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SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, MACHIAVELLIANISM AND TAX AVOIDANCE: A STUDY OF HONG KONG TAX PROFESSIONALS

William E. Shafer^{*} and Richard S. Simmons^{}**

Abstract

This study investigates the effects of attitudes toward the perceived importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility and Machiavellianism on professional tax practitioners' willingness to advocate aggressive avoidance schemes on behalf of corporate clients. We hypothesise that practitioners who perceive corporate ethics and social responsibility as more important will judge aggressive avoidance less favourably, and accordingly will estimate a lower likelihood of acquiescence in such schemes. We also hypothesise that practitioners with stronger Machiavellian orientations will be less likely to feel that corporate ethics and social responsibility are important, and more likely to judge aggressive tax avoidance schemes favourably. The findings, based on a survey of tax professionals in Hong Kong, support the hypotheses.

Introduction

There seems to be growing public concern regarding the ethical behaviour of professional tax advisors. For example, large public accounting firms have recently been investigated for facilitating client tax evasion through the marketing of aggressive or questionable tax shelters¹, and companies are often accused of incorporating in foreign "tax havens" for the express purpose of avoiding or evading their tax obligations.² The facilitation of such strategies by tax advisors raises concerns regarding the ethical standards of these professionals.

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¹ See K. Scannell, 'KPMG Apologises to Avert Charges: Firm Takes Responsibility for Improper Tax Shelters, U.S. Debates Indictment', *Wall Street Journal*, 17th June 2005, A3; T. Herman, 'IRS to Issue Rules on Tax Shelters: Ethical Guidelines Target "Opinion Letters" Often Used to Justify Questionable Transactions', *Wall Street Journal*, 8th December 2004, D1; D. C. Johnston, 'Changes at KPMG after Criticism of its Tax Shelters', *New York Times* (13th January 2004), C1.

² See S. H. Godar, P. J. O'Connor and V. A. Taylor, 'Evaluating the Ethics of Inversion' (2005) 61 *Journal of Business Ethics* 1.

Many studies have investigated ethical decision making processes relating to taxation³, but the effects of certain ethical beliefs and attitudes that appear relevant to tax professionals' judgements remain unexamined in this context. The current paper extends previous research by investigating the effects of two previously unexamined variables on professional tax advisors' ethical judgements and willingness to acquiesce in aggressive tax avoidance schemes: the perceived importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility and Machiavellianism.

It has long been recognised that overly aggressive tax avoidance violates principles of ethics and social responsibility⁴, but the effects of tax advisors' beliefs regarding the importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility on their willingness to advocate avoidance schemes has not previously been addressed. Business ethics researchers have also recognised the implications of Machiavellianism for ethical decision making, and Ghosh and Crain⁵ found that *taxpayers* with stronger Machiavellian orientations were more likely to engage in intentional noncompliance. However, the effect of Machiavellianism on professional tax advisors' willingness to advocate aggressive tax avoidance remains an open question. We investigate these issues in the current paper using a sample of tax professionals from Hong Kong.⁶

The following section presents a review of relevant literature and the development of our research hypotheses regarding the effects of the perceived importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility and Machiavellianism on tax professionals' decision making processes. This is followed by discussions of the research method and findings. The paper concludes with a discussion of the results and suggestions for further research.

³ See, for example, B. C. Henderson and S. E. Kaplan, 'An Examination of the Role of Ethics in Tax Compliance Decisions' (2005) 27(1) *The Journal of the American Taxation Association*, 39; Y. Sakurai and V. Braithwaite, 'Taxpayers' Perceptions of Practitioners: Finding One who is Effective and Does the Right Thing?' (2003) 46(4) *Journal of Business Ethics* 375; W. E. Shafer, 'Tax Practitioners' Willingness to Trust Clients: Effects of Prior Experience, Situational and Dispositional Variables' (2001) 13 *Advances in Taxation* 141; S. A. Yetmar and K. K. Eastman, 'Tax Practitioners' Ethical Sensitivity: A Model and Empirical Examination' (2000) 26(4) *Journal of Business Ethics* 271; S. E. Kaplan, K. J. Newberry and P. M. J. Reckers, 'The Effect of Moral Reasoning and Educational Communications on Tax Evasion Intentions' (1997) 19(2) *The Journal of the American Taxation Association* 38; J. O. Burns and P. Kiecker, 'Tax Practitioner Ethics: An Empirical Investigation of Organisational Consequences' (1995) 17(2) *The Journal of the American Taxation Association* 20.

⁴ See, for example, R. D. Schwartz, and S. Orleans, 'On Legal Sanctions' (1967) 34 *University of Chicago Law Review* 274.

⁵ D. Ghosh and T. L. Crain, 'Ethical Standards, Attitudes toward Risk, and Intentional Noncompliance: An Experimental Investigation' (1995) 14 *Journal of Business Ethics* 353.

⁶ The term "tax professionals" here refers to qualified accountants in Hong Kong providing tax advice to corporations in their capacity either as public accountants or employees. The ethical standards of these professionals are formally regulated by the ethical guidelines of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA) and of other accounting associations with substantial memberships in Hong Kong, such as the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA). These guidelines in essence entitle tax professionals to put forward the best tax position in favour of their clients/employers provided that those opinions are consistent with the law and uphold fundamental professional standards, in particular integrity and objectivity.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Perceived Importance of Ethics and Social Responsibility

It is often recognised that aggressive tax avoidance, or the failure to pay one's "fair share" of taxes, violates principles of social/civic responsibility.⁷ Indeed, researchers have explicitly raised the question of how a sense of civic duty or social responsibility to pay one's taxes can be nurtured in the community in order to promote compliance.⁸ A limited amount of empirical evidence also suggests that social responsibility considerations influence the likelihood of aggressive avoidance among taxpayers. For instance, in one of the earliest studies of tax compliance behaviour, Schwartz and Orleans⁹ found that participants who were sensitised to the social responsibility aspect of tax compliance by reading a series of statements were more likely to report truthfully in an experimental setting.

Recent revelations of tax professionals facilitating corporate tax avoidance schemes raise doubts as to whether these professionals feel that corporate ethics and social responsibility are important. Surprisingly, however, empirical studies have not addressed the effect of tax professionals' attitudes toward corporate ethics and social responsibility on their ethical decisions. Most recent empirical studies relating to ethics in taxation have focused on taxpayers rather than professional tax advisors, and accordingly have not addressed issues relating to corporate social responsibility.¹⁰

Research in the business ethics literature suggests that attitudes toward the importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility to organisational success will have an important influence on ethical decision making processes. Singhapakdi et al.¹¹ argue that such attitudes are "...likely to be a key determinant of whether or not an ethical problem is even perceived in a given situation..." by corporate managers. Singhapakdi et al.¹² acknowledge that "This is a pragmatic view based on an argument that managers must first perceive ethics and social responsibility to be vital to organisational effectiveness

⁷ See, for example, R. B. Cialdini, 'Social Motivations to Comply: Norms, Values and Principles', in J. A. Roth and J. T. Scholz (eds), *Taxpayer Compliance*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) 220; K. M. McGraw and J. T. Scholz, 'Appeals to Civic Virtue versus Attention to Self-interest: Effects on Tax Compliance' (1991) 23(2) *Law and Society Review* 209; T. Scholz and N. Pinney, 'Duty, Fear, and Tax Compliance: The Heuristic Basis of Citizenship Behaviour' (1995) 39(2) *American Journal of Political Science* 490.

