

ETHICS GAP: COMPARING MARKETERS WITH CONSUMERS ON IMPORTANT DETERMINANTS OF ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

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ABSTRACT

Studies in marketing ethics often revealed that ethical gaps do exist between marketers and other groups in society. The existence of these ethical gaps could be extremely counterproductive for marketing management. In order to effectively narrow these gaps, a marketing manager must first have a better understanding of causes of these gaps. To this end, this study compares marketing professionals with consumers on some important determinants of the ethical decision-making process. In particular, the marketers and consumers were compared with respect to their personal moral

philosophies and ethical perceptions in marketing situations. The data were obtained from a national survey of the practitioner members of the American Marketing Association and members of a consumer panel of a major southern university in the United States. The results generally indicate that marketing professionals are different from consumers with respect to some of the determinants of ethical decisions investigated. Some important managerial implications based on these findings were discussed.