# ETHICAL FOCUS IN TRAINING FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

**Emilia Mazurek,**[1]

PhD in Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Wroclaw University of Science and Technology, Wroclaw, Poland

emilia.mazurek@pwr.edu.pl
ORCID: 0000-0002-2132-8756

**Olena Vynoslavska,**[2]

PhD in Psychological Sciences, Professor,
Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Kyiv, Ukraine

olenavynoslavska@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-0311-376X

**Maria Kononets,**[3]

PhD in Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor,
Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, Kyiv, Ukraine

kononets.maria@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0001-9303-707X

*Abstract. In the contemporary world, there is a growing need for socially responsible and ethical leadership. Therefore, training future business leaders in the field of professional ethics and social responsibility is an important task of modern university education. To solve it, the participation of scientists and university teachers in the creation and implementation of advanced methods for the development of professional ethics of students is necessary. The aim of the study was to check the effectiveness of training future business leaders in professional ethics at university level using a new methodology created by the authors. In order to verify the hypotheses, an experiment was conducted. Additionally, the questionnaires and tests completed by the participants were analysed. The results of learning according to the new methodology, which confirm the expediency of its use for the development of parameters of professional ethics in future business leaders, are presented. The methodology described in the article can be used by university teachers to train future business leaders, as well as by organizational psychologists to conduct trainings with business leaders and personnel of enterprises and institutions.*

---

[1] Corresponding author, responsible for writing Abstract, Introduction, Discussion, Recommendation and Limitations sections

[2] Co-author, responsible for the 2nd stage of the study (the description of training sessions), Conclusions, and preparing the References List

[3] Co-author, responsible for the Methods (the 1st and the 3rd stage of the study), and the Results sections

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Building an ethical relationship between society and subjects of economic activity requires the development of a professional culture for all business leaders, especially its ethical component. Improvement of moral consciousness and social responsibility in modern society is implemented in two directions: deepening and expanding the study of the problems of the psychology of morality; training in the field of business ethics for the representatives of various professions.

Research of the problems of the psychology of morality, in turn, can be divided into two groups – theoretical and applied. Thus, the fundamental theory of the stages of moral development by Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) continues to be analysed and supplemented in modern research in methodological terms, in particular, the definition of ethical competence is clarified and the conceptualization of this concept is carried out (De Schrijver & Maesschalck, 2013); the relationship of business ethics with other humanities and social sciences is explored (Kononets & Vynoslavska, 2017); the possibility and methods of measuring individual differences in morality are developed and improved (Giammarco, 2016; Zahorodna, 2021; Järvinen et al., 2022).

In real life, very often we encounter manifestations of moral weakness or "the inconsistency people display when they know what is right but do what they know is wrong" (DeTinne et al., 2021, p. 429). Therefore, apply research in the field of the psychology of morality is often devoted to the study of the ratio between the level of a person's morality and the manifestation of his/her personal qualities. Thus, the results of the study confirm that "consumers become less tolerant of deception when consumers' moral self-awareness is high" (Guang-Xin et al., 2022, p. 117). The other study confirms "the positive effect of authentic pride and the negative effect of hubristic pride on leader ethical behaviour" (Sanders et. al., 2018, p. 631). It was investigated "how Schwartz's higher order personal values of Openness to Change, Conservation, Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement influence the ethical behaviour of students-accountants" (Mubako et al., 2021, p. 161). It has also been shown that "ethicality is positively related to creativity" (Winchester & Medeiros, 2021, p. 1). Also, the attention of many scientists is attracted by the problems of ethics and responsibility in transnational business (Crane et al., 2019; Eberlein et al., 2014). A number of studies have analysed ethically dubious cases in global business (Bontempi et al., 2021). The theoretical and empirical reflection on ethics and responsibility in management emphasizes the organizational mechanisms that lead to the humanization and dehumanization of the functioning of the organizations (Zawadzki, 2018).

The training of business professionals in the field of business ethics, aimed at increasing their level of moral development and social responsibility, is carried out in several directions.

Firstly, scientists justify the need for such training in the modern world (Andrienko et al., 2021; Freeman et al., 2022; Soulsby et al., 2021).

Secondly, business school teachers are developing teaching materials for students, among which there are a number of excellent textbooks and reference books on business ethics, many of which have gone through several editions (Buttell & Carney, 2008; Heinrichs et al., 2013; Treviño & Nelson, 2017).

Thirdly, business school teachers develop advanced educational technologies for training future business leaders in professional ethics both at the level of their interaction with government agencies, partners, consumers and other stakeholder groups and at the level of the relationships within the enterprises and organizations they lead (Ballantine et al, 2018; Freeman et al, 2022). Furthermore, in the literature, it is emphasized that „business ethics taught in corporations (ethics for business) is not a simple continuation of academic instruction (ethics of business)" (Kwarciński, 2012, p. 43).

At the same time, there are not enough publications containing a description of specific methods for preparing future business leaders in the field of professional ethics at the university level, which every teacher can repeat. Our article proposes just such methodology, developed by the authors for Ukrainian and Polish students.

The purpose of the article is to present the procedure and results of an empirical study aimed at experimental verification of the effectiveness of training future business leaders in professional ethics at the university level using a new methodology created by the authors; to describe in detail the content of the created methodology and show the sequence of training sessions for the development of such components of professional ethics as the level of moral consciousness, ethical behaviour in the organization and ethical communication with other economic agents.

