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How does Ethics Impact Marketing Decision Making of a Company: An Evidence from the Telecommunication Sector of Pakistan

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Abstract

For the past decade, marketing ethics has been a central point for academic researchers and practitioners. In particular, the development of frameworks and models to help in the analysis of Marketing Decisions are the focus of research. Current study aim at finding whether Ethical decisions (Honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect) affects organizational marketing decisions. A selection of 250 respondents was purposely made from the telecommunication industry of Pakistan. Out of which a 204 responses were induced at an acceptable rate of 81.6%. A five point Likert Scale, Itemized with 12 items was adopted from Taylor-Dunlop & Lester (2000) used to draw responses regarding Ethics.

Keywords: *Marketing, Ethics, Decisions Making, Telecommunication, Pakistan.*

Introduction

Researchers argue that individuals with differing backgrounds diverge in their compassion to varying situations, values, perceptions, and therefore ethical behaviors (Thorne & Sanders, 2002) because cultural disparities affects ethical reasoning of individuals. The various authors carry various opinions about work environment and the related ethical behavior. According to Torres (2006) across a number of academic disciplines literature is available, however, each sets a distinctive perspective following a certain approach. A literature of philosophy, the moral philosopher theorist's goal is linked primarily at prescribing abstract behavioral standards. The task involves evaluations of goodness of behavior through reflective deliberations which makes it a normative one by nature. Subsequently, moral philosophy adds to ethical inquiry by extenuating what moral behavior "ought-to-be" (Waterman, 1998). Furthermore, in case of applied ethics, as is the case of business ethics or another professional ethics literature, applied ethicists intent to the practical application of such standards in the professional context and not just for justifying the normative behavioral standards (Singer, 2000, cited in Velasquez, 1996). The approaches in the direction of business ethics might diverge expressively, even within one culture whenever an endeavor is made to reflect the work in another cultural settings, or if the aim is to develop a consensus in one point that turn out

to be nearly impossible (Torres, 2006). Cultural backgrounds influence professionals' to establish perceptions about several stakeholders, such as fellow customers or employees (Lu, Rose & Blodgett, 1999). Handling the multinationals companies in this regard offer challenges and can impact the organization core values if the dissimilarities in perceptions are ignored (Torres, 2006). Subsequently, those changes in ethics can have severe effects towards marketing division of organization as in modern world where customers are aware, companies need to adapt ethical perceptions based on their core knowledge about them (Czinkota, Ronkainen & Moffett, 1999).

Significance of Study

Ethics, being the representation of a country's people tastes, preferences, thinking, likings, dis-likings, comfort level, have a crucial impact on the marketing decisions of a firm. The researchers have given little attention to this very area thus creating a gape in the marketing literature. With this study of Pakistan's Telecom Industry, the researcher tried to gather useful information which can offer a sound base for enriching the knowledge and understanding about the role of ethics on the marketing strategies.

Current study aims at testing how various ethical attributes affect the marketing decisions of a company. Targeted population as mentioned earlier is the telecom industry of Pakistan including both public and private firms e.g. PTCL, Mobilink, Ufone, Zong, Telenor and Warid.

Current study can serve as one of the pioneering studies for researchers to follow as to find if the contact with various people with varying ethical attitudes can affect the marketing decisions of a particular company. These information will be of immense importance to Pakistani and international firms as these will help understanding the employees. When the companies do not recognize the effects over their people, there remains a possibility that the others can influence the marketing leaders; resulting in an adverse effect of company consumers and overall sales. So objective of current study is

- To assess the impact of Ethics on the Marketing decisions including Product Decisions, Price Decisions, Place Decisions and Promotion decisions of a firm.

Literature Review

Ethics

Ethics has been defined as the study and philosophy of human conduct, with an emphasis on the resolution of what is right and wrong. For marketers, at work place ethics refers to rules and standards directing employee conduct as well as ethics in the workplace refers to rules (standards, principles) governing the conduct of organizational members and the outcome of marketing decisions (Ferrell, 2005). Marketing ethics concentrate on standards that clarify acceptable marketing behavior, as determined by organization involving in formulating and analyzing marketing activities. By its very nature, ethics in marketing is disputable concept, and there is not any standard acceptable pattern to determining questions. Issues in ethics directed to a situation opportunity or a problem that needed decision amongst several actions to determine either wrong or right. (Ferrell, Fraedrich, and Ferrell, 2005). Marketing ethics is described as principals give direction behavior of organization and value system that is expected to express in different circumstances (Zikmund & D'amico,(1996). p.733). Also Vitell (1986) define it as a investigating the nature and base for moral standards and judgments.

