Abstract

In this research, the business ethics index and its relationship with consumer alienation have been measured and evaluated respectively. Business ethics index is an international index which evaluates ethics in business from people’s point of view in a society. And consumer alienation, which is one of the management psychology aspects, refers to the estrangement feelings of a person from marketplace. There has not been any practical and scientific research on measuring people’s thoughts and feelings about ethics in business in Iran; therefore, this research is innovative in its kind. In addition, this is the first research in Iran that works on consumer alienation. For data gathering, a questionnaire was used and distributed among 340 Tehran’s citizens based on sampling standard division. The results show Tehran’s citizens do not have optimistic view about business ethics, nor do they think that it will become better in short-term. Moreover, the inverse relationship between business ethics index and consumer alienation was accepted. So, the results revealed that business ethics index can be recognized as a factor which effects consumer alienation.

Key words: business ethic, business ethic index, consumer alienation, normlessness, meaninglessness, social isolation, self-estrangement, powerlessness.

1. Introduction

Despite business ethic has ancientness, it has recently been considered in the scientific space, because business ethic has changed to one of the fundamental concerns in micro and macro market place (De George, 2003). In this study, we seek an answer for one of the basic questions in market place: that is Tehran people’s feeling towards observance ethic and its principal in market place? The answer to that question not only remove ambiguity in this filed but also provide the possibility to compare it with other society in which the index examined. In this research, we implicitly study the point of views that there is on business ethic and deal with valid index of business ethic, then Tehran people’s feeling is assayed in two farsighted and prospective attitudes using valid index. Moreover, a remarkable argument in management and marketing literature of our country is consumer alienation with market that has been less attention. Consumer alienation deals with alienation and separation sense, person’s lack of control on market place, as main addressee of market place. That argument is applying and helpful despite its ambiguity, according to the experts (clarck, 1959). We need to describe four basic questions for defining types of alienation; therefore consumer alienation is not an exceptional. It is should be characterized focus, replacement, mode, and agent to answer this question (Pruden et al., 1974). In this research, business ethic index will be tested as an affective agent on consumer alienation. Therefore, another fundamental question that will be deal with in this research is whether a relationship between business ethic index and consumer alienation exists or not. Therefore, in the paper, the consumer alienation is explained, while its evaluation method being reviewed. And ultimately, the consumer alienation is measured in Tehran city. On the one hand, lack of Persian language studies and cause and effect relationship that could be between consumer alienation and his feel towards business ethics; on the other hand, lead to review and quantify this phenomenon, also its relationship with the business ethic tested.

2. Theoretical Framework

A) Business Ethic
Modern and scientific debate business ethics like business ethic is a young argument, the business ethical studies officially started in late 1970 (De George, 2003). In the area when scientific and technological innovations and inventions were rapidly accelerated, and simultaneously the emergence of various companies in the 1960s the world has witnessed various peripheral events in the field of business. Therefore, community questioned the business ethic and hence the market place found that they need to enforce moral behavior to survive (De George, 2003). In fact, the roots of business ethic have been formed from the first exchanged between people. It is therefore, of this argument can be searched its deep roots in a variety of schools and philosophical approaches, although over the past half century it is used professionally and scientific by organizations. The term ethics stemmed from several sources. Jirask (Jirask, 2003) knows ethic as self-actualization in a group or a spirit, the individual and the family. Ethics can also be regarded as the oldest principle and discipline thinking system. Ethics In the simple words means "correct understanding of right and wrong, and then doing or not doing incorrect" (Sarmadi, Shalbaf, 2007).