The study was based on the following hypothesis: the training of future business leaders in the field of professional ethics will be more effective under conditions of using consecutive training sessions aimed at increasing the level of students' moral consciousness and their ethicality of behaviour, as well as helping them in optimizing their communication. The authors assumed that through targeted training, it is possible to deepen the connection between moral prescriptions and human behaviour, teach to navigate the basic ethical concepts and be guided by them in professional activities.

During the research the authors solved the following **objectives**:

– To develop a strategy for researching the effectiveness of training future business leaders in professional ethics using the author's methodology.

– To test a new methodology in the process of experimental training of students in the field of professional ethics at the university level.

– To describe the results of applying the new methodology and compare the data obtained with the data of traditional training.

The experiment was conducted at the National Technical University of Ukraine "Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" during the 2018-2019 academic year in the process of teaching the optional academic discipline "Business Ethics" to volunteer students of the Faculty of Management and Marketing.

.
## 2. METHODS

The study was carried out in the experiment using the parallel group method – observation of two groups of people similar in composition, but in different conditions: the experimental group (EG) was trained according to the new methodology, and the control group (CG) – according to the traditional one. 46 respondents took part in the experiment. The experimental and control groups included 23 students each. In terms of socio-demographic parameters and academic performance, the experimental and control groups almost did not differ (Table 1). Additionally, each research participant was asked to complete questionnaires and tests, which we describe in details below. The obtained data were subjected to statistical analysis (grouping, variation and correlation analysis). Data processing was performed using the SPSS statistical software (version 28.0.1).

Table1. Characteristics of the composition of experimental and control groups

| Groups of respondents | Constant variables | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Gender | | Mean age | | Academic Performance, points | | | | |
| | male | female | male | female | 95-100 | 85-94 | 75-84 | 65-74 | 60-64 |
| EG (n=23) | 16 | 7 | 20.12 | 20 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| CG (n=23) | 16 | 7 | 20 | 20.14 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 1 |

The independent variable was the experimental learning of the academic discipline "Business Ethics", namely the holding of lectures, training session and seminars, which acted as instruments of influence. Multidimensional dependent variables were defined as objects of influence: the level of moral consciousness, the ethicality of behaviour and the ethicality of communication of students who participated in learning.

The researchers made ethical considerations in the conduct of this study. The students participated in the experiment were clearly informed about the purpose and objectives of the study, about the need for surveying and testing before the experimental learning and after it, and that the results of the survey would not affect their academic performance. In addition, participants were informed of the possibility to leave the study without any consequences for their status. Participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous.

The research had **3 stages**:

The **1$^{st}$ stage** of the study was carried out before the beginning of experimental learning. For the ***first assessment*** of students' maturity of such parameters of professional ethics of business leaders as the level of moral consciousness, ethical behaviour and ethical

communication (Kononets, 2013), they were asked to complete the survey instruments and the test, the description of which is given below.

The survey instrument *"Ethical attitudes of business professionals"* is used in a number of studies in morality psychology (Vynoslavska et al., 2005; Kononets, 2013). It was designed to measure such parameter of the professional ethics of business leaders as the "level of moral consciousness". The instrument consists of 16 situations describing moral dilemmas related to the maintenance of ethical standards in the business leaders' professional activities. Respondents were asked to choose the correct, from their point of view, assessment of the acceptability of each of the 16 situations on a seven-point scale that ranged from 1 (Never acceptable) to 7 (Always acceptable). The level of the moral consciousness of survey participant is determined as the mean value of acceptability of 16 moral dilemmas $\bar{I}$: $\bar{I}$ = 0-2.33 – high level of moral consciousness (corresponds to attitude "never acceptable"); $\bar{I}$ = 2.34-4.66 – mean level of moral consciousness (corresponds to attitude "sometimes acceptable"); $\bar{I}$ = 4.67-7.0 – low level of moral consciousness (corresponds to "always acceptable" attitude).

The survey instrument *"Ethics of behaviour in the organization"* was developed by the American researcher Rein (1980) and is intended to assess the ethics of behaviour in the organization. Despite the fact that almost 40 years have passed since the development of this instrument, it is still successfully used in research on organizational and economic psychology, as well as in conducting trainings on the development of ethical behaviour skills in the organization (Kononets, 2013).

The instrument consists of the description of fifteen situations, which demonstrate different ways of a person's behaviour in organization. To assess the ethicality of his/her behaviour, the respondent must determine his/her attitude to the examples of behaviour given in the text of the survey instrument, using the scale "strongly agree" – "agree" – "disagree" – "absolutely disagree".

The total number of points scored by respondents is calculated according to a special scale, and the ethicality of behaviour in the organization is interpreted as follows: 0-10 points – high level; 11-15 points – acceptable level; 16-25 points – mean level; 26-35 points – low level.

The test *"Your communication style"* is aimed at determining the communication style of a business leader in situations of business interaction and is intended to evaluate the "ethicality of communication" parameter. The test consists of twenty questions, each of which has three answer options. Respondents should choose one answer option for each question and calculate the number of scored points using a special table (Kononets, 2013, p. 153). According to this table, the range of 35-44 points corresponds to the "optimal" communication style. Since this communication style contributes to the successful interaction of a business leader with employees, partners and other persons related to his professional activity, we defined it asv an "ethical communication style". The scale used in this test is inversely proportional – the lower the number of points, the higher the ethicality of communication. The level of the respondent's ethicality of communications is assessed according to the number of points scored by him/her.

From the given descriptions of the diagnostic tools we used, it follows that their use allows us to determine the characteristics of the studied parameters of professional ethics of business leaders, which makes a possible further comparison of the data obtained.

