

(6) Moral balance in business managers decision making

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Recently there has been increasing interest in understanding how decisions that have moral components are made in organizations and what considerations are taken in resolving these moral issues. In each and every day, business managers must make moral decisions that involve choices between two or more courses of action, each of which is a complicated bundle of moral responsibilities, personal commitments, moral hazards and practical pressures and constraints. Decisions concerning moral behavior (and judgments of other's moral behavior) are affected by the perceived moral status of the actor and include some sort of quantitative weighing of the morally relevant actions performed by the actor in the recent past. Accordingly, a moral decision as to whether to allow oneself or another to deviate from what is perceived as correct moral behavior will be affected by one's perception of the actor's moral balance. The moral balance model offers a description of a principle underlying moral choice, that is whether to commit an act that one has morally judged as improper or not. The objectives of the presented study were: a. to identify decision patterns of business executives in resolving moral issues. b. to describe the main factors which influence their decision processes.

In an open interview 40 Israeli CEO and CEF were asked to describe two moral issues they encountered during the present working year and to explain the reasons for course of actions they choose for resolving those issues. Content analysis of the interviews reveals narratives which are consistent with the prediction of the moral balance model. The results suggest that when making moral evaluations and decisions, business managers take into account, previously relevant behavior by considering their own level of moral balance within a given time span.

The results of the present study provide a comprehensive explanation of moral decision making of executives in business environment.