To investigate the origins of Genesis Ethics, we need first to know reason of ethic. Evolutionary psychology, is constantly reviewing the human condition and its reason, and this reason is equally considered by ethics. Why human enact laws which away its followers of their desires. And why someone prefers over other interests (Ninneman, 2011). Midgley, 2002 put forwards two fundamental theories to answer the questions: Social contract and the fall of man theory. Social contract theory believes conflict between humans is inevitable while they have close contact with each other. And Ethics Provide good and appropriate laws for these conditions (Adler, 2009). In fact, ethics gives people a sense of security and confidence, because they are noticed that an element beyond law put them together in peace and it is ethic. Theories fall of man refers to the discussion of the man separation from God and this case raises that human man decides to live selfless and with lofty moral standards. So he can be on the way of fall to a good and the Merciful God, (Midgley, 2002). Then, origins of ethics refer to communicate and interact with human actually some way and his perfectionist nature; on the one hand. Each of these theories makes us familiar with origins of ethic somewhat. Although ethics is more complex than they can be interpreted and justified by these theories (Midgely, 2002). What is the purpose of business ethics? There are two different approaches discussed business ethics, also business ethics is something ambiguous and unreasonable according to some scholars. And on the other, some consider ethics as an important factor in business. That helps prosperity and health of the business process. An important point that should be noted here is complexity of ethical decisions in business. Cummings, 2005, in his paper refers to the complexity and difficulty of this issue by putting an example: "In a situation where you have to do a small unethical action or declare bankruptcy, what do you do? Performing an immoral act that probably no one will notice or avoiding it and bankruptcy while the bankruptcy will lead to become unemployed labor force, become creditor suppliers, and to loss the assets. “In fact, Cummings with this question shows the complexity of ethical decisions in market place particularly at management levels. Ethic studies in three descriptive, conceptual and grammatical methods, that business ethic is reviewed under methods of grammar, in fact, we are looking for do's and don'ts in dealing with issues are in business. (Beauchamp & Bowie, 2004; Shomali, 2010).

Business ethics index that briefly called BEI was presented by Professor John Tsalikis, in 2004, and it is already used in several different countries, American, European, Asian and two Muslim countries in the Middle East. Business Ethics Index (BEI) is existed from combines two key indexes used to measure consumer sentiment is there: the University of Michigan index of consumer sentiment (ICS) and the Consumer Confidence Index (CCI). First index is consumer sentiment of University of Michigan (ICS) Second, the consumer confidence index (CCI). However, there is a fundamental difference between BEI and two other indexes. BEI is not intended to predict the trajectory of the economic situation, but it should be used as a guideline for organizing, and coordinating industries and companies with the society conditions (Tsalikis, 2006). Business ethic Indexes has tried to measure people's sense on ethics in their business by drawing inspiration from these two indices. The index is composed of four different ethical concepts that in two dimensions are indivisible, one dimension after the person is being asked his personal or others opinion (personal opinion or proxy), the second dimension is measured the current situation or future situation (the retrospective or prospective). That asked one 'personal view on the state of business ethics in both the retrospective and prospective modes. In view of the proxy, opinion of others and the media, person is again

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1. The university of Michigan’s index of consumer sentiments
2. The conference Board consumer confidence index
asked, in both retrospective and prospective modes. Thus, in the Four Questions will be questioned all four concepts that arise from the combination of these two-dimension.

B) Consumer Alienation

Alienation is derived alienatio from the Latin word, and scholars have different opinions about the meaning of it. There is lack of consensus about its meaning and whether it is an inevitable social debate or a treatable psychological phenomenon (Williamson & cullingford, 1997). Variety of definitions of the term alienation is classified in the two schools (Geyer & Schwitter, 1976 and Johnson, 1973), the first school of alienation knows as "a social concrete situation", so that the alienation is a series of social and concrete processes which have mental-internal reflections people. Hegel - Marx, Srole, and Durkheim are subsets of these schools. The second school of alienation knows as "an internal state of the individual", so that alienation is an intrinsic phenomenon which has external factors in the social super class. Seeman and Geyer place in the scope of this school of thought. In spite of the differences between these two schools of thought, both schools have in common the three main Infrastructures which form the basis of the concept of alienation (Geyer, 1976). The first is that both schools point out some kind of interpersonal relationship with their environmental issues. (Issues like the economy, job status, others, etc.) Second, both schools give a relationship between the alienation and the level of isolation and secession (from self, others, society, etc.). And third, both schools consider this phenomenon undesirable, ornery and negative (Krishnan, 2008).