The **2nd stage** is the experimental learning, the aim of which was to develop the students' skills of self-presentation and establishing relationships with each other, to advance their level of moral consciousness, to form habits of ethical behaviour in the organization, to develop ethical communication skills with other economic agents, to master the basic ethical norms of international business.

In the experimental group (EG), the lecture material was consolidated in the process of training sessions, which were conducted in accordance with the created methodology for training future business leaders in professional ethics. The control group (CG) had traditional seminars.

The created methodology consists of five consecutive training sessions, which are based on active methods of learning (modelling of specific moral dilemmas, work in pairs, discussions, creative tasks), which are described in the works of applied psychologists (Bérubé & Gendron, 2021; Yatsenko, 2019). The description of training sessions is given below.

**TRAINING SESSION 1. The development of self-presentation skills and establishing a relationship with other participants**

*Aims of the training:* a) rapprochement of group members; b) removal of emotional tension, formation of group cohesion, emotional warmth and trust between its members (Yatsenko, 2019); c) formation in the group members the motivation (Heinrichs et al., 2013) to solve moral dilemmas of future professional activity.

INTERACTIVE METHODS FOR TRAINING

**"*Self-presentation*"**
*Aim:* rapprochement of members of the training group with each other.
*Procedure:* each member of the group at will and at his own discretion tells about himself.

*"Tell your expressions about each other"*.
*Aim:* to find out your "impression" about certain members of the training group. This material is extremely valuable for comparing it later with a more meaningful and depth psychological analysis of behaviour. This exercise promotes self-knowledge.
*Procedure:* each participant is invited to express their first impression of each member of the group verbally or non-verbally (in the form of a description or use of a symbol). The best time to do this is at the end of the lesson.
*Note.* This exercise can be performed in two ways:
a) expressing impressions of group members is addressed to one of them;
b) one of the participants of the training expresses his first impressions in turn to all other members of the group.

### *"Non-verbal contact"*

*Aim:* removal of emotional tension, formation of group cohesion, emotional warmth and openness between its participants.

*Procedure:* a) each member of the group comes up to the others in turn and shakes their hands, looking into the eyes; b) one member of the group sits with his eyes closed, the others take turns coming up to him and touching his hand, and he has to guess who is this; c) one member of the group sits on a chair with his back to the group, the others approach to him in turn and express their attitudes and feelings about him.

### *"The trust"*

*Aim:* exemption from negative emotions that interfere with the emergence of trust: fear, insecurity, anxiety, resentment of someone in the group, etc.

*Procedure:* each participant, in turn, addresses the other members of the group, determining the degree of their trust in them: "I trust in you", "Not sure that I trust you", "I do not trust you". The results of the exercise are discussed.

*Note.* When performing this exercise, particularly active opposes may occur. The concept of "trust" is not always associated with a positive assessment of another person, and its understanding is complicated by a lack of acquaintance with this person or differences in views on life. Objectification of the reasons that hinder the emergence of "trust" is an important step towards trust and cohesion of the group.

As a *result* of participation in Training session 1, group members will be able: to get acquainted with the general purpose of classes and the rules of work in the training group; to get rid of negative emotions such as fear, insecurity, anxiety that interfere with public speaking; to deepen trust in group members as an important condition for further cooperation; to create the motivation to solve moral dilemmas of professional activity.

### TRAINING SESSION 2. The development of the level of moral consciousness

*Aims:* a) determining the content of the basic concepts of universal and professional ethics; b) analysis of the moral dilemma associated with the professional activities of the individual; c) solving the moral dilemma that is relevant to most training participants (Colby et al., 1987; Kohlberg, 1981; Vynoslavska et al., 2005).

INTERACTIVE METHODS FOR TRAINING

***Incomplete sentence method*** (with following group discussion):

"Ethics is ..."

"Universal ethics is ..."

"Professional ethics is ..."

"Moral dilemma is ..."

***Work in pairs.*** The participants of the training session get acquainted with Dilemma III given in Lawrence Kohlberg (1958) and then analyse in pairs all case questions. This dilemma was created by him in 1958 and is still widely used by university teachers to train students in business ethics. Despite the conditionality of this dilemma (in modern conditions, a mere druggist could not invent an effective cure for cancer alone), it considers such

concepts as the human right to life, protection of intellectual property, a fair reward for the invention. Such analysis is useful for raising the level of the moral consciousness of future business leaders.

Analysing their agreement or disagreement with the acts described in this dilemma, training participants should keep in mind that from an ethical point of view, an act is a rather complex phenomenon, since, unlike an action, it is considered in conjunction with the previous and subsequent activities of moral consciousness.

*Group discussion.* The group discussion begins with hearing the positions of each pair of participants regarding their agreement or disagreement with the acts described in the text of the case. Discussions should be held on each issue separately.

*Creative task* After the discussion, the group is invited to work in pairs to make an ethical decision in an incident that is directly related to their organization or is relevant to most participants. The sequence of steps for making an ethical decision is as follows:

Step 1. Recognize and explain the dilemma.

Step 2. Get all the possible facts.

Step 3. List all possible choices.

Step 4. Check each option by asking three questions: a) "Is it legal?" b) "Is this correct?" c) "Is this useful?"

Step 5. Decision making.

Step 6. Double-check the decision by asking two questions: a) "How will I feel, if my family find out about my decision?" b) "How will I feel if my decision is reported in the mass media?"

Step 7. Start acting.

*Note.* It is necessary to pay attention to step №6. Since the subject of the action is far from indifferent to his moral well-being, moral assessment and attitude of others and acquaintances, while working on this step, training participants can ask and discuss additional questions.

