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A Cross-national Study of personality traits' effects on Business Students' Ethical Decisions

Quantitative research on the ethical impact of cross-cultural and
personality differences

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ABSTRACT:

International business literature, during these decades, has been increasingly focusing on the ethical side of doing business and on the results that derive from it. As a result, numerous studies and frameworks on ethical behavior have been produced, even embedding relationships with personality traits and characteristics of specific national cultures. However, very few studies have been conducted to evaluate the interactions between personality traits, ethical behavior, and cultural dimensions, even less with quantitative analysis on a cross-national sample.

This thesis tests the effects of three personality traits (agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience), measured according to the character test provided by the Big Five Identity model (BFI-10), on ethical behavior in hypothetical business scenarios. These effects will also be moderated, subsequently, by national variables retrieved from the GLOBE study (assertiveness, humane and performance orientation, and institutional collectivism), a cross-national study including 62 different national societies. The data collection was conducted at the means of a questionnaire administered through an online survey, and the statistical sample includes more than 100 responses from business students from 15 different countries.

The quantitative statistical analysis is developed through Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM), and a total of 6 regression models were computed to find statistical relationships between all the variables – dependent, independent, control, and moderating. The results of the thesis demonstrate various and valuable relationships between ethical behavior and personality traits, with the addition of significant moderation by the national GLOBE cultural dimensions. Furthermore, conscientiousness and agreeableness are found to be positively related to ethical behavior, while openness to experience is slightly negatively related.

In conclusion, the thesis analyzes the findings and provides implications and suggestions for related future research.

KEYWORDS: Personality Traits, Business Ethics, National dimensions, Cross-cultural ethic, Big Five Inventory, GLOBE study, Ethical Behavior

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Abbreviations

BFI-10: Big Five Inventory 10-item short.

GLOBE: Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness.

1 Introduction

Individuals are driven, on their choices, by their personality characteristics, and by the socially recognized values from their surrounding environment. This is the reason why personality traits have been investigated for decades in the international business environment, although mostly when it comes to work-performance outcomes. The correlations found by analyzing these traits and a wide variety of other business variables can be important and valuable for research and predict future behavior by individual employees of companies or groups belonging to the same cultural substrate.

Despite this, the research does not adequately explore the relationship that can be shown between personality traits and ethical behavior, or the justification for unethical behavior. This thesis will aim to shed light on this important link, analyzing it under a multi-cultural lens, ensuring that different socio-cultural characteristics are also considered in the computation of the results.

1.1 Justification for the project

Personality research represents an important as well as a wide source of information and knowledge regarding human behaviors and attitudes, especially when it comes to workplace outcomes and performances (Gebauer et al. 2014; Kluemper et al. 2015; Woo et al. 2016; Khalis and Mikami 2018; Seigfried-Spellar and Lankford 2018;). The studies have been conducted in an abundant quantity of disciplines, including psychology; international business management (e.g., Organ 1994; Raja et al. 2004; Kalshoven et al. 2011; Beus et al. 2015; Parks-Leduc et al. 2015; Dalal et al. 2015;), training, criminology, anthropology, medicine and many more. Every one of these disciplines has considered personality variables in relationship with a dependent variable, which in most of the international business and administration research has been the performance factor in the workplace.

The literature has been questioning from the inception how to accurately measure the personality traits and how to quantify them when needed. Specifically, the Big Five Inventory (Goldberg 1990; Costa and McCrae 1992; John and Srivastava 1999; Soto and John 2009; Azucar et al. 2018) is indicated as the most extensively accepted framework for assessing personality traits, particularly in management scenarios (Hurtz & Donovan 2000; Kluemper et al. 2015). Leveraging on the Big Five personality framework, personality measures have been linked to a wide array of workplace outcomes by the literature (Simha and Parboteeah 2020), such as commitment (Erdheim et al. 2006), job satisfaction (Judge et al. 2000, 2001, 2002, 2017; Mathieu 2013), organizational nationality conducts (Chiaburu et al. 2011; Shaffer et al. 2015), and work outcomes (Barrick and Mount 1991, 1993; Hurtz and Donovan 2000; Shaffer and Postlethwaite 2012; Hu and Judge 2017).

Summing up, most of the Business and International Business previous studies on the subject, focus on the relationship between personality and performance, or similar related factors. Ethical outcomes are less thorough and more specific, as outlined in the following subchapter (1.1.1). Therefore, investigating the relationships between personality traits, measured with the Big Five model, and ethical outcomes can enrich the literature with new findings that can integrate theories and models regarding business ethics. Ethical behavior is not only related to the humanity of economic agents in international business, but it can also have empirical repercussions on a wide range of economic variables, thus providing a statistically sound analysis of the relationship between personality traits and international business ethics is a modern and valuable topic for the field of international business.

1.2 Research Gap

The importance of this study relies on the fragmented current literature scenario on the topic. The previous literature explored personality's effects on ethical outcomes solely in specific instances, such as academic dishonesty (Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015; Stone

et al. 2010), or the influence of personality on non-productive and deviant behaviors (Salgado 2002, Ones et al. 2003; Clarke and Robertson 2005; Henle 2005; Mount et al. 2006; Egan and Taylor 2010) and the link between personality and other personality's traits on ethical outcomes (Moberg 1999; McFerran et al. 2010). Nevertheless, notwithstanding the highly valuable provisions offered by many different studies, it remains a significant gap that can be utilized as the baseline of this research.

The first difference between this study and the previous research is that, while the literature focused on empirical examination of the relationship between personality and ethical decisions, many of these studies have been conducted on single-country samples. Moreover, very few non-empirical studies have examined the link between personality and ethical decision-making, while this study is empirical evidence of the two factors. Assumed the prominence of cross-culture in the topic and the International Business scenario, the examination of the interconnections and correlations should be done in a wider variety of countries and cultures. Therefore, this thesis will test its hypotheses on a cross-cultural sample of Business students.

Furthermore, the thesis will also be aimed at the understanding of the correlations between relevant Big Five personality traits and individual ethical decisions from a national culture standpoint: the impact of each nationality will be weighted and taken into consideration while computing the quantitative analysis. National culture will be treated as a moderator between the above-mentioned relationship in the study, utilizing the GLOBE model (House et al. 2004) and four of its dimensions – humane orientation, performance orientation, institutional collectivism, and assertiveness – to appreciate the weight of cross-national cultural differences. The evidence would suggest that national culture can create an environment, surrounding the individual, that can either enhance or inhibit some relations between the person and his/her ethic. This is another point of enrichment for the literature, as scarcely any studies have focused on cultural impact in ethical and personality issues using cross-national samples.

1.3 Research Question and objectives

The Big Five Inventory contains five unique elements, namely Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience. As stated previously, across the years and research the framework has established itself as the predominant model to assess and measure personality's characteristics (Digman 1990; Barrick and Mount 1991; Mount and Barrick 1995; Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015). Furthermore, for the means of this study, it is key to underline that the model has also been recognized as cross-culturally generalizable (Moberg 1999) and has been proved to be significant in many diverse, from a cultural standpoint, countries – e.g., Germany (Angleitner et al. 1990); Israel (Birenbaum and Montag 1986); and Japan (Isaka 1990). Hence, the model can be applied effectively for the purposes of the study, with a high probability of obtaining results that are not biased but meaningful.

1.3.1 Research Question

The main aim of this thesis is to provide a quantitative analysis, based on data collected by the means of a survey, that is investigating the relationships between personality traits of students coming from different countries and their moral and ethical decision making. Computing the collected data, the study will find the significant correlation within the variables embedded in the model.

These results will be achieved by answering the following research question:

“How do personality traits and culture influence business students' ethical behavior?”

1.3.2 Objectives

Although the research question might sound broad and simple, the objectives specified will highlight the practicality of this proposal. Through this set of goals, the reader would

understand the real aim of the paper following simple concrete steps that will lead to the final research answers. The objectives are the following:

1. *To assess the correlation and the influence of personality traits on business ethical behavior.*
2. *To test if particular national culture variables significantly affect the relationship between business ethics and personality dimensions.*
3. *To contribute considerably to the topic literature, by providing a quantitative analysis combining the Big Five model to ethics and by showing the effect of GLOBE cultural dimensions.*

1.3.3 Delimitation of the study

To define the way to achieve the right answer to the initial research question, this thesis will build the objectives set in the previous chapter solely using as a starting point the existing literature on the specific topic, namely the international scenario where characteristics of individuals influence the ethical decisions and behavior, and the quantitative database obtained with the data collection. Albeit the current literature is very broad, it is necessary to underline the fact that this study will solely focus on the international business side of ethics, as ethics itself embed several studies of very wide and different disciplines.

Therefore, this study will build on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2, where the GLOBE study with its cross-national dimensions, and the Big Five Inventory, in the specifics of its personality characteristics attributable to the study, will be treated as essential foundations for the construction of the analysis. Although other frameworks for national dimensions and personality traits exist and are used in the literature, this study is limited to considering the aforementioned.

Similarly, for the dependent variable (ethical behavior), although it is possible to measure an individual's willingness to act ethically on multiple research bases, this thesis is limited, for practical reasons, to measure it through the questionnaire developed by Li & Person (2011).

1.4 Key definitions

In this chapter the key concepts behind the variables of the quantitative research will be defined, to support the reader having an initial overview of the topic.

Business Ethics (here analyzed as international ethical behavior) defines what is “appropriate and not appropriate, acceptable and unacceptable in perception and behavior, outline moral conduct according to the ideology of a specific group, and prescribe what humans ought to do” (Ermasova et al., 2018: 359). Lewis (1985) states that business ethics is “rules, standards, codes, or principles which provide guidelines for morally right behavior and truthfulness in specific situations” (p. 377). The key definition for the individual behavior is given by Beauchamp et al. (1997), asserting that an individual with a high motivation to be ethical is more likely to “understand what should be done, more likely to be motivated to perform required acts, and more likely to form and act on moral ideals than a morally bad person” (p. 39).

Conscientiousness “is the tendency for individuals to be organized, goal-directed, and followers of norms and rules” (Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015; Roberts et al. 2009). These Big Five traits of personality are generally subdivided into two components, specifically dependability and achievement (Kalshoven et al. 2011).

Openness to Experience is largely present in “individuals actively seeking out experiences that may be novel or completely new” (Aluja et al. 2003; Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015; McCrae and Costa 1987). People with high scores in this characteristic have a

tendency to appreciate new ideas, methodologies, and exploration outside their comfort zone.

Agreeableness is proper to individuals that tend to be kind, gentle, trusting, honest, and altruistic (Goldberg 1990; Kalshoven et al. 2011; McCrae and Costa 1987). According to Giluk and Postlethwaite (2015), “it is the trait that is concerned with how individuals approach interpersonal relationships, and agreeable individuals tend to be likable, trusting, and concerned with others’ welfare” (Simha & Parboteeah 2019”).

Institutional Collectivism was firstly defined by the GLOBE study as “the collectivism end of the individualism-collectivism continuum” (House et. al 2004). The collectivism cultural dimension is among the most fertile and essential dimensions that have been utilized to appraise the differences among different societies (Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck 1961; Triandis 1989; Søndergaard 1994; Parboteeah et al. 2012; Lewellyn and Bao 2017).

Humane Orientation “captures the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others” (House et al. 2004; Mansur et al. 2017; Parboteeah et al. 2012). It derives from the work on the notion of human nature made by Strodtbeck & Kluckhorn (1961).

Performance Orientation represents “the extent to which individuals in a community encourage and reward innovation, high standards, and performance improvement” (House et al. 2004). According to the GLOBE studies, countries with high-performance orientation will extensively enhance results, competition, and materialism, which advocate the possibility for a predominant cultural attitude towards the idea of ends justifying the means, since the ending outcomes are the real center of attention.

Assertiveness measures how “individuals are clear about what they want, what they don’t want, and can clearly articulate their intentions” (Booraem and Flowers 1978; Peretz et al. 2018). It differs from performance orientation since the former’s target is

how people relate with each other, while the latter aims at the results of individuals within their cultural environments. House et al. (2004) define assertiveness as “a cultural dimension that reflects beliefs as to whether or not people should be encouraged to be assertive, aggressive, and tough” in a social relationship.

1.5 Structure of the study

The paper’s structure is composed of five chapters. Every chapter will include many sub-chapters to let the reader have a comprehensive and intelligible piece of research.

The **first** chapter will present the introduction of the study, meaning the description of the problem, the need of the study, the delimitation of the scope, and the research questions and objectives.

The **second** chapter will consist of the current literature review. It will embed the sub-chapters devoted to deepening the Big Five model and the GLOBE studies, as they are the main theories through which the thesis’ model will be built.

The **third** chapter will include the methodology followed by the thesis, namely the description of the dataset composition, with an addition about the validity and reliability of the secondary data collected and the fit of these variables with the study in hand.

The **fourth** chapter will be the core part of the thesis, where the empirical research will be presented and carried out and the resulting findings will be outlined, evaluated, and discussed. The contributions to the literature will take shape in this chapter, implementing the new findings and merging all the pieces together in a new puzzle.

The **fifth** and final chapter will present a summary of the research, jointly with some ways forward and suggestions for future scholars who are willing to continue the research on this topic.

2 Theoretical Overview

2.1 Theories and concepts included in the literature review

Countless researchers advocate the value of recognizing that a broad and exhaustive literature review on different scholarly studies benefits further research, providing directions and pointing out gaps (Hofstede, 2015; Jonsen et al., 2011; Kolk, 2016; Paul and Benito, 2018; Paul and Singh, 2017; Paul et al., 2017; Sedziniauskiene et al., 2019; Snyder, 2019, Wilson, 2009). As Snyder (2019) affirms, “by integrating findings and perspectives from many empirical findings, a literature review can address research questions with a power that no single study has”.

The purpose of this chapter is to produce in-depth observations about the cross-cultural studies of the international business ethics research field.

Firstly, the chapter will address a synthesis of the current state of the literature and research, operating a brief systematic narrative review (Jones, 2004; Jonsen et al., 2011) leveraging key-words research operated in the main articles and publications websites (Academy of Management journals, Business Source Complete, Google Scholar, Oxford Journals, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Sage, Springer Link, Web of Science...) with an appropriate priority to articles with massive citations numbers.

