



UC/FPCE\_2018

Universidade de Coimbra  
Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação

**Is 'Business Ethics' what we think it is? A study of the Portuguese's Social Representation of business ethics**

Alvaro Gijón Francis (e-mail: [alvaro.g.francis@gmail.com](mailto:alvaro.g.francis@gmail.com))

Dissertação de Mestrado em Psicologia das Organizações e do Trabalho sob a orientação de  
Professora Doutora Lisete Mónico  
Professora Doutora Leonor Pais

**É a 'Ética Empresarial' o que pensamos ser? Um estudo sobre as Representações Sociais de ética empresarial na população Portuguesa**

**Resumo**

Desde a década de 1980, o campo da ética empresarial passou por mudanças significativas e experimentou um grande crescimento. Existe agora um vasto conjunto de literatura distinta e específica sobre ética empresarial preocupada com diversos tópicos e temas, mas no que concerne a relacionar o campo da ética empresarial com as representações sociais não é um deles, sendo este artigo o primeiro, ao nosso conhecimento, que o faz com uma amostra Portuguesa (N = 2735 indivíduos, entre 16 e 90 anos). Procurando fornecer uma 'ponte' entre a teoria e a realidade, procedemos com este estudo, a tentar descobrir qual é a representação social da ética empresarial para trabalhadores portugueses usando o Teste de Evocação Livre e aplicando a Teoria do Núcleo Central de Abric. Os resultados mostram um núcleo central organizado em torno dos conceitos fundamentais de "respeito" (f. = 1139, OME = 2,31), "justiça" (f. = 444, OME = 2,58), "honestidade" (f. = 384, OME = 2,58), "igualdade" (f. = 324, OME = 2,69), "código de conduta" (f. = 285, OME = 2,69), "confidencialidade" (f. = 203, OME = 2,34) e "concorrência leal" (f = 124, OME = 2,66). Embora alguns dos conceitos fundamentais da ética empresarial sejam encontrados na literatura, outros não, apontando para uma possível partição entre a teoria e a realidade.

**Palavras chave:** Ética empresarial, representações sociais, Teoria do Núcleo Central, EVOC.

**Is 'Business Ethics' what we think it is? A study of the Portuguese's Social Representation of business ethics**

**Abstract**

Ever since the 1980's, the business ethics field has gone through significant changes and has experienced a big growth. There is now a vast body of distinct and specific business ethics literature concerned with diverse topics and themes, but relating the field of business ethics with social representations isn't one of them being this article the first, to our knowledge, that does this with a Portuguese sample (N = 2735 subjects, aged 16-90). Attempting to provide a 'bridge' between theory and reality, we proceeded with this study, trying to discover what the social representation of business ethics in Portuguese workers is using the Free Evocation Test and applying Abric's Central Nucleus Theory. The results show a central core organized around the core concepts of 'respect' (f. = 1139, MOE = 2,31), 'justice' (f. = 444, MOE = 2,58), 'honesty' (f. = 384, MOE = 2,58), 'equality' (f. = 324, MOE = 2,69), 'code of conduct' (f. = 285, MOE = 2,69), 'confidentiality' (f. = 203, MOE = 2,34) and 'fair competition' (f. = 124, MOE = 2,66). While some of the core concepts of business ethics are found in the literature, others were not, pointing to a possible partition between theory and reality.

**Key Words:** Business ethics, social representations, Theory of the Central Nucleus, EVOC.

## **Agradecimentos**

Deixo apenas algumas palavras, mas um sentido e profundo sentimento de agradecimento.

Às minhas orientadoras, a Professora Doutora Lisete Mónico e a Professora Doutora Leonor Pais, pois sem elas não teria sido possível.

E a todas as pessoas que participaram e contribuíram para a elaboração de este trabalho.

### **Nota introdutória**

A presente tese foi redigida em formato de artigo em conformidade com as regras pedidas pelo *Journal of Business Ethics* quanto ao conteúdo e estrutura com o objetivo final de que o mesmo fosse submetido nesta revista. Este objetivo foi alcançado e o artigo foi submetido no passado dia 19 de fevereiro de 2018, com o número de manuscrito: BUSI-D-18-00364.

## **Index**

Introduction.....	1
I. Literature Review .....	2
1. Business Ethics .....	2
2. Social Representations .....	5
II. Methods.....	7
III. Results.....	10
IV. Discussion.....	13
V. Limitations and future areas of research .....	18
References.....	19
Appendices.....	28

## **Introduction**

If we wish to hit the mark, it would be helpful to know what we are aiming for. In this case, knowing what ‘business ethics’ is. Business is a human activity (Kline, 2006), it’s an “essential part of the social fabric” (Thomas et al., 2004, p. 56). Business requires an investment and customers to whom to sell their output on a consistent basis in order to make a profit, but the days of setting the business’ goal as “making a profit” are a thing of the past, we now know that the ultimate goal of any organization is success, more specifically, sustainability. So, as Tsalikis and Fritzsche (1989) stated, ethical business is good business. It is important for business organizations to become (Goodstein et al., 2014) and also to remain, ethical (Kaptein, 2015).

The headline dominance in recent times of corporate and social sector scandals have left and continue to leave their scars on society, generating concerns about whether ethics in business is possible (Keller-Krawczyk, 2010) or even compatible (Robin, 2009). Herein then, arises the questions of ethics in organizations and in their exercise. In contemporary organizations, according to Melé (2008), a number of sensitive and emerging fields call for ethical interference – like worker rights or gender issues.

Back in 1970 no one talked about business ethics, as we do today. A systematic reflection about business ethics was completely absent (van Luijck, 2006). This would start to change in the 1980’s. Companies began to develop proactive projects designed to avoid negative social judgment. They began to, as noted by Griesse (2003), incorporate business ethics programs and organized codes of ethical performance for their employees. Business ethics started to be seen as a response to the situations we currently face, such as, globalization, international competition, environmental

concerns, sustainability and technological developments, among others (Griesse, 2003).

This study, focusing on a rather scarce and limited empirical study literature base, contributes to the business ethics literature by producing some empirical data about the concept of business ethics, which might help to modeling educational processes allowing for adjustments in key areas for the acquisition of the knowledge needed. Additionally, by studying the social representation of business ethics we make an important contribution to the field, since it allows us to understand if the literature and research on it are on the same page as the ‘every-day-person’. The purpose of this paper is to identify the social representation of the term ‘business ethics’ aiding to better understand the meaning of this concept. In order to attain this goal, we will use the EVOC software (*Ensemble de Programmes Permettant L’Analyse des Evocations*; Vèrges, Scano and Junique 2002), 2005 version.

The article is structured as follows. In the following section, we present the literature review, which deals with a contextualization on ‘business ethics’ and on the theory of social representations and the Central Nucleus Theory, in order to provide a general idea of the notions we are working with. Next, we describe the methods used in this study. In the subsequent sections, the results are presented, and the implications are discussed. The article then ends with a brief observation on its limitations.

