Exploring Gendered Ethical Decision-making Among Sales Professionals in India

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Abstract

Humans' abject failure to uphold moral behaviour within workplace relationship calls for ongoing investigation of the complicated challenges brought on by the imbalance between productivity and commitment among employees. This current article is based on studying the gender differences in ethical decision-making among sales professionals in India and understanding under what circumstances the decision-making among the genders differ. The major findings show that no such decision-making difference between males and females exists. The research was conducted with a sample size of 10, but the data saturated at eight participants, wherein four were males and four were females. It is a qualitative study, and still, factors like incentives (money) and the experience level tend to deflect the ethical decisions of the individuals.

Keywords

Ethics, gender differences, sales, rewards, India

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Introduction

The term 'ethics' refers to a set of principles that determine what constitutes 'right, good and proper' action. These principles do not always demand a single 'moral'

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course of conduct, but they do provide a framework for weighing and deciding between competing possibilities (Sunanda, 2018). As situations that undermine the moral fibre of both the commercial and public sector continue to dominate popular and scholarly publications, business ethics remains at the forefront (Grell, 1993). Managers and leaders face a problem in modelling ethical behaviour and being willing to be held accountable to their superiors and the public for their decisions. Empirical evidence also points to a deterioration in ethical behaviour in organisations, notably in business (Walton, 1988).

Ethical decision-making in business is an important area of study. It is so essential that the Journal of Business Ethics has published five comprehensive meta-reviews of the literature, comprising approximately 500 empirical studies spanning nearly 40 years of research (Lehnert et al., 2016). Individuals' ethical decision behaviour is influenced by situational factors such as the organisation's reward system, peer influence, superior influence or organisational norms, according to the situational approach. In order to comprehend ethical behaviour, the most complex models of the ethical decision-making process utilise an interactive approach. This approach assumes that ethical decision-making is the result of a dialogue between the individual and the situation (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985).

Ethical behaviour and the prevailing system of employment relations in any workplace are critical for overall development, the production of goods and services for domestic consumption as well as international trade or exchange, the creation of national wealth, political stability and the inclusive benefits of long-term human development. In other words, the well-being of all stakeholders, the organisation's productivity and eventual profitability.

Ethics plays a critical role in organisational management, ensuring long-term success and stability for both individuals and the organisation. Employees regard ethics to be extremely important in the firm they will work for, and it is one of the most important factors in deciding whether to stay with their current employer or go. Unethical and illegal activity has a significant impact on their beliefs, which can have an impact on employee productivity and behaviour, as well as the company's ability to recruit and retain people (Quierrez, 2020).

Gender disparities in work ethic have been documented in research. Most studies believe that women have a better work ethic than males (Furnham & Rajamanickam, 1992). Gender disparities in behaviours including work ethic have been documented in studies (Sanaria, 2016). Most people believe that women have a better work ethic than men. While work ethic has the same substantive meaning for men and women in certain studies, women do not have a greater work ethic than males. When confronted with widespread perceptions of a 'glass ceiling' impeding women's advancement in the workplace, women may respond by embracing the belief in their ability to succeed and overcome obstacles by working hard and fostering the expectation that consistent hard work will yield positive results. Women and men, according to this argument, understand work ethic in the same way, but environmental restrictions have produced a higher level of professional or dedication work necessary for women's development in the workplace. Men and women understand work

ethic in similar ways, according to the explanation, but work environment constraints have prompted women to place a higher priority on work ethic in order to achieve (Meriac et al., 2009).