⁸ See Sakurai and Braithwaite, above n 3.

⁹ Schwartz, and Orleans, above n 4.

¹⁰ See Henderson and Kaplan, above n 3. See also M. Wenzel, 'Motivation or Rationalisation? Causal Relations between Ethics, Norms, and Tax Compliance' (2005) 26(4) *Journal of Economic Psychology* 491; D. D. Bobek, and R. C. Hatfield, 'An Investigation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Role of Moral Obligation in Tax Compliance' (2003) 15 *Behavioural Research in Accounting* 13.

¹¹ A. Singhapakdi, S. J. Vitell, K. C. Rallapalli and K. L. Kraft, 'The Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility: A Scale Development' (1996) 15 *Journal of Business Ethics* 1131, 1132.

¹² A. Singhapakdi, K. Karande, C. P. Rao and S. J. Vitell, 'How Important are Ethics and Social Responsibility? A Multinational Study of Marketing Professionals' (2001) 35(1-2) *European Journal of Marketing* 133, 134.

before their behaviours will become more ethical and reflect greater social responsibility”, and also observe that this view is consistent with models of ethical decision making in business. For instance, the Hunt and Vitell¹³ model recognises that individuals will make both a deontological and a teleological evaluation of an ethical issue, with the teleological evaluation incorporating considerations such as the perceived probability and desirability of consequences. Jones’¹⁴ issue-contingent model of ethical decision making also recognises that the perceived moral intensity of ethical issues will be influenced by teleological considerations such as the perceived probability and magnitude of effects on stakeholders. Teleological evaluations of ethical issues should clearly be influenced by perceptions of the importance of ethical behaviour to organisational success.

Singhapakdi and his colleagues¹⁵ developed an instrument to measure the Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility (PRESOR) in organisational effectiveness. This scale has been used in several previous studies, although most of these studies have focused on either documenting cross-national differences in PRESOR results or investigating the determinants of PRESOR responses. For example, Singhapakdi et al.¹⁶, Ahmed et al.¹⁷ and Axinn et al.¹⁸ all document cross-cultural differences in PRESOR responses. In addition to culture, several variables have been found to influence PRESOR responses, including ethical ideology (idealism vs. relativism), organisational ethical climate, age, and gender.¹⁹ Despite the conceptual arguments offered by Singhapakdi et al.²⁰ for the influence of the perceived importance of ethics and social responsibility on ethical decision making processes, previous studies have generally focused on the antecedents rather than the consequences of PRESOR responses.

The current paper suggests that the perceived importance of ethics and social responsibility to organisational success should have a significant impact on the ethical decision making processes of tax professionals. The items included in the PRESOR scale (see Appendix A) may be grouped into two broad categories: the stockholder view and the stakeholder view^{21 22}. As the name suggests, the items included under the

¹³ S. Hunt, and S. Vitell, ‘A General Theory of Marketing Ethics’ (1986) 6 (Spring) *Journal of Macromarketing* 5; S. Hunt and S. Vitell, ‘The General Theory of Marketing Ethics: A Retrospective and Revision’, in N. C. Smith, and J. A. Guelch (eds), *Ethics in Marketing*, (Homewood, Illinois: Irwin, 1991) 775.

¹⁴ T. Jones, ‘Ethical Decision Making by Individuals in Organisations: An Issue Contingent Model’ (1991) 16 *Academy of Management Review* 366.

¹⁵ A. Singhapakdi, K. L. Kraft, S. J. Vitell and K. C. Rallapalli, ‘The Perceived Importance of Ethics and Social Responsibility on Organisational Effectiveness: A Survey of Marketers’ (1995) 23(1) *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 49. See also Singhapakdi et al, above n 11.

¹⁶ Singhapakdi et al., above n 12.

¹⁷ M. M. Ahmed, K. Y. Chung and J. W. Eichenseher, ‘Business Students’ Perceptions of Ethics and Moral Judgement: A Cross-cultural Study’ (2003) 43 *Journal of Business Ethics* 89.

¹⁸ C. N. Axinn, J. E. Blair, A. Heorhiadi and S. V. Thach, ‘Comparing Ethical Ideologies across Cultures’ (2004) 54 *Journal of Business Ethics* 103.

¹⁹ See Singhapakdi et al., above n 12. See also Axinn et al., above n 18.

²⁰ Singhapakdi et al., above n 12.

²¹ See Axinn et al. above, n 18.

²² The original PRESOR scale contained 16 items, 13 of which loaded onto three factors labeled “short-term gains”, “long-term gains”, and “social responsibility and profitability” in the Singhapakdi et al.

“stockholder view” heading reflect a rather limited and narrow view of corporate obligations that emphasises the importance of profitability and duties only to stockholders, i.e., this is a view that appears consistent with Friedman’s²³ well-known argument that the only responsibility of business is to make a profit, within legal boundaries. This attitude, if held by tax professionals, could easily be used to rationalise the facilitation of aggressive tax avoidance strategies, and due to a “slippery slope” effect may also lead to the promotion of strategies that cross the line into tax evasion. If faced with pressure to implement an aggressive tax avoidance scheme, professionals who believe that a corporation’s ethical or social obligations extend only to shareholders, or that principles of ethics and social responsibility must be sacrificed for the sake of corporate profitability, should be more likely to engage in a rationalisation process that leads them to judge the scheme as being acceptable (“ethical” or “socially responsible”). Lenient ethical judgements should in turn increase the likelihood of acquiescence in questionable avoidance schemes.^{24 25}

In contrast to the stockholder view, individuals who adopt a broader stakeholder view feel that businesses have a social responsibility beyond making a profit, that ethical and socially responsible business behaviour is critical to long-term business success and survival, and that social responsibility is compatible with profitability. Such individuals are likely to feel that aggressive tax avoidance not only violates a corporation’s social and ethical obligations, but also may pose a threat to the long-term success and survival of the organisation. Accordingly, tax professionals who endorse the stakeholder view should judge aggressive avoidance schemes more harshly (i.e., as less “ethical” or “socially responsible”), and consequently should be less likely to acquiesce in such schemes.

(above, n 11) study. Axinn et al. (above, n 18) found that 14 of the original 16 items loaded onto three factors which they labeled “stockholder view”, “stakeholder view I”, and “stakeholder view II.” Etheredge, in J. M. Etheredge, ‘The Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility: An Alternative Scale Structure’ (1999) 18 *Journal of Business Ethics* 51, found that the PRESOR items loaded on two factors based on his study of Hong Kong managers: one factor that included four of the five “stockholder view” items listed in Appendix A, and one factor comprising five of the eight “stakeholder view” items. Thus, the available evidence on the factor structure of the scale based on Hong Kong business professionals corresponds well with the stockholder vs. stakeholder dichotomy, and accordingly we have adopted this terminology.

²³ M. Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

²⁴ We believe this reasoning applies equally to tax professionals employed by corporations and by public accounting firms. Tax experts employed by corporations may face significant pressures to satisfy the demands of their employers. Professionals employed by public accounting firms may face similar pressures to acquiesce to demands by corporate clients for the facilitation of tax avoidance.