After that, it will focus on the main theories that form the foundation of the analysis carried out in Chapter 4, namely the GLOBE study (House et al. 2004, 2007), and the BFI (Big Five Inventory, in the BFI-10 version, Rammstedt & John 2007). For these two studies, a theoretical framework will first be outlined, including all information useful to the reader in order to frame the theories properly. Right after, explanations regarding the choices of the specific variables considered in this thesis will be provided. Each variable (cross-cultural dimension for GLOBE, personality trait for BFI) will then be presented individually and linked to the existing theoretical background on the topic.

2.2 Cross-Cultural Business Ethics

The field of business ethics, as defined in chapter 1.3, has a complex and multi-dimensional nature. Several authors, (Calabretta et al., 2011; Ethics and Compliance Initiative (EIC), 2016; Linuesa-Langreo et al., 2019; Ma, 2009; Ma et al., 2012; Robertson et al., 1999; Uysal, 2010; Vries and Kim, 2011; Wang et al., 2018; Wood, 2017; Xiao et al., 2017) analyzed the discrepancies in the ethical behavior of individuals belonging to diverse societies. However, this chapter will focus on the studies that mostly matter for the means of this thesis: the cross-cultural aspect of business ethics.

Gift et al. (2013) shared the opinion that the research in Business Ethics in a multi-cultural perspective is genuinely meaningful to International Business, underlining *“the role for ethical perceptions in future research, and further examination and inquiry into the development and adaptation of ethical perceptions in cross-cultural business dealings”*, namely the influence of ethical perceptions in the international business development, as, by author’s instance, a managerial decision of considering or not a business partnership with a foreign partner, which can be affected by the disparity of the ethical models adopted by the national cultures.

Differences within ethical cultural behavior are important as much as commonalities in ethical values, as according to Buller et al. (2000) there are some universally shared ethical values despite the numerous distinctions of individuals coming from different countries in behavior.

As regards collectivism, research points out that individuals coming from group-oriented collectivist countries might be more condemning towards unethical, immoral, or illegal practices, especially if they could delineate potential hazards to the society (Christie et al., 2003; Clark et al., 2020; Hwang et al., 2014; Patel, 2003). For instance, individuals belonging to these cultures are less likely to engage in whistleblowing actions (Hwang et al. 2014). Contrarily, research proved that people in individualistic and egalitarian cultures, such as the United States, are more likely to accept and conclude whistleblowing

activities that would be condemned in society such as China, culturally very collective and hierarchical (Apud et al., 2003; Brody et al., 1998, 1999; Dozier and Miceli, 1985; Hwang et al., 2014; Patel, 2003; Stahl, 2017; Su et al., 2007).

In general, it can be stated that plenty of authors (Calabretta et al., 2011; Linuesa-Langreo et al., 2019; Ma, 2009; Ma et al., 2012; Robertson et al., 1999; Uysal, 2010; Vries and Kim, 2011; Wang et al., 2018; Wood, 2017; Xiao et al., 2017) analyzed and found discrepancies regarding ethical behavior of people from different countries and cultures. Thanks to the contributions of these scholars, several original frameworks were created, promoting the accumulation of knowledge on the topic and the issues raised by ethical cultural differences.

The theoretical foundation of the Business Ethics field is thoroughly described by Ermasova (2018, 2021). According to the 2018 paper, *“the influence of cross-cultural differences on the ethics perception has received great attention in the current empirical literature”* (p.361). The systematic research reveals that business ethics culture perspectives are not uniformly held throughout the globe (Ardichvili et al., 2009, 2010, 2012; Bailey and Spicer, 2007; Cavico and Mujtaba, 2009; Danon-Leva et al., 2010; Ermasova et al., 2017; Farazmand et al., 2011; Ford and Richardson, 1994; Jaffe and Tsimmerman, 2005; Jaffe et al., 2018; Kaptein, 2008; Lin, 2002; McCarthy and Puffer, 2008; Morgan and Neal, 2011; Na, 2000; Robertson et al., 2003, 2008; Valette-Florence, 1998). Ardichvili et al. (2010) argue that *“the consequences related to breakdowns in organizational ethics perpetrated by individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures are a loss in trust, honesty, and integrity; tarnishing of corporate goodwill and reputation; incurrance of financial penalties and fines (at the corporate and individual level); and conviction and sentencing of corporate executives and employees”* (p. 426).

The Institutional theory (North, 1990; Scott, 1995) has emerged as one of the most significant theoretical foundations for evaluating cultural views of business ethics in various nations. Scholars of integrative social contracts theory (ISCT) believe that *“the*

institutional framework defines the prevailing value system and influences ethical attitudes of major segments of society" (Hisrich et al., 2003: 5). According to Ralston et al. (1993), culture is *"those beliefs and values that are widely shared in a specific society at a particular point in time."* Furthermore, Ralston et al. (2007) investigated the possible influence of economic ideology and social culture on job-related values of managers living in China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Bonde and Firenze (2013) posit that the theory of ethics may be divided into three parts: meta-ethics (the nature of the ethical jointly with the nature and justification of ethical claims), normative ethics, and applied ethics. Consequentialism is used as the theoretical underpinning of many research' empirical investigations. For instance, Mulgan (2009) argues that a moderate consequentialist perspective recommends moral demands, duties to future generations, individual reproduction morality, and international fairness.

Modern research uses the virtue ethics approach to establish the setting and evaluate the business ethics culture perspectives in diverse societies. In opposition to approaches that stress obligations or regulations, or that highlight the consequences of acts, virtue ethics emphasizes the virtues or moral and ethical character in both thinking and conduct (Ermasova et al., 2018: 362). Farazmand (2017) affirms that virtue ethics can be conceived as *"ingrained values form the human characters that are displayed in thought and action with tolerance, respect, justice, fairness, avoidance of harms to self and to others, obligations to common good, and adherence to values of public interests"* (p. 203). According to Nussbaum (1993), most cultural conflict stems from local interpretations of virtues, but the virtues should not be related to national culture, as they are not. Ermasova et al. (2018) state that *"modern virtue ethics have always emphasized the importance of moral education, not as the inculcation of rules but as the training of character. In addition, virtue ethics has less difficulty with cultural relativity than the other two approaches"* (p. 363).

Lastly, Hofstede's culture dimensions theory (Hofstede 1980, 2001, 2016) is used in much cross-cultural empirical research. It offers a framework for understanding the influence of a society's culture on the values of its individuals, and how the values are translated into actions. Many scholars start from Hofstede's theory and analyze the influence of national culture and ethical behavior. For instance, plenty of authors suggest that individuals in collective cultures are more hostile to illegal or unethical acts or behaviors, especially if they pose a serious danger to the collective itself (Ermasova et al., 2017; Hwang et al., 2014; Lim, 2001; Mujtaba, Tajaddini, and Chen, 2011; Patel, 2003; Perks and Smith, 2008).

2.3 The Big Five Inventory

The Big Five Inventory (BFI – more known as Big Five Model) is one of the most, if not the most, popular frameworks to assess the personality of the test-takers, considered by notable scholars, in the past decades, to be the leading personality framework (Digman 1990; Barrick and Mount 1991; Mount and Barrick 1995; Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015). It was originally created in the last years of the 1980s (John, Donahue & Kentle, 1991), as 44 short-phrase questions that took about 5 minutes to answer.

It includes five unique factors, defined as Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience. Its significance in literature stems from the fact that the characteristics embedded in it have been consistently observed utilizing different research methodologies, and the five factors themselves have been proved to be based on genetics, and as such confidently generalizable (Costa and McCrae 1988; Digman and Shmelyov 1996; Kalshoven et al. 2011).

Moreover, for the purposes of the study, the inventory perfectly fits as it was demonstrated to be generalizable across cultures (Moberg 1999), and it has been the fundament of many studies on deeply diverse cultures, such as, as mentioned in chapter 1, Germany (Angleitner et al. 1990), Israel (Birenbaum and Montag 1986), and Japan (Isaka

1990). Hence, studying quantitatively these factors in cross-cultural research should be meaningful and statistically more significant.

Nonetheless, even though the original personality factors considered in the framework, as mentioned, are five, prior research indicates that particularly three are the most pertinent with ethics. In fact, McFerran et al (2010) claim that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience are deemed “higher-order personality”, which means much more relevant ethical outcomes implications are obtained when computing research with these variables. Moreover, the empirical correlation between ethical outcomes and the dimensions of neuroticism, and extraversion have proved to be dramatically weak (Colquitt et al. 2006). Resultantly, in this thesis, only the three significant variables will be discussed and used for the analysis and regression models, as it is considered to be better research practice to only use theoretically relevant variables (Kostova 1997). Theories linked to them will be presented in the following sub-chapters (2.3.1, for Conscientiousness, 2.3.2 for Agreeableness, and 2.3.3 for Openness to Experience).

2.3.1 Conscientiousness

It is defined as the “Tendency for individuals to be organized, goal-directed, and followers of norms and rules” (Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015; Roberts et al. 2009). In line with Kalshoven et al. (2011), this personality trait shall be separated into dependability and achievement, where the former regards persons being profound, meticulous, responsible, and organized, while the latter includes hard-working individuals that almost always meet conditions and expectations (McCrae and Costa 1987; Digman 1990; Mount and Barrick 1995; Kalshoven et al. 2011).

The hypotheses formulated at the end of this sub-chapter are based on several pieces of literature, that generally have demonstrated that the more conscientious an individual is, the more likely him/her is to be associated with positive ethical outcomes. The

findings of these theories will be briefly presented in the next paragraph and, as a result, the corresponding hypothesis will be developed.

Moon (2001) showed that conscientious individuals tend to act ethically not only for themselves but also for the community of people surrounding them. Likewise, Witt et al. (2002) proved that these individuals are inclined to take responsibility, while several other scholars (Roberts and Hogan 2001; Lodi-Smith and Roberts 2007; McFerran et al. 2010;) linked them with general honesty and pro-social behaviors and decisions. Recently, Babalola et al. (2017) related conscientiousness to ethical reflexiveness, which was later deeply related to moral management; while Mercado et al. (2018) noticed that this trait is negatively related to unproductive job actions and Nei et al. (2018) that is positively related to accountability and leader honesty. Other older studies support these results: Stewart (1996) observed that a person high in conscientiousness is more prone to be focused on objectives rather than personal economic benefits; Roberts and Hogan (2001) that the same person is less likely to be part of unfair or illegal actions.

If we stack up all of these conclusions with the shreds of proving that conscientious individuals are less commonly inclined to cheat (Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015), workplace deviance (Salgado 2002), procrastination (Steel 2007), and more inclined to comply with conduct rules (Khan et al. 2016), it can be expected that these people will be less prone to justify immoral actions and decisions, and inclined to act themselves according to a generical agreed ethical behavior.

Furthermore, it is valuable to underline that despite, as we mentioned, conscientiousness has been associated with various ethical findings, few of rather none of them investigated this relationship in a cross-national database.

Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: Conscientiousness is positively related to ethical behavior.

2.3.2 Agreeableness

In essence, this trait investigates how people undertake interpersonal contacts. Individuals with high scores on it are trusting, involved with others' well-being, and likable (Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015) as well as kind, gentle, altruistic, and fair (McCrae and Costa 1987; Goldberg 1990; Kalshoven et al. 2011).

Agreeableness is usually associated with refusing to justify unethical behaviors. This characteristic is typically related to straightforwardness, which entails that agreeable people are likely truthful and sincere when it comes to their actions and relationships with others (McCrae and Costa 1987; Kalshoven et al. 2011). Moreover, McAdams (2009) highlighted that high agreeableness equals a high sense of loyalty and unwillingness to justify the harm done to colleagues: this is supported by the work of Matsuba and Walker (2004) that first discovered that individuals with an acute trait of agreeableness have a tendency to a sharp sense of justice and fairness. Recently, it was proved by a scientific paper that agreeableness is negatively associated with unproductive work behaviors, both interpersonal and organizational (DeShong et al. 2017).

Based on these findings, the thesis forecasts that as agreeable individuals are lively and affable (Kalshoven et al. 2011), yet similarly honest and sincere (McCrae and Costa 1987; Kalshoven et al. 2011), they would not justify unethical behavior nor act potentially unethical. Besides this, due to their tendencies of avoiding damaging others (Khan et al. 2016), they would probably likewise avoid any action that shall hurt incidental individuals. All of the above lead the author to hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: Agreeableness is positively related to ethical behavior.

2.3.3 Openness to Experience

This attribute is proper of individuals actively searching out unusual or even entirely new experiences, with a propensity to enjoy different ideas and methodologies (McCrae and Costa 1987; Aluja et al. 2003; Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015).

Literature on the topic states that it is positively related to sensation seeking and negatively to conforming to others' values (Aluja et al. 2003; Parks-Leduc et al. 2015; Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015). McAdams (2009) indicates highly open individuals as people with "greater levels of moral reasoning". In general, however, as regards unethical behavior, scholars have found mixed findings on its correlation with openness to experience. For instance, while some authors support a negative correlation between this personality characteristic and fraudulence (Aslam and Nazir 2011; Nguyen and Biderman 2013), others support the opposite (Williams et al. 2010; Gallagher 2010). The same applies to deviant workplace behavior, where a positive correlation was demonstrated by Salgado (2002), opposed to the negative one that Miller and Lynam (2001) established.

Quite contemporary research validated the hypothesis that individuals with experiences in foreign working environments were more prone to take part in unethical behaviors (Lu et al. 2017). The authors explained these surprising results with the incremental moral boundaries that those specific people have developed through their experiences, namely increased ethical flexibility. Furthermore, often, suspect or unethical behaviors are offending conformity values, but also producing sensory experiences. All of the above might mean that individuals characterized with an enhanced openness to experience, usually morally more flexible, generally are more acceptant towards acts of suspicious or unethical behavior, since they go against social norms and provide the sensation-seeking that satisfies their personal needs.

Given all the mixed studies and final conjectures, the hypothesis for this trait will be the following:

Hypothesis 3: Openness to experience is negatively related to ethical behavior.

2.4 The GLOBE Study and its dimensions

Albeit, after an in-depth overview on the existing national culture frameworks, the literature indicates that the research is quite rich and extensive on the subject, providing several theories and diverse cultural dimensions (e.g., Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1998, Hofstede 2001; House et al. 2002;), this thesis relies on House's GLOBE study to retrieve its national cultural dimensions and consequently the moderator variables that will be utilized in the quantitative analysis.