*Group discussion* The group discussion concludes the discussion in pairs. At the same time, each training participant must report which decision was made just by him/her. It is desirable he/she spoke aloud all steps of ethical decision-making:

– Moral considerations before making an ethical decision.

– Actual action (decision making).

– Moral state after making an ethical decision.

As a *result* of participation in Training session 2, group members will be able to: get acquainted with the content of the basic concepts of universal and professional ethics; master the basic steps of moral choice and apply them to the decision of the current moral dilemma; analyse changes in their moral feelings after making an ethical decision.

**TRAINING SESSION 3. The formation of ethical behaviour skills**

Aim: a)  content definition of the concepts of ethical behaviour, moral consciousness and responsibility; b) analysis of the moral dilemma related to the ethical behaviour of the

individual; c) solving the moral dilemma related to the ethical behaviour of the person, which is relevant to most participants in the training (DeTienne et al., 2021).

INTERACTIVE METHODS FOR TRAINING

***Incomplete sentence method*** (with the following group discussion):

"An ethical act is ..."

"Ethical behaviour is ..."

"Moral consciousness is ..."

"Responsibility is ..."

***Work in pairs.*** The participants of the training session get acquainted with Dilemma VII given by Lawrence Kohlberg (1958) and then analyse in pairs all case questions. Discussing this dilemma, students have the opportunity to analyse such displays of ethical behaviour as keeping a promise, respect for property rights and observance of the law as well as the options for unacceptable behaviour (theft, deceit). It is also important to explain to the training participants that ethical behaviour depends on how skillfully and subtly a person interprets a moral situation, how sensitive he is to its essential features, how adequate his action plan is. This analysis is useful for the internalization of norms of ethical behaviour by future business leaders.

***Group discussion.*** The group discussion begins with hearing the positions of each pair of participants regarding their agreement or disagreement with the acts described in the text of the case. Discussions should be held on each issue separately.

***Creative task.*** After the discussion, the group is invited to work in pairs to make an ethical decision in an incident that is directly related to their organization or is relevant to most participants. The sequence of steps for making an ethical decision is similar to the training session 2.

***Group discussion.*** The group discussion concludes the discussion in pairs. At the same time, each training participant must report which decision was made just by him/her. It is desirable he/she spoke aloud all steps of ethical decision-making:

– Moral considerations before making an ethical decision.

– Actual action (decision making).

– Moral state after making an ethical decision.

As a *result* of participation in Training session 3, group members will be able: to get acquainted with the content of the concepts "ethical behaviour", "ethical decision" and "moral responsibility"; master the basic steps of an ethical act and apply them to solve the current moral dilemma; analyse the changes that have occurred in group members during the discussion on ethical decision-making.

**TRAINING SESSION 4. Building ethical relationship skills**

Aims: a) content definition of the concepts of ethical decision and ethical relationship; b) analysis of moral dilemma related to the ethical relationship of economic agents; c) solving the moral dilemma related to the relationship between organizations, which is relevant to most participants of the training session.

INTERACTIVE METHODS FOR TRAINING

***Incomplete sentence method*** (with the following group discussion):

"An ethical decision is ..."

"The normative way of making an ethical decision is ..."

"The descriptive way of making an ethical decision is ..."

"Ethical relationship is ..."

***Work in pairs.*** The participants of the training session get acquainted with the case given below and analyse in pairs all questions for discussion. This case is devoted to the problem of ethical / unethical relations of economic actors in E-Commerce (Frostenson et al., 2013).

**An unlicensed computer program** The small business owner received a free copy of the copyrighted computer program from a friend instead of spending $ 500 to purchase the program from a local software vendor.

*Case Questions*

1. Recognize and formulate the moral dilemma contained in this situation.

2. Name all participants in the described situation.

3. Clearly state the position and possible interests of each participant in the situation.

4. Who in the described situation "wins", and who "loses"? Why?

5. How we may to qualify the behaviour of the participants in the situation from the standpoint of business ethics? Why?

6. Which of the participants is responsible for copyright infringement in this case?

7. Should this responsibility be shared among all participants in the situation? Why?

8. In which case the behaviour of the participants in the situation could be called ethical?

9. Consider all possible options for their ethical behaviour.

10. Check each option of moral choice of participants in the situation, asking three questions: a) "Is it legal?" b) "Is this correct?" c) "Is it useful?"

11. Decide on the best option of ethical behaviour for the participants in the situation.

12. Double-check the decision by asking two questions:

a) "How will I feel if my family finds out about my decision?"

b) "How will I feel if my decision will be reported in the mass media?"

*Note.* It is necessary to pay attention to step №6. Since the subject of the action is far from indifferent to his moral well-being, moral assessment and attitude of others and acquaintances, while working on this step, training participants can ask and discuss additional questions.

***Group discussion.*** The group discussion begins with hearing the positions of each pair of participants regarding their agreement or disagreement with the acts described in the text of the case. Discussions should be held on each issue separately.

***Creative task.*** After the discussion, the group is invited to work in pairs to make an ethical decision in an incident that is directly related to their organization or is relevant to most

participants. The sequence of steps for making an ethical decision is similar to the training session 2.

**Group discussion.** The group discussion concludes the discussion in pairs. At the same time, each training participant must report which decision was made just by him/her. It is desirable he/she spoke aloud all steps of ethical decision-making:

– Moral considerations before making an ethical decision.

– Actual action (decision making).

– Moral state after making an ethical decision.

As a *result* of participation in Training session 4, group members will be able: determine the meaning of the concepts moral dilemma and ethical relationship; master the basic steps of building ethical relationship between economic agents and apply this knowledge to address the current moral dilemma; to analyse changes in the ethical attitudes of group members that occurred during the group discussion.