²⁵ We are relying here on the classic Rest formulation of ethical decision making, which postulates a four-part process: (1) recognition of an ethical or moral issue; (2) making an ethical judgement; (3) developing behavioural intentions; and (4) engaging in actual behaviour. See J. R. Rest, *Moral Development: Advances in Research and Theory*, (New York: Praeger, 1986). The Rest formulation has been influential in research on business ethics, and is incorporated into widely cited models of ethical decision making such as the Hunt and Vitell (above n 13) model. Reliance on the Rest model leads one to hypothesise a direct relationship between ethical judgements and behavioural intentions.

As indicated in Appendix A, all items included in the stockholder view category are reverse scored, while none of the stakeholder view items are reverse scored. Thus, high scores on the PRESOR scale (belief in the importance of ethics and social responsibility) are associated with the rejection of the stockholder view and endorsement of the stakeholder view. In line with the above arguments, tax advisors who reject the narrow conception of corporate responsibilities embodied in the stockholder view and acknowledge the broader scope of obligations reflected in the stakeholder view should judge aggressive tax avoidance more negatively and estimate a lower likelihood of participating in such schemes. Consequently, we propose the following research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Tax professionals who believe more strongly in the importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility will judge aggressive tax avoidance schemes more negatively (less ethical and socially responsible).

Hypothesis 2: Tax professionals who judge aggressive tax avoidance schemes more negatively (less ethical and socially responsible) will estimate a lower likelihood of acquiescence in such schemes.

Machiavellianism

The Machiavellianism construct, as originally conceived, was intended to capture a manipulative, cold and calculating personality.²⁶ The Machiavellianism scale was initially developed by assembling a list of items believed to be theoretically congruent with arguments taken from Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. Based on their analyses of these works, Christie and his colleagues identified three themes underlying Machiavellianism: (1) advocacy of manipulative tactics such as the use of guile or deceit; (2) an unflattering view of humans as being weak, cowardly, and easily manipulated; and (3) a lack of concern with conventional morality.²⁷

Although the focus of most early Machiavellianism research was on the use of deceit or manipulative tactics in interpersonal relations²⁸, the construct appears to be relevant to many ethical decision making contexts. It seems quite likely that someone who is prone to the use of manipulative or deceitful tactics and who lacks a concern for conventional morality will engage in unethical behaviour across a variety of settings. Individuals who score high on Machiavellianism tend to be less distracted by moral concerns such as fairness and justice, and better able to single-mindedly pursue "winning".²⁹ Such

²⁶ See R. Christie, 'Why Machiavelli?', in R. Christie and F. L. Geis (eds), *Studies in Machiavellianism*, (New York: Academic Press, 1970) 1.

²⁷ See R. Christie, 'Scale Construction', in R. Christie and F. L. Geis (eds), *Studies in Machiavellianism*, (New York: Academic Press, 1970) 10; R. Christie and S. Lehmann, 'The Structure of Machiavellian Orientations', in R. Christie and F. L. Geis (eds), *Studies in Machiavellianism*, (New York: Academic Press, 1970) 359.

²⁸ See R. Christie and F.L. Geis (eds), *Studies in Machiavellianism*, (New York: Academic Press, 1970).

²⁹ See F. Geis, S. Weinheimer and D. Berger, 'Playing Legislature: Cool Heads and Hot Issues', in R. Christie, and F. L. Geis (eds), *Studies in Machiavellianism*, (New York: Academic Press, 1970) 190.

personality traits seem likely to motivate the pursuit of deceitful or manipulative tactics in a business context. Indeed, it seems likely that people will be more prone to unethical behaviour in business vis-à-vis personal settings. That is, high Machiavellians should arguably be even more likely to adopt ethically questionable tactics in the pursuit of “winning” in business.

Empirical research suggests that Machiavellianism does have a significant impact on ethical decision making across a wide variety of business contexts. In laboratory experiments involving a business simulation game, Hegarty and Sims³⁰ found that high (low) Machiavellian business students playing the role of sales managers were significantly more (less) likely to pay kickbacks to purchasing agents to increase sales. Singhapakdi and Vitell³¹ found that high Machiavellian marketers tend to possess lower deontological ethical norms. In an experimental study using undergraduate business majors as surrogates for taxpayers, Ghosh and Crain³² found that Machiavellianism and attitudes toward risk each had a highly significant effect on intentional tax noncompliance, with high Machiavellians being more likely to report dishonestly. In a survey of professional salespeople, Ross and Robertson³³ found that Machiavellianism increased the tendency to lie, and that high Machiavellians were more likely to exploit the lack of clear ethical guidelines to mislead others. Wirtz and Kum³⁴ found that high Machiavellians were more likely to cheat on service guarantees, based on their survey of office workers and members of the general public in Singapore. In a recent study of working adults in the U.S., Winter et al.³⁵ conclude that individuals who score high on Machiavellianism believe it is more acceptable to violate the intellectual property and privacy rights of others.

It seems that virtually by definition high Machiavellians, who lack concern for conventional morality and are prone to unethical and manipulative tactics, will be less likely to perceive ethics and social responsibility as important in business contexts. The previous research on the effects of Machiavellianism on ethical decision making processes in business certainly supports this argument, indicating that high Machiavellians tend to have lower ethical standards and are prone to unethical behaviour across a variety of business settings. Further support for the potential impact of Machiavellianism in this context is derived from studies finding that individuals’ personal ethical beliefs or ideologies influence their perceptions of the importance of

³⁰ W. H. Hegarty and H. P. Sims, Jr., ‘Some Determinants of Unethical Decision Behaviour: An Experiment’ (1978) 63(4) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 451; W. H. Hegarty and H. P. Sims, Jr., ‘Organisational Philosophy, Policies, and Objectives Related to Unethical Decision Behaviour: A Laboratory Experiment’ (1979) 64(3) *Journal of Applied Psychology* 331.

³¹ A. Singhapakdi and S. J. Vitell, ‘Selected Factors Influencing Marketers’ Deontological Norms’ (1991) 19(1) *Academy of Marketing Science Journal* 37.

³² Ghosh and Crain, above n 5.

³³ W. T. Ross, Jr. and D. C. Robertson, ‘Lying: The Impact of Decision Context’ (2000) 10(2) *Business Ethics Quarterly* 409.

³⁴ J. Wirtz and D. Kum, ‘Consumer Cheating on Service Guarantees’ (2004) 32(2) *Academy of Marketing Science Journal* 159.

³⁵ S. J. Winter, A. C. Stylianou and R. A. Giacalone, ‘Individual Differences in the Acceptability of Unethical Information Technology Practices: The Scenario of Machiavellianism and Ethical Ideology’ (2004) 54(3) *Journal of Business Ethics* 275.

ethics and social responsibility in business.³⁶ Consistent with the above arguments, Ang and Leong³⁷ found a negative relationship between Machiavellianism and responses to the PRESOR scale among undergraduate business students in Hong Kong and Singapore. We sought to replicate and extend this finding by examining the relationship between Machiavellianism and PRESOR responses among a sample of professional tax advisors, as indicated in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Tax professionals with stronger Machiavellian orientations will believe less strongly in the importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility.