## **I. Literature Review**

### *1. Business Ethics*

Lewis (1985) defined business ethics as the “rules, standards, codes, or principles which provide guidelines for morally right behavior and truthfulness in specific



situations”. Weiss (1994) proposed to define business ethics as “the art and discipline of applying ethical principles to examine and solve complex moral dilemmas” (p. 6). Another possible definition is that business ethics is the application of moral principles in making business decisions (Rushton, 2002). According to Haddad (2007), business ethics is, “...making the right business decisions, or doing the right thing in business” (p. 57). So, as a summary of the previous definitions, we could say that business ethics is the applied ethics on any business activity as to not only do the right thing, but also know what the right thing is.

While the concept business ethics remains the most popular, others have surfaced. The most visible concept is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which has become fashionable (Liedekerke and Demuijnck, 2011). This new concept isn’t a different ‘branch’ of business ethics, instead it’s another, newer, way of understanding business ethics, and this term brought into business ethics new topics, new types of research and other social sciences (Liedekerke and Demuijnck, 2011).

One possible division of the business ethics literature is, as Donaldson and Dunfee (1994) propose, between empirical – research can be informed by empirical ideas, by concepts that describe and explain factual states of affairs – and normative approaches – research can be informed by normative concepts, by prescriptive ideas guiding us to what we should do. Another possible division comes from Nicholson (1994), who states that there are a number of different types of writings that dominate the field of business ethics, these are: didactic, analytical, descriptive and prescriptive.

The first group is comprised of texts about ethical philosophy, discussions of ethical dilemmas and issues such as pollution, safety and business conduct (Ford and Richardson, 1994; Svensson and Wood, 2008; Suhonen et al., 2011). Second, as their name states, are more analytical writings on morality in organizations. These verse on

different themes, for example, most notably, frameworks assessing the ethics of the organizations (Arjoon, Turriago-Hoyos, and Thoene, 2018; Bice, 2017; Svensson and Wood, 2011). Third we find data based surveys of corporate responsibility, often represented by the contents of organizations' annual reports, codes of conduct, their reputation or their measurable environmentalism (Matthews, 1987; Rushton, 2002). Fourth, and finally, we find writings with the intent of raising the ethical tone of business conduct based on the idea that “good business is good for business” (Donaldson and Davis, 1990; Kaptein, 2015; Tsalikis and Fritzsche, 1989).

Underlying these four types of writings is a vast body of distinct and specific business ethics literature concerned with culture – both organizational and national – (Agarwal and Malloy, 1999; Christie et al., 2003; Gabler, 2006; Polonsky et al., 2001), ethical decision-making (Ford and Richardson, 1994; Suhonen et al., 2011), education (Floyd et al., 2013; Swanson and Fisher, 2008), justice (Brady and Dunn, 1995; Singer, 2001), religiosity (Conroy and Emerson, 2004; Kurpis, Beqiri and Helgeson, 2008; Vitell, 2009), sustainability (Holland and Albrecht, 2013; Kolk, 2007; Overall, 2016), to name but a few.

Concerning empirical research on business ethics, Hannafey (2003) published a literature review on ethics and entrepreneurship highlighting the ethical dilemmas that entrepreneurs find in their activity, which is present in research published. Rajeev (2012) focused on literature about ethical decision-making at the workplace, pointing out individual antecedents, organizational context, and the influence of external environment on ethical decisions. In both literature reviews the concept of business ethics and the social representation of it are not covered. Afterwards, Wallis and Klein (2015) undertook a literature review on socially responsible investing. They have focused their literature review mainly on comparative performance between SRI and

their conventional benchmarks. Once again, the social representation of business ethics is not focused. Toro and Rodriguez (2017) carried out a literature review on ethics in organizations and found mainly research focused on pedagogical aspects involved in ethics training, gender and ethics training, the relationship between ethics training and ethical decision-making, and the relationships between ethics training and ethical cultures in organizations. One more time, the social representation on what is business ethics was not covered.

Different to the studies reviewed, ours is somewhat ‘irreverent’ in the sense that we use SRT to further the understanding of business ethics. We argue that there is significant potential to adopt SRT for business ethics-related research as social representations can have the effect of making a particular version of the unfamiliar familiar to those in the community.

## *2. Social Representations*

The term ‘social representation’ designates, according to Abric (2001), a set of organized and structured information, beliefs, opinions and attitudes about a given object. They are important in our everyday life, because they guide us, they help us “to name and define jointly the different aspects of daily reality, how to interpret those aspects, make decisions” (Jodelet, 1989, p. 17) and, eventually, how we ought to position ourselves before them (Jodelet, 1989). We could then define ‘social representations’ as constructions made by the people to improve their understanding of the world that allows them to better communicate and act upon it. Also, the notion of representations are formed, maintained and changed through communication (de Sá, 1996) and the theory of social representations does not presuppose a change to

higher forms of knowledge or towards more adequate representations, it presupposes the transformation of one type of knowledge into another (Marková, 2017).

Among the functions of social representations, we can cite, according to Abric (1994a), the functions of: (a) knowledge, allowing the subjects to understand and explain a certain reality; (b) identity, acting as a protection to the specificity of groups; (c) orientation, guiding behaviors and practices; and (d) justification of conduct, acting a posteriori in order to justify behaviors and positions of groups and individuals (Abric, 1994a, pp. 17-18). In addition to this, to better understand our research, it is important to analyze the Central Nucleus Theory proposed by Abric in 1976 (de Sá, 1996).

In order to explain the representations, Abric (1994b) proposed two parts, although being only one entity, compose the social representations, each with a specific and complementary role to the other. The first part is the central system, the central core of the representation, which constitutes the common collectively shared basis of social representations. It is stable, coherent, it resists change – allowing for continuity and consistency – and it is independent from the immediate social and material context (Abric, 1993). The second part refers to the peripheral system updates and contextualizes the normative and consensual determinations of the central system, resulting in the mobility, flexibility and individualized expression of the social representations. Without it, the representation could not be rooted in the reality of the moment (Abric, 1993). It allows the integration of individual experiences; it supports group heterogeneity and contradictions; and, it is evolutionary and sensitive to the immediate context. Their functions consist of the regulation and adaptation of the central system to the concrete situation that the group is facing and, in historical terms, in the protection of the central system (de Sá, 1996).

Some examples of previous studies using the SRT are, to name a few, Cavedon and Ferraz (2005), who analyzed how the social representations of managers influence the strategic management; Borges, Medeiros and Casado (2011), who examined the social representations of Brazilian graduate students of Business Administration regarding situations in which ethics and competitiveness were present, observing that for students, organizational ethics is strongly associated with consequences; Gardes, Beguinot and Liqueur (2013), who, as us, also resorted to the EVOC software in their study on the French banking sector, with the goal of identifying what was the social representation of banks in the French population. Hamilton et al. (2014), who introduced SRT, believing it could make an important contribution to the field of Transformative Consumer Research, allowing them to set guidelines for stakeholders in marketing and policy contexts. All of them showing that the SRT can contribute to a deeper understanding of the object being studied, in our case, business ethics.

