

Chapter 64

Ethical Consumerism: Contextual Issues of Ethical Decision–Making Processes: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

Ethical consumerism is the outcome of an ethical decision-making process. This research examines situational factors exemplified in context-related issues affecting decision-making as perceived by business students at the University of Bahrain. Reward systems, authority, bureaucracy, work role, organizational culture and national and cultural context are investigated. Qualitative research employing open-ended questions in questionnaire form is used. Two hundred and forty students participated in this research. Five questions were asked in the research. Themes involved are illustrations of reward systems, bureaucracy, organizational culture, national and cultural context and work roles. This research suggests that work roles require to be thoroughly investigated in future research. The research also shows that students are unaware of ethical consumerism. This explains reasons for not translating views of students to behavior as a reflection of ethical consumerism.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics is a weighty topic in business during the last decades. Organizations attempt to develop ethical strategies and also seek to promote ethical conduct among employees. Views of undergraduate students at the College of Business Administration of the University of Bahrain are investigated concerning ethical consumption. This research, therefore, examines awareness of ethical consumption and its related

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issues. The research involves three Sections. Section One discusses the Literature review concerning ethics and ethical consumptions. Section Two elaborates on research methodology. Finally a discussion and analysis of collected information is presented in Section Three.

Literature Review

The following section is divided into four main parts: The University of Bahrain-College of Business Administration, definition of ethics, relationships of business to ethics and finally ethical consumerism.

The University of Bahrain

The University of Bahrain is a continuation of its two components: The Gulf Polytechnic and the University of Arts, Science and Education. founded in 1986 with only two colleges: Education, Arts and Sciences which separated later into two independent colleges in 1990. (*University of Bahrain Catalogue, 1993-1994*).

To integrate past and present, the University of Bahrain has adopted a flexible joint Arabic-Islamic philosophy with high quality academic, practical and applied programs to fulfill the vast changing social and economical developments in the Kingdom of Bahrain, with a responsive system to local, regional, and global future environmental challenges. (*University of Bahrain, Undergraduate Catalogue, 2000-2001*).

Reflecting the Kingdom of Bahrain Vision 2030, the University of Bahrain vision “is to be an internationally recognized University for excellence in student learning, innovative research and community engagement that contributes to the economic vitality, sustainability, and quality of life in the Kingdom, the region and beyond”. While the mission states that “the University of Bahrain is a national University dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning, innovative research; the generation and dissemination of knowledge; development of the student’s personality, skills, and knowledge; and building partnerships with the public and private sectors; through distinction in its academic programs, faculty and staff, student activities, fostering innovation, cultivating a culture for quality, and reaching out to the local, regional, and global communities.”

Today in 2014, the University of Bahrain is located in the Zakhir area offering 24 Diploma level courses, 34 BSc. Degree programs and 25 postgraduate academic programs (a total of 83), distributed among the following colleges: College of Arts, College of Business Administration, College of Engineering, College of Information Technology, College of Law, College of Science, College of Applied Studies, Bahrain Teachers College, College of Physical Education and Physiotherapy, and College of Health Sciences.”

A total of 2,080 qualified staff serve these colleges, producing 5,500 published papers and books. The University of Bahrain offers 22 regional and internationally recognized journals, organizing up to 2014, 110 local, regional and international conferences. On the global and international settings, the University of Bahrain has been active in a variety of international bodies such as IAU, ISESCO, and UNISCO.

The drivers, nature and culture of the University of Bahrain involves international exchange student from Thailand, Turkey, USA, Japan, France, and China offering to students a variety of services for effective educational and learning process such as libraries, IT services, guidance and counselling services, language centers, transportations, medical care and many others, paying in return a relatively small amount of fees. Since its foundation, 50,000 young qualified men and women have graduated from the University of Bahrain.

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