The reasoning behind this choice is practically more than ideological: the GLOBE study takes into account many of the previous frameworks and builds its theories above them, therefore it is considered an update on the cultural dimensions previously described (for instance, by the popular Hofstede's cultural framework, 2001). Secondly, it fits this study more than any other model, as the cultural dimensions scores available in the GLOBE studies are more extensive and precise, enabling this quantitative thesis to be more accurate and maximizing the number of countries that can be included in it by virtue of the generous quantity of data available in House's models.

GLOBE (an acronym for Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) is a research program conducted mainly by Robert J. House, with the support of other scholars, with the aim of understanding how "culture influences leadership and organizational processes" (House et al. 2004, 2007). It is a long-term study, composed of three phases of research, still ongoing, described in two books published in 2004 and 2007. The research is centered toward an effort designed "to explore the fascinating and complex effects of culture on leadership, organizational effectiveness, the economic competitiveness of societies, and the human condition of members of the societies studied." (House et al. 2004). The authors address these themes with the leverage of a wide quantitative and qualitative study of 62 different cultures.

Even though the model considers nine cultural dimensions as its study core, by the means of this thesis just four of them will be taken into consideration as moderators variables in the relationship between ethical behavior and personality traits. In particular, Assertiveness, Humane Orientation, Institutional Collectivism, and Performance Orientation will be investigated. The reason behind this choice lies in the influence that these variables can have on the relationship itself: while it is likely true that every cultural dimension has its own contextual influence over it, only the selected ones affect the environment pertinent to the relationship (Simha & Parboteeah 2019).

In fact, collectivism and individualism can affect the degree of opportunism of an individual (Doney et al. 1998; Chen et al. 2015), and in particular institutional collectivism investigates group honesty and collective interests (Gelfand et al. 2004). Consequently, this cultural dimension is relevant to the study since it has an influence on people's self-interested decisions. Humane orientation is another valuable dimension since it is related to the degree to which a society fosters and values its individuals to behave altruistically or more in general kindly to others (House et al. 2004; Schlösser et al. 2013), therefore it also affects an individual's ethical behavior and choices. Likely, performance orientation, reflecting on how societies foster and incentive innovation and performance increments (House et al. 2004; Parboteeah et al. 2012), as well as assertiveness, measuring the degree to which societies encourage individuals to be or not to be assertive, aggressive, and tough (House et al. 2004; Parboteeah et al. 2012), is likely to have a significant influence on individuals' ethical decision-making.

Hence, reducing the dimensions used in the model is beneficial since we both follow the literature's advice of using exclusively variables that are relevant to the study (Kostova 1997) and avoid an overwhelming distortion in the multi-layered analysis (Parboteeah et al. 2008; Nam et al. 2014), as including every dimension would be not beneficial to the findings since the model would be too complex.

In the following subchapters (2.4.1 to 2.4.5), the cultural dimensions selected for the analysis that this thesis carries out are presented and introduced theoretically.

2.4.1 Institutional Collectivism

The collectivism cultural dimension is among the most significant and influential dimensions used to distinguish between cultural contexts (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961; Triandis 1989; Søndergaard 1994; Parboteeah et al. 2012; Lewellyn and Bao 2017). GLOBE research defined institutional collectivism as the collectivism edge of the individualism-collectivism scale. People belonging to collectivistic societies, compared to the ones belonging to individualistic societies, depend on community involvement to acquire status and individuality (Hofstede 2001; Parboteeah et al. 2012; Lewellyn and Bao 2017).

Individuals' behavior is usually motivated by what is best for the collective's objectives, and harmony and teamwork are often enhanced. Individuals in individualistic cultures operate in direct contradiction to this since individual interests are perceived as more valuable than community ones (Gelfand et al. 2004; Sims 2009). As a result, decision-making in collectivistic cultures generally takes social or collective needs and issues into account. Collectivist societies prioritize collective concerns, while their participants are most likely living at peace and being honest to their groups (e.g. close family, friends, colleagues, etc.).

Overall, the thesis posits that institutional collectivism will intensify the positive relationship between agreeableness and conscientiousness and the ethical behavior of the individuals while eroding the negative relationships between openness to experience and ethical behavior. The interdependence condition in collectivistic societies, in which individuals are more inclined to prioritize the interests of their group participants rather than their own self-interest requirements, is the primary explanation for these two principles (Javidan and House 2001; Waldman et al. 2006; Chen et al. 2015).

Furthermore, this involvement with the group will finish up reinforcing the connections of social control (Cullen et al. 2004). Given this emphasis on collective group welfare, conscientious people are more likely to value honesty and pro-social actions. Likewise, it could be forecasted that the above-mentioned emphasis on the collective welfare of the community will increase the likelihood that agreeable individuals of collectivistic cultures will be sensitive about the well-being of others and, hence, less likely to justify morally suspect actions. Consequently, it is expected that collectivism will moderate the relationship between agreeableness and conscientiousness and ethical behavior in a way for which the positive relationship will be enhanced in high collectivism cultures.

Following all the reasonings, it can be also believed that collectivism will undermine the negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior. Indeed, collectivism, with its emphasis on the communal good, is likely to reduce people's proclivity to try the new without being concerned about the potentially unethical results of those acts. Open to experience individuals are consequently less prone to rationalize morally questionable behavior in more collectivistic cultures. Arguably, the focus on others will lead those who are more open to new experiences to be more attentive regarding unexpected repercussions of their behavior on others.

According to Lewellyn and Bao (2017), individuals in low collectivistic cultures will present lower ethical standards. They claim that individuals with better ethical standards would exist in collectivistic communities with a focus on the well-being of society as a whole.

Given the aforesaid, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4.1: The positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high institutional collectivism than in those with a low one.

Hypothesis 4.2: The positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high institutional collectivism than in those with a low one

Hypothesis 4.3: The negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high institutional collectivism than in those with a low one.

2.4.2 Humane Orientation

Humane orientation describes how individuals in organizations or cultures promote and support people for being selfless, giving, loving, and caring to others (House and Javidan 2004; Parboteeah et al. 2012; Mansur et al. 2017). This national characteristic stems mostly from the notion of human nature provided by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961). Human beings in communities with greater degrees of this dimension greatly value others and emphasize their role of mutual help to one another (Kabasakal and Bodur 2004; Parboteeah et al. 2012; Schlösser et al. 2013; Mansur et al. 2017). Societies with a strong humane orientation cherish others more and emphasize kindness, compassion, and empathy toward one another (Mansur et al. 2017). Individuals in countries with reduced degrees of human orientation, contrarily, are more prone to selfishness and egoism, often at the cost of others' rights (Parboteeah et al. 2012).

In accordance with the theory on this specific dimension, it can be expected that humane orientation will intensify the positive relationship between both agreeableness and conscientiousness, and ethical behavior while loosening the negative relationship between openness to new experience and ethical behavior. The emphasis on others' wellness and interests in high humane orientation cultures may enable conscientious people to be even less inclined to justify unethical behaviors or act themselves unethically. Hence, the presence of high humane orientation in society will amplify the positive correlation between conscientiousness and positive ethical actions.

It is also expected that humane orientation will amplify the positive connection between agreeableness and ethical behavior. In fact, considering an agreeable individual's desire to prevent conflict and overall refusal to damage others (McAdams, 2009), an environment characterized by a high human orientation dimension, prioritizing the interaction among people, will generate an even greater environment in which unethicity will be hindered. The overall emphasis on being selfless and meeting others' interests is expected to amplify the positive effects of agreeable people engaging in ethical behavior.

In terms of openness to new experiences, humane orientation will most likely obstruct the interaction with morally questionable activities. While it remains true that a highly open to newness individual is generally willing to ignore the laws and act unethically, it is also expectable that a high humane orientation surrounding would curb such implications, since a high humane orientation translates with a focus on ethical and altruistic behavior. Thus, even individuals who are prone to break the rules to experience the new, are likely to moderate such impulses in order to fit better in society and with their peers. As a result, it is forecasted that high humane orientation would present a lower negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior.

Jointly, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 5.1: The positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high humane orientation than in those a low one.

Hypothesis 5.2: The positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high humane orientation than in those a low one.

Hypothesis 5.3: The negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high humane orientation than in those a low one.

2.4.3 Performance Orientation

The degree to which members in society foster and compensate innovation, high standards, and performance is referred to as performance orientation (House et al., 2004). This cultural characteristic is based on Weber's Protestant work ethic together with McClelland's desire for accomplishment (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1998), and, as an immediate consequence of this emphasis on perfection and performance, outcomes are praised more than individuals (Parboteeah et al. 2012).

Performance-oriented societies prioritize outcomes, assertiveness, rivalry, and consumerism (House et al. 2004), implying the possibility of a dominant cultural sentiment for which the goals justify the methods since the final results are what matters. Individuals belonging to high-performance-oriented cultures, according to Parboteeah et al. (2012), feel they can rule and regulate the surrounding environment. That implies that individuals in high-performance cultures will consider appropriate legitimizing unethical behavior as far as it serves them to get the outcomes they seek.

Overall, performance orientation is expected to weaken the positive relationships between conscientiousness and agreeableness and ethical behavior, while strengthening the positive relationships between openness to new experiences and justification of ethically suspect behavior. In particular, the emphasis and increased focus placed on outcomes in high performance-oriented cultures may lead conscientious people to rationalize immoral actions (as long as they lead to thrived results). Therefore, the existence of a strong performance orientation weakens the positive bond between conscientiousness and ethical behavior. Furthermore, performance orientation will likely reduce the positive connection between agreeableness and ethical behavior, since agreeable people, usually unwilling to harm others and prone to avoid conflicts (McAdams 2009), will be influenced by a society in which acting unethical is justified by the performance outcomes and fierce competition is welcomed (Gelbrich et al. 2016). These society preferences will likely undermine any motivation to prevent conflicts or protect others. The overall desire for competitiveness over collaboration, as well as the overall emphasis on

accomplishments over fulfilling the needs of others, will likely mitigate the positive effects of agreeable individuals for ethical behaviors.

In terms of openness to new experiences, performance orientation will likely strengthen the negative connection with ethical behavior. This is due to the fact that a high performance orientation environment would worsen the tendencies of a highly open individual – namely willing to breach the law and rationalize ethical suspicious actions – as highly performance-oriented cultures prefer behaviors that are anyway entirely focused on producing the desired outcomes by any means possible. Therefore, those who are highly open to experiences, are more inclined to act unethically and justify unethical actions. Consequently, high performance orientation will foster a higher negative connection between openness to experience and ethical behavior.

With all the aforementioned, it is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 6.1: The positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high performance orientation than in those with a low one.

Hypothesis 6.2: The positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high performance orientation than in those with a low one.

Hypothesis 6.3: The negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high performance orientation than in those with a low one.

2.4.4 Assertiveness

Assertiveness is a cultural component that influences attitudes about whether individuals should be fostered to be forceful, defiant, and severe in social relationships (House et al. 2004). It differs from performance orientation because it focuses on the relationships that people engage with one another, whilst performance orientation focuses on the outcomes and accomplishments of people within a social environment. Individuals with high scores of assertiveness are explicit in their needs, as well as with the opposite of them, and are able to undoubtedly express their aims (Booraem and Flowers 1978; Peretz et al. 2018). Societies with high assertiveness are populated by competitive people, that prioritize accomplishments and perceive others as predatory. Basically, the focus is mostly on competition, so these societies lead their citizens to selfishness and ambition, and to think that others are as opportunistic as they are. As a result, logically, the same individuals are more inclined to praise and legitimize unethical behavior, as they assume that others are similarly inclined to defend it. For instance, Peretz et al. (2018) showed that assertiveness was related to a proclivity to pursue adaptable work agreements. This indicates that assertive individuals – or rather, individuals living in assertive societies – have the tendency to search for arrangements that suit their own personal convenience and hence may be capable of excusing immoral actions.

Therefore, it can be stated that assertiveness, in general, will diminish the positive relationships between conscientiousness and agreeableness and ethical behavior, while reinforcing the negative relationships between openness to experiences and ethical behavior. Specifically, the emphasis on opportunistic self-interested conduct in assertive societies may affect conscientious people in becoming more prone to justify immorality. Assertiveness is assumably reducing the positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior.

Furthermore, assertiveness will likely reduce the positive link as well between agreeableness and ethical behavior: being assertiveness so prevalent in a specific society, may confound how agreeable people behave and react. Hence, the interplay between

agreeableness and assertiveness is probably generating a weaker environment, in which justifying and acting unethically is more possible, meaning that assertiveness most likely mitigates the positive effects of agreeable individuals for ethical behavior.

Openness to new experiences may, in contrast, be strengthened in its negative relationship with ethical behavior by society with high assertiveness scores. In particular, an individual with high openness to experience is typically inclined to disobey norms and rationalize morally dubious actions, and all of these inclinations would be promoted by an assertive environment since it fosters opportunistic self-interest acts. Therefore, those who are receptive to new experiences are more inclined to act unethically. Hence, finally, assertiveness is expected to enhance the positive relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior.

In conclusion, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 7.1: The positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high assertiveness than in those with a low one.

Hypothesis 7.2: The positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high assertiveness than in those with a low one.

Hypothesis 7.3: The negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high performance orientation than in those with a low one.

The table on the following page will help visualize and summarize all the hypotheses that will be tested by this thesis.

Table 1. Summary of Hypotheses.

	Hypothesis
1	Conscientiousness is positively related to ethical behavior.
2	Agreeableness is positively related to ethical behavior.
3	Openness to experience is negatively related to ethical behavior.
4.1	The positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high institutional collectivism than in those with a low one.
4.2	The positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high institutional collectivism than in those with a low one.
4.3	The negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high institutional collectivism than in those with a low one.
5.1	The positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high humane orientation than in those a low one.
5.2	The positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high humane orientation than in those a low one.
5.3	The negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high humane orientation than in those a low one.
6.1	The positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high performance orientation than in those with a low one.
6.2	The positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high performance orientation than in those with a low one.
6.3	The negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high performance orientation than in those with a low one.
7.1	The positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high assertiveness than in those with a low one.
7.2	The positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is milder in societies with high assertiveness than in those with a low one.
7.3	The negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior is enhanced in societies with high performance orientation than in those with a low one.