Machiavellianism should also have a significant impact on judgements of the acceptability of aggressive tax avoidance schemes. Such schemes may be viewed as manipulative tactics designed to promote profitability, survival, or “winning” in competitive business contexts. High Machiavellians, with their propensity for calculative strategic tactics and their relatively low standards of morality or ethics, should judge such schemes more leniently than low Machiavellians. As previously indicated, Ghosh and Crain³⁸ concluded that high Machiavellian taxpayers were significantly more likely to engage in intentional noncompliance. However, the effect of Machiavellianism on the ethical judgements of professional tax advisors has not previously been investigated. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Tax professionals with stronger Machiavellian orientations will judge aggressive tax avoidance schemes less negatively (more ethical and socially responsible).

The hypothesised relationships are summarised in the path model presented in Figure 1 below. As the figure makes clear, we are hypothesising that Machiavellianism has both direct and indirect effects on tax professionals’ ethical/social responsibility judgements, and that tax professionals’ attitudes toward the importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility will mediate the relationship between Machiavellianism and ethical judgements. This is consistent with the view that Machiavellianism, as a basic personality trait, potentially affects a variety of attitudes which in turn may influence a person’s judgements and behaviour.³⁹

³⁶ See, for example, S. J. Vitell and J. G. P. Paolillo, ‘A Cross-cultural Study of the Antecedents of the Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility’ (2004) 13(2-3) *Business Ethics: A European Review* 185; S. J. Vitell, J. G. P. Paolillo and J. L. Thomas, ‘The Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility: A Study of Marketing Professionals’ (2003) 13(1) *Business Ethics Quarterly* 63; Singhapakdi et al., above n 12; Singhapakdi and Vitell, above n 31 .

³⁷ S. H. Ang and S. M. Leong, ‘Out of the Mouths of Babes: Business Ethics and Youths in Asia’ (2000) 28 *Journal of Business Ethics* 129.

³⁸ Ghosh and Crain, above n 5.

³⁹ See Christie and Geis, above n 28.

Methodology

A survey was used to test the hypotheses. The target population was tax professionals in Hong Kong, including practitioners in both public accounting and private industry.⁴⁰ To the extent possible, we sought to select a sample that was representative of this population. A sample of approximately 1000 professional tax practitioners was chosen from the membership listings of professional institute(s) in Hong Kong⁴¹, and each practitioner was mailed a questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part contained two short scenarios (illustrated in Appendix B), each describing the action of a tax professional in a situation which poses a potential ethical dilemma. The scenarios were selected after discussion with two Hong Kong tax professionals, who agreed that they were technically sound and likely to be commonly confronted by tax professionals in Hong Kong. The first scenario involved the use of a commonly used tax haven to shelter profits from Hong Kong taxation. The second scenario concerned the shifting of profits to a loss-making associated company through the use of management fees in order to reduce the group's tax liability. Both scenarios involve the conscious misrepresentation of facts to the revenue authorities, and thus inhabit the gray area between tax avoidance and evasion.

In each case, participants were provided with an action statement of a hypothetical tax professional. At the end of each scenario, they were asked to indicate, on a seven-point scale, the extent to which the respondent felt the tax professional's action was first, ethical and second, socially responsible. Social responsibility judgements were elicited because, as previously argued, aggressive tax avoidance schemes raise concerns regarding corporate social responsibility. The respondents were further asked to indicate, also on a seven-point scale, the probability that their peers would undertake the same action. This measure was used as a surrogate for the behavioural intentions of the respondent him/herself, having the advantage of controlling for possible social desirability bias.⁴² All dependent measures employed seven-point likert scales. The ethical judgement scale was anchored on "ethical" (1) and "unethical" (7). The scale for social responsibility judgements was anchored on "socially responsible" (1) and "not socially responsible" (7). The behavioural intentions scale was anchored on "low" (1) and "high" (7).

⁴⁰ As previously indicated, it was felt that our theory and hypotheses apply to professional tax advisors regardless of employment type. As indicated in the next section, employment type generally had little effect on the results. As discussed later, a negligible number of participants were government employees. Although government employees were not part of our target population, it was not possible to exclude them from the sampling procedure.

⁴¹ To protect the anonymity of the institute(s), the number of institutes cooperating and the names of those institutes are not revealed here. This was an agreed condition for cooperation with the institute(s).

⁴² See J. R. Cohen, L. W. Pant and D. J. Sharp, 'Measuring the Ethical Awareness and Ethical Orientation of Canadian Auditors' (1996) 8 (Supplement) *Behavioural Research in Accounting* 98; M. F. Randall, and D. M. Fernandes, Social Desirability Bias in Ethics Research' (1992) 2 *Business Ethics Quarterly* 183.

The second part of the questionnaire included the PRESOR scale⁴³ and the Mach IV Machiavellianism scale.^{44 45} Both of these scales have been used extensively in previous research in business ethics and have been found to possess reasonable reliability and validity. The items included in both scales are illustrated in Appendix A. Responses were again provided on seven-point likert scales. A single score for Machiavellianism is computed by summing responses to the individual items and adding a constant of 20.⁴⁶ The final part of the questionnaire requested supplementary information on the respondents themselves: age, sex, number of years of professional experience in taxation, type of employment, and educational and professional qualifications. A pilot study, involving students from the researchers' university, was undertaken, after which some minor alterations and clarifications were made to the questionnaire.

In order to encourage an adequate response rate, email messages were sent to the subjects one week before the mailing, informing them of the forthcoming survey and asking them to complete and return the questionnaire upon receipt. In addition to the questionnaire, the mailing contained a cover letter from the researchers, asking recipients to complete the instrument. The cover letter informed recipients that any information received would be used for academic purposes only and individual responses would be kept strictly confidential. The mailing also contained a pre-paid, addressed envelope for sending replies directly to the researchers. A second mailing was undertaken approximately three weeks later.

A total of 186 responses were received. Eleven responses were incomplete and were eliminated, leaving 175 useable responses. This represented approximately 17 percent of the sample population. This response rate is comparable to those often achieved in studies of accounting and business ethics, and thus was considered reasonable. In order to check for non-response bias, early and late responses were compared, and no significant differences were noted. Demographic details of the respondents are shown in Table I below.

Of the 175 respondents, the great majority was male (81 percent). The average age of respondents and the average professional experience in taxation was approximately 45 years and 18 years respectively. Over half the respondents (57 percent) were employed by public accounting firms, and approximately 30 percent were employed by private companies. The remaining respondents were employed by the government or by "other" organisations. Most respondents possessed a degree, most commonly a bachelors (35 percent) or a masters degree (42 percent). Over three-quarters of respondents (78 percent) were CPAs, while 19 percent were chartered accountants (CAs), 55 percent had ACCA

⁴³ Singhapakdi et al., above n 11.

⁴⁴ See Christie and Geis, above n 28.

⁴⁵ The Mach IV is the most commonly used measure of Machiavellianism. However, because the original Mach IV instrument contained gender-specific statements (e.g., "Most men are brave") that seem less appropriate today, we used the gender-neutral version of the scale recommended by Zook and Sippes in A. Zook, II and G. J. Sippes, 'Reliability Data and Sex Differences with a Gender-free Mach IV' (2001) 126(1) *The Journal of Social Psychology* 131.

