



Ethical Orientation and Competitiveness - Competitiveness and the Impact of Ethical Orientation

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Abstract. Competitiveness drives strategic success, however recent economic crises have strengthened outcries for understanding the impact of ethics on individual behaviors, such as competitiveness. Kiasuism is an extreme form of competitiveness in which an individual tries to maximize the outcomes from social interactions. Several studies have demonstrated a significant positive relationship between kiasuism and academic performance. This study explores factors predicting kiasu tendencies, specifically ethical orientations towards egoism and utilitarianism, and sensitivity to procedural justice. The results of this study indicate that an ethical orientation towards egoism and a sensitivity to procedural justice both have a positive impact on kiasu tendencies, while a utilitarian ethical orientation has no effect on kiasuism.

Keywords: competitiveness, ethics, justice.

1. Theoretical Development and Hypotheses

Strategy has been defined as “the skill of making or carrying out plans to achieve a goal” (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Prior research has shown that a person’s strategic competitiveness, or desire to be the best, is significantly related to success (cf., Kirby & Ross, 2007). To better understand how to train people on the skills of strategy, we need to understand what drives their competitive spirit. However, left unchecked, the desire to win can lead to negative consequences for individuals and society (Bing, 1999). The recent world financial crises have been attributed, in part, to financial decision makers being too focused on their own individual success (Herremans, Herschovis, & Bertels, 2009).

Shortly after the collapse of Enron, the AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) Ethics Education Task Force prepared a report addressing the issue of ethics education in business schools in order to stimulate reflection and innovation in ethics pedagogy. The AACSB Ethics Education report states quite clearly and unequivocally that “All of us involved in business education need to think more deeply and creatively about how to advance ethical awareness, ethical reasoning skills, and core ethical principles that will help to guide business leaders as they respond to a changing legal and compliance environment as well as complex, conflicting, and sometimes highly problematic interests and opportunities (AACSB International, 2004, p. 9).” The AACSB also

joined with the United Nations, the European Foundation for Management Development, and others to act as co-sponsors of an academic collaboration known as the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) (United Nations, 2011a, 2011b). Its goal is to entrench ethical behavior and sustainability into the teaching and other activities of schools of business. The stakes are high. As the Ethics Education Task Force 2004 report observes, “At issue is no less than the future of the free market system, which depends on honest and open enterprise to survive and flourish. (AACSB International, 2004, p. 7)”

The 2008 Wall Street financial crisis reinvigorated the discussion of business ethics in the classroom and the role and nature of competitiveness to our collective prosperity. Investors’ trust of the marketplace has once again been shaken and our students need to be able to put this in perspective. In a recent and critical essay, Lorsch and Khurana (2008) note that “Now is the time for business school faculties to make the most of this opportunity to consider how they can contribute to the creation of a business culture that better serves the American economy and society.” To further this discussion of ethics in business, we explore several psychological factors predicting extreme competitiveness in the current business students, who are in training to be our future corporate leaders. By understanding the circumstances related to ethical failures in leadership, hopefully we can collectively create an academic and business culture that lessens the ethical lapses of the recent past.

1.1. The Extreme Competitiveness of Kiasuism

Competitiveness is a key part of U.S. culture and is related to many aspects of social, financial, and professional success. It drives people to live life at a faster pace (Levine & Norenzayan, 1999), look for opportunities, and strive for success in many settings, including academic performance (Kirby & Ross, 2007). However, when someone’s competitive passion turns into an extreme desire to win, it can have negative outcomes. A competitive spirit drives people to excel, but can also make them overly aggressive (Bing, 1999) and can lead to dysfunctional relationships (Kohn, 1992).

An extreme form of competitiveness is known as kiasuism. Kiasuism is a strong drive to dominate social interactions and outperform others (Hwang, Ang, & Francesco, 2002). The relationship between kiasu tendencies and task performance has been observed across a variety of every-day contexts, such as eating in restaurants, shopping at stores, and driving in traffic (cf., Chua, 1989). Kiasuism can lead to both positive and negative outcomes. “The [negative] kiasu person is selfish. He takes more than he needs...He is inconsiderate. He is greedy. And he is definitely obnoxious” (Leo, 1995, p. 18). Kiasuism also has positive benefits and those individuals high on this trait often thrive in competitive contexts because he or she wants very badly to succeed. Competitive

people scan the environment for opportunities and take quick advantage of them (Leo, 1995). For people possessing strong kiasu tendencies, every behavior or action is taken to ensure that they gain an advantage for themselves or their beneficiaries.