3 Research Methodology

This chapter will present the research methodology of the thesis. The thesis analysis is based on quantitative research computed over data collected employing both a questionnaire administered through Google Form and secondary data obtained from the GLOBE study (House et al. 2004, 2007). The collection of the data and the sample will be discussed in-depth in the specific sub-chapter, while a research approach will be delineated right after this introduction. This third chapter will finally end with an examination of the reliability and validity of the study.

3.1 Research approach

The approach of the research carried out with this thesis is deductive and it is based on the philosophy of positivism. The deduction approach aims to offer a procedural structure for testing a theory (Maylor & Blackmon 2005: 150). The hypotheses which will be tested are derived from former research and literature on the topic, which was discussed thoroughly in the second chapter. Statistical tools of analysis and quantitative data are used to test the hypotheses. The deductive research is particularly indicated to show and illustrate causal relationships between different variables (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009: 125). Furthermore, Miller W. L. (1983: 67) and Sekaran (1992: 98-99) state that deductive research usually leads to insightful outcomes.

The hypotheses derived from the theoretical background and prior research are examined in this study. The aim is to assess the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable, jointly with the direction of the potential interactions between the variables. Quantitative approaches are mostly used in this type of analysis (Yin 2003: 6-7; Saunders et al. 2009: 125). Moreover, the employment of quantitative data allows for statistical testing of the hypotheses (Saunders et al. 2009: 125). As mentioned, an online survey has been used as a data collection tool to gather most of the quantitative data, which would then be merged with the secondary data, used only as a moderator

factor for the variables. The thesis design and strategy are discussed thoroughly in the following sub-chapter.

3.2 Research design

To answer the research problem and reach the objectives of this study, the research will follow a structured framework that derives from the methodical and targeted gathering of data (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005: 109). In particular, having delineated the theoretical background and set the hypotheses, the empirical analysis will be aimed at determining whether or not the hypotheses are supported by the findings. This research design is the baseline framework for the collection and analysis of the data (Bryman & Bell 2007: 40). The main data collecting tool for this thesis is a survey. The survey perfectly fits the deductive approach since it allows for the collecting of large-scale datasets in a cost-effective fashion (Saunders et al.2009:144). Miller (1983) states that surveys are best suited to situations that require information from hundreds of statistical individuals since it is both cost-effective and time-efficient. Moreover, the possibility of taking the survey online ensures a fast data collection as well as convenience for participants (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2007).

The sample size is a key metric for this kind of study, as it has to be large enough to ensure that the study's findings can be significantly generalized. The data will be gathered in a numerical fashion, which will allow for hypothesis testing through a proper computation of the statistical analysis.

Albeit the survey is a cost-efficient tool of data collection, it does present drawbacks. First and foremost, the researcher will be completely reliant on the respondents' capacity and willingness to reply to the questions (Ghauri & Grnhaug 2005), as will be explained in detail in the chapter about reliability and validity. Secondly, the survey tool severely restricts the number of questions that may be asked to the respondents: to achieve a high response rate, the questionnaire should not be too long or too challenging

to complete. If the survey is excessively lengthy, data collection may be jeopardized, resulting in an insufficient number of responses, and that would mean that the sample's results could not be generalized to the entire population (Saunders et al. 2009: 144). Surveys have also been criticized for over-simplifying the interrelationships of the different variables, and for overlooking the behavior of individuals and institutions (Miller W. L. 1983: 67).

3.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of three distinct sections, each aimed at obtaining different data useful for defining the dependent and independent variables.

The first section follows BFI-10, namely the Big Five Inventory in the 10-item short version (Rammstedt & John, 2007). This choice is dictated by the fact that, as mentioned previously, the length of the survey is of fundamental importance to have a high response rate. The BFI-10 was built specifically to shorten the traditional and famous BFI-44, without losing reliability and validity, since BFI-10 retains significant levels on both of them. Consequently, Rammstedt and John argue that "in research settings in which participant time is truly limited and when personality assessment would otherwise be impossible, such as surveys, the BFI-10 offers an adequate assessment of personality".

The second section contains 19 ethical scenarios, each one with a related yes/no question, to test the ethical behavior of the respondents. The ethical scenarios were inspired by Li & Obeua (2011), and their description came from a real corporate code of ethics (Sarbanes-Oxley Act and the NYSE and the NASDAQ ethics requirements) covering nine common areas, namely accurate accounting records, conflict of interest, confidential information, proper use of company assets, compliance with laws, competition and fair dealing, trading on inside information, anti-nepotism, and reporting illegal and unethical behavior.

The third section solely contains demographic questions, for which data can be used as control variables in the following statistical analysis.

3.4 Measurements

The study will analyze the ethical behavior of Business Students exploiting a set of independent variables conjugated by moderating and control variables.

Table 2. Variables and Data sources used in the statistical analysis.

Variable	Data sources
Dependent	Score on ethical scenarios
Independent	BFI-10: conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience
Moderating	GLOBE national cultural dimensions: collectivism, humane orientation, performance orientation, and assertiveness
Control	Gender, Age, International Business (whether they study International Business)

The dependent variable has been measured by giving a score to each respondent for every answer in each ethical scenarios' question of the online survey. Each of the eighteen scenarios presented a yes or no question to an ethical dilemma, so each respondent could have a minimum score of 0, while a maximum of 18.

The main independent variables are the scores on the Big Five personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. The BFI-10 personality test measures each personality trait with two questions where the respondents can answer following a Likert scale (from 1 to 5, disagree strongly to agree strongly). The average of

the two questions is the score applied to the specific trait for each participant in the survey.

The moderating variables, as mentioned, were collected from a secondary data study, the GLOBE study by House et al. (2004, 2007). Specifically, the measures for each dimension were obtained from the 2004 work, where both societies' "practices" and "values" scores are presented: in other words, "as it is" scores, and "how it should be" ones. This analysis, in line with previous research (Parboteeah et al. 2004), utilizes the "practices" ratings, since the focus is on how observed culture moderates the different relationships between variables, rather than how they would theoretically treat them. These ratings were assigned to all the respondents belonging to a single country. Where the scores were not available (due to a lack of data in the GLOBE study), they were substituted with scores of comparable nations, both geographically and culturally, according to the Hofstede online tool of country comparison. This method is defensible since Hofstede (2001) also utilized average ratings for certain regions where data was lacking, confirming the assumption that comparable countries generally have comparable cultural dimensions. Therefore, for the sake of this research, the moderating variables of the Czech Republic, Tunisia, and Belgium were substituted with the ones of Germany, Morocco, and France, as they were the closest cultural-dimensionally wise.

In particular, in the pages of the 2004 study book, House et al. measured institutional collectivism using four questions that focused on the culture's fostering and reward of collaborative actions. In contrast, for the humane orientation cultural factor, five questions were employed, with each of them touching into society's need for friendliness, general care, and compassion. Performance orientation was assessed through three questions focusing on countries' proclivity to promote and celebrate performance improvements. Finally, the GLOBE researchers measured assertiveness utilizing two questions, both aimed at defining the extent to which an environment promotes its people to be aggressive and forceful in relationships. Every question in the GLOBE study is

generally given with a 7-point Likert scale, providing the respondents a degree of freedom while remaining in a perfectly smooth data-convertible analysis.

The control variables are Age, measured with an open-ended question; Gender, an indicator variable assigning 0 for women and 1 for men (although other genders were made available in the questionnaire, no respondent deviated from these two choices); and International Business, another indicator variable assigning 0 for business students and 1 for international students.

3.5 Data collection and sample

This study's data was collected using an Internet-based survey. Albeit the survey is supposed to be an economical and rather quick approach to gather a sufficient quantity of data, the response rate among business students, during the time this analysis took place, was problematic. Furthermore, the analysis of this study needs a wide array of countries in which respondents are living, as the wider it is the most significantly generalizable is the cross-cultural component. The data was collected in a period of about one month, from the end of September to the end of October 2021.

The designed target of the study is business students, with almost half of them being international business ones. This choice was made because today's business students are likely to be tomorrow's managers, hence the thesis would have a more future-oriented focus. Furthermore, obtaining a larger sample by contacting students is more feasible than trying to contact top managers of companies, and this has a significant impact on the statistical analysis of the data obtained from the collection. To reach the selected target audience, the survey was submitted to various online groups and communities frequented by business students, ranging in age from 18 to 28. The survey was made available in multiple languages (Italian, English, French, German, Spanish) to allow more accurate responses to students from different countries and cultures, and to reach as many students as possible without boundaries. The translation method used is backend

translation since it is the most popular method for translating questionnaires into languages other than English. The questions were designed in English and immediately translated into Italian by the author (as a native speaker). The text of the English questionnaire was then sent to several business students, each native speaker of the different languages (French, German and Spanish), who were available for translation. Once the text was translated, the author compared the translated versions to the original text together with the translators, making certain improvements necessary to obtain the final questionnaire. The final sample contains responses from 124 individuals belonging to 15 different countries. The complete English text of the questionnaire contained in the survey can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

3.6 Reliability and Validity

When conducting research, it is critical to evaluate the credibility of the findings. Regardless of the researcher's efforts, there is no certainty over determining whether the respondents filled out the survey accurately, providing correct facts, and expressing his/her real opinion on the subject in issue. Likewise, Saunders et al. (2009) argue that there is no guarantee of the correctness of the respondent's answers, but lowering the odds of receiving incorrect or untruthful answers is the approach to perceive to increase the trustworthiness of the findings. Hence, to decrease such risk, the researcher must focus on the study's reliability and validity (Saunders et al., 2009).

Reliability relates to a data analysis technique's capacity of measuring and identifying consistent findings: particularly, whether the research would obtain the same results if performed numerous other times. This suggests that findings should be consistent regardless of the researcher that carries out the analysis. Therefore, when doing research, it is indicated to pursue high-level reliability. Nevertheless, no research is immune to unexpected mistakes. Respondents in surveys may misunderstand the concept of the questions or only forget what they were asked about. Simultaneously, the researcher may commit unintentional mistakes, for instance, while transcribing the results or while

imputing and sorting the data into a specific dataset. Consequently, high reliability is desirable, albeit random errors may occur (Saunders et al. 2009).

The reliability of the thesis was assessed during several different stages of the research. To begin, during the phase of conceptualization of the different variables, the measurements scales were accurately designed, opting mostly for a measuring scale that has previously been used by notable previous studies on the subjects and tested on respondents. Secondly, the multiple regression analysis was used as statistical analysis, as shreds of evidence from the literature point out that it is the best approach for explaining causation between two variables and to predict findings regarding them. Lastly, the reliability of the study was tested by conducting a reliability test. The internal consistency of the variables was investigated through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, of which range can vary between 0 and 1; the more the value is closer to 1, the more reliable the analysis is. Although reliability estimates of 0.7 are generally deemed appropriate, 0.6 alphas are allowed from the literature in cross-cultural research environments (Fu and Yukl 2000; Ralston et al. 2014). The internal consistency test performed on the variables confirms that every one of them is valid since all values are more than 0.6, as notable in Table 3.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha summary.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Ethical Behavior	0.706
Agreeableness	0.654
Conscientiousness	0.734
Openness to Experience	0.832
Assertiveness	0.823
Humane Orientation	0.875
Institutional Collectivism	0.738
Performance Orientation	0.749

Validity “refers to the appropriateness of the measures used, accuracy of the analysis of the results and generalisability of the findings” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016, p. 202). More specifically, three concerns are addressed by validity: first, it considers if the research measures are acceptable for the intended goal. Second, if the findings and linkages have been correctly analyzed. The last point focuses on the significance of the research findings, what they represent, and whether the stated generalizability conforms to reality (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Validity can be distinguished between external and internal. External validity is aimed at assessing whether the research results may be generalized to other comparable groups or environments (Sachdeva, 2009). For instance, the capability to adapt certain research findings from one department to another within a firm may constitute, according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016), externally valid research. Internal validity, in contrast, is assured when a study properly reflects a causal link between two variables (Sachdeva, 2009). In the specific case of a questionnaire-based survey, for instance, internal validity is proven when analytical factors or outcomes can be related to the set of questions asked to the respondents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Given the definitions, to increase the validity of the study, internal and external validity considerations were addressed by adopting variables that had previously been utilized in other research of the topic, and that had been widely tested. Furthermore, the sample size is adequate to achieve a satisfactory and valid investigation of the data. Additionally, to further increment the validity, as mentioned, the questionnaire designed appositely for the study has been translated in many languages, as to ensure that as many respondents as possible could answer the questions in their native language, or at least in a language in which they have adequate proficiency. This allows the dataset analyzed by the research to have more accurate answers.

4 Analysis of the empirical findings

4.1 Data description

In this subchapter, the data will be thoroughly presented and described. As mentioned, the data was collected primarily by a questionnaire containing three sections, one per type of variables, and from secondary data for the moderating national culture variables. Therefore, in this chapter, the data will be divided into two levels of analysis, to match the different layers of the research: the first will be individual variables, namely the first level of the analysis, while the second will be national variables, namely the second level of the analysis.

The main descriptive statistics of the individual level variables are shown in Table 4. The number of business students answering the survey was 124, of which a little less than the total studied International Business (the correspondent variable is an indicator variable, 1 for International Business students and 0 for other business-related fields). The average age of the students is 23.5, while the gender is evenly distributed (1 for Male, 2 for Female), with a slight majority of male individuals.

Table 4. Main descriptive statistics of individual variables.

Variables N=124	Mean	Median	Mode	Min	Max	St. Dev.	Var.
Agreeableness	3.6885	4.0	4.5	1.5	5.0	0.93614	0.87637
Conscientiousness	3.7131	3.5	3.5	2.5	5.0	0.67367	0.45382
Openness to exp.	3.3115	3.5	3.5	1.5	5.0	0.78083	0.60970
Ethical Behavior	10.475	10.0	10.0	3.0	18.0	2.8845	8.32022
Gender	0.54098	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.50245	0.25246
Age	23.525	24.0	24.0	20.0	26.0	1.8221	3.32022
International B.	0.45902	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.50245	0.25246

The students' personality traits were assessed with questions regarding their agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience on a 5-level Likert scale, both with direct and reversed questions. The individual score on each trait is the average of the total score on each of the trait-related questions. As it can be appreciated in the Table, students' highest average score is on conscientiousness, closely followed by agreeableness. Openness to experience places as the third trait score-wise. Interestingly, while at least one student had a bad overall rank in one trait (min=1.5), no one had less than 2.5 in conscientiousness trait, which translates in an attitude of the sample of generally acting conscientiously, or at worse being on a medium level on this trait.