## **II. Methods**

This is a qualitative research based on the structural approach to the Theory of Social Representations conducted in Portugal. Our sample consisted of 2735 respondents (1713 [62.3%] female and 1008 male [36.8%] [for a total of  $N = 2721$ , and 14 missing]) between the ages of 16 and 90 ( $M = 31$ ,  $SD = 14.78$ ) encompassing four different generations (Silent Generation [32 subjects], Baby Boom Generation [325 subjects], X Generation [761 subjects] and Millennial Generation [1494 subjects] [we followed the time-categorization presented by Strauss & Howe (1997)]). The only eligibility criteria used was that the respondents, at the time of the data collection, had to be at least 16 years old (legal age to work in Portugal).

The data collection instrument consisted of two parts: free evocation of words starting with an inductive word and socio-demographic characterization. The data collection process was included as an assignment of a psychology master course. Appropriate training was provided and all the ethical and technical requirements were complied with. Participants were approached in public places during the day and asked for participating in the research. Data was collected between the months of October and November of 2017. As for the ethical issues, participants expressed their acceptance to participate in the study by signing an Informed Consent Form obeying the ethical standards set by the Portuguese Order of Psychologists.

Participants were asked to answer the following question: “Write down the first five words or expressions that come to your mind when you read the expression – Business Ethics”. The free association technique was used (Abric, 2001). Participants were also asked to provide socio-demographic information relating to their gender, year of birth, level of education, industry, business sector, professional situation, if they have a leadership position in their jobs, years of professional experience and whether they have or not an entrepreneur in their family.

Subsequently, we proceeded to the categorization of the answers. The categorization process is, according to Bardin (1977), an operation to classify constitutive elements of a set, by differentiation and, subsequently, following a previously defined criteria, by regrouping them. The categories resulting from this process are classes that bring together a group of elements under a generic title, grouping that is done according to the common characteristics of these elements. The categorization criterion can be semantic, syntactic, lexical and expressive. In our case, the type of categorization used was the lexical (classification of words according to their meaning, with pairing of synonyms and close meanings). As an example, words

such as “company”, “organization”, “factory”, or similar were grouped under the category “organization”. It should also be noted that, in order to carry out this categorization process, we proceeded, as Bardin (1977) suggests, firstly to isolating the elements and then classifying them.

The answers obtained were analyzed resorting to the EVOC software (*Ensemble de Programmes Permettant L'Analyse des Evocations*; Vèrges, Scano and Junique, 2002), 2005 version. The EVOC software allows the accomplishment of statistical calculations, building matrices of co-occurrences, which serve as the basis for the construction of the Four-Quadrants Table (Vèrges, Scano and Junique, 2002). The EVOC is composed of sixteen programs, each performing a different function. For our study we used four: *Lexique*, whose function is to isolate the lexical units; *Trievoc*, it sorts the evocations and organizes them in alphabetical order; *Rangmot*, provides a list of all the evoked words in alphabetical order, indicating how many times they were evoked and the order of recall, the total frequency of each word, the weighted average of the evocation order of each word, overall frequency and overall mean of recall orders; and finally, *Rangfrq* that organizes in a table of four quadrants the elements that compose the central nucleus and the periphery of a representation.

This software allowed us to obtain the social representation of different constructs, by listing the evoked words, analyzing them by crossing their frequency of evocation with their mean order of evocation. The intersection of these two criteria produces what is called the Four-Quadrants Table (Oliveira et al., 2005), in which the terms are classified according to their level of significance, allowing us to identify a hypothetic core of the term indicating the representation under study. This Four-Quadrants Table is divided in, not surprisingly, four. The left upper quadrant includes the central core of the representation under study – this one is the most important

quadrant, since it defines the meaning of the representation, the way it is organized and has a stabilizing function. The left lower quadrant is the contrasting core, in here we find the words that a minority of people identify as being their core concept of the representation. Those in the right upper quadrant are the first peripheral elements, and, finally, the right lower quadrant includes the second peripheral elements, which are more flexible and external to the representation (Abric, 1993, 1994a, 1994b).

### III. Results

Starting with the inductive word proposed for the collection of evocations, i.e. “business ethics”, 13028 answers were identified in the totality of our sample, for a total of 739 different words. These were inserted into the database in the order in which they were evoked.

**Table 1. Social representation of Business Ethics: Four Quadrant Table of [N = 2735 subjects; 739 different words evoked]**

Interm. Freq.	Term Evoked	<2.70		>2.70		
		f	M.O.E.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.
	<b>Central core</b>			<b>1<sup>st</sup> Periphery</b>		
	respect	1139	2.31	responsibility	485	2.72
	justice	444	2.58	good environment	288	2.99
	honesty	384	2.58	ethic	278	2.71
	equality	324	2.69	cooperation	240	2.99
>100	code of conduct	285	2.69	collaboration	239	3.03
	confidentiality	203	2.34	organization	236	2.82
	fair competition	124	2.66	morality	199	3.15
				professionalism	193	3.13
				transparency	171	2.81
				trust	166	3.15



---

				*	*	*
	<b>Contrasting core</b>					
				<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Periphery</b>		
	seriousness	76	2.29	appreciation	98	3.41
	prudence	53	2.68	solidarity	90	3.07
	respect the staff	51	2.06	motivation	90	3.38
	truthful	45	2.36	reputation	88	3.07
	essential	32	2.59	environmental responsibility	87	3.19
<b>&lt;100</b>	politeness	29	2.35	impartiality	85	2.92
	dignity	29	2.59	commitment	85	3.21
	rare	24	2.21	fair pay	82	2.77
	respect the law	19	2.58	competitiveness	80	3.23
	does not exist	18	2.06	rigor	79	2.81
	*	*	*	*	*	*

---

\* reduced for presentation purposes according to the value of 'f'

As shown in Table 1, the business ethics social representation of respondents suggests a central core organized around the core concepts of 'respect' 'justice', 'honesty', 'equality', 'code of conduct', 'confidentiality' and 'fair competition'. The first periphery is comprised by 23 terms with frequencies ranging from 103 to 485 and MOE between 2,709 and 3,293. Words included are 'responsibility', 'good environment', 'professionalism' and 'cooperation'. The second periphery is composed by 132 concepts such as 'environmental responsibility', 'commitment', 'solidarity' and 'appreciation', the frequencies in this periphery varied between 10 and 98, and the MOE between 2,706 and 4,600. Finally, a small number of participants – the contrast elements – considered 13 different concepts as core concepts of business ethics, namely 'seriousness', 'respect the staff', and 'essential'.

We then repeated this process six more times in order to identify possible differences of evocation depending on: a) gender; and, b) generation (we separated according to date of birth). Despite this, we will focus only on the analysis of the answers of the totality of our sample as well as according to gender and generation.

In that order, 8135 answers were identified by female respondents (1713), for a total of 528 different terms. Our male respondents (1008) with a total of 508 different words pinpointed 4832 answers. According to the generation to which they pertain, we found: for the Silent Generation (32 respondents), 143 answers were identified, from which 79 were different between them; for the Baby Boom Generation (325 respondents), 1567 responses were given for a total of 280 different words; for the X Generation (761 respondents), 3668 answers were found for a total of 389 different terms; and for the Millennial Generation (1494 respondents), 7061 answers were identified, with 525 different words used.