Although first identified and labeled in Singapore, kiasuism is not unique to that country. It has also been observed in Hong Kong (Chua, 1989), Australia (Ho, Ang, & Ng, 1998), and the United States (Kirby & Ross, 2007; Kirby, Kirby, Bell, & Schafer, 2010). To date, these cultural observations of the construct of kiasuism have been in academic settings and all have utilized kiasuism to predict student behaviors (Ho et al., 1998; Hwang et al., 2002; Hwang, 2003; Hwang & Arbuagh, 2006; Kirby & Ross, 2007; Kirby et al., 2010). The extant studies using kiasuism to examine student behaviors consistently show that it has a significant impact on academic performance (Ho et al., 1998; Hwang et al., 2002; Hwang, 2003; Hwang & Arbuagh, 2006; Kirby & Ross, 2007; Kirby et al., 2010).

To more fully understand kiasuism, its interrelationship with other constructs, such as ethical orientation, needs to be developed. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how kiasuism relates to other psychological variables. Previous studies have found that a desire to maximize options and sensitivity to the fairness of the distribution of outcomes are significant predictors of kiasuism (Kirby et al., 2010). The purpose of this current study is to extend the prior research by also exploring the predictive effects of sensitivity to procedural justice, which explores the fairness of the process that distributes outcomes, and ethical orientations on kiasuism, particularly in an effort to understand how competitiveness relates to the ethical awareness and principles of future business leaders.

1.2. Justice Sensitivity

The perceived fairness of the distribution of scarce organizational resources forms the core of distributive justice: the "ends" (Greenberg, 1990). The perceived fairness of the process through which outcome allocation decisions are made forms the basis of procedural justice: the "means." Procedural justice focuses on the perceived equity of the process used to determine how organizational resources and rewards are allocated (Greenberg, 1990; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Leventhal (1980) identifies six practices that determine if the allocation process is fair. In order for an allocation process to be perceived as fair the decisions should be consistently applied across different people and over time, free from bias, reflect accurate information, represent accepted organizational and cultural values, allow for correctability of errors, and be open to inputs from the participants involved.

Resentment is created when it is perceived that individuals or distinct groups are unjustly awarded benefits. People experience the greatest feelings of

resentment and dissatisfaction when there is little justification for the procedures used to determine who receives rewards (procedural justice) and when the outcomes of the process are not in their favor (distributive justice). However, if the allocation process is viewed as fair and justifiable, it can be enough to exonerate negative outcomes (Bies & Shapiro, 1987; Folger & Martin, 1986). In fact, "high justification procedures are those sufficiently appropriate to inhibit the resentment regardless of the outcomes they produce" (Folger & Martin, 1986, p. 531).

Because adequately justified procedures result in less resentment, they elicit more positive behaviors from organizational members (Daly, 1995). These organizational outcomes include cognitive strategies related to justice as well as high levels of performance (Greenberg, 1988). As prior research has found, individuals who are sensitive to distributive justice will be more likely to engage in kiasu tactics based on hard work in order to achieve academic performance (Kirby et al., 2010). There is also consistent empirical evidence that people exploit their competitive power in many non-bilateral, low solidarity situations such as those found in the typical one semester classroom setting where reciprocity is not the norm (Morgan & Sawyer, 1979).

An instrumental approach to procedural justice sensitivity posits that individuals deliberately work to change the circumstances associated with the allocation of rewards to their advantage, thereby increasing the likelihood of their actions leading to desirable decision outcomes (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Individuals primarily evaluate procedures with respect to their ability to produce desired outcomes (Jones, Scarpello, & Bergmann, 1999). Consistent with Thibaut and Walker's (1975) instrumental model of procedural justice, in order to change circumstances to enhance performance by engaging in competitive tactics, a competitive person should be concerned with the allocation system. For 'high kiasu' individuals trying to impact their circumstances, every action is designed to ensure that the person or their beneficiaries gain a competitive advantage. We believe that procedural justice sensitivity will increase kiasu tendencies since the competitive system of allocation of rewards is instrumental in achieving desired, competitive outcomes. Specifically, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: There will be positive relationship between procedural justice sensitivity and kiasu tendency.

1.3. Ethical Orientations

Ethical behavior is of great interest to management educators and scholars and has been examined in terms of the actions and ethics of individuals (Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011), organizational norms (Trevino & Youngblood, 1990), and control

systems (Trevino, 1990). However, exploring individual variables is a cornerstone of understanding the circumstances related to ethical lapses (Trevino, 1986). While there are many broad ethical perspectives, this study focuses on the teleological school of thought given that kiasuism is concerned with “ends” rather than “means.” Whereas other ethical perspectives examine issues such as the norms one ought to follow, teleological theories of business ethics focus on morality based upon the consequences of one’s actions. The two most common modern teleological theories ask if the evaluation of consequences should be based on what is best for the individual or for the societal group. Egoism focuses on the individual, whereas utilitarianism focuses on the society (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990).