The ethical behavior score is measured on a scale from 0 to 18, as every hypothetical ethical scenario presented in the survey was worth one point. The overall average result for this variable equals 10.475, which is slightly above half of the maximum total score of 18, which was obtained just by one student. The minimum score for this variable is 3. The majority of the results are above 5 and below 15 (respectively 5% and 95% percentiles).

In the GLOBE study, the cultural dimensions are also assessed with Likert scales for each question, which change in numbers according to the dimension (four questions for institutional collectivism, five for humane orientation, 3 for performance orientation, and two for assertiveness). Table 5 summarizes all the GLOBE scores for every country which was represented by at least one respondent of this thesis' questionnaire, for a total of 15 different countries. House et al did not present any data for some of these countries, hence, as afore-mentioned, Belgium, the Czech Republic, and Tunisia scores were substituted with the closest country, according to Hofstede's country comparison tool, for which GLOBE had findings. The scores are sorted in the table in ascending order for each dimension, from the smallest score (bottom) to the largest (top). Each country score will be applied to the citizens of the specific nation to obtain a moderating effect on the personality traits variables and their relationship to the ethical behavior score, which is the dependent variable of this study.

Table 5. GLOBE countries cultural dimensions scores.

GLOBE cultural dimensions scores							
Performance Ori-entation		Assertiveness		Institutional Collec-tivism		Humane Orienta-tion	
<i>Country</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Score</i>
Iran	4.58	Germany	4.67	Finland	4.63	India	4.57
U.S.	4.49	Czech R.	4.67	Poland	4.53	Iran	4.23
India	4.25	U.S.	4.55	India	4.38	Tunisia	4.19
Germany	4.25	Tunisia	4.52	U.S.	4.20	U.S.	4.17
Czech R.	4.25	Mexico	4.45	Mexico	4.06	Mexico	3.98
France	4.11	Spain	4.42	France	3.93	Finland	3.96
Belgium	4.11	Colombia	4.20	Belgium	3.93	Colombia	3.72
Mexico	4.10	Brazil	4.20	Iran	3.88	Brazil	3.66
Brazil	4.04	France	4.13	Tunisia	3.87	Italy	3.63
Spain	4.01	Belgium	4.13	Spain	3.85	Poland	3.61
Tunisia	3.99	Italy	4.07	Brazil	3.83	France	3.40
Colombia	3.94	Poland	4.06	Colombia	3.81	Belgium	3.40
Poland	3.89	Iran	4.04	Italy	3.68	Spain	3.32
Finland	3.81	Finland	3.81	Germany	3.56	Germany	3.30
Italy	3.58	India	3.73	Czech R.	3.56	Czech R.	3.30

Table 6. Main descriptive statistics of national variables.

Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	Min	Max	St. Dev.	Variance
Performance Or.	3.9530	4.01	3.58	3.58	4.58	0.2911	0.0847
Assertiveness	4.2193	4.13	4.07	3.73	4.67	0.2864	0.0820
Inst. Collectivism	3.8813	3.81	3.68	3.56	4.63	0.3375	0.1139
Humane Or.	3.6007	3.63	3.63	3.30	4.57	0.2959	0.0876

Table 6 shows the main descriptive statistics obtained for the cultural dimensions of the various nations. The overall average highest score is in Assertiveness, where Germany has the highest score (4.67) and India has the lowest (3.73). Contrarily, the lowest score is on Humane orientation, with a 3.60 average among the 15 countries, and again Germany one of the most influencing scores (the lowest – 3.30).

Table 7. Descriptive statistics and correlations of individual variables.

Individual level variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Agreeableness	3.689	0.9361	-					
2. Conscientiousness	3.713	0.6737	0.07	-				
3. Openness to exp.	3.311	0.7808	0.04	0.11	-			
4. Ethical behavior	10.48	2.884	0.20	0.23	-0.04	-		
5. Gender	0.541	0.5025	-0.15	0.05	0.03	-0.28	-	
6. Age	23.52	1.822	0.18	0.30	0.09	-0.06	0.21	-
7. Intern. Business	0.459	0.5025	0.15	0.10	-0.05	0.15	-0.14	0.19

Tables 7 and 8 present the separated correlation matrix and the main descriptive statistics of both national and individual-level variables, as variables belong to different levels of analysis. In the individual variables, the most notable correlations are between agreeableness and ethical behavior score (0.20) and conscientiousness and ethical behavior score (0.23). This leads to the assumption that the hypotheses constructed in the theoretical framework (chapter 2) regarding the two personality traits mentioned above are credible and accurate. Another interesting correlation is the one concerning the variables age and conscientiousness (0.30) which suggests a certain positive relationship between age and individual characteristics such as being organized, goal-directed, and followers of norms, typical of individuals with high scores in this personality trait. Although more slightly, also the relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior score seems to confirm hypothesis n.3, with the attitude of being inclined to new experiences leading to more questionable ethical choices (negative correlation -0.04).

Table 8. Descriptive statistics and correlations of national variables.

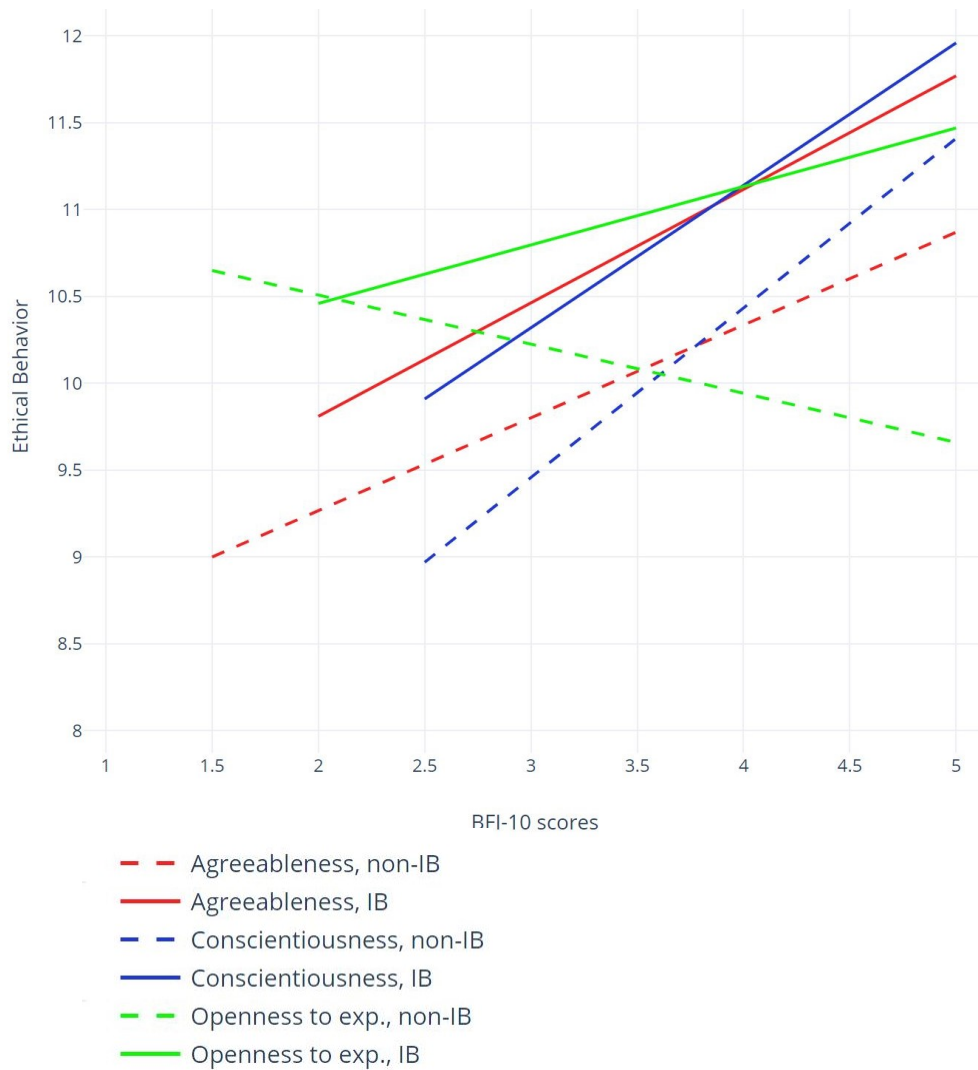
National Level variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Performance orientation	3.953	0.2911	-			
2. Assertiveness	4.219	0.2864	0.61	-		
3. Institutional collectivism	3.881	0.3375	0.00	-0.61	-	
4. Humane orientation	3.601	0.2959	-0.13	-0.53	0.63	-
5. Ethical behavior score	10.48	2.884	-0.06	-0.15	0.26	0.29

Similarly, the national variables appear to confirm the intuitions of hypotheses n.4-5-6-7. For ease of comparison, the ethical behavior score variable was also included in Table 8, although it is an individual variable. In fact, as explained, the ethical score is expected to be affected - enhanced or milder - with the inference of the national variables coming into play simultaneously with the individual variables. The correlations seem reasonable in this specific analysis since the generic effect of a high humane orientation and institutional collectivism is expected to be a higher ethical score, while, on the contrary, a society with high assertiveness and/or performance orientation negatively influences the same score.

The correlations between the national variables also seem reasonable: on the one hand, it is present a significantly high correlation between humane orientation and institutional collectivism (0.63), which is perfectly reasonable given that a collectivist society is also expected to be very oriented towards human value; on the other hand, performance orientation and assertiveness are also highly correlated (0.61). Similarly, the correlation between institutional collectivism and humane orientation and the other two national variables is always negative (with the sole exception of the correlation between collectivism and performance orientation), exactly what one would expect from variables describing such different dimensions, hence the division between humane orientation - institutional collectivism and performance orientation - assertiveness seems confirmed by the statistical analysis.

4.2 International business focus

Figure 1. Linear predictions differences among students.



Control variables, even if useful in the general model, do not present particular characteristics that denote an in-depth analysis. Given the nature of the thesis, however, a specific focus on the International Business variable is necessary, as it may be showing interesting features for the field literature and unexpected findings.

In order to provide an easily accessible graphical analysis for the reader, Figure 1 shows the linear functions linking ethical behavior and personality traits, all divided according

to the two indicators available for the International Business variable (which as a reminder are 0 for business students, 1 for international business students).

As can be discerned from the figure, the differences between the linear predictions are large and significant. The agreeableness trait appears to have a greater slope for international business students, with higher average ethics scores for each BFI test score. Similarly happens with the trait openness to experience, where there is even a big slope discrepancy, from negative (for business students) to positive (for international business students). Thus, international business students are able to invert the trend of the sample, having a positive relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior, whereas the rest of the students suffer from a negative one. For conscientiousness, the slope is slightly negative for IB students, yet the average score is far higher than for other business students. Overall, the difference shown through the use of the control variable is substantial and interesting from many points of view, which will be evaluated in more detail in the following chapters.

4.3 Common-Method Bias

Since both dependent and independent variables (including moderating and control) are derived from the same source of data (the questionnaire in the survey), a concern that could arise is the common method bias (Podsakof et al. 2003). The most efficient methodology to address this issue, even though not necessarily the best one to measure this bias (e.g., Chang et al. 2010), is, in our specific case, the Harman single-factor test. This test would assess if the common-method bias is an issue for our analysis. The factor analysis computed within the dataset confirms that when reducing all of the variables into one factor, the variance explained is less than 50%, which is the general percentage used as a threshold. The variance explained is 29.6%, meaning that common-method bias should not be problematic for the statistical analysis of the thesis, according to the best method we have at hand to determine whether this bias occurs or not (Conway & Lance 2010).

4.4 Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM)

Hierarchical Linear Modeling was selected as an analysis technique to assess the cross-level model created from the database. This decision was made since most of the variables (dependent, independent, and control) were measured at the individual level, while the moderating variables (the cultural dimension) were measured at the national level. Therefore, the appropriate technique suggested by the literature in this scenario is the HLM (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). This is necessary due to the high probability that standard regressions methodologies can create biased standard errors when computing data belonging to different levels. The use of standard regressions methodologies would undermine the essential premise of the independence of the observations, as individuals from the same country are prone to answer similar to the same questions.

Even though product terms are usually used in moderation tests executed in traditional regression analysis, assessing relationships in an HLM necessarily involves a different technique. HLM, in particular, necessitates the testing of both level 1 models (individual variables relationships) and level 2 models (national variables relationships). Consequently, the slopes-as-outcome approach is applied in this analysis to test the interaction hypotheses developed in chapter 2 (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). This approach posits that interaction occurs if the slopes of the relationships between the level 1 variables vary across countries. In other words, if the relationships (slopes) between the personality traits of an individual and its ethical score vary across countries, the interaction exists. Therefore, the slopes of the level 1 model become the dependent variables of the level 2 hypotheses tests. For reading convenience, partial models will be shown first, followed later by a final table with the complete HLM (Table 16).

In order to develop quantitative analyses as accurately as possible, all initial computations were developed using STATA software. However, given the specific choice of developing a nested model through hierarchical linear modeling, the different blocks of the HLM, the graphs, and the tests about the hypotheses were produced by combining the outputs of STATA to the HLM software, specifically created by Raudenbush and Bryk,

creators of this specific model, for multi-level model analyses that can be translated into HLM at the econometric level. The HLM software was made available through a limited-time trial from the Scientific Software International website.

Table 9. Level 1 model, individual variables. (Model 1)

Ethical Behavior	Coeff.	Std. Err.	95% Conf. Interval	
Agreeableness	.4896*	.3820	-.2763	1.256
Conscientiousness	1.119***	.4543	.2078	2.030
Openness to exp.	-.1944^	.3916	-.9796	.5907
Gender	-1.328**	.7408	-2.813	.1568
Age	-.2050*	.2080	-.6222	.2120
IB	.4867*	.7389	-.9948	1.968
_cons	10.47**	5.025	.4035	20.55

^p<.1 ; *p<.05 ; **p<.01 ; ***p<.001

The hypotheses related to the individual level (n.1, 2, and 3) are tested through the analysis of a traditional regression model. Table 9 presents the result of the regression made for this Model 1.