For this remaining data, we will focus mostly on the central core and the first periphery, since these are the most elucidative (and in the case of the periphery, it is the one that allows certain flexibility, being sensible to contextual changes) of the understanding that the respondents have of business ethics. In that order, as shown in Appendix A1, the social representation of business ethics of females suggests a central core organized around the core concepts of 'respect', 'justice', 'equality', 'confidentiality' and 'law'. The first periphery is comprised by 22 terms. Some of the words included are 'responsibility', 'honesty', 'code of conduct', 'good environment' and 'cooperation'.

The social representation by males from our sample (Appendix A2) suggests a core composed by, 'respect', 'responsibility', 'justice', 'honesty' and 'code of

conduct'. The first periphery has more than 30 terms, including 'good environment', 'equality', 'organization' and 'collaboration'.

We now arrive to our 'generational categorization'. Considering the Silent Generation (Appendix A3), their central core consists of 'respect', 'equality' and 'justice'. The first periphery also comprises only three terms, these being 'transparency', 'honesty' and 'responsibility'. Appendix A4 shows the answers of the Baby Boom Generation. Their central core is organized around the concepts of 'respect', 'honesty' and 'justice'. Their first periphery only has two terms, 'responsibility' and 'good environment'. The Generation X (Appendix A5), has a SR structured around the concepts of 'respect', 'responsibility', 'honesty' and 'confidentiality'. The first periphery is composed by the terms 'justice', 'code of conduct', 'ethic' and 'professionalism'. Finally, the Millennial Generation (Appendix A6) shows a central core organized around the concepts of 'respect', 'justice', 'equality' and 'confidentiality'. The first periphery is made up by 18 terms, such as 'responsibility', 'honesty', 'good environment', 'cooperation' and 'code of conduct'.

#### **IV. Discussion**

Over the last several decades, the business ethics field has gone through significant changes and has experienced a big growth. New theories and insights have contributed to changing the way business ethics is perceived and integrated into the management field (Holland and Albrecht, 2013). Despite this, very few were the studies found relating business ethics and social representations, being the closer to ours, one that was limited to administration students (Matos, Lima, Rolim and Machado, 2012).

The free evocations suggest that the central elements of this representation are organized around a notion of business ethics as being ‘respect’, ‘justice’, ‘honesty’, ‘equality’, ‘code of conduct’, ‘confidentiality’ and ‘fair competition’. The first question then is, are our results similar to the ones found by Matos, Lima, Rolim and Machado (2012)? The answer is, somewhat. Although two terms were found in both studies as being part of the central core of the representation – ‘respect’ and ‘honesty’ –, the remainder words used were not, with some being situated in our – or theirs – peripheries and others even being found in our contrast elements. This then might point towards a strong idea that business ethics is, and requires, respect and honesty. But, what does the literature say about business ethics?

Taking our central core, we find clear support for one of our evoked terms, this one being ‘justice’. Dierksmeier and Celano (2012) state that, everyone (individuals, firms, businesses and governments) is obligated to the realization of social justice. This is why concrete social, not just abstract institutional justice must inform and transform every commercial transaction anywhere in the world. According to them, social justice is the global virtue of business. The interest on justice in current business ethics literature is also noted by Singer (2001) when he speaks about the relationship between the two moral standards of justice and rights, the author also states that social justice is a key issue in business ethics. Brady and Dunn (1995) have argued that the traditional Deontology-Utilitarianism model is a more parsimonious normative framework of business ethics than the more recent Utility-Rights-Justice model. Additionally, organizational ethics is concerned with many aspects of organizational life such as safeguarding justice (Suhonen et al., 2011).

As for the rest of our central core results, we find in the literature some glimpses and similarities. In the case of the result ‘code of conduct’, we found a relatively close

term in the form of ‘code of ethics’. Langlois and Schlegelmilch (1990) observed that European codes of ethics mostly emphasize macro ethical issues, while Hatchoji et al. (1988) stated that Japanese tend to have dual codes of ethics: one for domestic operations, and another for international ones. Growing international and domestic business scandals of the 1970s and 1980s led companies to institute codes of ethics as symbols to both internal and external stakeholders of their commitment to ethical practices (Murphy, 1995). An organizational code of ethics impacts employee perceptions and behavior. Perhaps ethics codes serve to heighten awareness and sensitivity to the importance of ethical behavior (Adams et al., 2001). Codes of ethics could provide a moral compass by which individuals can self-monitor and regulate their behavior, resulting in increased consistency in ethical decision-making and actions. The mere presence of a code of ethics is more important than the content of the code per se (Adams et al., 2001). Code studies have been also conducted on the largest multinational corporations operating across a range of jurisdictions in the world (Bethoux et al., 2007).

In the case of the term ‘honesty’, since it refers to a facet of moral character and connotes positive and virtuous attributes, despite not being expressly cited in the business ethics literature, there is literature about individual virtues. The Aristotelian approach to business ethics puts a great concern on the character of an individual, for good character is the precondition of business ethics (Wai-Ying, 1999). Solomon (1994) suggested that the success of business ethics depends upon the development of civic virtues and not upon the learning of abstract theories. There are also applications of Eastern thought and virtues to business practices (e.g., Hazera, 1995; Kumar and Rao, 1996).

Despite not being a part of the central core, ‘responsibility’ is found in the first periphery of the social representation of business ethics, and, unlike other terms from the central core, ‘responsibility’ is supported by the literature. Increasing numbers of investors are looking at the way organizations meet their social responsibilities (Barnett and Salomon, 2006), despite this, there was no consensus on what exactly should be included in the social responsibility of organizations (Griffin, 2000). The more an organization behaves socially responsibly, the more likely that their behavior will be perceived as ethical. For organizations to be perceived as ethical, they need to be socially responsible (Overall, 2016). In Sotorrío’s and Sanchez’s (2008) study European companies had high scores for all indicators of responsibility to customers and employees and on all but one indicator for environmental responsibility. Organizational ethics is concerned with the ethical responsibility of the organization as a whole (Suhonen et al., 2011).

Studies on gender differences are plentiful, and this is also observable in the business ethics field. In our case, the differences between females’ and males’ responses were the terms ‘equality’, ‘confidentiality’ and ‘law’ for women, and ‘responsibility’, ‘honesty’ and ‘code of conduct’ for men. Both men and women evoked the terms ‘respect’ and ‘justice’. Starting with the similarities, we found, in the literature, studies about ‘justice’ Specifically, Ryan (2016) states that men have stronger reactions than women to distributive injustices in the workplace, while women have been shown to have lower satisfaction with procedural injustice in organizations. For the rest of the words evoked by the different sexes, the literature isn’t as clear. In their study, Hartman, Fok and Zee (2009) found that male were more likely to be willing to bribe than female, which could be supported by our findings since women appear to be more concerned with the legal aspects of business ethics

(law being a central element in their social representation) and bribery being an unlawful action. Also, scholars have found that, compared with men, women are more related to the issue of corporate social responsibility (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2015). Our results are different since it is the male respondents that evoked responsibility as a core concept of business ethics. Finally, according to Chen, Tuliao, Cullen and Chang (2016), men prefer success and competition to following rules. This is also not supported by our data since male respondents used the term ‘code of conduct’ as a central element of business ethics.