While there are many variations of egoism, this ethical theory generally posits that an act is ethical when it promotes the individual’s long-term interests. Our free-market economic system, as exemplified by the works of Adam Smith (1776/1976), is based upon the notion that individuals act in their own long-term self-interest. Kiasu behaviors are those in which individuals focus on their own outcomes and outperforming others (Leo, 1995). However, this does not imply that high kiasu individual do not follow rules and norms, give to charity, or look out for the welfare of others. Instead, they engage in such behaviors if doing so furthers their own self-interests.

As an individual is more oriented towards egoist ethical philosophies, they are going to exhibit more self-interested behaviors (O’Neill, 1993). Since kiasuism invokes self-interested behaviors, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between an egoism ethical orientation and kiasu tendency.

Utilitarianism, on the other hand, posits that individuals should act in a way that produces the greatest societal good. When evaluating the consequences of an action, the best action is the one that results in the greatest good for the greatest number of people. All possible actions (and inactions) should be considered in order to determine which is best for society. Our democratic processes, in which the majority rules, are an illustration of utilitarianism (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990).

As an individual is more sensitive to utilitarian ethical philosophies, the more likely they are to subordinate individual good for the collective good. Kiasuism is related to individual gains and competitive standing, and thus “the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few” would be antithetical to these individuals. Therefore we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: There will be a negative relationship between a utilitarian ethical orientation and kiasu tendency.

2. Methods

2.1. Sample and Procedures

To test the hypotheses, 149 undergraduate students from a large public university located in the southwestern United States were recruited for participation in this study. All subjects were senior-level students enrolled in upper division management classes taught by the two authors. All data were gathered using questionnaires administered at the end of the semester. Participation was voluntary and students who elected not to complete the survey were given an equally attractive alternative exercise. Approval to conduct the survey was obtained from the Institutional Review Board, and participants were assured their responses would be kept confidential. Overall, 126 usable surveys were obtained from the students, for an overall response rate of 85 percent. The average age of the respondents was 23 years old, 56% were males, and all were majoring in some form of business (11% accounting, 2% CIS, 3% economics, 16% finance, 54% management, and 14% marketing). T-tests on all of the demographic and academic major variables revealed no significant differences in the survey results between the two professors' courses so all surveys were compiled into a single dataset.

2.2. Dependent Measure

The dependent measure for this study was kiasu tendency. Kiasu tendency measures the overall tendency towards kiasu behaviors, both positive and negative, across an array of every-day contexts, such as eating at restaurants and shopping at stores. Kiasu tendency was measured using the 10-item scale developed by Ho et al. (1998). They developed the scale by first conducting structured interviews with 90 students in Singapore and Australia. These interviews were content analyzed to develop a series of questionnaire items. The items were scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = never to 7 = all the time) and summed to arrive at a single result, with a higher score indicating greater kiasu tendencies. Sample items include "I rush for a seat on the bus" and "I push my way onto a crowded elevator." Reliability for the scale was calculated at .70.

2.3. Independent Measures

This study examines the effects of sensitivity towards procedural justice and ethical orientations on kiasuism.

2.3.1. Procedural justice sensitivity. Procedural justice sensitivity was measured using the seven-item scale developed by Colquitt (2001). This is a 7-point Likert scale assessing one's sensitivity to procedural fairness within a given context. The scale was designed to be slightly modified to fit the testing situation (Colquitt, 2001). Since this study was conducted in an academic setting, the items were written to assess the procedures governing grades. Sample items include "You have been able to express your views and feeling regarding the grading procedures" and "Have the grading procedures been free of bias?" Responses are scaled from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The items are summed to arrive at an individual's overall perceptions of the fairness of the procedures employed in a given context, with higher scores reflecting greater perception of procedural fairness. We calculated a reliability of .74 for the scale.

2.3.2. Ethical orientation. Attitudes towards egoism and utilitarianism were assessed using the Multidimensional Ethical Scale originally developed by Reidenbach and Robin (1988). Subjects read two different business scenarios describing a situation and an employee's response to the situation. The respondents are asked to evaluate the employee's actions using 12 seven-point Likert scale questions. The items comprise subscales for each of the ethical theories. The items in each subscale are summed, with higher scores indicating a stronger orientation towards the ethical theory. Sample questions for the egoism subscale ask the respondents to rank on a one-to-seven scale whether the employee's actions were "self-promoting for me" and "personally satisfying for me." Sample questions for the utilitarianism subscale ask the respondents to rank on a one-to-seven scale whether the employee's actions were "produces the greatest utility" and "maximizes benefits while minimizes harm." The reported reliabilities of the scenarios were .85 (Reidenbach & Robin, 1988).