Hypothesis 1 suggested that conscientiousness is positively related to ethical behavior (here represented as the dependent variable). Model 1 confirms this hypothesis, as the conscientiousness coefficient is positive (1.119) and statistically significant ($p<.001$). Hypothesis 2 is also supported, as it was proposing a positive relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior, and the model highlights a positive coefficient for the agreeableness-related variable (.4896) which is also statistically significant, although on a different level compared to the conscientiousness coefficient ($p=0.0205$).

Hypothesis 3 argued that openness to exp would have been negatively related to the dependent variable. This hypothesis should be supported again by the model since the related variable's coefficient is slightly negative (-.1944), however, the statistical

significance level is not ideal ($p=0.0622$). All of these results have been obtained after controlling for the variables age, gender, and international business.

Table 10. Level 2 model, national variables. (Model 2)

Score 18	Coeff.	Std. Err.	95% Conf. Interval	
Performance or.	-1.7710*	1.9578	-5.6929	2.1509
Assertiveness	2.3773*	2.5447	-2.7203	7.4750
Inst. collectivism	2.2594*	1.7976	-1.3416	5.8604
Humane or.	2.2166*	1.6306	-1.0498	5.4832
_cons	-9.3059*	12.6284	-34.6037	15.9918

^ $p<.1$; * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Model 2, presented in Table 10, shows the correlation coefficients for the second-level variables, namely the variables that describe the behavior of the nations' cultural dimensions. All the coefficients are statistically significant ($p<.05$), and three out of four cultural dimensions predictors are positive while just one – performance orientation – is negative. While the results of institutional collectivism were expected, given that a positive relationship with ethical behavior was predicted for these variables, as well as the negative result of performance orientation, for the exact same reason as before, the positive and significant assertiveness score is unexpected and unusual given all the theoretical reasoning behind the hypotheses.

However, it is important to emphasize that the national variables are not treated as pure independent variables, but rather as moderating variables, and as such, they will be analyzed in later steps, jointly with the testing of the related hypotheses, when their influence in the interaction between the individual independent variables (i.e. personality traits) and the ethical attitude score will be analyzed.

To assess the effect of the moderating variables, scholars usually utilize the spotlight analysis, which presents the impacts of one variable at different levels of the moderating

one, most of the time at a range that varies from plus one to minus one standard deviation from the mean. Recent research shows, however, that this method might not be always effective since those designated values of the moderating variable could be meaningless to the analysis. Hence, Spiller et al. (2013) recommend using floodlight analysis instead, in which the plot takes into account the intervals of the moderating variables where *“the simple effect of a second variable is significant and where it is not”* (Spiller et al. 2013, p. 286). As a result, the floodlight approach focuses on presenting the scope of the data instead of showing the mean of the specific moderating variable.

The decision tree discussed by Spiller et al. (2013) has been used to determine the most suited analysis (between floodlight and spotlight) for this thesis. Spotlight seems like the best fit for this analysis, since the moderator's variables have been measured by the GLOBE study on a significant scale (Likert, 7-point), and the main values are clearly described by taking the averages of these cultural variables and by adding/subtracting a standard deviation to them. Therefore, the author opted to employ the more traditional spotlight approach.

4.4.1 Institutional collectivism hypotheses

Table 11. Institutional collectivism interaction coefficients. (Model 3)

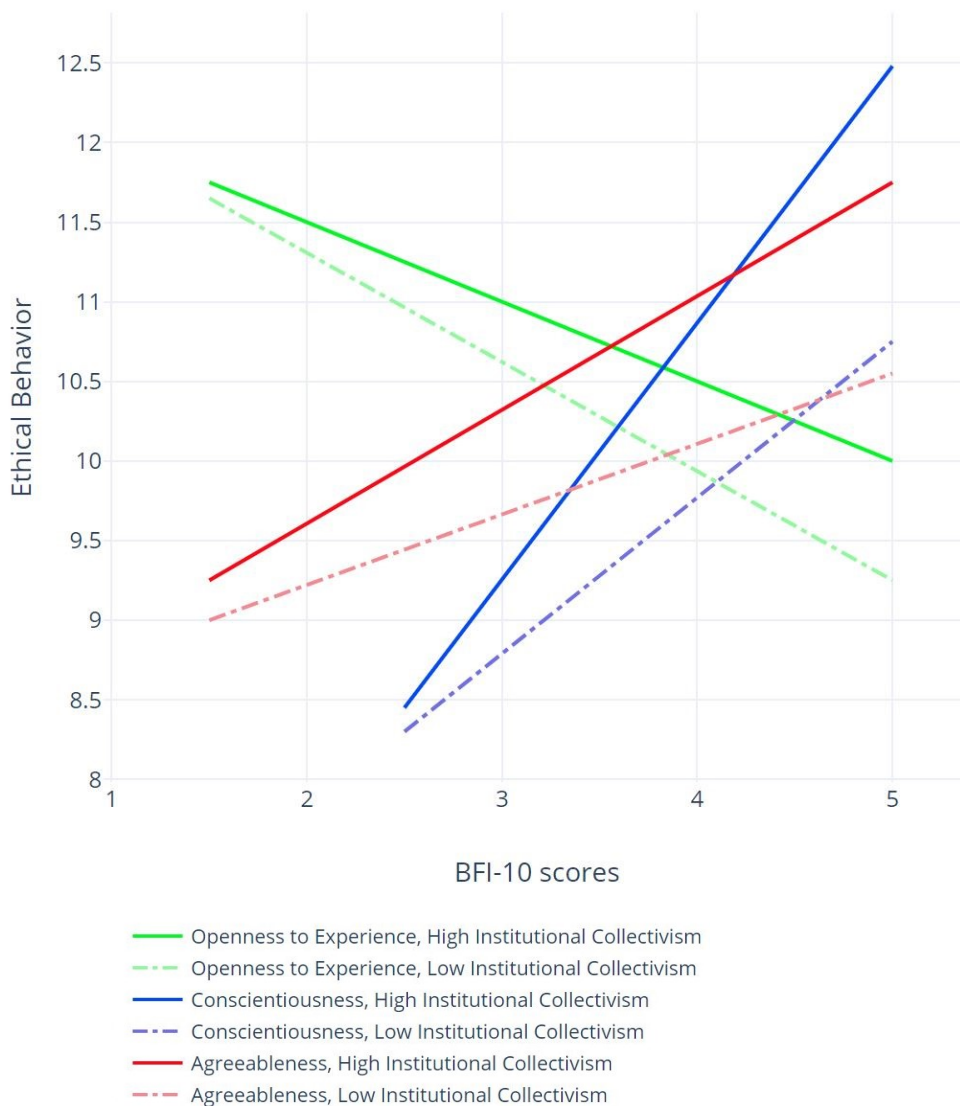
	Coeff.	Std. Err.	95% Conf. Interval	
Collectivism*conscientiousness	.2178**	.1393	-.0616	.4972
Collectivism*agreeableness	.1791*	.1029	-.0273	.3855
Collectivism*openness to exp.	-.0859*	.1197	-.3260	.1540
_cons	-15.12	12.72	-40.64	10.39

^p<.1 ; *p<.05 ; **p<.01 ; ***p<.001

Model 3, presented in Table 11, shows the computation for testing the hypotheses from 4.1 to 4.3, meaning every hypothesis aimed at investigating the influence of high or low institutional collectivistic societies on different personality traits' ethical behavior. The

model indicates that all the interactions, computed with both STATA and HLM software, are statistically significant. However, to test the coefficients shown in Model 3, it is crucial to investigate these relationships at different degrees of collectivism.

Figure 2. Interactions between Institutional Collectivism and personality traits.



Therefore, following, as mentioned, the traditional spotlight approach, Figure 2 presents all the interactions using the aforementioned standard deviation above and below the mean for collectivism of the entire sample of 15 countries. The graph shows each

interaction of the cultural dimension of collectivism, with every personality trait, dividing the effects on individuals belonging to low institutional collectivistic societies, and individuals belonging, contrarily, to high institutional collectivistic societies.

Analyzing Figure 2, it can be finally assessed whether hypotheses 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 are supported by the quantitative research or not. As showed, the relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior is enhanced in highly collectivistic societies. The linear predictions start both at a similar point, for a low level of conscientiousness, but right after the slope is significantly higher in more collectivistic societies. Therefore, this evidence allows us to support hypothesis 4.1, as institutional collectivism is indeed moderating the relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior in a way that the positive relationship is enhanced in more collectivistic societies than in the less collectivistic.

Similarly, even though with a different slope, agreeable individuals seem to obtain higher ethical scores under the condition of a stronger collectivistic society. This can be appreciated by comparing the slopes of the variable agreeableness under the different conditions of collectivism. While with a low collectivism society, the score tends to stop on average at 10.5, in high collectivistic societies it can go up to almost 12, depending on the level of agreeableness. Therefore, hypothesis 4.2 is also supported, as institutional collectivism moderates the relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior in a way that the positive relationship is enhanced in more collectivistic societies than in the less collectivistic.

As regards openness to experience, the slopes are quite different from the previous two traits. As expected from the previous models and descriptive analysis, openness to experience present a negative slope, meaning that the higher the openness to experience trait is in an individual, the lower the expected ethical score is. The difference between the two lines representing the predictions of the more and less collectivist societies is significant and evident, with the slope of the less institutional collectivist societies much

steeper downward. Hence, hypothesis 4.3 is supported, as Institutional collectivism is moderating the relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior, such that the negative relationship is milder in more collectivistic societies than in the less collectivistic.

Interestingly, the difference between more and less collectivist societies is always greater as one moves to higher levels of conscientiousness, regardless of the personality trait one analyzes.

4.4.2 Humane orientation hypotheses

Table 12. Humane orientation interaction coefficients. (Model 4)

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	95% Conf. Interval	
Humane Or.*conscientiousness	.1940*	.1099	-.0263	.4144
Humane Or.*agreeableness	.2333**	.1500	-.0677	.5343
Humane Or.*openness to exp.	-.0840	.1262	-.3371	.1691
_cons	-15.97	12.70	-41.44	9.511

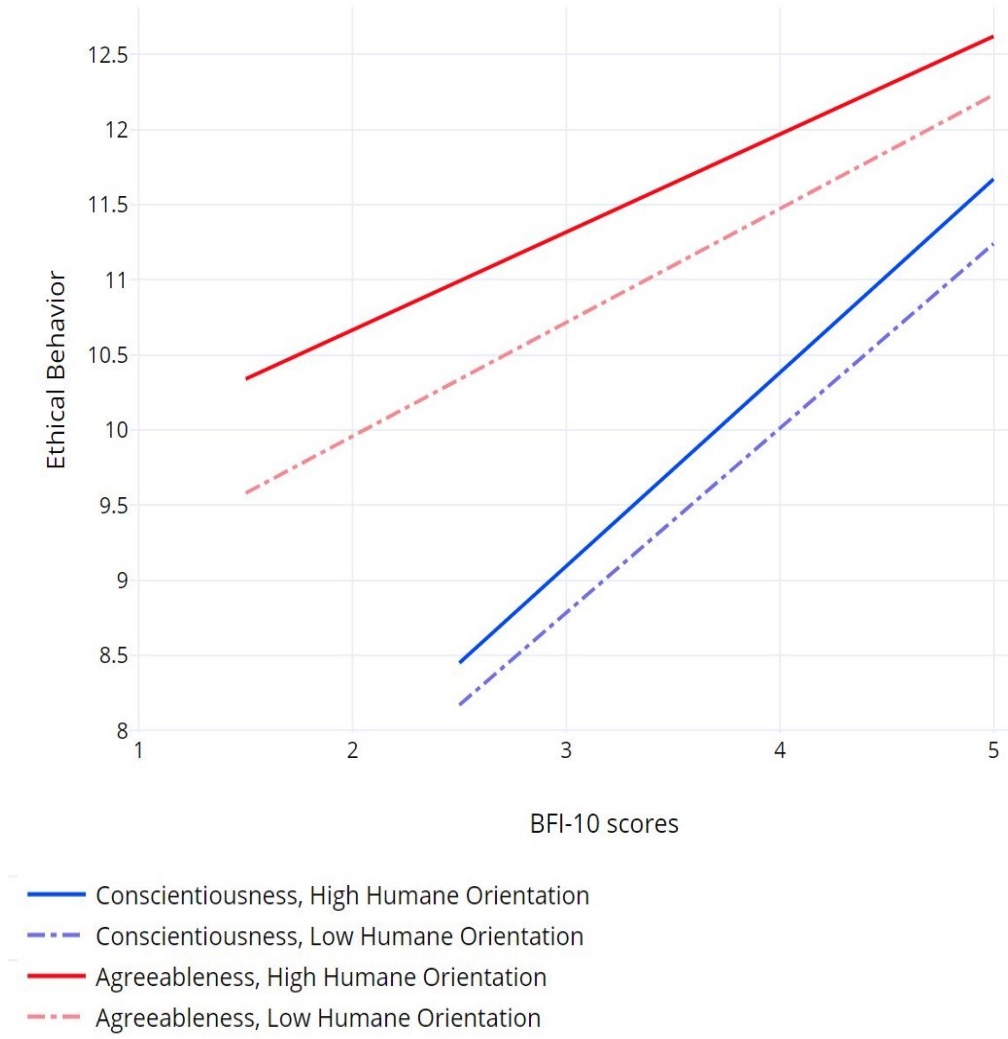
^p<.1 ; *p<.05 ; **p<.01 ; ***p<.001

Model 4, described in Table 12, presents the principal interactions between the national variable humane orientation and the individual variables of the three personality traits chosen for this analysis. The model is needed to assess whether or not hypotheses 5 are supported.

In this case, not all coefficients are statistically significant. In fact, the co-efficient describing the interaction between humane orientation and openness to experience, after having done the necessary analyses with the previously indicated econometric programs (Stata, HLM), is not significant (p-value slightly greater than 0.1). For this reason, it is

possible to state, without the need for any plots, that the quantitative analysis offered by this hierarchical regression model does not support hypothesis 5.3.

Figure 3. Interactions between Humane Orientation and personality traits



To test hypotheses 5.1 and 5.2, however, Figure 3 was plotted, which, as Figure 2 did for institutional collectivism, shows the influence of humane orientation on the ethical behavior-personality trait relationship (clearly, except for openness to experience). The difference is again highlighted by the splitting of linear predictions between individuals belonging to societies with high levels of humane orientation, and individuals belonging to those with low levels.

