/disagree scale. Relativism means the degree to which one rejects universal norms while making ethical judgments, whereas idealism means the degree to which the individuals assume that desirable consequences can, with the right action, always be realized. The ethical perceptions and ethical judgments were operationalized by means of four marketing ethics scenarios developed by...
Dornoff and Tankardsey (1975). It was found that Thai marketers are significantly different from American marketers on all the ethics variables measured. It was also found that American and Thai groups are also significant on all measures of perceived ethical problems and ethical judgments. Based on the discriminant analysis, it was found that all independent variables (idealisism, relativism, all four measures of perceived ethical problems and all four measures of ethical judgments) were significantly different in discriminating the Thai and American marketers. It was also found that Thai males were more idealistic, more relativistic, less likely to perceive ethical problems, and were less ethical in terms of their ethical judgments than American males. In particular, Thai marketers were significantly more idealistic and more relativistic than American marketers. It was also found that Thai marketers tended to judge the unethical business scenario as being more acceptable than American marketers.

In summary, results of these studies provide substantial support for the relationships proposed in the model. Vitell and Hunt (1990) and Mayo and Marks (1990) investigated the relationships of deontological norms, deontological evaluation, ethical judgments, and intentions. Singhapadid and Vitell (1990, 1991) and Clark and Devins (1996) contributed to examining the relationships of perceived ethical problems, perceived alternatives, organizational environment, and personal characteristics while Armstrong (1995) and Singhapadid, Vitell and Leeladulthant (1994) proved the relationships between cultural environment and perceived ethical problems.

Possible Future Studies

Armstrong (1995) and Singhapadid, Vitell, and Leeladulthant (1994) showed the relationship between cultural environment and perceived ethical problems. Results of these two studies supported previous studies which mostly focused on cross-national analysis (Lee 1991; McDonald and Zepf, 1987; Oprom, 1987; Dihansky, Jolten, Koit, and Lim, 1991; Whipple and Swords, 1992; and Hustel, Doher, McManus, and Kifs, 1996). All of these studies considered culture as a national boundary. The cultural environment simply serves as a synonym by nation without any further conceptual foundation (Mowdishall, Punn, and Ric, 1995). According to Berry (1975) to recognize a unit analysis might be misleading in cross-cultural research because it overlooks the potential subcultural or micro-cultural differences within a country. In a multi-ethnic country like Indonesia, the dimension of national culture as well as ethnic problems perceived by Indonesian transgenders may not always be easy to be determined because there are more than three hundred ethnic micro-cultures, each with its own geographical area, language, social structure, cultural tradition, and ethnic identity (Quanz, 1967; Bachtair, 1995). Additional study can be conducted to examine the influence of microcultures on perceived ethical problems. This study is worth conducting since individuals do not learn values, attitudes, and norms from society or organization but from those who are members of distinct social groups (Fortett and Gresham, 1985). This argument is based on the differential association theory developed by Sutherland and
Creasy (1970) which argued that ethical or unethical behavior is learned in the process of interacting with persons who are part of intimate personal groups or a role set mixture of characteristics of referent groups who form the role set, and may include their location and authority, as well as their perceived beliefs and behavior.

In terms of the deontological part of Hunt and Vitell's General Theory of Marketing Ethics, only one study has been conducted to examine the relationship between deontological norms, a set of pre-determined norms representing personal values or rules of behavior, and two background factors as depicted in the model. Singhapakdi and Vitell (1991) investigated how organizational environment (organizational culture) and personal characteristics (Machiavellianism, locus of control and gender) related to deontological norms. Further study needs to be conducted to investigate the possible relationship between deontological norms and the other background factors (cultural environment and personal characteristics). In line with Armstrong (1995), Hofstede's cultural typology can be used to measure cultural background, whereas the personal characteristic can involve economic value orientation, political value orientation, and religious value orientation (Hargrave and Sims, 1978). Results of this possible study will confirm that deontological norms are not only formed by organizational culture, Machiavellianism, locus of control and gender, but also cultural backgrounds and the value orientations.

Conclusion

Hunt and Vitell (1986) noted that almost all efforts in the area of marketing ethics have been normative and focused on developing guidelines or rules to assist marketing managers to make ethical decisions. Research in this area was claimed to be inadequate since theories and decision rules have been limited to the citation of simple ethical maxims. To cover the theoretical gap, Hunt and Vitell (1986) developed a descriptive model: A General Theory of Marketing Ethics. The model intends to explain the marketing decision making process for situations involving ethical problems. Empirical studies have been conducted to justify the veracity of the theory. Results of these empirical studies have provided essential support for the relationships proposed in the model. Substantially, this theory can be used to guide further empirical research and analysis as well as managerial decision making.

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