2.4. Control Measures

To assess the impact of procedural justice and ethical orientations on kiasu tendency, we also controlled for all of the variables assessed in prior studies (cf., Kirby et al., 2010). In particular, they were sex, age, socially desirable responses, maximization, conscientiousness, and distributive justice sensitivity.

2.4.1. Sex. Prior research has found differences in levels of competitiveness between men and women (cf., Campbell, 2002). In a recent study, Raviv and Netz (2007) found that men rated competition as being a key reason for pursuing an activity significantly more than did women. Niederle and Vesterlund (2007) found that women have a greater tendency than men to shy away from competitive situations. Therefore, we control for the effects of sex on kiasu tendencies, with females being coded as 0 and males as 1.

2.4.2. Age. Studies have found that older adults value competition less highly than do younger ones (Duda & Tappe, 1988). In their recent study, Raviv and Netz (2007) also found significant differences by age in how important individuals rated competition as a reason for participating in an activity. Even small ranges in age can be informative and should be controlled when conducting research using college students (Morgan & Kunkel, 2007). Therefore, we control for the effects of age in years on kiasu tendencies.

2.4.3. Socially desirable responses (SDR). Social desirability can be considered a style of responding that contaminates and distorts measures of psychological variables (Nicholson & Hogan, 1990). Therefore, SDR must be controlled in any study using psychological variables (Crant, 1995). SDR was assessed using Reynold's (1982) 13-item social desirability scale, with their reported reliability of .76. Sample items include "No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener" and "I have never deliberately said something to hurt someone's feelings."

2.4.4. Maximization. Maximization is the trait that drives people to seek to optimize their actions, and has been shown to be significantly related to competitiveness (Kirby et al., 2010). Maximization was measured using the 13-item Maximization Scale developed by Schwartz, Ward, Monterosso, Lyubomirsky, White, & Lehman (2002). This is a 7-point Likert scale assessing one's tendency to maximize. Sample items are "I never settle for second best" and "No matter how satisfied I am with my job, it's only right for me to be on the lookout for better opportunities." Responses are scaled from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The items are summed to arrive at an individual's maximization, with higher scores reflecting greater maximization. Schwartz et al. (2002) report a reliability of .71 for the scale.

2.4.5. Conscientiousness. Conscientiousness is the trait of being careful and meeting one's obligations. It was measured using the Factor III items from the 50-item International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg, Johnson, Eber, Hogan, Ashton, Cloninger, & Gough, 2006). This is a 7-point Likert scale assessing one's conscientiousness. Sample items are "I am always prepared" and "I shirk my duties." Responses are scaled from 1 (very inaccurate) to 7 (very accurate). Four of the items are reverse-scored, and then they are all summed to arrive at an individual's conscientiousness score, with lower scores reflecting greater conscientiousness. The scale has a reported reliability of .75 (IPIP, 2008).

2.4.6. Distributive justice sensitivity. Distributive justice sensitivity is related to competition, as they are both concerned with improved outcomes through increased effort (Kirby et al., 2010). It was measured using the four-item scale developed by Colquitt (2001). This is a 7-point Likert scale assessing one's

perception of distributive fairness within a given context and can be slightly modified to fit the testing situation (Colquitt, 2001). Since this study was conducted in an academic setting, the items were written to assess the distribution of grades. Sample items include “My current GPA accurately reflects the effort I have put into my classes,” and “My current GPA is justified given my academic performance.” Responses are scaled from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The items are summed to arrive at an individual’s overall perceptions of the fairness of the distribution of outcomes in a given context, with higher scores reflecting greater perception of distributive fairness. We calculated a reliability of .91 for the scale.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients for the variables in the study. Multiple measures of different elements of the same phenomenon are important for improved construct validity; however they are frequently intercorrelated with one another (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). However, an examination of the correlation matrix indicates that all of the correlation coefficients are considerably less than 0.8 in absolute value, a frequently cited and commonly used threshold for the detection of multicollinearity (Kennedy, 2008).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Kiasu Tendency	28.79	7.36									
2. Sex	.56	.50	-.14								
3. Age	23.13	2.76	-.26**	.15							
4. SDR	5.50	2.53	-.19*	.11	.05						
5. Maximization	56.37	9.38	.20*	.04	-.18*	-.21*					
6. Conscientiousness	52.41	8.04	-.09	-.02	.03	.12	-.17*				
7. Distributive Fairness	17.80	6.70	.04	-.03	-.01	-.01	.10	.07			
8. Procedural Justice	31.40	6.51	.19*	.09	.04	.13	.02	.10	.31**		
9. Egoism	4.47	2.19	.23*	.12	-.21*	-.05	.11	.02	.10	-.01	
10. Utilitarianism	6.27	2.24	.16	.08	-.23**	-.16	.02	-.03	-.11	-.11	.45**