⁴⁶ See Christie and Geis, above n 28.

certification and 23 percent had other certifications. Thus a large percentage of participants had multiple certifications.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The means and standard deviations for the dependent measures are summarised in Table II below. For scenario A, the mean ethical and social responsibility judgements were 6.02 and 5.46 respectively, indicating that in general participants felt that the tax advisor's behaviour was unethical and socially irresponsible. The mean response for the likelihood of peers committing a similar action was 2.93, suggesting that respondents believed it was unlikely that their peers would undertake the same action. For Scenario B, the mean responses for ethical (social responsibility) judgements were 5.15 (4.87), somewhat lower than those for Scenario A. However, the means were still towards the high end of the scale, indicating that in general respondents felt that the actions of the tax advisor were unethical and socially irresponsible. The mean likelihood estimate was 3.91, towards the center of the scale, suggesting that respondents believed it was more likely in this scenario that their peers would undertake the same action.

Preliminary tests were run to test for potential effects of demographic variables. Univariate ANOVA models revealed that, with few exceptions, the categorical measures (gender, employment type, degree type, certifications held) did not have a significant impact on the dependent measures. One exception was that ACCA certification status had a significant effect on ethical and social responsibility judgements and behavioural intentions for Scenario B. However, since there was no *prima facie* reason why this should be the case, and since the significant effect was present only for one of the two scenarios, it was decided to ignore this effect. The other exception was that employment type had a significant effect on one of the six dependent measures – ethical judgements for Scenario A. However, due to the fact that only one of six possible relationships were significant, this finding was not considered practically significant.

Correlation analysis indicated that age was positively associated with ethical and social responsibility judgements for Scenario A, and negatively associated with behavioural intentions, and these effects were significant at the .05 level. This finding suggests that older participants judged the questionable actions more harshly, and estimated a lower probability that their peers would engage in similar actions. Professional experience was also negatively correlated (significant at the .05 level) with behavioural intentions for both scenarios, suggesting that more experienced participants estimated a lower likelihood of their peers condoning such acts. However, it was also noted that age and experience were negatively correlated with Machiavellianism (correlations significant at the .01 level), and it was thus suspected that Machiavellianism may have been the driving factor behind the correlations of age and experience with ethical decisions. To test this supposition, linear regression models were run with ethical / social responsibility judgements and behavioural intentions as the dependent variables, and age, experience and Machiavellianism as the independent variables. In each of these models,

Machiavellianism was highly significant (.001 level or smaller), and neither age nor experience were significant. Thus, it appears that because our younger and less experienced participants were more Machiavellian, their ethical decisions were more aggressive, and this also resulted in negative (positive) correlations between age/experience and behavioural intentions (ethical judgements). Because age and experience had no incremental explanatory power above that of Machiavellianism, in our subsequent hypothesis tests examining the effects of Machiavellianism the age and experience variables were omitted.

The internal reliabilities for the PRESOR and Machiavellianism scales were also examined. For the 20 Machiavellianism statements, the alpha coefficient was 0.73, which compares favourably with that reported in previous studies⁴⁷. The coefficient alpha for the 13 PRESOR statements was also relatively high at 0.79, indicating that it would be reasonable to treat the 13 items as a unidimensional scale. However, following previous research utilizing the PRESOR scale, we factor analysed the responses in an attempt to identify meaningful subscales.⁴⁸

An exploratory principal components factor analysis was used to test the dimensionality of the PRESOR items, the results of which are summarised in Table III below. Four factors emerged with eigenvalues in excess of 1, which collectively explained approximately 60 percent of the variance. The first factor, which explained approximately 21 percent of the variance, was comprised of five stakeholder view items. The internal reliability of these five items, measured by Cronbach's alpha, was relatively high at .76. The second factor was comprised of all five stockholder view items, which accounted for 16.6 percent of the variance and had an acceptable internal reliability of 0.70.⁴⁹

The remaining two factors each consisted of only two items. Factor 3 included two stakeholder view items, one of which also loaded significantly onto Factor 1. Factor 4 was comprised of the two remaining stakeholder view items. The internal reliabilities of these last two factors were relatively low, and they seemed to lack face validity in that they were not readily interpretable as distinct factors.⁵⁰ Consequently, these two factors

⁴⁷ See Christie and Geis, above n 28; Zook and Sipps, above n 45.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Etheredge, above n 22; Singhapakdi et al., above n 12.

⁴⁹ These two factors, and their reliabilities, correspond quite closely with the factors and reliabilities identified by Etheredge (above, n 22) in his study of Hong Kong managers. In the Etheredge study, nine of the PRESOR items loaded significantly onto two factors labelled "Importance of ethics and social responsibility" (Importance) and "Subordination of ethics and social responsibility" (Subordination). The Importance factor, which had an internal reliability of .75, included five stakeholder view items, four of which are included in our Stakeholder View factor. The Subordination factor, with a reliability of .73, included four of the five items included in our Stockholder View factor, and the excluded Stockholder View item ("If the stockholders are unhappy, nothing else matters") also had a relatively high (.472) loading on the Subordination factor.

⁵⁰ Correlation analysis also indicated that three of these four items had no significant relationships with any of the dependent measures. The one exception was the item "Being ethical and socially responsible is the most important thing a firm can do", which was significantly correlated with ethical judgements and behavioural intentions. Although this item had a significant cross-loading between Factors 1 and 3, it was retained in the scale for Factor 1 (Stakeholder View), because its elimination reduced the internal reliability

were excluded from subsequent analyses. For purposes of the hypothesis tests, scales were constructed for Factors 1 (Stakeholder View) and 2 (Stockholder View) by calculating the mean response for the five items comprising each scale. An overall PRESOR measure was also constructed by taking the mean of the 13 scale items.

Hypothesis Tests

As a preliminary test of the hypothesised relationships, the correlations among the dependent and independent variables were examined. As indicated in Table IV below, most of the correlations between the PRESOR measures and ethical/social responsibility judgements were positive and highly significant, consistent with Hypothesis 1. Judgements of ethicality and social responsibility for both tax scenarios were positively correlated with the overall PRESOR measure and the Stockholder View factor at the .002 level or smaller. Ethical judgements for both scenarios were also highly correlated with the Stakeholder View factor. Two exceptions to Hypothesis 1 were the marginally significant correlations between social responsibility judgements and the Stakeholder View factor. As anticipated in Hypothesis 2, the correlations between ethical/social responsibility judgements and behavioural intentions were negative and highly significant.

According to Hypothesis 3, Machiavellianism should have a negative effect on PRESOR responses. Consistent with this argument, the results in Table IV reveal highly negative relationships between Machiavellianism and each of the PRESOR measures for both scenarios. Hypothesis 4 is supported by strong negative relationships between Machiavellianism and ethical/social responsibility judgements for both scenarios; again, all relationships were highly significant.

Regression analysis was used to determine if the Stakeholder View and Stockholder View factors mediate the relationship between Machiavellianism and ethical/social responsibility judgements. According to Baron and Kenny⁵¹, to conclude that one variable (x) mediates the relationship between another variable (y) and a dependent variable (z), the following conditions must hold true: (1) y must have a significant effect on x in a univariate regression model; (2) y must have a significant effect on z in a univariate regression model; and (3) when z is regressed on both x and y , the effects of x must be significant and the effects of y must not be significant. Thus, in order to test the hypothesised relationships among our measures, we first ran univariate regression models for the effects of Machiavellianism on the Stakeholder View and Stockholder View factors, and on ethical/social responsibility judgements. Then, we regressed ethical/social responsibility judgements on each of the PRESOR factors combined with Machiavellianism. The results of these models are summarised in Table V below.

of that scale from .76 to .71. All subsequent analyses were conducted both with and without this item included in the Stakeholder View scale, and all results were substantially the same under both methods.