In 2020, roughly 19% of women in India were employed, compared to approximately 30% in 1990 (Statista, 2022). Though there is a decline in the number of women participating in the workforce, according to studies, women have an inherent advantage in terms of psychological qualities for leadership roles. Women were deemed to be more honest, caring and innovative as leaders in a poll performed by the Pew Research Centre Social and Demographic Trends (ETHRWorld, 2021). Although women had fewer board seats in India in 2021, there was a rise in the number of women who became CEOs, with 4.7% of female CEOs compared to 3.4% in 2018. According to Deloitte Global's study, selecting a female CEO has a beneficial impact on board diversity. Firms led by women have 33.5% more women on their boards than companies led by males, with 19.4% vs. 33.5%, respectively. For firms with female chairmen, the figures are comparable (30.8% women on boards vs. 19.4%, respectively) (Basu, 2022). The stable increase in the number of women in the leadership roles hints out to the question of the hour, will there be a change in the ethical climate of companies after the appointment of a female CEO or a manager per se.

The growing number of women in the workforce will have a substantial impact on what is considered ethical behaviour in business (Beltramini et al., 1984). India's economy is expanding, with a rising GDP and an estimated working-age population of over 800 million people by 2050. Despite this progress, less than a quarter of women aged 15 and older (20.3%) will be employed by 2020 (compared to 76.0% of men). In India, women account for only 19.9% of the overall labour force (The World Bank, 2022). But in the context of Indian scenario, we need to explore how the decline in women labour force and the increase of female in leadership role or managerial position are affecting the ethical dimension of business.

A quick assessment of the qualitative field reveals a great range and depth of ethical decision-making effects. While this influences later quantitative investigations, there has been no literature review that emphasises qualitative research. Unfortunately, qualitative research has a poor reputation for having little impact, influence or publication. The objectives to conduct qualitative research on the ethical decision-making domain were to begin, the research sought to get the respondents to identify the content domain (i.e., factors) that influence ethical and unethical decision-making (Heyler et al., 2016). Another reason being, the research also wanted respondents to outline the steps they took to put their decisions into action. There are studies that are being conducted in the topic, but this article is aimed to explore that ethical and unethical decision-making factor that varies across gender and also to find out possible consequences of the same.

The lack of research in the field of ethical practices and the qualitative study of ethics on gender is the gap which is found in the previous researches. This study aims to fulfil the gap and produce research on the same.

Review of Literature

Most of the research on building ethical climates in organisations through ethical decision-making has taken place in the last 20 years. Until recently, research has centred on determining what factors influence organisational members' ethical behaviour. Individual or situational variables have been evaluated as determinants in ethical decision behaviour in specific studies, but more complicated models that include the interaction of individual and situational elements have been developed (Gender Differences in Ethical Decision Making | Emerald Insight, 2002).

Although the popular impression is that women are more ethical than men, researchers who have looked at gender effects in the context of ethical decision-making have found mixed results. A number of researches back up the idea that men are more likely than women to engage in unethical behaviour (Beltramini et al., 1984; Betz et al., 1989). Some studies show that women make more ethical decisions than men, whereas others show that both men and women make ethical decisions (Serwinek, 1992). Men and women have the same ethical views and process ethical information, according to Tsalikis and Ortiz-Buonafina (1990). Recent research examining corporate cash holdings policy has provided insights into gender-related characteristics, specifically risk aversion and ethical sensitivities. Evidence suggests that female CFOs mitigate agency problems by reducing excess cash holdings, reflecting more conservative ethical sensitivities compared to their male counterparts. However, this does not necessarily support the notion that female executives are more risk-averse than male executives. Rather, it highlights the complexity of gender influences on corporate decision-making (Doan & Iskandar-Datta, 2020).

Additionally, the role of gender in EDM, particularly the observation that men may be more inclined towards ethical decision-making than women, warrants further investigation. This counterintuitive finding suggests the potential presence of explanatory constructs not captured in current studies, which could be explored in future research (Lim et al., 2023).

Moreover, gender differences in leadership behaviour have been explored, with findings indicating that female leaders tend to engage in more effective and fewer ineffective leadership behaviours than their male counterparts. However, these behavioural differences do not necessarily translate into a significant female advantage in overall leadership effectiveness, as the gender differences in this domain appear to be minimal on average (Shen & Joseph, 2021).

Women are more likely than males to regard specific hypothetical corporate practises as unethical, according to data from over 20,000 respondents in 66 surveys in a study (Franke et al., 1997). According to the 'structural' perspective, disparities between men and women caused by early socialisation and other role requirements (e.g., wife, mother) will be overridden by the benefits and costs of occupational roles. Under similar occupational settings, the structural approach predicts that women will grow more like males (Dawson, 1995).

Economic and legal assessments reveal financial revenues and expenditures, as well as the situation's legality. The basis of philosophic analysis is logical cognitive processes. It implies that a manager should have a single guiding principle of

behaviour or a single statement of opinion that is in and of itself 'right', 'appropriate' and 'just'. A decision maker will be guided by such a principle while deciding what duties he or she owes to others. Managers must be able to execute the three forms of analysis successfully in order to solve ethical challenges (Stedham et al., 2007).

Objectives of the Study

Amalgamating the ideals of integrity into an organisation's daily operations will encourage people to behave ethically, prevent detrimental mistakes while drawing on human impulses for moral thought and action, and increase sustained productivity. But, the absence of it might lead to long-term ill effect and bad mouthing of the organisation. The research objective of the study is to:

(1) to understand the gender differences in the ethical practices among sales professionals.
(2) to understand the consequences of ethical decision-making.

Research Method

The study adopts a qualitative research methodology, which is particularly useful when the goal is to explore complex phenomena within their real-life context. Qualitative research enables the researcher to delve deeply into the circumstances and experiences of the participants to understand how they navigate and address a specific problem or issue. This approach is invaluable when existing theories are either partial, inadequate or fail to capture the full complexity of the phenomena being studied, especially in unique or underexplored populations (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Qualitative research is also selected when the aim is to build theories rather than test existing ones. This inductive approach is crucial in understanding phenomena from the ground up, allowing for the development of theories that are grounded in the data collected from participants rather than imposing pre-existing frameworks onto the data.

Within the qualitative research paradigm, this study employs a multiple case-study approach. A multiple case study approach is beneficial when the focus is on understanding a specific issue or concern within its real-life context. In a multiple case-study design, several cases are studied to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena. The rationale for using multiple cases is to compare and contrast different perspectives and experiences, thereby offering a richer, more nuanced understanding of the issue which is under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In this study, multiple case studies are selected from different research material and contexts to illustrate the issue at hand. By examining multiple cases, the research can draw out commonalities and differences across different settings, leading to a more robust and generalisable understanding of the phenomena.

The research instrument was developed through an iterative process. The construction of the instrument began with a thorough review of the literature to identify key themes and variables relevant to the research questions. The initial literature review provided a foundation for the content of the instrument. The research instrument was meticulously constructed following consultations with industry experts. Initial interviews and discussions with these experts helped identify key areas of concern and typical scenarios faced by sales professionals in the industry. These insights were crucial in formulating the scenarios and questions that made up the research instrument.

Table A1 in the Annexure A represents the final copy of the expert validation process. Two rounds of validation were conducted with industry experts, ensuring that the scenarios and questions were both realistic and relevant to the sales environment in India. The final instrument was then tested on a selected sample of individuals with a minimum of four to five years of experience in the sales industry. The majority of these interactions were conducted through telephonic interviews, and all participants provided informed consent, which allowed for the collection and analysis of their responses.

Following the collection of data, the responses were analysed to identify key themes such as Integrity, Leadership, Teamwork, Loyalty, Incentives and Rewards. The analysis focused on understanding how sales professionals navigate complex ethical decisions, manage team dynamics and reconcile personal and organisational goals.

Table A2 provides a detailed breakdown of the research findings, illustrating how different participants approached the scenarios, reflecting their personal values, ethical standards and professional experience. By grounding the research in real-world scenarios and validating the instrument through industry expert feedback, the study ensures both the relevance and rigour of its findings. This approach not only helps to build a robust theoretical framework but also provides actionable insights for professionals in the sales industry.

Results

Leadership

When asked about Leadership, if the participant will make the team members work on a weekend, most of them chose that they will make the people work on Sunday. Three male and two female members mentioned that they would give the employee a comp-off for the next day but would make the team work. Whereas one male and two female members said, they would not make the employees work on a weekend as that is the only day they get to rest and get ready for the next week. In this scenario, there was no difference in gender. The recurring theme in this situation was Reward, as most mentioned that even if the Team leads were the ones who would be getting the incentive, they would take the team out for lunch or dinner. They also mentioned that they could divide the incentives among all the employees in the team. The topic of burnout and loss of motivation was also

brought as the consequence of making the employees work on a weekend, as they might have their plans on Sunday, which can/cannot be transferred to the next day.

Integrity

When asked about Integrity, 'You, as a sales agent, are selling a certificate course package worth ₹600. You call a customer, and he/she mentions that he/she will only pay ₹400 for the course. As you need to complete the target before your stand-up call, what would you do to complete the target? Option 1. You ask the customer to pay you ₹400 and you add ₹200 from your own pocket to reach the target because as you achieve the target, you get ₹1,500 as an incentive along with your base pay', two males and four females did not take up the option of paying from ones' pocket. Two males said that they would take up the offer as it is an obvious choice if 'the company is also benefitting and the salesperson is also benefitting'. In Integrity, all the female participants were more ethical in this dimension as they spoke more from the referrals perspective and how it can affect the company's pricing strategy. There was one female participant who mentioned that they would not trust the customer, which is why they would not pay. The incentive might come later, but what if the customer does not pay? But most people spoke about the company's brand value and how it might affect their overall pricing if that one customer who got it at the lower price referred the other customers for the lower price.

Teamwork

When asked a question about Teamwork, 'the team is lagging by only one sale to hit the target, and one person from the team has an extra lead. One person has one less. What would the team leaders do in such a situation', two males and four females mentioned that they would transfer the leads, as they would not want the whole team to lose out on Incentives or miss out on hitting the target. Incentives were a significant part of the discussion and became a recurring theme in the Teamwork dimension. The ones who said they would not transfer the leads mainly were for the workplace culture. They would not want to breed that kind of culture that believes and promotes spoon feeding and giving success to someone else. They would wish their teammates to be more efficient and hardworking. In the dimension of Teamwork, the women participants tend to be more ethical as they hinted at Teamwork, Incentives and the team's overall motivation.

Loyalty

The last situation was based on Loyalty, and it asked if the participant would sell a course to the customer if the course was not valuable for the consumer would get nothing out of it. In this situation, three males and one female mentioned that they would not pitch the product if it would not be valuable for the consumer. One male

and three females said that they would pitch in the product as it is about the incentive one gets. They also mentioned the discount and EMI options which might be helpful for the customer. Still, they believe in the product that even if 100% of it will not be beneficial, at least 10% of it would be valuable for the customer. In this Loyalty scenario, a difference was found, and the male participants were more on the ethical side. The participants who chose that they would not pitch if in case it is not valuable for the consumer gave in reason of long-term effect of it, on the company. They mentioned that it might impact the word-of-mouth marketing of its product, and there might be fewer referrals in due course of time. This is why it is better not to hit the target rather than give it to a person who does not require it. The people who took the option of pitching it to the client no matter what gave reasons for their livelihood and how the incentives matter, and how they believe in their product.

Other Recurring Themes

Incentives played an essential role in each situation, as most participants changed their answers after the incentive part was added into the situations. There were statements made by both males and females wherein they mentioned that the salary a Salesperson gets is nothing compared to the additional incentives one gets. So, it came down to Incentives in the role of ethical decision-making. The Reward system of taking the team out for lunch or dinner or dividing the incentives among all the team members also can be a theme for organisational functioning. A few participants mentioned that the rewards would be a great source of motivation for the employees, and it would help them work better for the upcoming weeks of targets.

The studies found out that there were no significant differences among genders in terms of ethical decision-making. The consequences were mainly brand image of the company, negative effect on employee productivity and the overall climate of the organisation was being affected if the employees inculcate unethical behaviour.

Discussion

There were no such strict differences found in terms of gender. In terms of Leadership, the Male participants tend to be ethical. In terms of Integrity, the Female participants tend to be more ethical. In the theme of Teamwork, Female participants tend to be ethical. And in terms of Loyalty, the Male participants tend to be more ethical. It should also be noted that various other dimensions like Company brand value, Incentives, Rewards, Marketing and Pricing Strategy came into play in the situations.

Higher level management experience participants in the study made ethically correct decisions in two instances. This study lends some credence to past research findings suggesting that managerial expertise and position within an organisation directly affect the ability to make ethical decisions. When faced with moral issues,

managers with a lengthy tenure often have experience in related situations from which to draw. They may also be more aware of the organisation's ethical environment regarding what constitutes appropriate behaviour. Thus an individual's socialisation in the organisation affects their behaviour when making ethical decisions.

The results also show that when moral intensity is not extremely high, high-need achievers or people who value achievement will typically choose a less moral course of action. Individuals who place a high value on performance selected the less ethical choice when faced with a selection that balanced economic and ethical concerns because they felt that the work environment did not support their ability to work well and improve personally. However, there was no interaction between gender and achievement value for ethical decision behaviour.

The lack of substantial variations in workplace values between men and women lends some value given to past studies that claim that both men and women share similar ethical views and judgments. However, a change seems to develop when people are asked to act on those perceptions and beliefs. Even if the value orientation of the female respondents in this study is very comparable to that of the male respondents, the ethical choice was consistently and logically made. On the other hand, the behaviour of the male responders appeared to be related to the moral gravity of the circumstance.

Comparing the male and female samples' results yielded some fascinating findings. Male respondents' ethical perspectives were remarkably comparable to those of female respondents. This result lends credence to the claims made by Kidwell et al. (1987) and McNichol and Zimmerer (1985) that men and women share similar ethical perceptions and attitudes. The findings also refute the claims made by Beltramini et al. (1984), Jones and Gautschi (1988) and Ricklefs (1983) that there are differences between men's and women's ethical perceptions and that women are more concerned with ethical issues than men. Additionally, comparing the two groups factor patterns shows that people of various sexes use somewhat similar processes while assessing ethical circumstances. This discovery will also offer some evidence that refutes the claims made by Beltramini et al.

Limitations and Future Research

There is scope in terms of various other themes which could have been dissected in the study. As the questions were mainly based on behavioural event interviews and how an employee would react in accordance to various situations, they had choices, but due to restrictions of time and the scope of research itself, further studies for investigations on the same could not be conducted. There are various factors that lead to the unethical practices of employees which also could not be found out, for that further research can be conducted specially to find out the consequences of the unethical behaviour. The main problem that was faced during the interview is to define ethics, practices and perspectives and different literatures gives different perspectives on their views of ethical and unethical behaviour. So, this article is based mainly on the perspective of the author.

One significant limitation of this study is the lack of comprehensive qualitative research in the existing literature on the specific topic of sales strategies and ethical decision-making within the Indian context. Although this study employs a robust qualitative approach using a multiple case study design, the relative scarcity of prior research on this particular issue poses a challenge. The field lacks a well-established theoretical framework that could have guided the exploration and interpretation of findings more comprehensively. As a result, this study had to rely heavily on expert consultations and context-specific scenarios to develop the research instrument, which, while insightful, may not capture the full spectrum of experiences and ethical dilemmas faced by sales professionals across different industries and cultural contexts. The limited amount of previous research available to compare or contrast findings also restricts the ability to generalise the results or build upon a broader theoretical perspective.

Future researchers can extend this research work by using different research methods. This would provide stronger empirical support for the findings. We also hope that practitioners and organisations will find this research useful to improve ethical decision-making in their organisations.

Conclusion

The study reveals intriguing insights into the relationship between gender, leadership, integrity, teamwork, loyalty and ethical decision-making in the workplace of sales professionals in India. While gender differences in ethical perspectives were not prominent, notable variances were observed in how male and female participants approached ethical decision-making within specific dimensions such as leadership, integrity, teamwork and loyalty. Higher-level management experience was found to positively influence ethical decision-making, suggesting that managerial expertise and organisational socialisation play crucial roles. Furthermore, the study highlights the impact of moral intensity and achievement values on ethical decision behaviour. Despite similarities in ethical perceptions between genders, behavioural differences emerge when individuals are tasked with acting on those perceptions. Overall, the findings challenge previous studies regarding gender disparities in ethical perceptions and underscore the importance of considering situational factors and individual values in ethical decision-making processes.

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Annexure A

Table A1. Final Copy of Expert Validation[a].

Sl. No.	Items/Statements	Accept	Modify	Reject	Comments
1	Situation 1: You are in charge of a Sales Team of s employees in an EdTech firm. By the end of 4 weeks, your team has to produce 16 sales, and there are only 2 days left to complete 16 sales out of which you already have 15 Sales, you just need 1 more Sale to achieve the target and get your ₹6,000 added incentives along with your salary. Out of the 2 days, one is a Sunday, so, you have only 1 working day. What would you do in a situation like this? 1. Make the employee work on a Sunday/ Overtime because if you achieve the target, the employee will also get an incentive? 2. Let it be, the employee gets only one day to rest? 3. Make the employee work on both days and give her/him a leave on the following day if/when target is achieved? 4. Request a couple of the other employees to extend and work on Saturday to support the first employee, and hopefully make the team targets. It is a team after all. Need to chip in				
2	Situation 2: You, as a sales agent, are selling a certificate course package worth ₹600. You call a customer and he/she mentions that he/she will only pay ₹400 for the course. As you need to complete the target before your stand-up call, you ask the customer to pay you ₹400 and you add ₹200 from your own pocket to reach the target, because as you achieve the target, you get ₹1,500 as an incentive along with your base pay. • What is your opinion in this act?				
3	Situation 3: You are the Team Lead of the North region sales division in a CRM company. Your target for the month is 2 leads for the pre-proposal engagement, but you also have the target of closing 24 leads in a month as you have 4 members in your team, which means that employee in your team has to close 6 leads every month. In this month, 2 employees closed on all the leads, 1 member had 7 leads and 1 member had 5 leads. 1. Transfer the excess lead to the one who has a shortage of closing 1 lead, and later divide the incentive on the basis of team performance. 2. Let it be as the employees just started on their career, and they need to learn to achieve success.				
4	Situation 4: Suppose that you are in a Edu-tech company in the Sales division. While in your daily routine task of talking and demonstrating a product of the company to a customer, the customer asks that will the course actually be valuable for their child. As the course is of ₹1,00,000 for a year, will it actually be worthwhile. What would be your answer to this question if you knew that the family does not belong from a well to do place. • No, it may not be as efficient as it seems. You want to be authentic, if that's the case, and ethically empathise with the customer to guide them appropriately. Part of the sales job is to be authentic and sell the true value of a product, and not the product itself • Yes!—You're looking to meet your quota, and you believe in the product. The investment is well worth it, it does not matter the financial stability of the family. You know it will yield results in due course • Yes—Because you have a job to do, and to meet your sales quota. You may/may not know the extent of the programme's capability and relevance and hence should not get into it yourself. Leave to the experts. • Leave it to the parents/customer to decide. You have done your job of articulating the value that you offer. The decision has to be the buyers'/parents				

[a]Two sets of validations were done by Industry Experts in the field of Sales in India.

Table A2. The Research Analysis or the Findings, Link: Research Findings.

	Themes:	Integrity Incentives	Leadership Rewards	Team Work
Sl No.	Situations	Male 1 (M1)	Male 2 (M2)	Male 3 (M3)
1	Suppose that you are in charge of a Sales Team of 6 employees in an EdTech firm. By the end of 4 weeks, your team has to produce 16 sales, and there is only 2 days left to complete 16 sales out of which you already have 15 Sales, you just need 1 more Sale to achieve the target and get your ₹6,000 added incentives along with your salary. Out of the 2 days, one is a Sunday, so, you have only 1 working day. What would you do in a situation like this? Options: 1. Make the employee work on a Sunday/Overtime because if you achieve the target, the employee will also get an incentive? 2. Let it be, the employee gets only one day to rest? 3. Make the employee work on both days and give her/him a leave on the following day if/when target is achieved? 4. Request a couple of the other employees to extend and work on Saturday to support the first employee, and hopefully make the team targets. It isa team after all. Need to chip in	The participant mentioned in his answer that he is going to go with the first option. He mentioned that he is going to make the employees work on a Sunday, depending on the criticality of the situation. He mentioned that it might also lead to a burn-out situation but depending on the situation he would make the employees work on a Sunday, give the next day off and also will give the employees a treat (motivation) as he as a team lead will get the incentive.	The participant chose the third option wherein he mentioned that he will request the other members to also chip in. Then for the incentive bit, he mentioned that he will take them out with the incentive money he received as hitting the target. Mostly like a treat.	The participant chose the third option. He mentioned that he expects his employees to work on a weekend if the target is not achieved. He mentioned that they need to prioritise the target rather than their personal plans on the weekend.
2	You, as a sales agent, are selling a certificate course package worth ₹600. You call a customer and he/she mentions that he/she will only pay ₹400 for the course. As you need to complete the target before your stand-up call, what would you do to complete the target? Option 1. you ask the customer to pay you ₹400 and you add ₹200 from your own pocket to reach the target, because as you achieve the target, you get ₹1,500 as an incentive along with your base pay.	The participant did not go with the option given. He spoke about price flexibility, and mentioned that if the management agrees, then he can discount the course. He personally goes by very strict pricing strategy, so he mentioned that he would not go by any discounts as far as possible but again would depend on the management for the answer.	The participant did not take up the option as he mentioned that it might hamper the company's reputation and referrals which the company might get. He also mentioned that he will try to discount the course if possible.	The participant chose the option. He mentioned that it is an obvious choice, if it is benefitting the customer and if it also benefitting him

Loyalty				
Male 4 (M4)	Female 1 (F1)	Female 2 (F2)	Female 3 (F3)	Female 4 (F4)
The participant went with the second option as he mentioned that there is no guarantee in sales, he will rather wait for the month end and check the status of the team, rather than making them work on a weekend.	The participant chose the second option as she mentioned that she will not make them work on a Sunday and it is upto them if they actually would want to work or not.	The participant chose the first option. She also mentioned that she would take the team out on the basis of the difficulty of leads, if the leads were easy but she feels that the team was slacking then she would keep the incentive to herself.	The participant chose the second option wherein she mentioned that she would not make the work on a Sunday as they also have personal lives. She mentioned that she would try to motivate the employees with the incentive, but if the employees do not agree, she will encourage them to rather take the weekend off than the money.	She mentioned that in sales there is no Sunday or weekend per se, everybody needs to pitch in according to the customer's availability. So, she will ask her team members to work on a Sunday too.
He took the option as he mentioned that it would benefit him. He mentioned that for him it is because of the relaxation he feel after cracking the last sale, rather than just The incentive.	The participant did not take the option and rather spoke about discounting the price of the course.	She would not take the option as she mentioned that she would not trust the customer, if the customer actually does not have money or if he is fooling around. She is mostly scared if the payment of her bonus does not come through and she will be in loss anyway.	She mentioned that she will not take the option as she would depend on the reference. If the customer can bring her another referral, she will not discount the product for them.	She mentioned that she will not take the option as it will hamper the organisation's credibility. She also mentioned that the customer also might send referrals for the lower price, which might affect the organisation's growth.

(Table A2 continued)

(Table A2 continued)

	Themes:	Integrity Incentives	Leadership Rewards	Team Work
Sl No.	Situations	Male 1 (M1)	Male 2 (M2)	Male 3 (M3)
3	Situation 3: You are the Team Lead of the North region sales division in a CRM company. Your target for the month is 2 leads for the pre- proposal engagement, but you also have the target of closing 24 leads in a month as you have 4 members in your team, which means that employee in your team has to close 6 leads every month. In this month, 2 employees closed on all the leads, 1 member had 7 leads and 1 member had 5 leads. Options 1. Transfer the excess lead to the one who has a shortage of closing 1 lead, and later divide the incentive on the basis of team performance. 2. Let it be as the employees just started on their career, and they need to learn to achieve success.	The participant chose the second option in this situation. He mentioned that it might later on hamper the company culture to breed people who would depend on other. He wants to stop from a pattern being formed.	The participant chose the first option. He mentioned that it is the team effort and we should not lose out on a whole incentive only because of one person.	The participant chose the second option as he mentioned that the other members of the team worked really hard for the deals, and he would not want to transfer it and spoon feed the person. He does not want a culture like that in the company.
4	Suppose that you are in a Edu-tech company in the sales division. While in your daily routine task of talking and demonstrating a product of the company to a customer, the customer asks that will the course actually be valuable for their child. As the course is of ₹100,000 for a year, will it actually be worthwhile. What would be your answer to this question if you knew that the family does not belong from a well to do place. Options 1. No, it may not be as efficient as it seems. You want to be authentic, if that's the case, and ethically empathise with the customer to guide them appropriately. Part of the sales job is to be authentic and sell the true value of a product, and not the product itself. 2. Yes!—You're looking to meet your quota, and you believe in the product. The investment is well worth it, it does not matter the financial stability of the family. You know it will yield results in due course 3. Yes—Because you have a job to do, and to meet your sales quota. You may/may not know the extent of the programme's capability and relevance and hence should not get into it yourself. Leave to the experts. 4. Leave it to the parents/ customer to decide. You have done your job of articulating the value that you offer. The decision has to be the buyers'/parents	The participant chose the first option, where he chooses a more ethical way. He emphasis on brand value and referrals. He also mentioned about word- of-mouth marketing and how it may hamper the company in the long run.	He mentioned that it is a competition between his ethics and his job. He also chose the fourth option wherein he will be transparent with the customer and let the customer decide if the course will be valuable or not.	The participant chose the second option. He has a target to meet and he believes in the product

Loyalty				
Male 4 (M4)	Female 1 (F1)	Female 2 (F2)	Female 3 (F3)	Female 4 (F4)
He mentioned that sales are all about incentives. He chose the first option of transferring the leads from one person to another as he does not want anyone from his team to miss out on the incentives.	The participant chose the first option but also mentioned that she will request her team to transfer the leads and not force anyone. She mentioned that one should not let go of an incentive because of only 1 lead.	The participant chose the first option without even listening to other options. She mentioned that as a team they will miss out of the incentive because of that one sale, she would rather ask/force the person to share the sale.	The participant chose the first option of transferring the leads. She mentioned that some months of sale may be good and some might be bad, and for this month she Will transfer the lead and next month she can do that same system again.	She mentioned that she will go ahead and transfer the leads but also notice the pattern in the employees, as one or two times, it is fine, but more than that breeds laziness and unproductivity in the organisation.
The participant chose the first option. He mentioned that he would focus more on the EMIs and installment, discounts which the company may provide, but if it is not helpful for the customer, then he would not pitch in the product and let go of his sales quota.	The participant chose the second option as she mentioned that it will yield at least 10% of benefit to the child. She also has her target to be met, so she will be pitching in the product to the customer.	The participant chose the third option as she just focuses on the sale and the incentive which she will be getting after she achieves the target.	The participant chose the first option as it does not seem efficient for the customer. She would not try and waste that child's future on the products.	The participant chose the second option. She mentioned that she would believe in the product, which is why she would pitch it to the customers no matter what.

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