**TRAINING SESSION 5. Consolidation of basic ethical standards of international business**

*Aim:* a) content definition of the concept "ethics of international business"; b) analysis of the moral dilemma related to ethical relationship in multinational firm; c) solving the moral dilemma related to the ethics of international business, which is relevant to most training participants.

INTERACTIVE METHODS FOR TRAINING

**Incomplete sentence method** (with the following group discussion):

"Ethics of international business is …"

"Corporate policy is ..."

"Ethical imperialism ..."

"Ethical relativism ..."

**Work in pairs.** As they become involved in the process of international cooperation, many business leaders need to improve their competence in the implementation of the ethical standards of international business. Training of future business leaders to work with international business institutions is carried out in the process of special trainings aimed at improving the general culture of relationships, as well as studying the corporate culture of foreign partners. The most common method of conducting such classes is a case study. Therefore, participants in this training session are invited to familiarize themselves with the case study "The Gift" (Treviño, & Nelson, 2017, pp. 430–431) and discuss all case questions in pairs. In Treviño, & Nelson, there are other case studies in teaching future business leaders to ethical standards of international business.

**Group discussion.** The group discussion begins with hearing the positions of each pair of participants regarding their agreement or disagreement with the acts described in the text of the case. Discussions should be held on each issue separately.

**Creative task.** After the discussion, the group is invited to work in pairs to make an ethical decision in the case that is directly related to their organization or is relevant to most

participants. The sequence of steps for making an ethical decision is similar to the training session 2.

*Group discussion.* The group discussion concludes the discussion in pairs. At the same time, each training participant must report which decision was made just by him/her. It is desirable he/she spoke aloud all steps of ethical decision-making:

– Moral considerations before making an ethical decision.

– Actual action (decision making).

– Moral state after making an ethical decision.

As a *result* of participation in Training session 5, group members will be able: to determine the meaning of the concept *ethics of international business*; master the basic steps of building ethical relationship between economic agents belonging to different cultures and countries; analyse changes in the ethical attitudes of group members that occurred during the group discussion.

The **3rd stage** of the study was carried out after the completion of experimental learning. For the **second assessment,** students were asked to complete the survey instruments and the test that we used in the 1st stage. The data obtained at the 1st and 3rd stages were used for subsequent comparative analysis in order to check our hypothesis that the training of future business leaders in the field of professional ethics will be more effective under conditions of using the consecutive training sessions aimed at increasing the level of students' moral consciousness and their ethicality of behaviour, as well as helping them in optimizing their communication. The results of this analysis are presented in the next section of this article.

## 3. RESULTS

This part of the article presents the results of a quantitative analysis of data obtained in the experimental (EG) and control (CG) groups after surveying and testing students at the 1st and 3rd stages of the study. The mean values of the parameters of future business leaders' professional ethics are presented in Figures 1-3, in which EG1 and CG1 are data of the first assessment, EG2 and CG2 are data of the second assessment.

The dynamics of the "level of moral consciousness" parameter was studied using the survey instrument "Ethical attitudes of business professionals". Mean values of this parameter in the experimental (EG) and control (CG) groups are shown in Fig. 1. As we can see in this figure, the level of moral consciousness before the beginning of experimental learning in EG and CG was almost the same (3.81 i 3.82 points, respectively) and tended to shift towards a low level, since the range for the mean level of this parameter is 2.34-4.66 points, and its mean value is 3.5 points. After experimental learning, the mean value of the level of moral consciousness in EG improved by 11.81%, including male students – by 10.94%, female students – by 14.13%. At the same time, in CG, the mean value of this parameter improved by only 2.09%, including male students – by 2.13%, female students – by 2.51%. It should be noted that in the previous study (Vynoslavska et al., 2005) the average level of moral consciousness of Ukrainian business professionals was 3.9 points, and the students from the

EG and CG showed little better results in the first assessment. This means that it is more difficult to meet ethical standards in practice than when dealing with the moral dilemmas during training. It is important that the values of the levels of moral consciousness among practitioners and future managers of enterprises turned out to be almost the same, and in the second (final) attestation, students even improved their results.
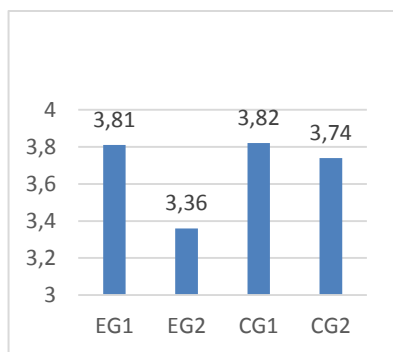


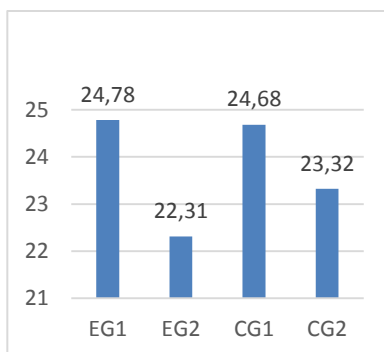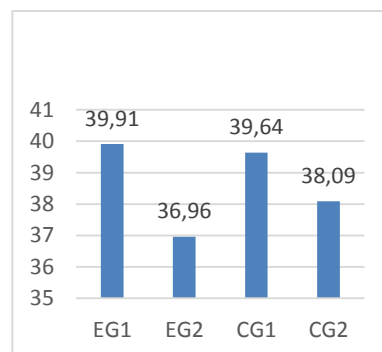| Figure 1. | Figure 2. | Figure 3. |
|---|---|---|
| Mean values of the parameter "level of the moral consciousness", points (the groups as a whole) | Mean values of the parameter "ethicality of behaviour", points (the groups as a whole) | Mean values of the parameter "ethicality of communication", points (the groups as a whole) |