⁵¹ R. M. Baron, and D. A. Kenny, 'The Moderator-mediator Variable Distinction in Social Psychological Research: Conceptual, Strategic, and Statistical Considerations' (1986) 51 *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1173.

As the models in Panel A of Table V indicate, Machiavellianism had highly significant negative effects on both the Stakeholder View and Stockholder View factors. These univariate regression models were both highly significant and explained approximately 22 (35) percent of the variation in the Stakeholder View (Stockholder View). Machiavellianism also had highly significant direct effects on ethical/social responsibility judgements for both scenarios, as shown by the models in Panel B of Table V.⁵²

Panel C reports the results of regressions of ethical/social responsibility judgements on Machiavellianism and the two PRESOR factors, with separate models for the Stockholder and Stakeholder Views.⁵³ Models 1 through 4 indicate that, in all cases, the Machiavellianism variable remained significant, but the Stakeholder View variable was not significant. These results suggest that the Stakeholder View factor does not significantly mediate the relationship between Machiavellianism and ethical/social responsibility judgements. In contrast, Models 5 through 8 indicate that, in all cases, the Machiavellianism variable is no longer significant, but the Stockholder View variable remains significant. Thus, it appears that the Stockholder View factor does mediate the relationship between Machiavellianism and ethical/social responsibility judgements.

Discussion

The results of the current study generally support each of the four hypotheses. As theorised, tax professionals' perceptions of the importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility generally had a significant impact on their ethical/social responsibility judgements, which in turn influenced their behavioural intentions. This is the first study to document a relationship between tax professionals' attitudes toward corporate social responsibility and their ethical decisions, and the results indicate that those professionals who discount the importance of ethical and socially responsible conduct are more likely to facilitate aggressive corporate tax avoidance schemes. Because we found no significant differences in the ethical decisions of tax professionals employed by corporations and public accounting firms, the findings further suggest that the PRESOR construct is

⁵² Note that the standardized beta coefficients in the univariate regressions of the Stakeholder View, Stockholder View, ethical judgements, and social responsibility judgements on Machiavellianism are equivalent to the related correlation coefficients reported in Table IV, as would be expected. These univariate regression models were run in order to follow the procedures recommended by Baron and Kenny (above, n 51) for mediation analysis, although some of the information provided is essentially redundant with the correlation analysis. All other univariate regression models for the relationships hypothesised in Figure 1 (i.e., regressions of ethical/social responsibility judgements on the Stakeholder and Stockholder View factors, and the regressions of behavioural intentions on ethical/social responsibility judgements) were consistent with the related correlations reported in Table IV; thus, the details of these models are not presented.

⁵³ Separate models which regressed ethical/social responsibility judgements for Scenarios A and B on Machiavellianism, Stakeholder View, and Stockholder View were also run. In each of these models, the effect of the Stockholder View factor was highly significant, and the effects of the Stakeholder View factor and Machiavellianism were not significant. Thus, these models lead to the same basic conclusion as the models reported in Table V – that the Stockholder View factor mediates the relationship between Machiavellianism and ethical/social responsibility judgements, but the Stakeholder View factor does not.

relevant to the study of ethical decision making processes not only of corporate employees, but also of professionals such as tax advisors.

This study also adds to the body of research that has documented the influence of Machiavellianism on ethical decision making processes across a wide variety of business contexts. Our results indicate that Machiavellianism has both direct and indirect effects on tax professionals' ethical decisions. As hypothesised, participants scoring higher on Machiavellianism were less likely to feel that corporate ethics and social responsibility are important, and more likely to judge aggressive corporate tax avoidance schemes favourably. The results of our mediated regression analysis indicate that the Stockholder View, but not the Stakeholder View, mediates the relationship between Machiavellianism and ethical/social responsibility judgements. These results suggest that high Machiavellians use the traditional Stockholder View, which emphasises a narrow conception of corporate responsibility limited to profit maximisation within legal constraints, to rationalise their support of aggressive tax positions.

The study is subject to limitations in addition to those addressed in the methodology section. First, the study did not control for the risk profiles of the subjects. Thus, to the extent that the subjects contemplated risk of detection in responding to the scenarios, and that risk is correlated with a variable included in the model, omitted variable bias may be present in the results. However, in both of the scenarios utilised in the study, the risk of detection was low, suggesting that subjects' responses would not be highly influenced by a consideration of risk. Second, since the questionnaire asked participants to provide ethical and social responsibility judgements immediately prior to an intention judgement, the ethical aspects of the tax behaviour may have been made more salient to the intention in the respondents' minds than otherwise might have been the case. Third, since the study obtained a measure of tax compliance intentions in hypothetical situations rather than actual tax compliance behaviour, the effect of the independent variables on the practice of facilitating tax avoidance remains unaddressed. Finally, as the study was restricted to tax professionals in Hong Kong, further research is required in order to assess the generalisability of the results outside that territory. Previous research has found that perceptions of the importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility are affected by the Hofstede cultural dimensions⁵⁴, which suggests that cross-cultural studies of the issues addressed in the current paper may reveal important differences in tax professionals' ethical decision making processes.

The current study was an initial attempt to assess the impact of corporate social responsibility considerations and Machiavellianism on tax professionals' ethical decision making processes, and several related issues could also be examined. One possible avenue for future research would be the interactive effects of Machiavellianism and other variables that influence ethical decisions. For instance, Ross and Robertson⁵⁵ found that high Machiavellian salespersons were more likely to lie when there was a lack of clear ethical guidelines within their company. This finding suggests that the examination of the

⁵⁴ See, for example, Vitell et al., above n 36.

⁵⁵ Ross and Robertson, above n 33.

interactive effects of Machiavellianism and measures of the ethical climate or context⁵⁶ within public accounting firms or corporations holds promise for providing a better understanding of tax professionals' ethical decisions. Further research could also expand on the model used in the current paper to simultaneously examine the effects of Machiavellianism and other personal variables that have been found to influence ethical decision making, such as cognitive moral development and locus of control. Prior studies indicate that a variety of factors may influence PRESOR responses; thus, there is also a need to obtain a better understanding of the determinants of tax professionals' perceptions of the importance of corporate ethics and social responsibility. For example, in addition to the effect of cultural differences discussed earlier, Vitell et al.⁵⁷ found that personal moral philosophies (idealism and relativism) and perceptions of organisational ethical values influenced PRESOR scores. Similar research could provide further insights into tax professionals' ethical decisions.

⁵⁶ See B. Victor and J. B. Cullen, 'A Theory and Measure of Ethical Climate in Organisations', in W. C. Frederick (ed), *Research in Corporate Social Performance*, (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1987) 57; B. Victor and J. B. Cullen, 'The Organisational Bases of Ethical Work Climates' (1988) 33 *Administrative Science Quarterly* 101; L. K. Treviño, K. D. Butterfield and D. L. McCabe, 'The Ethical Context in Organisations: Influence on Employee Attitudes and Behaviours' (1998) 8 *Business Ethics Quarterly* 447.