Concerning the different generations, they are not sharply divided, but their characteristic features are adequate for the whole age-group in general. Professional literature uses different names for depicting the categories of the generations and their time-categorization is also sometimes differently defined (although it does not influence the basic characteristics). As stated in the Methods, we decided to follow the time-categorization presented by Strauss & Howe (1997), according to whom, for example, the millennial generation goes from 1982 until 2002. No prior study was found that studied the social representation of business ethics according to generation. ‘Respect’ was found in all our respondents’ central core, independently of the generation group. As for the rest of the answers, the next more common answer was ‘justice’, appearing in all except the Generation X; ‘honesty’ in both the baby-boomers and Generation X; and ‘equality’, a central element of the Silent Generation and the millennials. According to Zemke, Raines and Filipczak (2000), the Silent Generation is characterized by being respectful of order, rules and authority. Baby-boomers are identified by respecting hierarchy and traditions (Bencsik and Machova, 2016). Xers is the first generation to really be characterized by respecting diversity (Bencsik and Machova, 2016). As for millennials, they easily accept cultural

differences (Andrea, Gabriella and Tímea, 2016), which could be explained by the fact that their social representation of business ethics encompasses both ‘respect’ and ‘equality’. As for the rest of our respondents’ answers, they weren’t directly found in the literature. For example, Zemke, Raines and Filipczak (2000) defined both the Silent and Baby-boom Generations as believing and taking pride in hard work. This concept wasn’t found in our respondents, yet, in both generations we find, in their first peripheries, the concept of ‘responsibility’, which we could somewhat link to the idea of ‘hard work’ since this last one demands responsibility to be met. Bencsik and Manchova (2016) stated that xers also value hard work, and, while not in the same way as in the previous generations, xers from our sample evoked in their first periphery the term ‘professionalism’, which again, could be linked to the notion of hard work, since professionalism is a skill or behavior that allows a person to do a job well. Andrea, Gabriella and Tímea (2016) noted that for millennials it is important to work where they want and to do what they really enjoy doing and that the concepts of success, career and money are of top priority, these notions were not found among our millennial respondents’ understanding of business ethics.

## **V. Limitations and future areas for research**

Although this research is valuable, it is not without limitations. First, while we reviewed many articles for this study, we find that there is very limited research on the social representations of business ethics.

Second, while the data used in this study is rich, it was obtained solely through one method, questionnaire, which limits the researcher’s capacity to probe for further details associated with a given phenomenon. An area of future research might involve



conducting more in-depth qualitative analyses to better understand the understanding that the 'regular-person' has of the concept of business ethics.

## References

- Abric, J. C. (1993). Central System, Peripheral System: Their functions and roles in the dynamics of social representations. *Papers on Social Representations*, 2(2), 75-78.
- Abric, J.C. (1994a), *Pratiques social et représentations*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Abric, J.C. (1994b), L'organisation interne des représentations sociales: système central et système périphérique. In C. Guimelli (ed.), *Structures et transformations des représentations sociales*, Neuchâtel, Delachaux & Niestlé, pp. 73-84.
- Abric, J.C. (2001). L'approche structurale des représentations sociales: développements récents. *Psychologie et société*, 4, 81-106.
- Adams, J.S., Tashchian, A., & Shore, T.H. (2001). Codes of ethics as signals for ethical behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 29, 199-211.
- Agarwal, J., & Malloy, D. C. (1999). Ethical work climate dimensions in a not-for-profit organization: An empirical study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 20, 1-14.
- Alonso-Almeida, M. D., Navarrete, F. C., & Rodriguez-Pomeda, J. (2015). Corporate social responsibility perception in business students as future managers: a multifactorial analysis. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 24(1), 1-17.
- Andrea, B., Gabriella, H., & Tímea, J. (2016). Y and Z generations at workplaces. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 8(3), 90-106.

- Arjoon, S., Turriago-Hoyos, A., & Thoene, U. (2018). Virtuousness and the common good as a conceptual framework for harmonizing the goals of the individual, organizations, and the economy. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 147, 143-163.
- Bardin, L. (1977). La catégorisation. In L. Bardin (Ed.), *L'Analyse de Contenu* (pp. 117-132). Presses Universitaires de France.
- Barnett, M. L., & Salomon, R. M. (2006). Beyond dichotomy: the curvilinear relationship between social responsibility and financial performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 27(11), 1101-1122.
- Bencsik, A., & Machova, R. (2016). Knowledge sharing problems from the viewpoint of intergeneration management. In D. Vasilenko & N. Khazieva (Eds.), *4th International Conference on Management, Leadership and Governance: ICMLG2016* (p. 42). Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited.
- Béthoux, E., Didry, C., & Mias, A. (2007). What codes of conduct tell us: corporate social responsibility and the nature of the multinational corporation. *Corporate Governance: An International Review*, 15(1), 77-90.
- Bice, S. (2017). Corporate Social Responsibility as institution: A social mechanisms framework. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 143, 17-34.
- Borges, J. F., Medeiros, C. R., & Casado, T. (2011). Práticas de gestão e representações sociais do administrador: algum problema? *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, 9(5), 530-563.
- Brady, F. N., & Dunn, C. P. (1995). Business meta-ethics: An analysis of two theories. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 5, 385-398.

- Cavedon, N. R., & Ferraz, D. L. S. (2005). Representações sociais e estratégia em pequenos comércios. *RAE eletrônica*, 4(1) <https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1676-56482005000100014>
- Chen, C., Tuliao, K. V., Cullen, J. B., & Chang, Y. (2016). Does gender influence managers' ethics? A cross-cultural analysis. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 25(4), 345-362.
- Christie, P., Kwon, I. G., Stoeberl, P. A., & Baumhart, R. (2003). A cross-cultural comparison of ethical attitudes of business managers: India, Korea and the United States. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 46(3), 263–287.
- Conroy, S.J. & Emerson, T.L.N. (2004). Business Ethics and Religion: Religiosity as a predictor of ethical awareness among students. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 50, 383–396.
- De Sá, C.P. (1996). Representações sociais: Teoria e pesquisa do núcleo central. *Temas em Psicologia*, 4(3), 19-33.
- Dierksmeier, C., & Celano, A. (2012). Thomas Aquinas on justice as a global virtue. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 22(2), 247-272
- Donaldson, J., & Davis, P. (1990). Business Ethics? Yes, but what can it do for the bottom line? *Management Decision*, 28(6), 29-33.
- Donaldson, T., & Dunfee, T. W. (1994). Toward a unified conception of business ethics: Integrative social contracts theory. *The Academy of Management Review*, 19(2), 252-284.
- Floyd, L. A., Xu, F., Atkins, R., & Caldwell, C. (2013). Ethical outcomes and business ethics: Toward improving business ethics education. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 117(4), 753-776.