The dynamics of the parameter "ethicality of behaviour" were studied using the survey instrument "Ethics of behaviour in the organization". Mean values of the ethicality of behaviour in the experimental (EG) and control (CG) groups are presented in Fig. 2. As we can see in this figure, the ethicality of behaviour parameter before the beginning of experimental learning in EG and CG had a mean level, was almost the same (24.78 and 24.68 points, respectively), and had a clearly expressed tendency to approach the range of 26-35 points, in which the moral improvement is necessary. After experimental learning, the mean value of the ethicality of behaviour in EG improved by 9.97%, including male students – by 11.26%, female students – by 8.09%. At the same time, the mean value of this parameter in CG improved by only 5.51%, including male students – by 6.31%, female students – by 2.36%.

The dynamics of the parameter "ethicality of communication" were studied using the test "Your communication style". Mean values of ethicality of communication in the experimental (EG) and control (CG) groups are shown in Fig. 3. As we can see in this figure, the ethicality of communication parameter before the beginning of experimental learning in EG and CG was almost the same (39.91 and 39.64 points, respectively), corresponding to optimal communication style (range 35-44 points), and had a tendency to approach excessive aggressiveness (>45 points). After delivering lectures and training sessions in EG in accordance with the created methodology, the mean value of ethicality of communication in the group as a whole shift in the direction of optimization by 7.39%, including male students – by 5.58%, female students – by 8.49%. However, after delivering lectures and traditional seminars at the CG, the mean value of ethicality of communication in the group as a whole

shifted in the direction of optimization by only 3.91%, including male students – by 3.27%, female students – by 4.19%.

Evaluation of differences between EG and CG in terms of the level of professional ethics parameters measured quantitatively before experimental training (EG1 and CG1) and after it (EG2 and CG2), as well as in each group between the first and second assessments (EG1 and EG2, CG1 and CG2), was carried out using the statistical criterion Man-Whitney test, which is used for small samples. The results of the test confirmed the absence of relation, influence or differences that are significant in a statistical sense.

Subsequent analysis showed that in EG the increase in the mean value of the parameter "level of moral consciousness" was higher by 9.66% than in CG. The increase in the mean value of the parameter "ethicality of behaviour" was higher in EG than in CG by 4.59%. The increase in the mean value of the parameter "ethicality of communication" in EG was higher than in CG by 3.63%. Regarding male and female students, in both groups the dynamics of the parameters of professional ethics had some differences. In particular, women displayed more intense increases in the level of moral consciousness and the ethicality of communication. As for men – they displayed more intense increases in the ethicality of behaviour than women. A similar conclusion about the differences in the ethical behaviour of men and women after studying business ethics was obtained by Wang & Galvano (2015). The conclusion is: "…women trained in business ethics are less likely to respond ethically to business situations" (Wang & Galvano, 2015, p. 591).

The final results indicate that positive changes in the parameters of professional ethics of future business leaders  took place both in the experimental group (EG), in which the described training sessions were held, and in the control group (CG), where traditional seminars have taken place. However, the positive changes in the experimental group were more significant than in the control group, which confirmed our hypothesis.

## 4. DISCUSSION

According to the authors, it was possible to achieve better results in the process of applying the described methodology for the development of professional ethics in future business leaders thanks to the use of active socio-psychological learning (ASPL) methods aimed at developing moral motivation, the ethicality of behaviour and business communication, increasing ethical sensitivity. Evidences of the effectiveness of such interactive methods as modelling of specific moral dilemmas, dialogical communication in pairs, group discussions for training professional ethics are adduced in the studies of many applied psychologists (Bérubé & Gendron, 2021; Heinrichs et al., 2013; Yatsenko, 2019).

In particular, Tamara Yatsenko (2019) believes that among the various methods used in ASPL, special attention belongs to dialogue, or rather, dialogue interaction. This method allows you to influence the feelings, ethical attitudes and moral motivation of individuals through communication and information exchange between them. Dialogic interaction "contributes to the emotive "enlivening" of the material freely chosen by the respondent for

presentation" (Yatsenko, 2019, p. 14) – an example of such material can be the option of solving a moral dilemma proposed by the training participant. Another study has shown empirically that dialogic learning can influence the development of ethical sensitivity in Final-Year Undergraduates (Bérubé & Gendron, 2021).

Another method of ASPL is a group discussion, in which one can look at a moral dilemma from several angles and choose the most correct solution. In the discussion, the student can actively participate, express his own opinion, as well as listen to the opinions of other participants. During off-line work in a training group, participants compare their ethical attitudes with the ethical attitudes of other group members and gradually change their opinions without any pressure from the outside, which ultimately contributes to the development of moral motivation. The Handbook of Moral Motivation (Heinrichs et al., 2013) offers the results of theoretical and practical research on the problem of moral motivation, in particular, the problem of tension between moral judgment (feelings, attitudes) and a real moral act. One of the authors of this book notes that the problem of moral motivation is related to the so-called "judgment-action gap, the gap between judging correctly the right thing to do and doing it" (Reed, 2013, p. 341). That is why a group discussion aimed at developing moral motivation is an important element of training in the field of professional ethics.