⁵⁷ Vitell et al., above n 36.

Appendix A Scale Items

PRESOR Scale:

Stockholder view:

1. The most important concern for a firm is making a profit, even if it means bending or breaking the rules.¹
2. To remain competitive in a global environment, business firms will have to disregard ethics and social responsibility.¹
3. If survival of a business enterprise is at stake, then you must forget about ethics and social responsibility.¹
4. Efficiency is much more important to a firm than whether or not the firm is seen as ethical or socially responsible.¹
5. If the stockholders are unhappy, nothing else matters.¹

Stakeholder view:

6. Being ethical and socially responsible is the most important thing a firm can do.
7. The ethics and social responsibility of a firm is essential to its long-term profitability.
8. The overall effectiveness of a business can be determined to a great extent by the degree to which it is ethical and socially responsible.
9. Business ethics and social responsibility are critical to the survival of a business enterprise.
10. A firm's first priority should be employee morale.
11. Business has a social responsibility beyond making a profit.
12. Social responsibility and profitability can be compatible.
13. Good ethics is often good business.

Machiavellianism Scale:

1. Never tell anyone the real reason you did something unless it is useful to do so.
2. The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.
3. One should take action only when sure it is morally right.¹
4. Most people are basically good and kind.¹
5. It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak and it will come out when they are given a chance.
6. Honesty is the best policy in all cases.¹
7. There is no excuse for lying to someone else.¹
8. Generally speaking people won't work hard unless they're forced to do so.
9. All in all, it is better to be humble and honest than to be important and dishonest.¹
10. When you ask someone to do something for you, it is best to give the real reasons for wanting it rather than giving reasons which carry more weight.¹
11. Most people who get ahead in the world lead clean, moral lives.¹
12. Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble.
13. The biggest difference between most criminals and other people is that the criminals are stupid enough to get caught.
14. Most people are brave.¹
15. It is wise to flatter important people.
16. It is possible to be good in all respects.¹
17. The man who said "There's a sucker born every minute" was wrong.¹
18. It is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there.
19. People suffering from incurable diseases should have the choice of being put painlessly to death.
20. Most people forget more easily the death of a parent than the loss of their property.

1 = Reverse scored.

Appendix B Tax Scenarios

Scenario A:

Mr. Wong is the tax advisor of Company A, a Hong Kong trading company. The managing director of Company A asks Mr. Wong's advice on earning off-shore (and thus tax-free) profits. Mr. Wong suggests setting up a company in the British Virgin Islands. The banking of receipts and payments will be performed in Hong Kong with the knowledge of the IRD. However, while most of the decision-making and buying and selling activities will also continue to be performed at Company A in Hong Kong, the IRD will be informed that these activities are performed in the BVI in order to make the profits free from profits tax. Mr. Wong helps Company A put this plan into operation.

Scenario B:

Mr. Chan has been Company B's tax preparer for several years. This year, Company B has made unexpectedly high profits in the last month of the year. Mr. Chan is asked by the company to create a provision representing management fees for services rendered from an associated company (which has made substantial losses this year) in order to reduce the taxable profits of Company B. Mr. Chan is aware that, in fact, the services provided by the associated company are minimal. Nevertheless, he prepares Company B's tax return with the inclusion of the provision for management fees expense.

Table I
Summary of Demographic Data

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| <i>Gender</i> | |
| Male | 141 (81%) |
| Female | 34 (19%) |
| <i>Age</i> | |
| Mean | 44.55 |
| Standard Deviation | 9.28 |
| <i>Professional experience in taxation (years)</i> | |
| Mean | 18.01 |
| Standard Deviation | 10.76 |
| <i>Type of current employment</i> | |
| Public accounting firm | 99 (57%) |
| Publicly traded (listed) company | 22 (13%) |
| Non-publicly traded (listed) company | 27 (15%) |
| Government | 6 (3%) |
| Other | <u>21 (12%)</u> |
| | <u>175 (100%)</u> |
| <i>Educational background (degree held)</i> | |
| Associate/none | 25 (14%) |
| Bachelors | 61 (35%) |
| Masters | 74 (42%) |
| Other | <u>15 (9%)</u> |
| | <u>175 (100%)</u> |
| <i>Professional certifications held¹</i> | |
| CPA | 137 (78%) |
| CA | 34 (19%) |
| ACCA | 97 (55%) |
| Other | 41 (23%) |

Note:

1. Numbers do not total 175 because many respondents held more than one professional certification.

Table II
Responses to Dependent Measures

| | <u>Ethical Judgements</u> ¹ | <u>Social Responsibility Judgements</u> ² | <u>Behavioural Intentions</u> ³ |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Scenario A ⁴ | 6.02 (1.46) | 5.46 (1.83) | 2.93 (2.07) |
| Scenario B | 5.15 (1.61) | 4.87 (1.76) | 3.91 (2.07) |

Notes:

1. Ethical judgements were measured on a seven-point scale where 1 = “ethical” and 7 = “unethical”.
2. Social responsibility judgements were measured on a seven-point scale where 1 = “socially responsible” and 7 = “not socially responsible”.
3. Behavioural intentions were measured on a seven-point scale where 1 = “low” and 7 = “high”.
4. Reported numbers are mean responses; numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Table III PRESOR Factor Analysis

| | Factor loadings | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Being ethical and socially responsible is the most important thing a firm can do. | .574 | | .511 | |
| The ethics and social responsibility of a firm is essential to its long-term profitability. | .767 | | | |
| The overall effectiveness of a business can be determined to a great extent by the degree to which it is ethical and socially responsible. | .679 | | | |
| Business ethics and social responsibility are critical to the survival of a business enterprise. | .733 | | | |
| Good ethics is often good business. | .608 | | | |
| The most important concern for a firm is making a profit, even if it means bending or breaking the rules. | | .738 | | |
| To remain competitive in a global environment, business firms will have to disregard ethics and social responsibility. | | .666 | | |
| If survival of a business enterprise is at stake, then you must forget about ethics and social responsibility. | | .559 | | |
| Efficiency is much more important to a firm than whether or not the firm is seen as ethical or socially responsible. | | .563 | | |
| If the stockholders are unhappy, nothing else matters. | | .608 | | |
| A firm's first priority should be employee morale. | | | .837 | |
| Business has a social responsibility beyond making a profit. | | | | .562 |
| Social responsibility and profitability can be compatible. | | | | .763 |
| Percentage of variance explained | 20.9% | 16.6% | 11.7% | 10.2% |
| Cronbach alpha | .76 | .70 | .62 | .31 |

**Table IV Correlation
Analysis**

| | ETHA | SRA | PEERA | ETHB | SRB | PEERB | STOCK | STAKE | PRESOR |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| SRA ¹ | 0.540 (.000) | | | | | | | | |
| PEERA | -0.326 (.000) | -0.275 (.000) | | | | | | | |
| ETHB | 0.549 (.000) | 0.316 (.000) | -0.201 (.008) | | | | | | |
| SRB | 0.403 (.000) | 0.572 (.000) | -0.164 (.031) | 0.727 (.000) | | | | | |
| PEERB | -0.158 (.037) | -0.183 (.015) | 0.675 (.000) | -0.366 (.000) | -0.315 (.000) | | | | |
| STOCK | 0.395 (.000) | 0.324 (.000) | -0.237 (.002) | 0.443 (.000) | 0.311 (.000) | -0.274 (.001) | | | |
| STAKE | 0.234 (.002) | 0.145 (.056) | -0.155 (.041) | 0.242 (.001) | 0.141 (.064) | -0.157 (.038) | 0.476 (.000) | | |
| PRESOR | 0.335 (.000) | 0.253 (.001) | -0.222 (.003) | 0.363 (.000) | 0.237 (.002) | -0.224 (.003) | 0.834 (.000) | 0.822 (.000) | |
| MACH | -0.297 (.000) | -0.232 (.002) | 0.278 (.000) | -0.342 (.000) | -0.238 (.002) | 0.274 (.000) | -0.589 (.000) | -0.467 (.000) | -0.607 (.000) |

Notes:

1. Numbers in parentheses are significance levels.

ETHA = Ethical judgements, Scenario A.