- Ford, R. C., & Richardson, W. D. (1994). Ethical decision making: A review of the empirical literature. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 13, 205-221.
- Gabler, D. (2006). Is your culture a risk factor? *Business and Society Review*, 111, 337-362.
- Gardes, N., Beguinot, S., & Liquet, J. (2013). Du concept d'image à sa mesure, une approche par les représentations sociales. *La Revue des Sciences de Gestion*, 261-262(3), 157.
- Griesse, M. (2003). Business ethics and corporate social responsibility in light of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral judgment. *Impulso*. 14, 33-48.
- Griffin, J. J. (2000). Corporate Social Performance: Research directions for the 21st century. *Business & Society*, 39(4), 479-491.
- Goodstein, J., Butterfield, K. D., Pfarrer, M. D., & Wicks, A. C. (2014). Individual and organizational reintegration after ethical or legal transgressions: Challenges and opportunities. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 24(3), 315–342.
- Haddad, L. (2007). The ethics of business and the business of ethics. *The Middle East Business and Economic Review*, 19(1), 56–67.
- Hamilton, K., Piacentini, M. G., Banister, E., Barrios, A., Blocker, C. P., Coleman, C. A., . . . Saatcioglu, B. (2014). Poverty in consumer culture: towards a transformative social representation. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(17-18), 1833-1857.
- Hannafey, F. T. (2003). Entrepreneurship and Ethics: A Literature Review. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 46, 99-110.
- Hartman, S. J., Fok, L. Y., & Zee, S. M. (2009). An examination of ethical values among black and white subjects and among males and females. *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 12(2), 1-14.

- Hatchoji T., Nishikawa, Y., Ohinata, Y., Ichihari, G., & Takahashi, S. (1988). *Future stage of corporate social responsibility in the era of overseas production*. Tokyo: Hitachi Research Institute.
- Hazera, A. (1995). A comparison of Japanese and U.S. corporate financial accountability and its impact on the responsibilities of corporate managers. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 5, 479-497.
- Holland, D., & Albrecht, C. (2013). The worldwide academic field of business ethics: Scholars' Perceptions of the most important issues. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 117(4), 777-788.
- Jodelet, D. (1989), Réprésentations sociale: un domaine en expansion. In, D. Jodelet (Org.) *Les Réprésentations Sociales*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Kaptein, M. (2015). The battle for business ethics: A struggle theory. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 144(2), 343-361.
- Keller-Krawczyk, L. (2010). Is business ethic possible and necessary? *Economics & Society*, 3(1), 133–142.
- Kline, W. (2006). Business ethics from the internal point of view. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 64, 57–67.
- Kolk, A. (2007). Sustainability, accountability and corporate governance: exploring multinationals reporting practices. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 17(1), 1-15.
- Kumar, N. S., & Rao, U. S. (1996). Guidelines for value based management in Kautilya's Arthashastra. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 15, 415-423.
- Kurpis, L., Beqiri, M., & Helgeson, J. (2008). The effects of commitment to moral self-improvement and religiosity on ethics of business students. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 80(3), 447–463.

- Langlois, C.C., & Schlegemilch, B.B. (1990). Do corporate codes of ethics reflect national character? Evidence from Europe and the United States. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 21, 519-539.
- Lewis, P. (1985). Defining 'business ethics': Like nailing jell-o to a wall. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 4(5), 377-383.
- Liedekerke, L. V., & Demuijnck, G. (2011). Business ethics as a field of training, teaching and research in Europe. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 104, 29-41.
- Marková, I. (2017). The making of the theory of social representations. *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, 47(163), 358-374.
- Matthews, M. C. (1987). Codes of ethics: Organizational behavior and misbehavior. In W. C. Frederick & L. E. Preston (Eds.), *Research in Corporate Social Performance and Policy* (Vol. 9, pp. 107-130). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Matos, F.R., Lima, A.C., Rolim, G.F., & Machado, D.D. (2012). Representações sociais sobre ética nas organizações: O significado do termo para alunos do curso de administração de empresas. In A.M. Sousa (Ed.), *Tendências na Gestão Contemporânea* (pp. 242-267). Fortaleza: Expressão gráfica e editora.
- Melé, D. (2008). Corporate social responsibility theories. In, Crane, A., McWilliams, A., Matten, D., Moon, & J., Siegel, D.S. *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility* (pp. 47-82). New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Murphy, P.E. (1995). Corporate ethics statements: Current status and future prospects. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 14, 727-740.
- Nicholson, N. (1994). Ethics in organizations: A framework for theory and research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 13(8), 581-596.

- Polonsky, M., J., Brito, P., Q., Pinto, J., & Higgs-Kleyn, N. (2001). Consumer ethics in the European union: A comparison of northern and southern views. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 31(2), 117-130.
- Oliveira, D.C., Marques, S.C., Tosoli, A.M.G., & Teixeira, M.C.T.V. (2005). Análise das evocações livres: Uma técnica de análise estrutural das representações sociais. In A.S. Paredes (Ed.), *Perspectivas teórico-metodológicas em representações sociais* (pp. 573-603). João Pessoa: Editora Universitária UFPB.
- Overall, J. (2016). Unethical behavior in organizations: empirical findings that challenge CSR and egoism theory. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 25(2), 113-127.
- Rajeev, P. N. (2012). Correlates of ethical intentions: A critical review of empirical literature and suggestions for future research. *Journal of International Business Ethics*, 5(1), 3-17.
- Robin, D. (2009). Toward an applied meaning for ethics in business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 89, 139–150.
- Rushton, K. (2002). Business ethics: a sustainable approach. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 11(2), 137-139.
- Ryan, L. V. (2016). Sex differences through a neuroscience lens: Implications for business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 144(4), 771-782.
- Singer, M. S. (2001). Paradigms linked: a normative-empirical dialogue about business ethics. In J. Dienhart, D. Moberg, & R. Duska (Eds.), *The Next Phase of Business Ethics: Integrating Psychology and Ethics* (Vol. 3, pp. 125-141). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

- Solomon, R. C. (1994). Business and the humanities: An aristotelian approach to business ethics. In T. J. Donaldson & R. E. Freeman (Eds.), *Business as a Humanity* (pp. 45-75). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sotorrió, L. L., & Sánchez, J. L. (2008). Corporate Social Responsibility of the most highly reputed european and north american firms. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 82(2), 379-390.
- Stajkovic, A.D., & Luthans, F. (1997). Business ethics across cultures: A social cognitive model. *Journal of World Business*, 32(1), 17-34.
- Strauss, W., & Howe, N. (1997). Seasons of life. In *The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy* (pp. 137-230). New York: Broadway Books
- Suhonen, R., Stolt, M., Virtanen, H., & Leino-Kilpi, H. (2011). Organizational ethics: A literature review. *Nursing Ethics*, 18(3), 285-303.
- Svensson, G., & Wood, G. (2008). A model of business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 77, 303-322.
- Svensson, G., & Wood, G. (2011). A conceptual framework of corporate and business ethics across organizations. *The Learning Organization*, 18(1), 21-35.
- Swanson, D. L., & Fisher, D. G. (2008). Business ethics education: If we don't know where we're going, any road will take us there. In D. L. Swanson & D. G. Fisher (Eds.), *Advancing business ethics education* (pp. 1-23). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Thomas, T., Schermerhorn, J.R., & Dienhart, J.W. (2004). Strategic leadership of ethical behavior in business. *Academy of Management Executive*, 18(2), 56- 66.
- Toro, J., & Rodríguez, M. P. (2017). Formación en ética en las organizaciones: Revisión de la Literatura. *Información Tecnológica*, 28(2), 167-180.