Both marketing professionals and scholars define ethics in different ways. One approach personal moral values lead to ethical determination of choices in decision making process and ethic is related to these moral values. In organizational background these values are honesty, fairness, citizenship, and responsibility that guides in difficult decision making situation. According to another approach from organizational point of view ethics involve determining organizational values and to provide shared

approach to decision making ethically.(Ferrell and Ferrell, 2005).High ethical norms require people to adhere to sound moral principles.

Marketing ethics historic roots are extracted from early apprehensions during the 20th century with interest to consumer protection and anti-trust, especially corrupted edibles. Frank Chapman Sharp first time take ethic course for teaching started teaching in University of Wisconsin in 1913 and Sharp and Fox (1937) published a textbook on business ethics. Earliest model for ethics was developed by Robert Bartels (1967) in marketing. He conceptualizes the variables that influence individual determination of right and wrong in decision making. It presents a framework for social and personal ethics in marketing decisions. This was a great contribution The model did a good job in describing the variable involving in marketing decision making involving complexity of ethical decision making.

Importance of Ethics

For the successful execution of various strategies related to marketing one of the most important and significant variable is market orientation. (Homburg, Krohmer, and Workman, 2004). Nonetheless there is a chance that the marketing strategy that ensure success not always been related to meeting needs of all the concerned people directly or indirectly influenced by them (Miller and Lewis, 1991).

There is an important role of ethics in making decision in accordance to moral values and conduct of organization but also to avoid unintentional outcomes of marketing activities. There is need to concentrate on relevant interest of key stakeholders (Fry and Polonsky, 2004). Mostly but not fortunate, estimate used is to raise the interest of the customer over those of other stakeholders (Ferrell, 2004). Earlier in the 1980s, professionals and business recognized ethics as an important area of interest.

Research work of Hunt, Wood and Chonko (1989) shows a strong relation between ethical conduct in addition to commitment to organization. In studying the organizational ethical research, corporate ethical values scale is widely used. Gundlach and Murphy (1993) construct a framework founded on the ethical transfer dimensions like trust and equality for relational marketing.

Marketing ethics deals with moral choices and need of making choices about the moral standards to applying and explaining issues related to ethics according to (Murphy, Laczniak, Bowie and Klein, 2005. In order to create an environment of long lasting customer relationships, there is need to adopt qualities of learn listen and respond to their changing needs and wants. And importantly empower them to make decisions wherever needed (Pollard, 1996, pp. 74 75). Corporations are important part of our lives as well as of our economy. They help in creating the circumstances of socioeconomic, social-political, ecological, technological, legal, cultural, and supply and sale markets'. This is the reason why these corporations are having responsibility to consider ethical issues in their decision making processes and functioning. Reference of universal business ethics is very difficult.

In today's world, major issue faced by enterprises is related to ethic. Wines & Napier (1992) stated that all around the world, managers are coping the difficulties of managing the ethical issues in organizational context, as each country has its own moral values related to right and wrong. As many firms are entering the global economy and also due to migration of labor among countries. Today many managers are working in a condition with staff belonging to different countries. So it is important that marketing managers should comprehend this rapid expansion of intra-organizational behavior and its effects on decision making for multinational corporations effectiveness.

Factors affected by Ethics

Ferrel (1985) stated that while implementing and evaluating ethical issues to marketing special factors need to be considered. There are many factors and in those main important and influential one is to remain in use

or active. Survival is significant factor marketers must be able to add to the profit or other organizational goals or purpose. Second, marketers must be able to level their wish for success and prosperity against to society needs and desires. And this condition of balance needs compromises.

To address these issues, certain rules are developed by society. These include both legal and clear rules and these rules specify direction to marketers in order to direct their struggle to reach their roles. Within organizational background, ethical issue needs to be considering to business decisions irrespective of any functional area not only marketing. External stakeholders concerns and interests help in starting the ethical issue intensity (Ferrel, 1985).

Organizational culture and moral values of individuals impact the acknowledgment of ethical issues and marketing decisions. Marketing ethics associates to matters like honesty, responsibility, fairness, interest conflicts, unequal treatment, privacy, and deceit. Self as well government regular authorities like the Business Bureau developed formal ways to deal with marketing related issues (Ferrel, 1985).