Observations of the participants during the training sessions made it possible to see their emotions at the moments of perception of new information or rethinking of their beliefs; the depth of personal significance of the analysis of moral dilemmas; anticipation of emotional satisfaction from dialogical communication at the next meetings with the group, which confirmed the conclusions of Emma Bell and colleagues about the existence of three opportunities for the revival of business ethics research, namely: "(i) moments of novelty or disruption; (ii) deep, meaningful attachments to things studied; and (iii) possibilities for embodied, affective encounters" (Bell et al., 2021, p. 251).

In addition to ASPL methods, other active methods are used for training in professional ethics, in particular, in the system of advanced training of a business professional. Sharon Oja & Patricia Craig (2013) note that often young professionals perceive the requirement to follow the organization's code of ethics as some kind of pressure that limits their freedom. However, after the study, the authors concluded that the use of active methods with elements of "reflexive coaching", "support and challenge" and "guided research" can form a well-structured internship environment in which emerging professionals are encouraged to make ethical commitments (Oja & Craig , 2103, p. 601). This means that a developed methodology based on the use of ASPL methods can be recommended for implementation in the system of advanced training of a business professional.

**Recommendations for university teachers and organizational psychologists**

The methodology described in the article can be used by university teachers in the proposed form or after a certain modification in accordance with the direction of training of future professionals (economics, law, education, medicine, ecology, construction, etc.).

The developed methodology can also be used by organizational psychologists to conduct trainings for business leaders and personnel of enterprises and institutions in order to enhance their ethical competence. At the same time, specific situations for analysis should be carefully selected taking into account the contingent of participants in training sessions and the activities of the organizations where they work.

### Limitation

The described methodology was created by an international group of authors which represented Polish and Ukrainian universities. However, experiential learning was held just in Ukraine (2018-2019). As to experiential learning in Poland, unfortunately, it did not take place because of the start of the COVID-19 pandemic which caused an intensive transition of universities to online learning. The authors believe that only traditional lectures and seminars can be held online, but it is impossible to deliver training sessions in accordance with the proposed methodology in this format (see Mazurek, 2021).

.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the implementation of the developed methodology in institutions of higher education, which train future business leaders, will allow students: to get acquainted with the content of the basic concepts of universal and professional ethics; to develop motivation to solve moral dilemmas in future professional activity; to master the basic steps of moral choice and ethical act; to explore methods of building the ethical relationship between economic agents within the country, as well as those belonging to different cultures and countries; to apply the acquired knowledge and skills to solve current moral dilemmas. In addition, the knowledge acquired during such training will help future business leaders to navigate better modern ethical concepts when solving moral dilemmas in various professional and life situations.

## REFERENCES

Andrienko, T., Genin, V., & Kozubska, I. (2021). Developing Intercultural Business Competence via Team Learning in Post-Pandemic Era. *Advanced Education*, *8*(18), 53–69. https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.214627

Ballantine, J.A., Guo, X., & Larres, P. (2018). Can Future Managers and Business Executives be Influenced to Behave more Ethically in the Workplace? The Impact of Approaches to Learning on Business Students' Cheating Behaviour. *Journal of Business Ethics, 149*, 245–258. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3039-4

Bell, E., Winchester, N., & Wray-Bliss, E. (2021). Enchantment in Business Ethics Research. *Journal of Business Ethics, 174*, 251–262. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04592-4

Bérubé, J., & Gendron, Y. (2021). Developing Ethical Sensitivity in Future Accounting Practitioners: The Case of a Dialogic Learning for Final-Year Undergraduates. *Journal of Business Ethics.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04947-5

Bontempi, A., Del Bene, D., & Di Felice, L. (2021). Counter-reporting sustainability from the bottom up: the case of the construction company WeBuild and dam-related conflicts. *Journal of Business Ethics.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04946-6

Mazurek, E. et al. (2022). Ethical focus in training future business leaders at university level. *Advanced Education*, 21, 68-85. DOI: 10.20535/2410-8286.259116

Buttell, F.P., & Carney, M.M. (2008). Moral development theory. In B. A. Thyer, K. M. Sowers, & C. N. Dulmus (Eds.), *Comprehensive handbook of social work and social welfare, Vol. 2. Human behaviour in the social environment* (pp. 379–395). John Wiley & Sons Inc. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470373705.chsw002016

Colby, A., Kohlberg, L., Gibbs, J., Candee, D., Hever A., Power G., & Speicher B. (1987). Measurement of moral jugement: standard issue scoring manual. New York. Cambridge University Press.

Crane, A., Matten, D., Glozer, S., & Spence, L. (2019). *Business Ethics: Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization (5th ed.).* Oxford University Press.

De Schrijver, A., & Maesschalck, J. (2013). A New Definition and Conceptualization of Ethical Competence. In D. Menzel & T. Cooper (ed.), *Achieving Ethical Competence for Public Service Leadership,* (pp. 29–51). Armonk (NY): M.E. Sharpe. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315706740

DeTienne K.B., Ellertson C.F., Ingerson M.-C., & Dudley W.R. (2021). Moral Development in Business Ethics: An Examination and Critique**.** *Journal of Business Ethics, 170*, 429–448. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04351-0

Eberlein, B., Abbott, K.W., Black, J., Meidinger, E., & Wood, S. (2014). Transnational Business Governance Interactions: Conceptualization and framework for analysis. *Regulation & Governance, 8*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/rego.12030

Freeman, R.E., Dunham, L., Fairchild, G., & Parmar, B.L. (2022). Leveraging the Creative Arts in Business Ethics Teaching. In: Dion, M., Freeman, R.E., Dmytriyev, S.D. (Eds.), *Humanizing Business. Issues in Business Ethics*, Vol 53. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72204-3_26

Frostenson, M., Hasche, N., Helin, S., & Prenkert, F. (2013). Ethical Issues in E-Commerce: A Renewed Analysis Based on the Multiplicity of Customer Relationships In C. Lüetge (Ed.), *Handbook of the Philosophical Foundations of Business Ethics* (pp. 181–195). Heidelberg: Springer.