- Tsalikis, J., & Fritzsche, D.J. (1989). Business ethics: A literature review with a focus on marketing ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, (8), 695-743
- Van Luijk, H. (2006). Bedrijfsethiek in Fasen. In W. Dubbink & H. van Luijk (Eds.), (red.) *Bedrijfsgevallen. Hedendaagse casussen in de bedrijfsethiek* (pp. 6–17). Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Vergès, P., Scano, S., & Junique, C. (2002). *Ensembles de programmes permettant l'analyse des évocations: Manuel*. Aix-en-Provence: Université d'Aix en Provence.
- Vitell, S. J. (2009). The role of religiosity in business and consumer ethics: A review of the literature. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 90, 155-167.
- Wai-Ying, W. (1999). Rethinking the presuppositions of business ethic—From an Aristotelian approach to Confucian ethics. In P. H. Werhane & A. E. Singer (Eds.), *Business Ethics in Theory and Practice* (Vol. 13, pp. 177-188). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Wallis, M. V., & Klein, C. (2014). Ethical requirement and financial interest: a literature review on socially responsible investing. *Business Research*, 8(1), 61-98.
- Weiss, J. (1994). Business ethics defined. In J. Weiss (Ed.), *Business Ethics: a managerial, stakeholder approach* (pp. 1-26). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Zemke, R., Raines, C., & Filipczak, B. (2000). Old farts and upstarts: Crisis in the cross-generational workplace. In *Generations at work: managing the clash of veterans, boomers, xers, and nexters in your workplace* (pp. 9-28). New York: AMACON.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A.

#### Appendix A1. Social representation of Business Ethics in female respondents: Four Quadrant

Table of [N = 1713 subjects; 528 different words evoked]

Interm. Freq.	Term Evoked	<2.70		>2.70			
		f	M.O.E.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.	
>70	respect	754	2.24	responsibility	326	2.74	
	justice	287	2.59	honesty	244	2.74	
	equality	218	2.62	code of conduct	194	2.77	
	confidentiality	155	2.14	ethic	188	2.71	
	law	71	2.68	good environment	168	2.98	
				cooperation	160	2.99	
				collaboration	150	3.00	
				morality	146	3.16	
				organization	145	2.84	
				professionalism	124	3.19	
				*	*	*	
		seriousness	40	2.20	legality	69	2.86
		respect the staff	34	1.88	competence	67	3.48
		culture	25	2.68	solidarity	65	3.15
	dynamic	23	2.69	appreciation	61	3.39	
<70	management	23	2.69	impartiality	60	2.80	
	essential	19	2.47	motivation	55	3.33	
	politeness	18	2.44	profit	54	3.09	
	site	16	2.69	environmental responsibility	54	3.13	
	rare	14	2.14	reputation	52	2.89	

respect the law	13	2.54	commitment	49	3.25
*	*	*	*	*	*

\* reduced for presentation purposes according to the value of 'f'

## Appendix A2. Social representation of Business Ethics in male respondents: Four Quadrant

Table of [N = 1008 subjects; 508 different words evoked]

Order of Evocation		<2.70			>2.70	
Interm. Freq.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.
<b>&gt;70</b>	respect	381	2.47	good environment	118	2.99
	responsibility	156	2.66	equality	106	2.86
	justice	153	2.55	organization	91	2.79
	honesty	139	2.31	collaboration	88	3.09
	code of conduct	89	2.48	ethic	87	2.76
				cooperation	78	2.99
				communication	70	3.17
				professionalism	68	3.00
				social responsibility	55	2.82
				profit	54	3.46
<b>&lt;70</b>	transparency	67	2.58	morality	52	3.14
	fair competition	51	2.28	trust	51	2.94
	rigor	38	2.63	security	49	2.82
	legality	38	2.66	confidentiality	46	2.98
	fair pay	37	2.54	dedication	46	3.39
	seriousness	36	2.39	comprehension	45	3.36
	truthful	17	2.18	law	44	2.91
	respect the staff	17	2.41			
	hygiene	16	2.69			
	market	13	2.08			
*	*	*	*	*	*	

\* reduced for presentation purposes according to the value of 'f'

**Appendix A3. Social representation of Business Ethics in the Silent Generation (1928-1945)**

respondents: Four Quadrant Table of [N = 32 subjects; 79 different words evoked]

Order of Evocation		<2.60			>2.60		
Interm. Freq.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.	
>5	respect	10	2.10	transparency	6	2.67	
	equality	8	2.38	honesty	6	3.17	
	justice	8	2.38	responsibility	5	3.40	
<5	code of conduct	2	1.00	collaboration	4	2.75	
	corruption	2	1.50	good environment	4	4.00	
	seriousness	2	2.00	confidentiality	3	2.67	
	necessary	2	2.50	organization	3	2.67	
	fair pay	2	2.50	quality	3	3.00	
	security	2	2.50	education	3	3.33	
					consideration	2	3.00
					comprehension	2	3.50
					dedication	2	3.50
					fair competition	2	3.50
				*	*	*	

\* reduced for presentation purposes according to the value of 'f'

**Appendix A4. Social representation of Business Ethics in the Baby-Boom Generation (1946-1964)**

respondents: Four Quadrant Table of [N = 325 subjects; 280 different words evoked]

Order of Evocation		<2.60			>2.60	
Interm. Freq.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.
>35						

	respect	117	2.54	responsibility	49	2.60
	honesty	62	2.19	good environment	36	2.86
	justice	50	2.50			
	transparency	24	2.17	organization	31	2.65
	ethic	24	2.33	equality	29	2.69
	fair competition	18	2.17	collaboration	27	3.33
	confidentiality	15	1.87	education	25	3.20
	competitiveness	14	2.43	communication	22	3.27
	good management	13	2.46	cooperation	22	3.36
<35	<b>seriousness</b>	12	2.42	security	20	2.75
	legality	12	2.50	code of conduct	20	2.85
				accomplisher	20	3.45
				profit	19	3.37
				*	*	*

\* reduced for presentation purposes according to the value of 'f'

#### Appendix A5. Social representation of Business Ethics in the Generation X (1965-1980)

respondents: Four Quadrant Table of [N = 761 subjects; 389 different words evoked]

Order of Evocation		<2.60		>2.60		
Interm. Freq.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.
	respect	280	2.42	justice	135	2.63
	responsibility	147	2.48	code of conduct	91	2.74
>70	honesty	124	2.34	ethic	75	2.64
	confidentiality	70	2.13	professionalism	72	3.21

