

Public Abstract

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Title:Moral Decision Making of University Housing and Residence Life Professionals

This study examined the relationship between moral decision making and professionals working in university housing and residence life positions within the Upper Midwest Region of the Association of College and University Housing Officers. The specific variables studied included age, gender, education level, professional housing experience, institutional characteristics, and the correlation between all of these variables. The study was conducted in an effort to identify levels of moral decision making of professionals who interact daily with college students on issues related to discipline, student leadership, role modeling, and hiring. These same professionals also serve in an overall university capacity related to issues of budget allocation, hiring of professional staff, and university mission fulfillment.

Data were collected through a quantitative methodology which utilized the Defining Issues Test (DIT) created by James Rest. The instrument was provided via the Center for the Study of Applied Ethics at the University of Minnesota. Survey data were obtained through a paper process from those members of UMR-ACUHO institutions who agreed to participate in the study. The survey consisted of a demographic sheet as well as the DIT instrument which utilized five scenarios to which participants rated specific responses and ranked top responses.

The completed surveys were sent to the University of Minnesota for machine scoring. The raw data were returned and analysis completed. In most cases, there was no statistically significant relationship between any of the individual variables. A step-wise forward regression indicated a statistically significant finding that age impacted the level of moral decision making of respondents when all variables were considered.