Personal moral values as well as culture of organization determine the reason why there is different perception level; feel with varying intensity (Robin, Reidenbach, and Forrest, 1996). Organizational ethical climate is an important element of organizational culture. Opportunity refer to their work immediately available to employees, where they work. The work environment comprises of certain "carrots and sticks" that can be used by superiors to influence their employees in order to motivate them (Bellizzi and Hasty, 2003).

Acceptable ethical ways of acting are obtained from organizational setting, industry, culture as well as scholars and each individual moral values are different on the base of forming individual opinion (Hunt and Vitell, 2005). Hood (2003) stated that ethical direction of an organization is shown through conventional and clear business activities on daily basis. These activities basis is summarized by organization accepted rules and policies. Hemingway and Maclagan (2004) prove that enterprises' ethical ways of acting are based on formal adoption and proper programs for implementation of ethics. These ethical programs can be of enterprises' ethical programs, which can be believed as the result of and attached with the changing values of individual managers.

Marrewijk (2004) argue enterprise's success core values include order, success, community and synergy. These four core value systems have a very crucial impact with the organizational culture and climate. McCann and Holt (2009) Garcia´-Marza´ (2005) argues that there are certain areas of interests common to all stakeholders which are needed to be satisfied claim a specific direction in management decisions and actions.

Thommen (2003) pointed out that an ethical way of manner can be gain only through transformation. This transformation needed to be take place at all the levels of organization i.e. entire management. This transformation required at all level of management according to (Belak, 2003; Bleicher, 2004) and successful execution of strategies required an ethical programme that clearly specify the activities, needed means to perform for successful formulation of such program. Such program purpose is to give direction and implementation lie at the operational level. To gain the best efficiency level ethical measure not needed to implement in isolation rather in frame of complete ethical program (Thommen, 2003). And finally successful execution of such ethical program require incorporation by all stakeholders within the enterprise i.e. owners, managers on all management levels, experts and all other co-workers (Thommen, 2003).

Marketing Decisions

Marketing processes concentrate on a corporation's methods and procedures followed in developing marketing decisions. These include mental rational and highly intelligent method used to deal with a marketing problem, to examine, make an analysis of it, and to gather the necessary data for decision

making. Modification of marketing programs are associated with the adaptation of several traits of marketing mix such as product, promotion, price and distribution (Sorenson and Wiechmann, 1975; Kreutzer, 1988; Jain, 1989). Even though this study develops a measurement scale solely, in a limited manner for gauging marketing programs reworking, future expansion of a measurement scale for analyzing marketing process revision is also needed and strongly supported(Griffith et al., 2000), since this is another area requiring valid, credible, accurate and trustworthy scales.

According to McCarthy, the marketing mix deals with the way in which a business uses price, product, distribution and promotion to market and sell its product. Moreover, the marketing strategy needs to consider the culture, consumer needs and expectations, shopping habits, buyers' behavior of people from targeted country. Similarly, "speech accommodation theory" sates that communicators can improve communication by making themselves parallel to message receivers (Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991). Applying this theory to marketing, we can postulate that marketers can improve marketing communications by making themselves more similar to message receivers (consumers) by considering their needs and wants by accommodating flexible themselves to consumer cultures.

McCarthy & Perreault (1984) viewed marketing strategy a "big picture" of what a firm will do in some market, made up of two inter-related parts—the target market and the marketing mix. Pride & Ferrell (1985) saw a marketing strategy as that which surround about by selecting and analyzing a target market (the group whom the organization wants to reach) and creating and maintaining an appropriate marketing mix (product, distribution, promotion and price) program that will satisfy those people".

Punjaisri and Wilson (2007), researchers in corporate marketing (CM) maintain that corporate marketing ought to identify; the significance not just for consumers rather for stakeholders i.e. employees. Without a doubt, employees are of great worth corporate resource and as such must be managed in a most positive way from company point of view and perspective. CM is an essential way to accomplish this, for the reason that it can improve employees' attraction of the organization, by attaching special importance or significance to something the aspects of corporate values to which they have an attraction, thereby increasing their predilection to recognize organizational culture (Balmer, 2001, 2008). The stronger the feel among the employees, the more value they bring with them (Smidts et al., 2001), and offer significant competitive advantage, because recognition directly affects their work-related behavior and decisions (Dutton et al., 1994; Pratt, 1998; Edwards and Peccei, 2007).