<b>&lt;70</b>	seriousness	35	2.06	good environment	67	3.16
	impartiality	24	2.54	morality	65	3.00
	respect the client	17	2.59	organization	62	2.86
	truthful	15	2.47	equality	58	3.17
	respect the staff	13	1.39	trust	54	3.11
	does not exist	10	2.00	transparency	50	3.14
	balance	10	2.50	cooperation	48	2.77
				accomplisher	48	2.92
				legality	44	3.00
				competence	44	3.11
			*	*	*	

\* reduced for presentation purposes according to the value of 'f'

#### Appendix A6. Social representation of Business Ethics in the Millennial Generation (1980-2002)

respondents: Four Quadrant Table of [N = 1494 subjects; 525 different words evoked]

Order of Evocation		<2.60		>2.60		
Interm. Freq.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.	Term Evoked	f	M.O.E.
<b>&gt;70</b>	respect	678	2.27	responsibility	261	2.82
	justice	229	2.55	honesty	176	2.86
	equality	222	2.58	good environment	170	2.91
	confidentiality	104	2.55	cooperation	167	3.02
				ethic	165	2.77
				code of conduct	158	2.64
				collaboration	157	2.87
				organization	128	2.86
				morality	107	3.11
				professionalism	106	3.11
			*	*	*	

---

	fair pay	47	2.49	duty	68	3.13
	prudence	34	2.59	security	60	3.13
	respect the staff	29	2.21	fair competition	59	2.66
	truthful	23	2.09	solidarity	52	2.96
	seriousness	23	2.57	commitment	52	3.33
<70	dynamic	21	2.52	loyalty	51	2.82
	good management	20	2.50	motivation	51	3.24
	dignity	19	2.42	appreciation	51	3.29
	humanism	17	2.29	environmental responsibility	50	2.98
	code of ethics	16	2.44	impartiality	49	3.00
	*	*	*	*	*	*

---

\* reduced for presentation purposes according to the value of 'f'

## Appendix B.

### Journal of Business Ethics

#### Is 'Business Ethics' what we think it is? A study of the Portuguese's Social Representation of business ethics

--Manuscript Draft--

<b>Manuscript Number:</b>	BUSI-D-18-00364
<b>Article Type:</b>	Original Paper
<b>Full Title:</b>	Is 'Business Ethics' what we think it is? A study of the Portuguese's Social Representation of business ethics
<b>Section/Category:</b>	Business Ethics and Psychology - Gazi Islam
<b>Keywords:</b>	Business ethics; social representations; EVOC.
<b>Corresponding Author:</b>	Alvaro Gijón Universidade de Coimbra Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação Coimbra, Coimbra PORTUGAL
<b>Corresponding Author E-Mail:</b>	alvaro.g.francis@gmail.com
<b>Order of Authors:</b>	Alvaro Gijón Lisete Mónico, Ph.D Leonor Pais, Ph.D Nuno Rebelo dos Santos, Ph.D
<b>Funding Information:</b>	
<b>Abstract:</b>	Ever since the 1980's, the business ethics field has gone through significant changes and has experienced a big growth. There is now a vast body of distinct and specific business ethics literature concerned with diverse topics and themes, but relating the field of business ethics with social representations isn't one of them being this article the first that does this with a Portuguese sample (N = 2735). Attempting to provide a real 'bridge' between theory and reality, we proceeded with this study, trying to find what the social representation of business ethics in Portuguese workers is using the Free Evocation Test and applying Abric's Central Nucleus Theory. The results show a central core organized around the concepts of 'respect' (f. = 1139, MOE = 2,31), 'justice' (f. = 444, MOE = 2,58), 'honesty' (f. = 384, MOE = 2,58), 'equality' (f. = 324, MOE = 2,69), 'code of conduct' (f. = 285, MOE = 2,69), 'confidentiality' (f. = 203, MOE = 2,34) and 'fair competition' (f. = 124, MOE = 2,66). While some of the core concepts of business ethics are found in the literature, others were not, pointing to partial agreement between theory and reality.
<b>Suggested Reviewers:</b>	
<b>Additional Information:</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
1. Is the manuscript submitted elsewhere?	No
2. Has the work reported in this manuscript been reported in a manuscript previously rejected by the Journal of Business Ethics?	No



## Appendix C.

# Estudo sobre o conceito de Ética Empresarial

Mestrado em Psicologia das Organizações e do Trabalho  
Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Coimbra

### Instruções:

Por favor, leia atentamente o enunciado abaixo apresentado e responda da forma mais sincera e espontânea possível. Não existem respostas certas ou erradas ou melhores ou piores.

Este questionário não demora mais de 2 minutos a ser respondido e as respostas são confidenciais e utilizadas exclusivamente nesta investigação.

Muito obrigado pela sua colaboração!

1. Por favor, comece por escrever no quadro abaixo as cinco primeiras palavras ou breves expressões que lhe vêm imediatamente à mente ao ler o termo **Ética Empresarial**, respeitando a ordem com que estas lhe vão surgindo. Em seguida, assinale com um X se considera que cada palavra/expressão é positiva, negativa ou neutra.

Ordem	Palavra/expressão breve	Positiva (+)	Negativa (-)	Neutra
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

2. Por fim, responda às seguintes questões colocando um X no quadrado apropriado sempre que necessário

<b>1. Sexo</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Masculino <input type="checkbox"/> Feminino
<b>2. Ano de nascimento</b>	
<b>3. Anos de experiência profissional</b>	
<b>4. Empregador</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Estado <input type="checkbox"/> Privado <input type="checkbox"/> Outro
<b>5. Vínculo profissional</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prestador de serviços (recibo verde) <input type="checkbox"/> Contrato a termo (certo ou incerto) <input type="checkbox"/> Contrato sem termo (efetivo)
<b>6. Exerce um cargo de coordenação ou chefia?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sim <input type="checkbox"/> Não
<b>7. Nível de Escolaridade</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensino Básico (até ao 9º ano inclusive) <input type="checkbox"/> Ensino Secundário (9º ao 12º ano) <input type="checkbox"/> Ensino Superior
<b>8. Sector de atividade *</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Primário <input type="checkbox"/> Secundário <input type="checkbox"/> Terciário

\*Sector primário inclui atividades ligadas à natureza (por exemplo, agricultura, silvicultura, pesca, pecuária, caça, indústrias extrativas, etc.).

Sector secundário inclui os sectores da economia que transformam produtos (por exemplo, construtor civil, engenheiro, operador de máquinas, responsável de produção, etc.). Este sector geralmente utiliza os produtos que provêm do sector primário e transforma-os, ao ponto de servirem para serem usados para outros negócios, exportados ou para serem consumidos por consumidores domésticos.

Sector terciário (ou dos serviços) corresponde às atividades de comércio de bens e à prestação de serviços (por exemplo, recepcionista, comercial, professor, médico, gestor, agente imobiliário, carteiro, enfermeiro, etc.).

Agradecemos a sua colaboração neste estudo!