Editorial

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Biographical notes: Dara Schniederjans is currently a PhD student majoring in Production Operations Management at the Rawls College of Business Administration at Texas Tech University. Her main research interests are in the areas of ethics, supply chain and operations management, and information systems. She has published articles in journals such as *Quality Management Journal*, *Journal of Operational Research Society*, and *The Global Studies Journal*. She has also co-authored three books in outsourcing and supply chain management, including *Topics in Lean Supply Chain Management*. She is a member of the Decision Sciences Institute and the Academy of Management.

Marc J. Schniederjans is the C. Wheaton Battey Distinguished Professor of Business in the Management Department of the College of Business Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). He teaches classes in operations management, decision sciences, and management information systems. He has authored or co-authored 19 books in the field of management. He has published more than 100 journal articles appearing in such journals as *Operations Research*, *Decision Sciences*, *Production and Operations Management Journal*, *European Journal of Operational Research*, and *International Journal of Production Research*. He has served on the editorial review or advisory boards of more than 20 journals and is currently the area editor for the *Operations Management Research*.

Business ethics is often referred to as an oxymoron. Yet ethics and performance in organisations are often combined. The study of ethics is very historic but more recently decades has been applied to organisations and business practices. Ethical theories and methodologies are used to understand how businesses operate in a socially responsible manner. Legal practices are also used in context to represent an organisation's/country's ideologies on what is right from wrong, yet most are based on ethical theories either through religion or philosophy.

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Societies face problems requiring decisions to be made based on a country's ethical values. A major portion of society's problems originate in business practices exercised throughout the world. Despite the complexity found in modern business practices that add to the detriment of problem solving, the conceptualisation, development, implementation, and application of ethical practices and methodologies can often lead to successful outcomes for the businesses and society in general.

We believe one of the many missing components to adding value is the lack of ethics and morality between and within organisations and their stakeholders. New and emerging research is focused on how building an ethical climate creates values in organisations and their supply chain partners. This is validated by the fact that corporations are made up of decision makers who base their decisions on personal interests. However, personal interests can have negative impacts on inter-organisational relationships as well as interpersonal relationships among decision makers if personal and organisational ethics and morality are not taken into account. Thus, ethics plays a vital role in developing relationships which creates value. Although, ethical conduct may be only one of the missing pieces to creating value in organisations it is crucial to maintaining a foundation for success.

Business ethics weakness as a field seems to be a lack of a common ground for scholars. Understanding the theoretical domains of ethics and applying it to business can positively impact the field by giving it a theoretical basis to build on. In summary, the idea of this special issue is to understand ethical theory and how it applies in a business context. The objective of this special issue is to provide an outlet for publishing research that highlights ethics in social systems through the creation and maintenance of ethics in organisations. In this special issue, we present a series of theoretical, empirical, and case studies related to business-related ethics and social systems science.

In the paper 'Using an informing strategy to manage moral legitimacy in healthcare organisations', Payne and Hoffman use institutional theory research to develop propositional statements that relate informing strategy to moral legitimacy in healthcare organisation. Despite varying pressures forced upon healthcare organisations by institutional environments, choice is still available to leaders in healthcare organisations. Payne and Hoffman also make the point that efforts in communication and information control can influence moral legitimacy.

In the paper 'The unifying function of leadership: shaping identity, ethics and the local rules of interaction', Hazy describes 'unifying leadership' which "unites people in a common effort by focusing on evolving identities and on nurturing an ethical system". This leadership creates value by restoring unity in a system through transparency and consistency that is used for individuals to know the collective purpose guiding choices and actions. Inevitably, this transparency and consistency can reduce chances of unethical actions so long as individuals are aware of this collective purpose and can estimate the costs and benefits of their actions.

Another paper 'Preliminary validation of a model for describing the ethical climate of a business community', Marble and Kracher use expert panel validation to describe a model that represents the ethical climate of a business community as a whole. They suggest that the ethical climate of a business community is manifested by embracing, honesty, transparency, non-corruption, equity, diversity, accountability, organisational citizenship and cohesiveness. Marble and Kracher also suggest that a strong ethical climate exists when an organisation has cohesive positive leadership, fair-minded and responsible organisations, accountable employees and a government that promotes

equitable business. On the other hand, ethical climates are challenged by a lack of diversity in leadership, a lack of accountability and transparency, dishonesty of its employees and corruption in its government.

The remaining three papers focus on the education of ethics. Pragman, Flannery and Bowyer in their article 'Teaching social responsibility through service learning: a study of antecedents leading to change' help to answer the question how should business ethics be taught? To do this, they used ANCOVA models to see if service learning was an appropriate method to teach social responsibility. Overall, they found that service learning projects caused significant changes in empathy, internal locus of control, moral identity and moral engagement. Likewise, there were significant positive changes for female and business major students in comparison to male and non business major students.

In the paper 'Ethical receptive capacity and teaching business ethics', Tangpong, Michalisin and Li answer the questions why should business ethics be taught? To do this, they connect ethical receptive capacity (ERC) to business ethics education. According to their experimental results, they found that business ethics education should be introduced to business students as early as possible in their programme because they are more receptive to new ethical contents prescribed to them. Thereby, this article not only shows the receptivity of students to ethics, but also that timing is a factor in when students should be introduced to ethics.

Lastly, in the paper 'Aristotle's ethics in the business classroom', Marks helps to answer the question what should we teach in business ethics? To do this, Marks describes several ways that Aristotle's ideas can be incorporated into an introductory course in business using Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Marks incorporates aspects like human development, Aristotle's view of the good life and the doctrine of the golden mean.

With varying methodologies as well as theoretical backgrounds, these authors provide a basis of creating value through organisational legitimacy, leadership, ethical climate, and ethics education.

The *International Journal of Society Systems Science* main objective is help solve various society-related dilemmas by promoting synergy through both theory and application, integrating different business disciplines and interchanging hard and soft decision models. In line with this objective, we hope this special issue can serve as a reference for researchers and practitioners to understand the importance of creating value through the combination of ethics and other value laden activities in different disciplines.

Acknowledgements

All submitted manuscripts were peer-reviewed by at least two referees and in some cases four. Based on referee reports and the guest editors' own reviews, revised papers were accepted. The guest editors would like to thank the reviewers for their hard work, time and valuable comments and suggestions that make this special issue possible. Comments, criticisms and suggestions are welcomed by both of the editors of this special issue.