Giammarco, E.A. (2016). The measurement of individual differences in morality. *Personality and Individual Differences, 88*, 26–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.08.039

Guang-Xin X., Chang, H., & Rank-Christman, T. (2022). Contesting Dishonesty: When and Why Perspective-Taking Decreases Ethical Tolerance of Marketplace Deception. *Journal of Business Ethics, 175*, 117–133. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04582-6

Heinrichs, K., Oser, F., & Lovat, T. (2013). *Handbook of Moral Motivation: Theories, Models, Applications*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Järvinen, J.T., Laine, M., Hyvönen, T.,·& Kantola. H. (2022). Just Look at the Numbers: A Case Study on Quantifcation in Corporate Environmental Disclosures. *Journal of Business Ethics, 175*, 23–44. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04600-7

Kohlberg Dilemmas. (1958). Retrieved September 19, 2022 from https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/the-kohlberg-dilemmas

Kohlberg L. (1981). The Philosophy of Moral Development. In: *Essays of Moral Development (pp. 409-412)*. New York, Harper and Row.

Kononets, M.O. (2013). Psykholohiya Profesiynoyi Moral'nosti Pidpryyemtsiv: Teoriya i Suchasna Praktyka [*Psychology of Entrepreneurs' Professional Morality: Theory and Modern Practice: the Monograph*]. Kyiv, Ukraine: DIVA.

Kononets, M. O., Vynoslavska, O. V. (2017). Psychology of Entrepreneurs' Professional Morality in the System of Humanities and Social Science. *Virtus: Scientific Journal, 13*, 57–62. http://conference-ukraine.com.ua/en/archivej

Kwarciński, T. (2012). Ethics of Business or Ethics for Business? Two Models for Teaching Business Ethics. *Central European Management Journal, 20*(3), 42-49. https://doi.org/10.7206/mba.ce.2084-3356.14

Mazurek, E. (2021). Barriers to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at universities in Poland. In K. S. Solima (Ed.), *Innovation management and information technology impact on global*

economy in the era of pandemic. *Proceedings of the 37th International Business Information Management Association (IBIMA)* (pp. 8242-8249), 30-31 May 2021. Cordoba, Spain.

Mubako, G., Bagchi, K., Udo, G., & Marinovic, M. (2021). Personal Values and Ethical Behaviour in Accounting Students. *Journal of Business Ethics, 174,* 161–176. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04606-1

Oja, S.N., Craig, P.J**.** (2013). Moral Motivation and the Role of the Internship in Professional Preparation. In: *Handbook of Moral Motivation. Moral Development and Citizenship Education,* vol.1 (pp.585–605). Rotterdam: SensePublishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-275-4_32

Reed, D.C. (2013). A Simile of Moral Motivation. In: *Handbook of Moral Motivation. Moral Development and Citizenship Education,* vol.1 (pp.341–361). Rotterdam: SensePublishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-275-4_20

Rein, L. G. (1980). Is Your (Ethical) Slippage Showing? *Personnel Journal, 59* (9), 740–743.

Sanders, S., Wisse, B., Van Yperen, N. W., & Rus, D. (2018). On ethically solvent leaders: The roles of pride and moral identity in predicting leader ethical behaviour. *Journal of Business Ethics, 150*, 631–645. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3180-0

Soulsby, A., Remišová, A., & Steger, T. (2021). Management and Business Ethics in Central and Eastern Europe: Introduction to Special Issue. *Journal of Business Ethics, 174*, 739–746. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04924-y

Treviño, L.K., & Nelson, K.A. (2017). *Managing Business Ethics: Straight Talk About How To Do It Right.* (7th ed.). Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Vynoslavska, O.V., McKinney, J.A., Moore, C.W., & Longenecker, J.G. (2005). Transition Ethics: a Comparison of Ukrainian and United States Business Professionals. *Journal of Business Ethics, 61*, 283–299. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-1128-x

Wang, L.C., & Calvano, L. (2015). Is Business Ethics Education Effective? An Analysis of Gender, Personal Ethical Perspectives, and Moral Judgment. *Journal of Business Ethics, 126*(4), 591–602. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1973-y

Winchester, C., & Medeiros, K.E. (2021). In Bounds but Out of the Box: A Meta-Analysis Clarifying the Effect of Ethicality on Creativity. *Journal of Business Ethics.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04990-2

Yatsenko T. S. (2019). Arkhayichnyy Spadok Psykhiky: Psykhoanaliz Fenomenolohiyi Problemy [*The Archaic Heritage of the Psyche: Psychoanalysis of Problem's Phenomenology*]. Dnipro, Innovatsiya. https://yacenkots.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Monograf%D1%96ya-06_05.pdf

Zahorodna, K. (2021). Znaczenie Badań Empirycznych w Etyce. Psychologia Moralności i Etyka Filozoficzna [Empirical Research in Ethics. Moral Psychology and Philosophical Ethics]. *Ruch Filozoficzny, 77*(1), 151–171. https://doi.org/10.12775/RF.2021.008

Zawadzki, M. (2018). Dignity in the Workplace. The Perspective of Humanistic Management. *Central European Management Journal, 26*(1), 171-188. https://doi.org/10.7206/jmba.ce.2450-7814.224

**Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest