

Examining the Relationships between Business Ethics, Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Behaviour: Perspectives from WA Township in Ghana

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines business ethics, customer satisfaction, and purchase behavior within Wa Township, highlighting the importance of small enterprises in driving economic expansion in low- and middle-income environments. **Design/Methodology/Approach:** The research utilized a quantitative approach in a case study methodology. 358 smallholder shop owners in total were chosen at random to take part in in-person face to face meeting. After being cleaned, the data were entered into a Microsoft Excel sheet, and loaded into SPSS and examined using the chi-square test of independence, frequencies, and proportions. **Findings:** The results have shown a strong statistical relationship between business ethics and customer satisfaction ($p=0.000$), business ethics and purchase behaviour ($p=0.000$). **Practical implications:** This study recommends investment in growing smallholder business owners' knowledge about the necessity of business ethics and customer satisfaction. **Original value:** This research novelty displays in the context a nexus between business ethics, customer satisfaction and purchase behaviour, that can lead to greater sales and business success.

Keywords: Business Ethics, Customer Satisfaction, Purchase Behaviour.



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INTRODUCTION

The importance of business ethics has grown significantly in recent years. Company ethics has emerged as a crucial business function, similar to finance and marketing (1,2,3). Businesses construct business ethics to encourage moral behaviour among their workforce and win over important constituencies like investors and end-users (consumers) of their goods and services. Moral principles are based on ideas of what is good, wrong, and fair for the conduct of business. Most businesses rely on their conscience when making decisions, using their own moral upbringing as a reference point. Many organizations and businesses have tried to create codes of conduct over the years that managers can use as guidance when making choices. Due to the numerous scandals that have previously resulted from ethical problems in business practices, many companies and organizations in today's globalized society have finally realized the importance of portraying ethical behaviour in business practices. It is also getting harder to ignore the unethical behaviours of employees within an organization. Businesses became more conscious of a consumer-based culture that was on the rise and expressed concerns about the environment,

social issues, and corporate responsibility in the 1960s, which is when the idea of business ethics first emerged. The decade is distinguished by an increased attention on "social issues. "When it comes to what is right and wrong, a person's or a group of people's behaviour is governed by codes of values and principles called ethics (4). Ethics therefore establishes guidelines for what is morally right or wrong in organizational behaviour and decision-making (4). It addresses internal principles that make up company culture and influences choices about social responsibility in light of the surrounding environment. Ethics and values are distinct concepts (5). Whereas ethics is concerned with how a moral person should behave; values are the inner judgments that determine how a person actually behaves. Values concern ethics when they pertain to beliefs about what is right and wrong. In the business setting, being ethical means applying principles of honesty and fairness to relationships with co-workers and customers (6).

Examining moral or ethical issues that arise in a business setting is done through the study of business ethics, often known as corporate ethics or applied ethics (7). It is a catch-all phrase that refers to all ethical concerns that

arise when conducting business. Business ethics are guidelines for ethically upright behaviour in managerial decisions pertaining to the operations of the firm and its corporate interactions with society. These guidelines might take the form of rules, conventions, codes, or principles (4). It is crucial to both individual and organizational behaviour and applies to all elements of business conduct (5). Research in the fields of ethical purchasing and effective purchasing strategies is becoming increasingly important (8). Suppliers are essential in ensuring that the employees they hire have a comfortable workplace. However, their clients' spending patterns—often the same retailers—could undermine their efforts by pressing them to comply with their standards of labor behaviour. Short lead times and last-minute order modifications are two examples of practices that can lead to unapproved subcontracting, excessive overtime, and greater usage of casual labor. Additionally, it may be challenging for suppliers to give workers a fair wage due to demand from retailers to lower prices.

The ability of suppliers to offer fair wages and working conditions for their employees is something that many businesses are already beginning to consider methods to promote rather than hinder. For instance, several businesses have started ambitious training programs to raise awareness among commercial personnel and consumers of the effects of their choices on employees. Making "ethical champions" in store commercial teams who serve as the "go to" person for ethical trade is another step in the right direction. Some businesses are already rewarding their purchasing personnel for considering labor standards when placing orders with vendors. There is insufficient information available despite the significance of business ethics and corporate responsibility purchasing practices in businesses. Furthermore, there is little comprehensive study highlighting the significance of corporate responsibility in purchasing patterns and company ethics. Regarding the subject under investigation, a gap in the body of knowledge is found. Businesses have begun integrating business ethics and corporate responsibility into their purchasing procedures, but it is also important to consider how well and frequently these practices are implemented in the companies themselves (8). These are companies that once conducted their business operations in accordance with moral principles. Whereas a company's economic duties are to generate goods and services that society needs and wants at a price that can perpetuate the continuing existence of the business, and also satisfy its obligations to investors; ethical responsibilities are those behaviours or activities expected of businesses by society and other stakeholders such as employees (5). Business ethics and social responsibility are very important for organisational growth and success. Specifically, they consider business ethics to lead to positive employee, customer and

community relations. Not only has that but also, bettered public image/reputation, greater customer loyalty, strong and healthier community relations can inure to the benefit of corporations that are socially responsible. The benefits that can be derived from effective purchasing have long been recognised in the management literature. Better Work, in collaboration with brands and other industry stakeholders, including the Better Buying Institute, has developed an interactive foundational training applicable for brand staff at different levels and across departments. According to research, supplier compliance with corporate codes of conduct can be prevented by buyer purchasing practices, endangering the lives and dignity of supply chain workers. While bad purchasing habits have caused a variety of issues, such as child labor and employee layoffs, many of their detrimental repercussions fall into four categories. Legal and financial compliance, business ethics, corporate social responsibility, public and community affairs, investor relations, conflicts management, stakeholder communications, brand management, environmental affairs, sustainability, socially responsible investment, and corporate philanthropy are among the professional disciplines included in the corporate responsibility field. Establishing the significance of organizations' business ethics and corporate responsibility of purchasing practices, as well as the advantages of business ethics and corporate responsibility of purchasing, is relevant to this study. The main research question is as follows: What are the effects of business ethics on business success?

The specific objectives of the research are:

1. To examine the relationship between business ethics and purchase behaviour.
2. To determine the relationship between business ethics, and customer satisfaction

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

This section of the report reviews relevant literature on business ethics, customer satisfaction and purchase behaviour, among businesses.

Business Ethics: When it comes to what is right and wrong, a person's or a group of people's behaviour is governed by codes of values and principles called ethics (4). Therefore, ethics sets standards for good or bad corporate behaviour and decision-making (4). It covers internal values that are a part of company culture and affects decisions about how to behave in terms of social responsibility toward others (5); minimizing conflicts and improving goodwill towards the company and what it stands for. Ethics is actually concerned with how a moral person should behave; values are the internal judgments that guide how a person behaves. In order to do business ethically, one must be honest and fair with both consumers and employees (7). Business or corporate ethics, a branch of applied ethics, deals with

moral or ethical conundrums that arise in a business environment (9). All ethical concerns in the context of conducting business are collectively referred to as business ethics. Corporate ethics are the guidelines for morally right behaviour in managerial choices pertaining to the organization's operations and its business relationships with society (4). It is applicable to every facet of business behaviour and affects how both individuals and the entire organization behave (5). Additionally, a company's daily behaviour is governed by its corporate ethics. The integrity of a company's code of ethics, which helps to guide management and employees in day-to-day activities, is essential to that company's success. The justification for ethics as a good practice is that moral environments produce a climate that encourages the development of moral human resource practices. The result is a shared set of values that direct, shape, and direct conduct at work. In order to generate revenue for businesses, ethics is regarded to be a set of moral standards that encourages sincere and modest methods of doing so while prohibiting acts of self-gain (11). Since ethics forms the foundation of a company's guiding principles, it is crucial to consider ethics while creating a strategic plan for a corporation. The goal of the business is to provide services and goods while generating revenue from operations and sales (12). A company's strategies must uphold moral and ethical standards for its stakeholders despite its goal to maximize profit and return on investment (13). These guidelines apply to all of their stakeholders, including their workers, the community in which they operate, the authorities, and the media (14).

Customer Satisfaction

The bulk of studies on customer satisfaction can be viewed as belonging to a common framework defined by the so-called disconfirmation paradigm that explores the causes of satisfaction, with a few significant exceptions (15). Customers judge their degree of satisfaction and their prior experiences using this model of discrepancy by comparing the perceived performance of a good or service to a mental standard. The bulk of studies on customer satisfaction can be viewed as belonging to a common framework defined by the so-called disconfirmation paradigm that explores the causes of satisfaction, with a few significant exceptions (16,17). Customers judge their degree of satisfaction and their prior experiences using this model of discrepancy by comparing the perceived performance of a good or service to a mental standard. A positive, negative, or zero difference may result from the clash between expectations and perceived performance; the judgment of satisfaction or discontent depends on the significance of this disparity. Expectations are a result of one's knowledge and are, in general, the anticipated outcome of a probabilistic scenario. They serve as a stand-in for the cognitive structures' belief components on potential purchase experiences, including a certain level of

emotional arousal, from a marketing standpoint. Consumers who directly interact with a product or who infer knowledge about it indirectly through comparative experiences or from other sources (like marketing) build stimulus-response links because people "learn" what they may rationally anticipate in such situations. A particular cognitive structure, such as an attitude, is said to result from reflection on both the expected probability in relation to an attribute or event (the expectancy), as well as the evaluative judgment attributed to that particular attribute or event. These learning techniques form the basis for the so-called expectancy-value models (18). By combining these criteria (importance evaluation) and the probability (expectancies) that particular significant occurrences will occur, an overall judgment can be drawn. These expectancy-value models, which consider expectations in a predictive manner as if they were anticipations of a characteristic or an event, have been used to analyze customer attitudes in the marketing literature in a number of ways (19) such as the performance of a product. However, the normative importance of expectations might be revealed by assessing a person's requirements in light of their own set of values. People thus develop evaluative criteria based on their values, which they subsequently employ to comprehend and assess reality (20). As a result, many more modern models have profited from normative expectations to develop a range of standards for evaluating perceived success. Some authors have substituted ideal or equal performance, needs and wants as values, social and experience-based rules, consumer-related emotions, post-decisional regrets, wishes - as it will be shown later - and a variety of standards in place of expected expectations. These models take into consideration the fact that what customers desire or need may differ from what they anticipate. Therefore, a product's subpar performance may still leave customers unhappy even if they anticipate it. Because of this, expectations and various other standards (such as ideal performances, societal regulations, needs, wants, and desires) are categorized as independent constructions, separately made by individuals in line with circumstances even if they frequently go hand in hand. Customers' values may override predicted expectations since they may be displeased with certain features of a product's performance that they were ignorant of prior to purchase. According to the conventional paradigm, the effectiveness of the product provides a further yardstick by which to measure consumer satisfaction, which is measured in relation to the results that the product or service produces (21). However, rather than being statistically quantified in an objective and scientific way, these are perceived and subjective outcomes that result from an individual's cognitive elaboration processes. For instance, the speed of a car can be measured scientifically in terms of kilometers per hour, but how that speed is perceived depends on the individual.

Pre-purchase performance is contrasted with perceived performance in the traditional paradigm. Pre-purchase performance has been described in the marketing literature into three basic techniques, namely adequate, ideal, and predicted performances (22). Effectively, given a set of perceived costs, a client should have received appropriate performance. It is a normative criterion based on the implied relationship between the specific investment expenses and the expected return. The criterion of pre-purchase comparison generally used in the research on satisfaction is expected performance, which is stated in predictive expectations and considers the most likely performance of a product. This concept sums up how the performance would appear in the consumer's eyes, who frequently based that assessment on the historical performance that is considered to be industry norm and any possibly confusing outside influences (for instance, advertising).

Disconfirmation is the comparison of the consumer's expectations and the product's perceived performance, or the result attained after the product has been purchased and used. According to the subtractive disconfirmation theory, the effect of a comparison should be understood in terms of the algebraic difference between the observed performance and the standard of comparison (i.e., expectations). Therefore, the subtractive disconfirmation approach already suggests a satisfaction assessment on the obtained result, whether it be good or negative. On the other hand, in the subjective disconfirmation technique, the disconfirmation indicates a special cognitive position that arrives before satisfaction, on which it has an influence that is independent of the performance level and of the standard of reference. Similar to the previous method, the satisfaction result is not always linear; rather, it is affected by an emotional component that emerges during the evaluation of the realized disparity. The subjective approach has been adopted as the basis for all main theories on satisfaction due to its greater methodological validity and experimentally demonstrated explicative capacity. These hypotheses show that there is a point where consumers will judge a product negatively and reject it, even if its performance is only marginally below what they had anticipated. This point is where customers will not accept a rise in the discrepancy between possessed expectations and experienced performance. According to conventional wisdom, whether a consumer is satisfied with a product depends on how well it performs in relation to expectations or another baseline of comparison (or dissatisfied). From the several definitions that the literature offered, an ex-post evaluative assessment regarding a specific purchasing decision emerges as the defining characteristic (23). This judgment is the result of cognitive, reasoning processes that were combined in the disconfirmation paradigm comparison and occasionally integrated by emotive elements, such as the possible emotional responses that

the comparison's results may provoke (24). A variety of product qualities need be evaluated in light of expectations, some of which are favorable and others unfavourable. In order to measure it; the synthesis of these forms the basis of the satisfaction/dissatisfaction assessment. When clients assess their own pleasure, they can easily recall the only features of the thing they are evaluating (the product) that are actually important to them (24). It has been demonstrated that there are some very interesting asymmetries and nonlinearities in the relationship between the assessments of the different product features and overall satisfaction. Recent studies have shown, for example, that some satisfaction ratings are more sensitive to negative performance evaluations related to a specific attribute than positive evaluations of the same intensity. In other cases, the effect of the individual characteristics on overall pleasure increases in accordance with the relative weight that the consumer expressly accords to them (25). The amount to which satisfaction influences attitude development may be seen by looking at the results of these evaluations longitudinally, that is, over time. As a result, a satisfied customer would typically reinforce his or her intention to purchase the goods (5).

Purchase Behaviour

The construct of "purchase behaviour" has been studied by various authors in the fields of marketing. For the concept of purchase is defined as a conscious effort by customers to choose some given products or to choose some given services. It arises when the impression or attitude given to customers aligns with their core needs or expectations (25). As per (25), the act of purchasing something, which could be either a product or a service, is referred to as the construct of purchase. According to some writers, including (25), the term "purchase" refers to a customer's acquisition of a good, service, or product in exchange for payment. According to (25), the price paid might have a monetary value as well as a value based on the customer's time, energy, and other price risk investments.

Business ethics refers to the principles and standards that guide the behaviour of individuals and businesses in the marketplace, encompassing elements like transparency, honesty, integrity, fairness, and accountability (26). These ethics influence business practices, which include the operational activities and strategies that businesses employ, such as customer service quality, product/service transparency, ethical advertising, fair pricing, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. These practices, in turn, affect customer satisfaction, defined as the measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectations (23). Key elements of customer satisfaction include perceived value, customer service experience, trust in the business, product quality, and ethical alignment with consumer values (27). Customer

satisfaction then influences purchase behaviour, which is the decision-making process and actions of consumers when buying goods and services, encompassing purchase intention, repeat purchase, brand loyalty, and word-of-mouth referrals (28). Customer purchase

behaviour significantly influences business success by driving sales, fostering customer loyalty, and enhancing the company's reputation and market position (29,30). Figure one illustrates these relationships.



Figure 1: Conceptual model (Source: Authors' construct, 2024)

Theoretical Review

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Developed the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in 1985 as an expansion of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), three primary elements impact an individual's behavioral intentions, which in turn affects their actions: the individual's attitudes towards the conduct, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (30).

The 'attitude toward the behavior' element has to do with the person's assessment, whether favorable or unfavorable, of engaging in a specific behavior. It is

based on the person's assessment of the behavior's results and his/her beliefs about those results (31). For instance, a consumer's perception that organic goods are healthier and more ecologically friendly may have an impact on his/her decision to buy organic foods.

The 'subjective norms' are the societal pressures that one feels to engage in or refrain from engaging in a specific conduct. Their formation is influenced by the convictions surrounding the approval or disapproval of the action by important factors, such as family, friends, or the community (32). For example, a buyer may choose to purchase a luxury vehicle because he/she thinks it will raise his/her social standing and win over his/her friends.

'Perceived behavioral control' relates to how easy or hard the person believes he/she can carry out the conduct. It is influenced by prior experiences and projected challenges, much to the idea of self-efficacy (33). For instance, a customer may want to switch to a healthier diet, but may feel limited by the cost or availability of good food options.

Application of TPB in Consumer Behavior

The TPB has been extensively employed to forecast a range of consumer behaviors, such as judgments about purchases, actions linked to health, and environmental concerns (34). For example, the TPB was used in a study to determine customers' inclinations to purchase eco-friendly goods. The study discovered that customers' intentions to buy environmentally friendly products were highly influenced by attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control. Digital marketing is another setting in which the TPB is put to use. Using the TPB, investigated how users behaved in online social networks. They discovered that users' intentions to interact with social media advertising were influenced by their views on social media advertising, perceptions of control, and social norms.

Criticism and Limitations of TPB

For a number of reasons, the TPB has drawn criticism despite being widely used. First, the theory assumes that decisions are made linearly, which may not always be the case in situations when people act impulsively or habitually in the actual world (33). Furthermore, the TPB has come under fire for failing to sufficiently take into consideration how emotions influence consumer behavior. For instance, the TPB's rational decision-making process may not be compatible with impulsive, emotionally driven purchases. Additionally, by concentrating mostly on individual-level elements and ignoring more significant social, cultural, and economic impacts, the TPB may oversimplify the complexity of consumer behavior (34). These drawbacks imply that, even while the TPB offers a helpful framework for comprehending some facets of consumer behavior, additional theories or models could be required to fully capture the variety of elements influencing customer choices.

Hypotheses and Research Model

After the literature review the different hypothesis are:

H1: There is a relationship between business ethics and customer satisfaction.

H0: There is no relationship between business ethics and customer satisfaction.

H2: There is a relationship between business ethics and purchase behaviour.

H0: There is no relationship between business ethics and purchase behaviour.

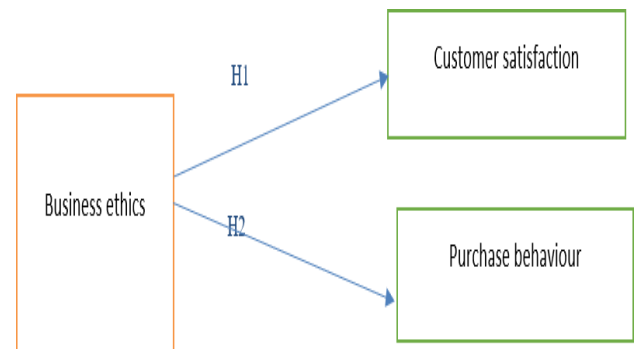


Figure 2: Research Model (Source: Authors' construct, 2024)

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology follows these different stages.

Research Design: For the pragmatist, reality is continually renegotiated, discussed, and evaluated in light of its applicability in dealing with unforeseen circumstances (35). As a result, problem-solving is its main objective. It leverages the advantages of both the post-positivist and constructivist perspectives to accomplish the main objective in order to pinpoint the frequently many sources of an issue (36). The interdisciplinary viewpoints provided by pragmatics allow for in-depth and comprehensive studies to be conducted within a single study (37). The paradigm is frequently criticized for favoring expensive, overly ambitious, and complex designs that are not appropriate for early career researchers (38); but this study has chosen is a quantitative method. Due to this, a case study approach is used in the research design, along with quantitative research techniques. Case study methodology was chosen because it is appropriate for addressing the study's research issues. The case study is normally preferred for a study when 'how' and 'why' questions are asked, when the investigator has little or no control over the events, and also when the focus of the study is contemporary, within its real-life context (39). The researchers want to understand why businesses need or want to include corporate responsibility into their purchasing habits in light of this tactic. The case study will also be taken into account because it is an empirical investigation that includes methodical approaches to viewing occurrences, the gathering of data, analysis of the data, and objective presentation of the results. The investigators will gain a greater grasp of the problem at hand, the reasons why it occurred, and what can be thoroughly examined in the event of additional investigations. The case study research method, is suited for studies that need for in-depth information about a phenomenon within a constrained time frame because a large-scale survey might not yield the genuine results. This study adopts a case study methodology, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of the

influence of business ethics on customer satisfaction and purchase behaviour. The study follows a pragmatist paradigm, which combines post-positivist and constructivist perspectives, enabling a comprehensive analysis that balances objectivity with contextual understanding (40). While the case study method provides rich, contextual insights, it is important to note that the findings may not be generalizable to all settings. This limitation is addressed by situating the study within the specific socio-economic context of Wa Township, acknowledging the potential for unique local factors to influence the results (41).

Study population: The study participants were small shop owners within the Wa 'Kejetia' Market. Both men and women between the ages of 19 and 70 years were considered for the study.

Sampling: According to (5), sampling is defined as the methodical selection of a small number of elements (people, things, or events) from a theoretically defined population of elements in order to gather information. In order to eliminate bias, he continued, the selection process is systematic. For the quantitative survey in this study, small business owners were chosen using a simple random sampling approach (5). All eligible small shop owners within the Wa 'Kejetia' Market were identified and registered in the researchers' field notebook. Each shop owner was assigned a unique identification number.

Sample size determination: Sampling is necessary in research because the researcher cannot practically cover the entire target population of the study. That is, a sample must be selected in such a way as to be representative of the study population for estimating population proportions and at confidence coefficient of 95% using standard normal variate based on the coefficient. Data from the Wa Municipal Assembly revealed a total of 3290 registered small shop owners within the Municipality. The determination of the sample size for the study was done using the Yamane (1973) formula for sample size determination at 95% confidence coefficient, $n = N/[1+N(e)^2]$

Where n = the sample size,

N = the population size of 3225,

e = the margin of error 0.05

$n = 3290/[1+3290(0.05)^2]$

$n = 3290/9.2$

$n = 357.608$

$n = 358$

Thus, the sample size for small shop owners was 358, and hence, significant for the research.

Having predetermined the sample, cardboard papers were cut out with each bearing the unique identification number and placed in a container. A young boy was asked to randomly pick 358 papers. All the 358

participants were later contacted at their shops and separate times arranged with them for data collection.

Participant recruitment: The term "recruitment" encompasses a wide range of tasks, including determining who qualifies for participation, providing prospective participants with a detailed explanation of the study, securing a sufficient sample based on the objectives of the study and the chosen research design, obtaining informed consent and adhering to ethical guidelines, and maintaining participant participation until the study's completion. The recruitment of research subjects for this study was based on these theoretical principles.

Data collection instruments: Small business owners' responses to structured and semi-structured questionnaires were utilized to compile data. A research document with questions and various response alternatives intended to elicit information suitable for analysis to fulfil a study purpose is referred to as a questionnaire (41). The purpose of the research questions was to collect information on company ethics, corporate social responsibility, and consumer happiness. Utilizing information from the body of literature and personal experience, questions were created.

Pilot testing: Pilot testing was done on the participants' quantitative tools (42). The survey questionnaire was tested on a group of individuals chosen at random from two distinct Upper West Region rural areas that were not the study locations. In addition to identifying the range of possible answers to multiple-choice questions and improving the wording and ordering of the questions, this exercise also allowed participants to better understand how much time could be allotted to complete each questionnaire without making them feel uncomfortable (43). Prior to administering the instruments to the sample population, participant responses and ambiguities to the multiple-choice questions were examined (44). During the pilot test period, practical issues such as new and undiscovered cultural diversities in the research locations that can affect the gathering of data from women were also assessed.

Data collection techniques: Face-to-face meetings between researchers and respondents were used to collect the data. The research method or approach in which the researcher asks the respondent questions (45). This was performed one-on-one with the subject, giving the chance to get more specific answers to questions that were left open-ended and to observe social cues. The researchers were alerted to social signs including the respondent's intonation and body language, which led us to take notice and further investigate ambiguous responses. The use of this technique was appropriate for obtaining relevant information from the questionnaire, for the data collection.

Data collection: The stores and houses of the participants—those who opted to answer questions there—were the sites of data gathering. Before the data collection, participants were asked for verbal agreement. They were assured of their right to quit from the study at any time and to participate only voluntarily (5). In order to supplement the completed survey questions, field notes were made during the data collection process. The notes were reviewed to make sure they were complete and to capture and make ethnographic observations.

Data Analysis: Prior to being cleaned and checked for rigor, the obtained data were entered into Microsoft Excel. After that, SPSS version 21 was used to import the finished dataset and analyze it. The prevalence of the various variables was ascertained by generating frequencies and percentages. Subsequently, chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine the

strength and significance of association of socio-demographic variables with the business ethics, purchase behaviour, and customer satisfaction. A 95% confidence level was established. Additional statistical analysis was conducted due to the significant importance of collinearity statistics, which may jeopardize the validity of the conclusions.

Ethical Considerations: The study adhered to strict ethical standards, obtaining verbal informed consent from all participants. Participants were informed of their rights, including the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any time. Data confidentiality and participant anonymity were maintained throughout the research process (5). Additionally, the study addressed data privacy concerns by securely storing all data and ensuring that sensitive information was not disclosed.

RESULTS

Both primary and secondary data sources were used in the investigation. To get their opinions on corporate ethics and CSR, shop owners and employees were given online surveys with questionnaires. The data was examined for precision and comprehensiveness. Because it expresses quantitative analysis between variables clearly, the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program was utilized to obtain frequency distributions (46). The goal of this study was to investigate the connections between participant socio-demographic traits and company ethics, spending, and customer happiness. The findings are presented in three broad themes: business ethics, purchase behaviour and customer satisfaction. Participants were asked to respond to the survey questionnaire in order to measure the perspectives of participants on business ethics.

Descriptive statistics

Out of the 358 participants, there were 232 male participants (64.8%) and 126 female participants (35.2%). In terms of age, participants were classified based on three broad age cohorts; 20-40, 41-60, ≥ 61 . The majority (49.4%) of the participants were within the ages 20-40, followed by those within 41 to 60 years (25.7%, $n=92$) and those with 61 years and above were only 24.9% of the 358 participants.

Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

Information on some basic socio-demographic characteristics of participants was obtained. Out of the 358 study participants, few participants (21.5%) had never been to formal school setting as of the time of the survey. Participants within the age brackets of 21 to 40 were the majority, constituting 49.4%, followed by those within the ages of 41-60 of about 25.7%. Approximately, 27.9% had attained primary level education, 25.7% had completed senior high or vocational/technical level education, another 24.9% had attained tertiary level education. Males were the majority (64.8%). In terms of marriage, 74.3% of the participants were single whilst 25.7% were married. On ethnic groupings, Waala and Ashanti were the majority shop owners among the survey participants, constituting 33.2% and 38.5%, respectively (Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

Variable	Frequency (N* =358)	Percentage (%)
Age of participants		
21-40	177	49.4
41-60	92	25.7
≥ 61	89	24.9
Gender		
Male	232	64.8
Female	126	35.2
Marital status		
Married	92	25.7

Single (divorced, widowed, separated, never married)	266	74.3
Educational attainment		
None	77	21.5
Primary	100	27.9
JHS/SHS/TVET	92	25.7
Tertiary	89	24.9
Ethnicity		
Dagarti	44	12.3
Waala	119	33.2
Ashanti	138	38.5
Sissala	42	11.7
Dagomba	15	4.2
Religion		
Christians	70	19.6
Muslims	288	80.4

Source: Field survey, 2024

* Total frequency is 358 for all variables

Reliability test of variables

A reliability test or internal consistency among the various variables was analysed. It was found that business ethics ($\alpha=0.736$), corporate social responsibility ($\alpha=0.735$), repurchase ($\alpha=0.727$), business ethics and repurchase ($\alpha=0.701$), corporate social responsibility and customer satisfaction ($\alpha=0.711$) had a Cronbach alpha value of greater than 0.7 (Table 2).

Table 2: Cronbach alpha for variables

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach alpha value*
Business ethics	4	$\alpha=0.736$
Purchase	4	$\alpha=0.821$
Customer satisfaction	4	$\alpha=0.711$

*Reliable at $\alpha=0.7$

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 3: Analysis of business ethics, purchase, and customer satisfaction

Variable crossing	Chi square value, degree of freedom, and p-value*	Conclusion
a. Business ethics and customer satisfaction	$\chi^2=464.432$, $df=1$, $p=0.000$	Reject the null hypothesis
b. Business ethics and purchase behaviour	$\chi^2=112.035$, $df=1$, $p=0.000$	Reject the null hypothesis

* $p \leq 0.05$

Source: Field survey, 2022

From Table 3, the results show that there is statistically significant relationship between business ethics and customer satisfaction, because $\chi^2=464.432$, $df=1$, and $p=0.000$. Thus, the null hypothesis H_0 which states that there is no relationship between these variables is being rejected, because there is indeed a very strong and statistically significant relationship among them.

H_1 : There is a relationship between business ethics and customer satisfaction.

Also, from Table 3, the results show that there is statistically significant relationship between business ethics and purchase behaviour because $\chi^2=112.035$, $df=1$, and $p=0.000$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and H_2 is accepted.

H_2 : There is a relationship between business ethics and purchase behaviour.

DISCUSSION

Business ethics and Customer satisfaction

It was found that educational attainment and religion of small shop owners had some relationship with customer satisfaction. Participants during the study expressed

varied views on customer satisfaction and relations. From the results, it was found that there was statistically significant relationship between business ethics and customer satisfaction. This suggests that doing business ethically and treating customers in ethical manner has great potential to attract and retain them to patronise the

particular business. The relationship between ethical behaviours and customer relations which leads to customer satisfaction was emphasised. Customers have the tendency of using good customer relations as leverage to borrow goods from shop owners without paying. This will affect shop owners' ability to maintain goods/products in considerable quantities to keep the shops running. This can lead to the collapse of shops when it goes on for a long period of time. Earlier studies have noted that to improve customer satisfaction, local shop owners as a practice have payment plans in place for customers (47). The payment plans help the customers to purchase goods and services and pay them within specified periods. These are measures to improve upon customers' relations and retain regular customers for a long time. Courier services are also in place to ease customers the stress and extra cost of moving purchased goods to their destinations (47). These findings agree with the extant literature. Indeed, small shops were reported as keeping economies afloat. These small businesses were described as being even more important in vulnerable communities and neighbourhoods, because they provide essential goods in areas that large retailers are not able to serve (47). Noted that small shops are able to identify customer needs and therefore offer more satisfying service to customers. It is more so because, they are located within the reach of customers. According to (48), whether or not values are based on the morality of particular choices determines whether they are "good" or "bad." Because it influences how much a stakeholder will trust a company, business ethics are crucial to the success of that company (49). It has long been linked to gaining and preserving the confidence of the company's stakeholders (50) has shown a strong relationship between ethical practices and customer satisfaction in the context of Burkina Faso. Overall, the present research reveals a positive and a strong correlation between business ethics and customer satisfaction. Business owners are thus encouraged to maintain ethical behaviours and ethical business relationship with their customers to ensure business growth and sustainability.

Business ethics and Purchase

(5) has demonstrated that ethical practices lead to customer repurchase. In addition, Curtis, Abratt, Dion, and Rhoades (2011) have shown a link between customer satisfaction, loyalty and repurchase. In addition, has demonstrated that there is a link between business ethics and organisational values. This research reveals a positive correlation between business ethics and purchase behavior in the Upper West context in Ghana. From the participants, purchase behaviour has a relationship with business ethics. Practicing good ethical business behaviours is not only a recognized conduit for the good business image or a good reputation, but also influences purchase behaviour. Demonstrating good moral principles, rules and attitude in business conduct

and dealings goes a long way to increase purchasing level of the business. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are significantly related to purchase behaviours. Besides these, it was found that business ethics was significantly associated with business purchase behaviours. This means that purchasing behaviour is function of business growth. Business owners are thus encouraged to maintain healthy business ethics in order to increase and grow purchases. Across most low-middle-income settings, small holder shops have been the dominant contributors and outlets for reaching the population with basic daily needs. For example, in Nairobi, Kenya, about 80% of consumer goods are sold through small shops (48). This suggests that policy initiatives should target improving this sector in order to help reduce unemployment among the youth, and as well as deliver daily pressing needs at the door steps of the population.

CONCLUSION

Although a representative sample was obtained for the study, it must be noted that the qualitative component was minor, which would have provided the lived explanations on the response categories reported. The design of the survey instruments, especially the response categories of very important, somewhat important, not important at all and none of the above could allow for statistical modelling to determine the exact influence of socio-demographic characteristics and business ethics, purchase behaviours and customer satisfaction. However, it is believed that the findings as presented provides new insights into the necessity of ethical behaviours, customer satisfaction, and the influence on increasing business patronage, overall. The study explored business ethics, purchase behaviour and customer satisfaction. As discussed, the findings have shown that these elements are relevant for business growth and survival. Efforts must therefore be focused on growing these elements in small businesses. Stakeholders in small firms/businesses should support business owners with basic knowledge on ethical behaviours and customer satisfaction.

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