Importance of Marketing Decisions

Efficient international marketing activities are necessary for the success of many business organizations functioning in today's era of high globalizing and competitive environment (Czinkota and Ronkainen, 2007). Marketing managers deal with various clients from different areas working globally. Countries can offer similarities and differences in certain aspects. This is the hallmark of the culture and ethics in multinational companies and its very understanding now a days since many ethical questions arising in companies are associated to marketing decision (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985, p.88).

Vitell, James, & Mohammed, (1991) views that in a business setup marketing is the practical area that impact and influences consumer. Similarly, it comes under the strictest of scrutiny, creates the biggest buzz and accepts the most critique related to the unethical business activities.

Factors of Marketing Decisions

Constantinides (2006) assert that a more consistent marketing management paradigm for market development, identifying market trends and environmental trends is the marketing Mix (product, price, place and promotion). Many studies endorse the 4Ps as reliable operational framework in order to address the marketing problems. (Romano and Ratnatunga, 1995; Coviello et al., 2000). People studying marketing

develop a strong likeability to the 4ps during their college years and as a result they their buying behavior and decision is influenced by 4Ps (Brassington and Pettitt, 2003; Soekartawi, 2005a).

Ethics and Marketing Decisions

According to the Interpretation of marketing advanced by the American Marketing Association (2004), marketing is an organizational function comprises of different course of actions for creating and pertaining to the activity of transmitting information, and conveying value to customers and having a tendency to manage or control customer relationships in ways that is advantageous to organizations as well as and its stakeholders. This description recognizes the significance of delivering value and the responsibility of marketers to be able to manage meaningful relationships that provide significance to all relevant stakeholders. This definition of marketing incorporates the concern for stakeholders beyond the organization and customers. One distinction between decision taken on ground of ethics and in absence is that moral standards are not apply and decision maker consider moral standards in a situation that he or she may not have faced before.

The Ferrell and Gresham (1985) framework for incorporating ethics in decision making process make more obviously defined the interaction of the individual and organization including organizational colleague and culture and explanation of ethical decision making. Most of the propositions in this model have been tested to provide established understanding of ethical decision making.

The first complete model relating to ethical issues to marketing was developed by Hunt and Vitell. According to which feeling or sense of an issue of ethical situation initiate the decision-making process. Following which, the decision maker recognize the choices settled the ethical issues, subsequently the outcomes of actions taken.

Marketing managers are becoming more delicate in the ethical aspects and are paying more care to customers. They are having the view that customers and entire population suppose that they act in a morally adequate way. Majority of the marketers demonstrate moral commitment and acknowledgement that ethical manner is necessary trust building (Srnka 1997, p.96). This is pertinent to general marketing theory, the basing assumption of which is that all transactions are carried on basis of trust" (Kotler 2003, p. 8). While the disagreement and clashes are results when seller and buyer are not in accord with their ethical mindsets (Lee, 1981).

Remarkable work was conducted by Laczniak and Murphy (1993) who analyzed ethical issues in marketing activities like advertising, personal selling, marketing research and pricing. Laczniak's (1983) framework was to examine marketing ethics, and Ferrell and Gresham (1985) build their possibility model to analyze ethical decision-making in marketing.

The moral issues in formulating strategies relating to marketing activities are association of providing assistance to target markets. Serious ethical interests arise from MNCs act of targeting poor and illiterate consumers in international markets with prices that cannot be afforded, or with prices not including them from the market which lead them to deprivation from basic needs fulfillment. For example introduction of life-saving medication not in affordable range to needy and poor (Amine, 1996).

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study has cross sectional study design. Use fullness and low cost involved in Cross- sectional study designs better suits to situation where a comparatively less time is required for collecting data from bigger integer of respondents.

Sample

A purposive sample of 250 managers working in the telecom industry of Pakistan were selected for survey questionnaire. A number of 204 questionnaires filled in all regards qualifying the standard at response rate of 81.6% were received.