Figure 3 is critical in determining that the statistical model supports both hypotheses 5.1 and 5.2. Both relationships, conscientiousness, and agreeableness with ethical behavior, are indeed more positive in societies with high levels of humane orientation. Therefore, it can be said that hypotheses 5.1 and 5.2 are accepted since humane orientation is moderating the relationships such that the positive relationships are enhanced in highly humane-oriented societies rather than in the less oriented ones.

4.4.3 Performance orientation hypotheses

Table 13. Performance Orientation interaction coefficients. (Model 5)

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	95% Conf. Interval	
Performance Or.*conscientiousness	.2415**	.1369	-.0330	.5160
Performance Or.*agreeableness	.1842**	.0986	-.0135	.3820
Performance Or.*openness to exp.	-.0963*	.1187	-.3344	.1418
_cons	-15.53	12.58	-40.76	9.698

^p<.1 ; *p<.05 ; **p<.01 ; ***p<.001

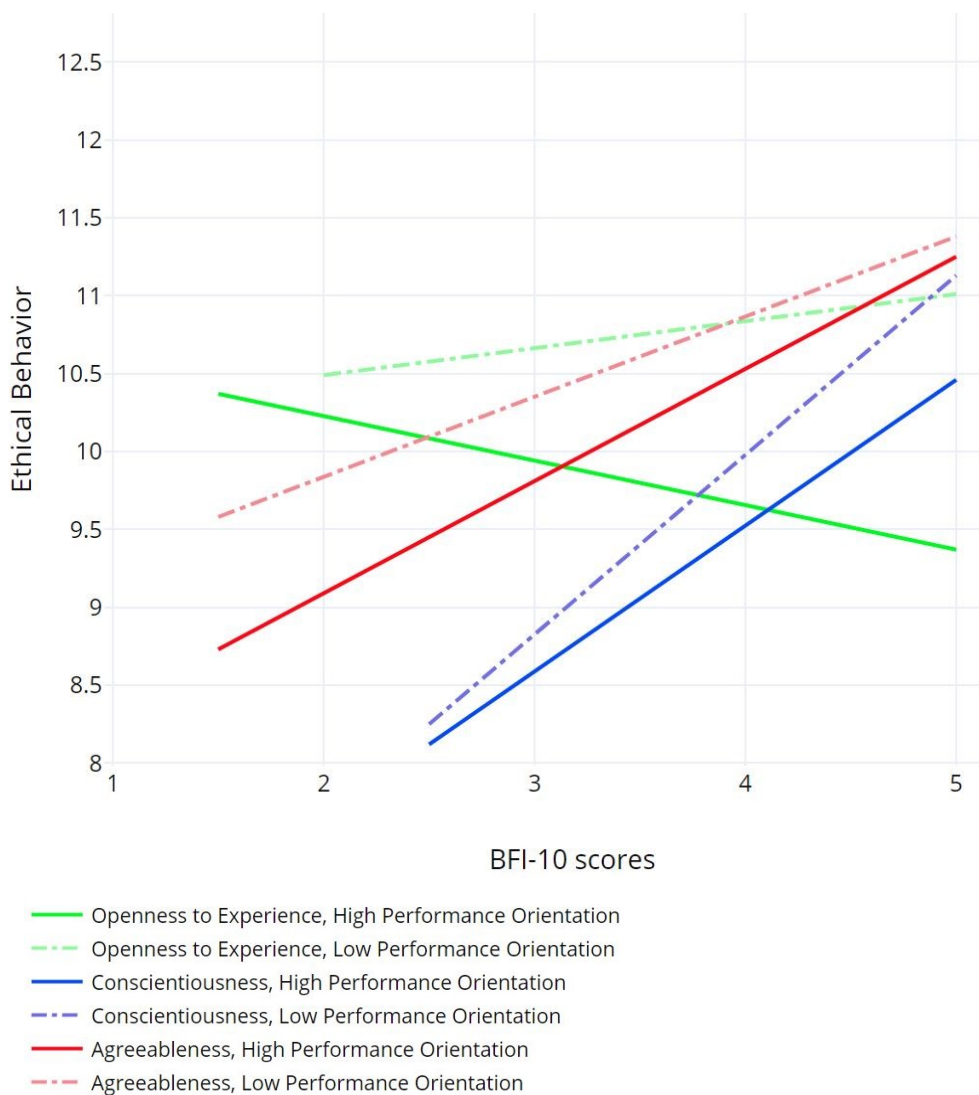
Table 13 shows the fifth block of the HLM (Model 5), which describes the interaction coefficients of the national performance orientation dimension taken in relation to the three personality traits. As can be appreciated from the levels of statistical significance exhibited in the table, all coefficients are statistically significant, albeit at slightly different levels.

Therefore, the plot shown in Figure 4 shows this time all linear predictions of each personality trait. It is immediately clear that the graph is very different from the ones of the first two traits (conscientiousness and agreeableness): regardless of the personality trait, the predictions of societies with high performance orientation are always lower than societies with a low performance orientation, which is the opposite of what was plotted

in the previous figures (2-3). Moreover, a personality trait has different levels of minimum in the x-axis, given the absence of individuals belonging to low performance orientation nations with levels of openness to experience lower than 2.

What is even more peculiar and interesting is that the slope of the trait openness to experience changes radically depending on the level of performance orientation: if on the one hand, a high performance orientation leads to a negative coefficient, on the other hand, a low performance leads to a positive one, which reaches levels of ethical behavior similar to the other two traits.

Figure 4. Interactions between Performance Orientation and personality traits.



After analyzing Figure 4, it is possible to evaluate the validity of the individual hypotheses. Hypothesis 6.1 is confirmed by the data: openness to experience moderates the interaction between conscientiousness and ethical behavior so that the positive relationship is milder in high performance oriented societies.

Hypothesis 6.2 shows some unique database characteristics that make the analysis even more meaningful. While it is correct, on the one hand, that the linear prediction of companies with high performance orientation is lower, on average, than that of low companies (in ethical behavior, from the point of view of the trait of agreeableness), on the other hand, it is also true that the slope of the former is greater than the slope of the latter. Therefore, it can be stated that, on average, individuals belonging to societies with low performance orientation are more ethical, but also that the relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior is stronger for individuals belonging to societies with a strong performance orientation. As a result, hypothesis 6.2 is not supported by the findings.

Hypothesis 6.3 is unquestionably supported by the data, since, as mentioned previously, the slopes of the two predictions even have opposite signs (in favor of the slope of low performance oriented companies). Therefore, the cultural dimension moderates the relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior such that the negative relationship is enhanced in high performance oriented societies.

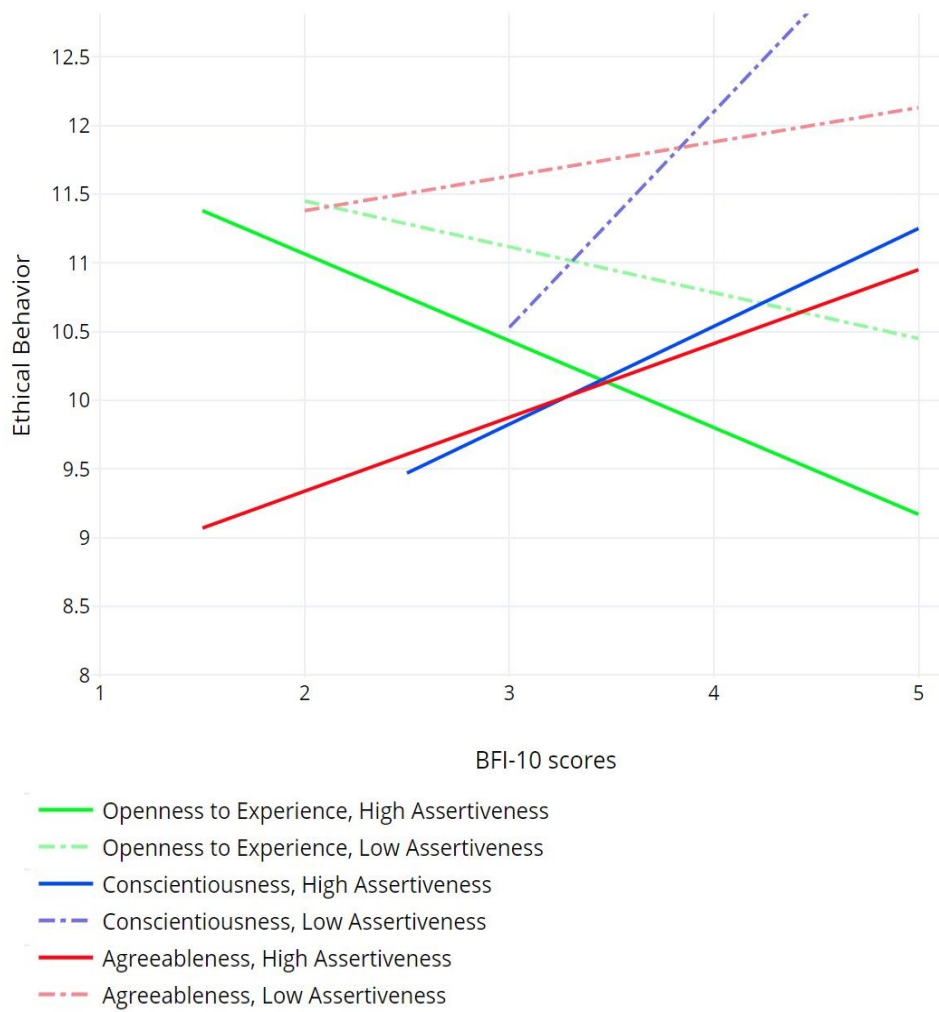
4.4.4 Assertiveness hypotheses

Table 14. Assertiveness interaction coefficients. (Model 6)

	Coeff.	Std. Err.	95% Conf. Interval	
Assertiveness*conscientiousness	.2184**	.1284	-.0392	.4760
Assertiveness *agreeableness	.1621*	.0923	-.0231	.3472
Assertiveness*openness to exp.	-.0862**	.1103	-.3073	.1350
_cons	-15.77	12.66	-41.16	9.625

^p<.1 ; *p<.05 ; **p<.01 ; ***p<.001

Figure 5. Interactions between Assertiveness and personality traits.



In Model 6, Table 14, the interaction coefficients of the cultural dimension GLOBE assertiveness with personality traits are shown. All coefficients are statistically significant; hence this allows to create Figure 5, plotting the line graphs of the traits and the ethical score, separating the low from the high assertiveness in the sampled 15 countries.

Similar to Model 5, in this analysis, it can be noted that some scores in personality traits are present in the high assertiveness case but absent in the opposite case. These are score 1.5 for openness to experience and agreeableness and score 2.5 for conscientiousness.

The hypotheses that will be tested in this subchapter range from 7.1 to 7.3. The first, 7.1, aims to check whether the moderating variable has an effect of weakening the positive relationship between conscientiousness and ethical score in environments where assertiveness is very high. As can be seen from Figure 5, conscientiousness has not only a higher intercept in low assertiveness but also a significantly more positive slope than in high assertiveness. hence, hypothesis 7.1 is supported.

Hypothesis 7.2 is very similar in statistical results to hypothesis 6.2. In fact, as with the previous model, the intercept of the regression of agreeableness with the assumption of low assertiveness is far greater than that of the one for high assertiveness; however, the slope of the latter is greater than the former. For these reasons, Hypothesis 7.2 is rejected, as the moderating variable, assertiveness, is not weakening the relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior in highly assertive societies but rather strengthening it compared to societies with low assertiveness.

Finally, the last hypothesis (7.3) is supported by the model. Figure 5 shows a milder negative relationship between openness to experience and ethical behavior under the condition of low assertiveness, hence an enhanced one in environments with high assertiveness. Therefore, it can be stated, as the hypothesis does, that the assertiveness moderating variable moderates the relationship between openness to experience and ethical

behavior, such that the negative relationship is enhanced in highly assertive societies than in the less assertive ones.

Since the hypotheses are numerous and varied, for ease of fruition by the reader, Table 15 presents a summary of the analyses, and the relative results, conducted in this fourth chapter, while Table 16 the final and complete Hierarchical Linear Model, including every block of analysis.

Table 15. Summary of hypotheses tests.

Related variable	Hypothesis	Supported by the findings
Conscientiousness	1	Yes
Agreeableness	2	Yes
Openness to exp.	3	Yes
Institutional collectivism	4.1	Yes
	4.2	Yes
	4.3	Yes
Humane orientation	5.1	Yes
	5.2	Yes
	5.3	No
Performance orientation	6.1	Yes
	6.2	No
	6.3	Yes
Assertiveness	7.1	Yes
	7.2	No
	7.3	Yes

Table 16. Complete Hierarchical Linear Model.

Variables	Level 1	Level 2	Interactions			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Agreeableness	.4896*	.7147**	.7147**	.7147**	.7147**	.7147**
Conscientiousness	1.119***	1.206***	1.206***	1.206***	1.206***	1.206***
Openness to experience	-.1944^	-.2239^	-.2239^	-.2239^	-.2239^	-.2239^
Gender	-1.328**	-1.390**	-1.390**	-1.390**	-1.390**	-1.390**
Age	-.2050*	-.4757**	-.4757**	-.4757**	-.4757**	-.4757**
International Business	.4867*	.4994^	.4994^	.4994^	.4994^	.4994^
Performance orientation		-1.7710*	-1.7710*	-1.7710*	-1.7710*	-1.7710*
Assertiveness		2.3773*	2.3773*	2.3773*	2.3773*	2.3773*
Institutional collectivism		2.2594*	2.2594*	2.2594*	2.2594*	2.2594*
Humane orientation		2.2166*	2.2166*	2.2166*	2.2166*	2.2166*
Collectivism*conscientiousness			.2178**			
Collectivism*agreeableness			.1791*			
Collectivism*openness to exp.			-.0859*			
Humane Or.*conscientiousness				.1940*		
Humane Or.*agreeableness				.2333**		
Humane Or.*openness to exp.				-.0840		
Performance Or.*conscientiousness					.2415**	
Performance Or.*agreeableness					.1842**	
Performance Or.*openness to exp.					-.0963*	
Assertiveness*conscientiousness						.2184**
Assertiveness*agreeableness						.1621*
Assertiveness*openness to exp.						-.0862**

^p<.1 ; *p<.05 ; **p<.01 ; ***p<.001

4.5 Discussion of findings

The first major focus of this thesis was to examine the connections between personality characteristics and ethical behavior, or rather, more specifically, managerial ethics, as the questionnaire was administered exclusively to business students. The ethical behavior of each student was measured with a quantitative score, related to their answers to 18 fictional ethical business scenarios. The first findings of the research demonstrate the three individual level hypotheses are supported. This implies that, as regards ethical behavior, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience are significant personality traits to investigate.