In marketing and business, the alienation taken from the perspective of Seeman and he examines this issue, how consumers feel alienate with active companies in the market (Alison, 1978, and Lambert, 1980). The alienation of the market can cause a variety of negative consequences for companies and institutions active in the fields of business, especially if consumer experiences a high level of dissatisfaction and alienation (Lambert, 1980). Kenniston try to present a framework by offering focus, replacement, agent, and mode for the different kinds of alienation. For Pruden, Shuptrine and Longman, focus is marketing in this types of alienation, which the audience or consumer experiences a sense of alienation with it. And mean of replacement is a form of communication which replaced healthy and relationship. In the case of consumer alienation from market what has replaced the old relationship is a sense of ineffectiveness and deprivation. Mode refers to the way which phenomenon of alienation finds expression. In the discussion of consumer alienation, alienation can be occurs in various ways, including acting proactively to reform society, apathy, seclusion, isolation, or engage a third factor. Agent deals sources and causes of the phenomenon of alienation (Pruden et al., 1974). For a discussion of “consumer alienation with market,” there are two views regarding the structure, Alison (Alison, 1978), including those who believes consumer alienation have a structural dimensionless. While there are other psychologists who believe multidimensional structure of consumer alienation (Acevedo, 2005 and Seeman, 1959) various dimensions of alienation evaluate separately, such as powerlessness and (here is that I cannot do anything about results of my life), meaningless (comes as there is not understandable logic and reason for me), normalness (here is that good and moral people are always last one), Social isolation (here is where I'm not commensurate with community and I am alone) , and self-estrangement (arises that I'm strange and unfamiliar).

3. Background of research

Since 2006, business ethic index is measured every year in the United States, results have been determined for the four periods (Tsalikis et al., 2011). The latest assessment was published in the year 2009, shows the index about 108. This index was measured in 2007 at tree countries Europe Union (Tsalikis & Seaton, 2007) and in the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain obtained 120, 90 and 99 respectively. In 2008, the index was examined in two Asian emerging economies of India and China (Tsalikis et al., 2008). In China was about 118 and in India about 107. This index was measured in Japan in 2008 and was recorded about 99 (Tsalikis & Seaton, 2008). Business Ethics Index was evaluated in four countries of East block, in 2008 (Tsalikis & Seaton, 2008). The index is for Russia, Romania, Poland and Bulgaria respectively about 136, 121, 117 and 105. In 2009 (Tsalikis & Lassar, 2009), this indicator was evaluated Middle Eastern Islamic countries. As a result of the evaluation of business ethics to Turkey and Egypt are closer to 82 than 80, respectively. In one study, the relationship between consumer alienation and the economic and political freedom have been studied, and the economic and political freedom have been investigated, three countries have been studied: China.
(as a society with a very low level of freedom), Bulgaria (as a society with relatively low levels of freedom) and the United States of America (as a society with a high level of freedom). The results have shown the relationship between political and economic freedom and consumer alienation, so that people are more open societies, they are less alienated than the market (Derleth and Herche, 2005). Tarek has also done research on consumer alienation; he found that consumer attitudes to new technologies have deep and inverse connections with level of consumer alienation. People who have a positive view on the new technologies and the desire for pioneering to use them, experience lower levels of alienation of the consumer. He also found that consumer alienation have direct relation with powerlessness of person to control market and lack of confidence in the market, and as much as one feels much powerlessness and have less confidence in the market, he experience higher levels of the consumer alienation to market. He also found that the consumer alienation has an inverse relation with the feeling of person towards marketing (Tarek, 2011). Johnson theorizes that there are relationship between consumer alienation and life satisfaction. But there is significant relation between cognitive age and the amount of consumer alienation. Cognitive age is the age category that person belong to the category of intellectually, emotionally, interests and his actions and may differ from actual age of individuals (Johnson, 1991). In one study, were measured connections between self - monitoring and alienation (The “self - monitoring” is the amount of stability of person behavior and conducting it by the intrinsic characteristics of the individual (Samani and Latifian, 2005). In fact, those who have a higher self - monitoring governing their behavior according to the conditions, while people who have low self-monitoring, they are more influenced by their inner values and beliefs (Samani and Latifian, 1384)). In this research results showed that people with the lower self-monitoring have a greater sense of alienation in purchasing condition (Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997). Burns examines the relationship between the phenomenon of free-riding and the consumer alienation. Free-riding refers to receive goods and services (mainly public goods and services are considered) by people without paying any fees or mutual benefit in situations where goods or services, or information offer to the public and free of charge. A “no exclusivity for consumption “occur which cause to happen the phenomenon of free-riding by some people. Burns states that people who are more alienated with the market show less tendency to use free-riding (Burns, 2010). Longman and Pruden in research conducted on the different races living in the United States of America realized that is a direct connection between consumer alienation and belief in government intervention in the market (Pruden et al., 1974).