Data collection instrument

The research tools and instruments used for data collection comprised of:

Ethics Measure

Taylor-Dunlop & Lester (2000) model for Ethics concept measurement was used. This consisted of 22 items anchored under 5 point's Likert rating scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

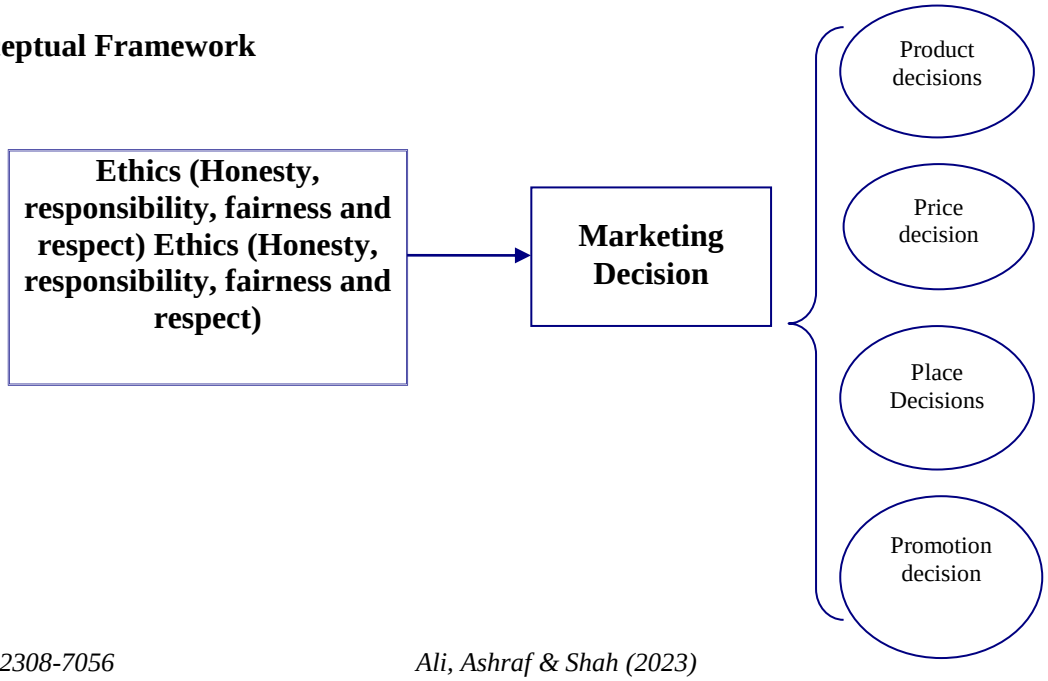
Marketing decisions Instrument

The concept marketing decisions was measured through selected items of marketing mix instrument developed by Purnomo, Lee and Soekartawi (2010). It comprised of 16 items anchored at 5 point likert scale. The ranges between 1 (Strongly disagree) and 5 (Strongly agree) showed the extremes. The questionnaire comprised of two sections. First Section constituting the required information on demographic attributes like gender, age, education level, experience, management level etc. Second Section comprises 12 questions related to Ethics anchored on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Statistical Tests

SPSS 16.0 is utilized for the analysis of the collected Data. Hypothesis proposed in the study is correlational therefore Pearson correlation is used to see the direction of relationship between dependent and independent variables. Also, the linear regression is used for find the strength of relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Conceptual Framework



Hypotheses: Based on the above mentioned model following hypotheses are proposed

There is a positive relationship between Ethics and Marketing Decisions of a firm.

Proposed relationships of variable

Table 1: Variable used for the model and proposed relationship

Variable	Define	Expected sign	Sign symbol
Dependent variable			
Marketing Decisions	Company's stratagem and plan of action in relevance to its marketing mix		MD
Independent variable			
	Ethics are the common agreed upon practices representing the standards governing the conduct of the member of a profession	Positive	E

Analysis

This section discusses about overall data, its composition in terms of varying demographic attributes, reliability of the instruments and other relevant statistical measures carried out for analyzing the data.

Results of Demographic characteristics

Gender

In order to keep gender balance the sample included a substantial number of both males and females. The sample comprised of 146 male and 58 female respondents comprising 76.7% and 23.3% of the sample respectively.

Management Level

The data was collected from the middle and operational level. The respondents included 109 people from middle management and 95 people from the operational level. Maximum number of respondents was belonging to middle management level.

Organization

As discussed earlier that six organizations namely a) Ufone b) Telenor c) Mobilink d) Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) e) Zong f) Warid from the telecom industry of Pakistan were included in the sample. A number of 34 people from each one of them were taken in the sample.

Age

The respondents were selected from different age groups. The age of the respondents was therefore divided into four categories i.e. a) <25 years b) 25-40 years c) 41-55 years d) >55 years. Sample included maximum respondents from age group of 25-40 years which are 114, 68 from 40-55 years, 18 from >55 years and minimum respondents are from age group of <25 years.