In terms of conscientiousness and its positive relationship with ethical behavior, the results of the quantitative study confirm what a vast amount of research observed: high conscientiousness is generally negatively related to law-breaking and positively with law-following (Salgado 2002; Roberts et al. 2009; Giluk and Postlethwaite 2015). The findings of chapter 4, like other literature findings, imply that conscientious people are more prone to act ethically. This translates into the well-being of businesses where top managers are conscientious individuals, as they would be less inclined to breach rules and rationalize unethical actions. This can be due to, for instance, the inclination of conscientious individuals to keep well-managed and systematic records, meticulously oriented to accuracy (e.g., Jackson et al. 2010). The need to preserve precise thorough records likely limits any capability to explain unethical behavior and/or to act unethically.

Agreeableness and its positive relationship with ethical behavior may be clarified by addressing the social component embedded in the trait itself. Fundamentally, agreeable individuals thrive to preserve positive interactions with peers and prevent any dispute (Costa and McCrae 1992; Barrick et al. 2002; Judge and Zapata 2015). Therefore, the social element of preserving these relationships may preclude them from acting unethically or rationalizing unethicality, due to the high likelihood of interpersonal conflicts if a person engages in immoral actions or justifies them. This decreases the probability of agreeable people rationalizing such acts. If alternative unethical activities (i.e., activities

that do not entail social relations) were to be surveyed, there could have been better odds of justifying unethical conduct.

Despite the mixed findings by the literature on the topic, the hypothesis that openness to experience would be negatively related to ethical behavior was validated by the findings. This result is rather expected, as literature describes individuals who are high on this attribute to be more inclined to seek out dangerous undertakings and actions, among which unethical endeavors belong. Therefore, results suggest that the individuals that are creative in looking for new experiences and expressions (King et al. 1996; Koestner and Losier 1996; Judge and Zapata 2015) are, by the means of this research, negatively related to ethical behavior.

The thesis' findings give legitimacy to the hypotheses that particular cultural dimension variables moderate the relationship of the dependent variable (ethical behavior) and personality traits. They proved, as expected, that collectivism produces contextual circumstances in which the link between conscientiousness, agreeableness, and ethical behavior is positive and enhanced under high collectivism, and the one between openness to experience and ethical behavior is negative but milder. These findings lend strong evidence to the argument that national-level factors can have a significant role in influencing interactions between personal-level (or level 1, as defined in this analysis) variables. Moreover, the results are consistent with specific research that suggest that national collectivism is highly related to ethical personal outcomes and behaviors (Cullen et al. 2004; Chen et al. 2015).

Furthermore, the results proved that higher degrees of humane orientation reinforced the positive bond between both conscientiousness and agreeableness, and ethical behavior. However, the relationship with openness to experience was found to be statistically non-significant. This can have many reasons, of which the most likely is the insufficient width of the sampling: if the questionnaire had had a higher incidence of responses, it is more reasonable that the p-values would have been generally smaller, and thus the

interaction coefficient of openness to experience and humane orientation would have been below the 0.1 threshold.

As predicted, performance orientation fosters cultural contexts in which the association between openness to experience and ethical behavior is negative and greater in high performance oriented cultures. The relationship with conscientiousness also turns out to be like the predictions: the relationship between conscientiousness and ethical behavior turns out to be less positive in environments with a high performance orientation. However, the relationship between agreeableness and ethical behavior did not meet the expectations, as the slope was larger in societies with a high performance orientation. An explanation for this unusual result could be that in countries where high performance is the standard, a lack of expected quality outcomes could lead to relationship conflicts. This would mean that even agreeable individuals could be tempted to act immorally in order to achieve the required performance results, and, hence, avoid any conflict.

In conclusion, the hypotheses related to the cultural dimension of assertiveness are equal in outcome to those of performance orientation. While the hypotheses regarding the interaction with conscientiousness and openness to experience are confirmed, the hypothesis on agreeableness is still unsupported, as the relationship between ethical behavior and personality trait under the high assertiveness condition is stronger than under the low assertiveness condition. Reasons are uncertain, perhaps the cultural values like assertiveness are likely to produce a social context in which the societal individuals are more prone to rationalize the immoral, due to the overarching focus on harmful code of conduct fostering aggressivity, tough competition, and opportunism.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Theoretical contribution

Considered as a whole, the thesis provides valuable contributions to the existing literature on the topic.

Firstly, this quantitative analysis integrates the individual-level research on the relationship that ties business ethics and personality traits, as Big Five personality dimensions are proven to be related to ethical behavior, despite individuals' nationality. These results strengthen existing studies that tested, for instance, merely single-nation data, assessing leaders' personality and behavior as observed by subalterns (Kalshoven et al. 2011), theoretical frameworks tying ethics to personality (Hartman 1998), and research measuring the relevance of student's values in moral judgment (Lan et al. 2008). This has crucial implications for the International Business scenario since it reinforces the concept that traits of personality can be comparable across different national societies, notwithstanding the possibility of cross-cultural differences (Schmitt et al. 2008; Gurven et al. 2013; Gebauer et al. 2014). Moreover, these results corroborate the effectiveness of using a personality traits variables analysis in a large sample of people from various nations.

Furthermore, the findings support the expanding body of international business literature on the environmental influence of cultural dimensions. This branch of the literature is blooming during this decade, as Kirkman et al. (2006) predicted, remarking in their conceptual analysis of papers leveraging Hofstede's dimensions that moderating analysis, like this thesis produced, were and will gain relevance. Nevertheless, little research has been conducted to investigate the moderating influence of the cultural dimensions and correlations that are taken into consideration in these pages. Lastly, the thesis functions as an answer to Kirkman et al.'s (2006) suggestion of deepening the research that focuses on other cultural aspects than individualism.

Another contribution to the literature specific to international business is derived from the differences shown by the International Business control variable. The results indicate important discrepancies in ethical behavior between international business students and the rest of the students. Overall, generalizing, to the extent possible, the findings, it would seem that studies related to the internationality of the business environment have practical and tangible value in their relation to the ethical choices of decision-makers. Ethical behavior is thus more likely, on average, in managers who have a background in international business studies, rather than other studies in the economic environment. This also ties into the managerial considerations that will be developed in the next chapter.

Overall, the results are noteworthy and relevant, as they provide subtle depth to the existing knowledge of how national dimensions influence personality and its effects. The statistical evidences on assertiveness, collectivism, humane, and performance orientation create considerable diversity and richness to the current literature on international business ethics and personality traits effects.

5.2 Managerial implications

The thesis' results have some major implications for managers and corporate employees in general. Given that personality characteristics have a considerable impact on ethical behavior, personality measurements and tests should be treated thoughtfully. Firms might be willing to allocate more effort and time in allocating and selecting conscientious and agreeable top management team employees. Moreover, while the thesis' findings do not advocate for outright prohibitions on selecting managers who are highly open to fresh experiences, corporate can apply some due diligence on the hiring and managing processes, especially in light of the influence of national variables over the relationship that bonds ethics with openness to experience. Perhaps enhanced workplace schematic socialization and traineeship programs with these managers can be effective. This suggestion is in line with the literature, as Beus et al. (2015) argue that considering

personality characteristics to guide the selection and staffing process is a prudent step for organizations and leaders to adopt.

Furthermore, international firms and CEOs seeking to expand their business abroad or on a global scale should be conscious that societies have different values and cultures, and the discrepancies that come with them might have unanticipated consequences. An agreeable manager in a highly humane oriented nation can act in an utterly unpredictable manner, or, equally, another conscientious one can operate unexpectedly in a highly assertive society. All these differences, for which this thesis finds valuable correlations coefficients, should undoubtedly be considered before deciding to establish or out-source business in a different nation.

Thus, while determining the staff or selecting the individuals that most suit management positions, firm decision-makers are advised to account for personality traits jointly with the national cultural differences. Additionally, top position employees should have a fundamental understanding or knowledge of their own traits along with the societal culture backdrop of the nation or area in which they are or are planning to operate. This recommendation is crucial in high assertive and performance oriented communities, as gaining self and environmental awareness and expertise would likely support the company and the managers to thrive and avoid engaging in immoral or illegal activities.

5.3 Limitations and future research directions

As the majority of empirical studies, this thesis is not exempted from limitations. The most predictable but also important one concerns the size of the survey sample. The questionnaire counts 124 respondents, and although they represent a sufficient statistical sample, a research with a more extensive sample would undoubtedly obtain more accurate and precise results. Furthermore, it would allow a more extensive generalization of the findings in other similar environments.

Another limitation is due to the nature of the research. This thesis carries out a purely quantitative analysis, although the topic, business ethics, is largely related in content to a qualitative type of analysis, generally less related to numerical analysis and more to delving vertically into the figures of the respondents. The qualitative analysis would in fact allow for a more in-depth analysis of the reasons behind the choices of behavior (ethical or unethical) in business environments, being by definition more suitable for investigating human characteristics, although it does not allow for statistically precise empirical analysis like the quantitative approach. Therefore a qualitative analysis, perhaps combined with the quantitative analysis described in these pages, would bring another layer of understanding to the topic, enriching the scope of this thesis.

Lastly, the data was collected from a questionnaire, thus directly from the respondents. Hence, the results may be affected by the participants' errors or biases. Furthermore, as straightforward as the ethical scenarios were, respondents may have misinterpreted some questions by providing partially or totally incorrect answers. The main future research direction idea is, as one can expect after the presentation of limitations, to reproduce the analysis of this quantitative research in a bigger sample. Although many efforts have been made to obtain the maximum possible number of respondents to the survey, the data collection that led to the creation of the database was still carried out by a master's student of international business, with all the limitations of its tools, network, and timing.

Taking the same analysis to another level, from a quantitative standpoint, would bring it to higher accuracy and precision, enabling, perhaps, the discovery of additional correlations or additional interesting and valuable findings. The metrics for measuring the variables could also benefit from the power of the instrumentation available to the possible future researcher, as this thesis relies mostly upon other research assumptions and models, and in rapid testing due to the need for short time frames associated with the survey methodology of data collection. Furthermore, additional research could support the

proving of validity of these findings, and, consequently, grant additional confidence to leaders willing to utilize them in their decision-making processes.

An additional challenge could be the closer integration of cultural components, values, and institutions. Longitudinal research on these interactions could enhance the clarity and holistic view of the results of the thesis. It is not excluded that, doing so, further fascinating and unexpected findings would consequently emerge, adding extra layers to the expertise and competence of the decision-makers.

Another recommendation for future research, that would undoubtedly increase the knowledge on the issues influencing business ethics, would be analyzing more thoroughly the unexpected findings resulting from the thesis' statistical analysis. For instance, how can agreeableness be more positively related in both a highly performance oriented and assertive environment? How is openness to experience affected by humane orientation? Future research can delve deeper into these questions and enrich the literature of the topic in an original and enhancing fashion.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Hello everyone!

I am a student of International Business at the University of Vaasa and Pavia. I would like to ask for a few minutes of your time for completing this questionnaire related to my Master's thesis. The survey is aimed at Economics and Business students and graduates. It is focused on Ethical Behavior, and it should not take more than 5 minutes to complete it. I kindly ask you to try to be completely honest in your answers, which will be anonymous.

Thank you for your time!

I. Personality traits

- a. How well do the following statements describe your personality? I see myself as someone who...

Disagree strongly *Disagree a little* Neither agree nor disagree *Agree a little* Agree strongly

is generally trusting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
tends to find faults in others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
tends to be lazy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
does a thorough job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has an active imagination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has few artistic interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- II. Ethical scenarios – 18 yes or no questions
- a. Would you honor your boss's request of you to sign and submit a purchase order for his son's \$19.95 gift?
- Yes
 - No
- b. Would you honor your boss's request of you to sign and submit a purchase order for his son's \$1,995 gift?
- Yes
 - No
- c. Would you try to record next-year orders as sales in the current year by asking the warehouse manager to promptly fulfill these orders so as to meet this year's target sales of the company?
- Yes
 - No
- d. Would you offer your wholesale customers an unusually big discount to induce them to buy more products than they can promptly resell to meet the company's target sales?
- Yes
 - No
- e. As a purchasing department director, would you accept a supplier's lunch invitation?
- Yes
 - No
- f. Would you provide your sister with the name and address of customers of her competitor?

- Yes
 - No

- g. After work hours or during lunch break, would you use your employer's computer for personal purposes?
 - Yes
 - No

- h. During work hours, would you use your employer's computer for personal purposes?
 - Yes
 - No

- i. Would you use your employer's copy machine to copy your personal items?
 - Yes
 - No

- j. Would you use your company's credit card to pay for your family dinner?
 - Yes
 - No

- k. Would you make a \$10 bribe to a policeman in a foreign country where bribing a policeman is very common?
 - Yes
 - No

- l. Would you agree to make a \$1,000 bribe to a foreign tax authority to avoid being audited?
 - Yes

- No
- m. Would you recall from the market your most popular product, which was advertised as 100% lead-free, but has a small trace of lead within the required safety level?
- Yes
 - No
- n. Would you sell your company's stock that you own before a release to the public of negative news about the company?
- Yes
 - No
- o. Would you try to profit from the imminent decline in stock price by buying a put option on the stock before a public release of this news?
- Yes
 - No
- p. Would you hire your niece in your firm instead of another candidate who has more work experience?
- Yes
 - No
- q. Would you report to the company your close friend who used the company credit card to pay for his family dinner for the first time?
- Yes
 - No

- r. Would you report to the company your close friend who has been using the company credit card to pay for his family dinner whenever he eats out?
- Yes
 - No

III. Demographic questions

a. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

b. Age (open)

c. Nationality (open)

d. What is the field of your current or just concluded degree? (e.g. management, Accounting, International Business...) (open)