4. Methodology

From the viewpoint of research classification and based on objective, this research exploratory and applied research. It is applied research because looking to utilize theories, laws, principles, and techniques that have been formulated in basic research (for executive problem solving). Also, in terms of method, this is taken into account a descriptive research from survey branch. On the other hand, with regard to examine issues related to a particular bank this paper can also be regarded as a case study. Finally, the research is a field research in terms of data collection (through questionnaires). Statistical population of research, residents of Tehran is equivalent to 8800000 people, because it is difficult and non-economic to collect data from the entire community. Statistical sample will be computed using classified sampling method appropriated to specified volume and required data from the Statistical sample.

5. Research findings

First hypothesis: the people of Tehran have not good vision about the business ethic.
Table 1: t-student test, the first hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First hypothesis</td>
<td>-6.844</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.27994</td>
<td>-0.3604 - -0.1995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the test results t-student observed that the measure 0.05, sig = .000, and is less than the significance level 0.05, and the mean of results equal to 72/2 and is less than the assumed measure of 3. Therefore, with the 99% reliability we can say that People of Tehran have not good vision about the business ethic.

Second hypothesis: the people of Tehran have no a positive forecasting to improve the business ethic in the future.

Table 2: t-Student test, the second hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second hypothesis</td>
<td>-42.891</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-1.37952</td>
<td>-1.4428 - -1.3162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to t-student test results, can be observed measure sig = .000, and less than 0.05 the significance level, and the mean of results equal to 62/1 and is less than the assumed measure of 3. Therefore, with the 99% reliability we can say that People of Tehran have no a positive forecasting to improve the business conditions in future.

As observed People’s mean measure of the forecasting in Tehran about future is less than the mean measure previously obtained, this shows that people have no a positive forecasting improve the business conditions in future.

Third hypothesis: there is an inverse relationship between the feeling people of Tehran towards business ethic and consumer alienation.

Table 3: results of Pearson correlation coefficients for the third hypothesis

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Consumer alienation</th>
<th>Business ethic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>(**)-0.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the significance level has error level less than 1%, the assumption Zero is rejected indicating no significance between the two variables. Therefore, with the 99% reliability we can say between the feeling people of Tehran towards business ethic and consumer alienation was a significant correlation between the two variables. The correlation coefficient is estimated equivalent to -270/0 which shows the relation and correlation between the two variables in reverse.

6. Discussion and result

The first hypothesis examines attitude from people of Tehran towards business Ethics in the present and future. Both hypotheses are confirmed according to the statistical data. With the approval of these two hypotheses, we found that business ethic is experiencing the unfavorable status and people have not positive vision towards the current situation, even they have not hope that it will be improved in the near future.
The statistical data of this research shows that feelings and attitudes of consumers towards ethics in market place can also affect the level of consumer alienation the market as an influencing factor, as much as people have a positive attitude towards business ethics, they will have less alienation with the market or the market place. So we can attitudes towards business ethic are along with other factors such as political and social freedom, life satisfaction, and confidence towards market.

7. Practical suggestions

Practical suggestions are offered as follows:

A. Assessment of Business Ethics in the whole county, Iran
B. Using the open questions to assess attitudes with respect to various aspects of business. Thereby can be realized what part of the market place has more immorality and corruption, and what is opinion of people about the institutions, organizations and various guilds involved in the business.
C. examining various aspects of consumer alienation
D. reviewing cause of negative view of people to business ethics
E. reviews ways to reduce consumer alienation as one of the influencing factor on people's view towards business ethics.

References