Experience

The respondents were from varying experience levels. To have a clear picture of this demographic attribute the experience level was also included in the questionnaire fashioned in four different categories i.e. a) <1 year b) 1-5 years c) 5-10 years d) >10 years. Maximum respondents were having more than 10 year's experience i,e 77 while 8 are having <1 year experience, 61 are having 1-5 years' experience, 58 are having 5-10 years of experience.

Reliability Analysis

In order to find the internal consistency of a scale, the alpha coefficient also known as Cronbach alpha is used (Sekaran 2000; Westberg, 2004). The Cronbach alpha values range between 0 and 1. When the alpha value is near to 1 this reflects high reliability of the scale for use.

Table 2: Reliability of Scales (N=204)

Variable Name	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Ethics	0.79	12
Marketing Decisions	0.82	16

As tabulated above, the alpha values suggest a reliability the constructs used in current study are within the aforementioned acceptable range i.e. $\alpha>0.70$.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a useful measure for determining the direction of the relationship between different variables involved in a study. Correlation coefficient values are given in table below.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis (N=204)

	Ethics	Marketing Decisions
Ethics	1	
Marketing decisions	.693**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

In current study the value of correlation coefficient for Ethics and Marketing Decisions is ($r=0.693$, $p<0.01$) depicting that Ethics affects the Marketing Decisions of a company positively. Their relation are significant and positive showing existence of strong relationship between both and which results in acceptance of hypothesis.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis for showing the strength of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Incremental regression model is used for determining relationship between Culture and Marketing decisions.

Regression analysis for Ethics and Marketing Decisions

The test summary for Ethics and Marketing decisions is tabulated in table 4.10 above. The table depicts that there exists a strong and positive relationship between Ethics and Marketing decisions as (R square= 0.48, $p< 0.05$). The analysis shown that nearly 48% of the variation in Marketing Decisions was accounted for by

the model. F statistic significance value here again negated the presence of by chance occurrence as it was calculated to be less than 0.05.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Ethics and Marketing Decisions (N=204)

Model		B	Std. Error	B	T	P <
1	(Constant)	.888	.195		4.550	.000
	Business Ethics	.695	.051	.693	13.663	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Marketing Decisions

R square = 0.48, Adjusted R square = 0.478, F=186.67

Discussion of the Key Findings

The study framed vital conclusions concentrated upon Ethics in Marketing Decisions of an organization. Hypothesis H postulated in the study stated that "there is positive relationship between Ethics and Marketing Decisions. The results of the study confirmed the existence of a significant and positive relationship between Ethics and Marketing decisions. These findings are in line with the existing pool of literature. The Ferrell and Gresham (1985) framework for incorporating ethics in decision making process make more obviously defined the interaction of the individual and company including organizational colleague and culture, highlight similar positive relation presence between ethics and marketing decisions. Ethics analyze issues of marketing managers and organizations related (Murphy, 2002). A good number of marketers demonstrate moral commitment besides acknowledgement that ethical demeanor is necessary for trust creation (Srnka 1997, p.96). Similar positive relationship between ethics and marketing decisions are confirmed by (Lee, 1981), by Laczniak and Murphy (1993) and (Hunt and Vitell 1986).

Conclusion

The aim of present study was to examine the effect of Ethics on Marketing Decisions of a company In order to investigate the relationship between Ethics and marketing decision, regression was performed and correlation analysis reveals relationship between variables.

Results showed that Ethics contributes towards marketing decisions positively. Therefore implementation of and adherence to the ethical values like Honesty, responsibility ,fairness and respect in organizational culture brings positive results in marketing decisions of firms and hence on overall organization.

The Present research is distinctive due to several reasons. On one hand it has tested the effect of ethical values on Marketing decision making in a sector never been tested before e.g. the telecom industry of Pakistan. While on the other hand it has deliberated both the private and public sector organization despite the fact that earlier studies only tested the public organization.

The observed findings lead to the analysis that Ethics affect Marketing decisions. Those organizations which are interested to cultivate an effective as well as efficient marketing strategy to overcome the challenging market competition. They need to understand that in which kind of culture their company is being operated and that they should integrate ethical values honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect strongly in their culture. However, Small sample size, specific sector and uni-dimensional facets of marketing decisions studied are fewer limitations of the study.

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