SRA = Social responsibility judgements, Scenario A.

PEERA = Behavioural intentions, Scenario A.

ETHB = Ethical judgements, Scenario B.

SRB = Social responsibility judgements, Scenario B.

PEERB = Behavioural intentions, Scenario B.

STOCK = Stockholder view factor from PRESOR scale.

STAKE = Stakeholder view factor from PRESOR scale.

PRESOR = Unidimensional PRESOR scale.

MACH = Machiavellianism.

Table V
Mediated Regression Analysis

Panel A: Effects of Machiavellianism on PRESOR scales

| Model 1: Dependent variable = Stakeholder View | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
| Independent variable: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.467 | -6.95 | .000 |
| Model F-value | 48.3 | | |
| Model significance | .000 | | |
| Model R ² | .218 | | |

| Model 2: Dependent variable = Stockholder View | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
| Independent variable: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.589 | -9.59 | .000 |
| Model F-value | 92.1 | | |
| Model significance | .000 | | |
| Model R ² | .347 | | |

Panel B: Effects of Machiavellianism on Ethical/Social responsibility judgements

| Model 1: Dependent variable = Ethical judgements for Scenario A | | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
| Independent variable: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.297 | -4.09 | .000 |
| Model F-value | 16.8 | | |
| Model significance | .000 | | |
| Model R ² | .088 | | |

| Model 2: Dependent variable = Social responsibility judgements for Scenario A | | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
| Independent variable: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.232 | -3.14 | .002 |
| Model F-value | 9.8 | | |
| Model significance | .002 | | |
| Model R ² | .054 | | |

Table V (continued)
Mediated Regression Analysis

Model 3: Dependent variable = Ethical judgements for Scenario B

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variable: Machiavellianism | -.342 | -4.79 | .000 |
| Model F-value | 22.9 | | |
| Model significance | .000 | | |
| Model R ² | .117 | | |

Model 4: Dependent variable = Social responsibility judgements for Scenario B

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variable: Machiavellianism | -.238 | -3.22 | .002 |
| Model F-value | 10.4 | | |
| Model significance | .002 | | |
| Model R ² | .057 | | |

Panel C: Effects of Machiavellianism and PRESOR factors on Ethical/Social responsibility judgements

Model 1: Dependent variable = Ethical judgements for Scenario A

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variables: Machiavellianism | -.241 | -2.94 | .004 |
| Stakeholder View | .121 | 1.48 | .140 |
| Model F-value | 9.5 | | |
| Model significance | .000 | | |
| Model R ² | .100 | | |

Model 2: Dependent variable = Social responsibility judgements for Scenario A

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variables: Machiavellianism | -.211 | -2.51 | .013 |
| Stakeholder View | .046 | .55 | .582 |
| Model F-value | 5.1 | | |
| Model significance | .007 | | |
| Model R ² | .056 | | |

Table V (continued)
Mediated Regression Analysis

Model 3: Dependent variable = Ethical judgements for Scenario B

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variables: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.293 | -3.63 | .000 |
| Stakeholder View | .105 | 1.30 | .194 |

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Model F-value | 12.4 |
| Model significance | .000 |
| Model R ² | .126 |

Model 4: Dependent variable = Social responsibility judgements for Scenario B

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variables: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.220 | -2.63 | .009 |
| Stakeholder View | .038 | .45 | .654 |

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Model F-value | 5.3 |
| Model significance | .006 |
| Model R ² | .058 |

Model 5: Dependent variable = Ethical judgements for Scenario A

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variables: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.099 | -1.15 | .253 |
| Stockholder View | .336 | 3.89 | .000 |

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Model F-value | 16.6 |
| Model significance | .000 |
| Model R ² | .162 |

Model 6: Dependent variable = Social responsibility judgements for Scenario A

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variables: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.063 | -.70 | .483 |
| Stockholder View | .288 | 3.22 | .002 |

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Model F-value | 10.4 |
| Model significance | .000 |
| Model R ² | .108 |

Table V (continued)
Mediated Regression Analysis

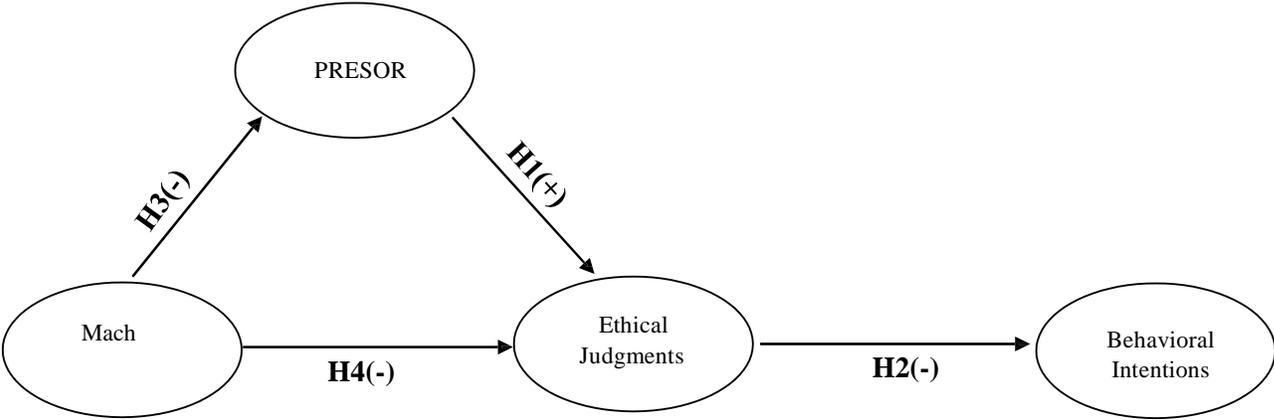
Model 7: Dependent variable = Ethical judgements for Scenario B

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variables: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.124 | -1.47 | .142 |
| Stockholder View | .370 | 4.40 | .000 |
| Model F-value | 22.4 | | |
| Model significance | .000 | | |
| Model R ² | .206 | | |

Model 8: Dependent variable = Social responsibility judgements for Scenario B

| | Std. Beta | t-statistic | p-value |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Independent variables: | | | |
| Machiavellianism | -.083 | -.93 | .353 |
| Stockholder View | .262 | 2.93 | .004 |
| Model F-value | 9.7 | | |
| Model significance | .000 | | |
| Model R ² | .101 | | |

Figure 1
Hypothesised Relationships



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