* significant at $p < .05$

** significant at $p < .01$

3.2. Hierarchical Regression Models

To first assess the impact of the independent variables on kiasu tactics, hierarchical regression analysis was employed. This technique was used to assess the impact of the predictor measures on kiasu tendency over-and-above the effects of the control variables, and is consistent with the methodology applied in other explorations of the nomological net of kiasuism (cf., Kirby & Ross, 2007). Following the recommendations of Cohen and Cohen (1983), the control variables were first entered into the initial equation. Because prior research showed a relationship between distributive justice sensitivity and competitiveness (Kirby et al., 2010), we next wanted to see if procedural justice sensitivity had any additional impact. Therefore, procedural justice was entered in the second block. Finally, the impact of ethical orientations was assessed over-and-above justice sensitivity. Thus, the measures of egoism and utilitarian ethical orientations were added in the third block.

An important issue in hierarchical regression analysis is that of practical significance. Although a measure can be statistically significant, questions can be raised over whether it is practically significant. Does the measure improve decision making and task prediction enough to justify its inclusion? Yates and Taub (2003) argue that, in behavioral research, if a measure is relatively easy and cost-free to administer, it can be said to have practical significance if it aids in the prediction of the outcome under study.

While there are multiple ways of determining practical significance, a widely accepted method is through an assessment of incremental validity (Hunsley & Meyer, 2003; Sechrest, 1963). Incremental validity is defined as “the extent to which a measure adds to the prediction of a criterion beyond what can be predicted with other data” (Hunsley & Meyer, 2003, p. 443). Incremental validity can be assessed by calculating a measure’s semi-partial r when using hierarchical regression analysis (Cohen, 1992). The semi-partial r is computed as the square root of the R^2 value for the regression equation (Hunsley & Meyer, 2003). Most relationships fall within $r = .10$ to $.30$ in behavioral research (Hunsley & Meyer, 2003). Cohen (1992) identifies this as the small to medium range. As variables are added to an equation, r increments generally decrease because variables in behavioral research are frequently interrelated (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Hunsley and Meyer (2003) propose when a third (or more) variable is included in a regression analysis, a semi-partial r of $.15$ or greater is a reasonable contribution to the equation, thus indicating practical significance.

The results of the hierarchical regression equations testing Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are shown in Table 2. All three steps in the model are significant, and the F value in each model is also significant, signifying that each block of variables significantly improves the explanatory power over the preceding model. Also, the semi-partial r values for all blocks exceed Hunsley and Meyer’s $.15$ threshold, thereby indicating the models have practical significance. In Step 2, procedural

justice sensitivity is positive and significant, thus supporting Hypothesis 1. In Step 3, orientation towards egoism is positive and significant, thus supporting Hypothesis 2. However, orientation towards utilitarianism is not significant, thus failing to support Hypothesis 3.

Table 2: Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Kiasu Tendency

Variable	Step 1 (controls)			Step 2 (procedural)			Step 3 (ethics)		
	B	s.e.	b	B	s.e.	b	B	s.e.	b
Constant	41.87	8.72		36.92	8.71		30.82	9.39	
Sex	-1.90	1.29	-.13	-2.08	1.26	-.14	-2.62	1.26	-.18*
Age	-.57	.23	-.22*	-.59	.23	-.22**	-.45	.23	-.17*
SDR	-.31	.26	-.10	-.39	.26	-.13	-.37	.25	-.13
Maximization	.10	.07	.12	.09	.07	.11	.08	.07	.10
Conscientiousness	-.06	.08	-.06	-.07	.08	-.08	-.08	.08	-.09
Distributive	.02	.09	.02	-.06	.10	-.05	-.08	.10	-.07
Procedural				.28	.10	.24**	.29	.10	.25**
Egoism							.66	.32	.19*
Utilitarian							.12	.32	.04
F-score	2.88**			3.61**			3.58**		
Δ F-score	2.88**			7.15**			3.03*		
R ²	.13			.18			.22		
Δ R ²	.13			.05			.04		
Adjusted R ²	.08			.13			.16		
Semi-partial <i>r</i>	.36			.22			.20		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

4. Discussion

In light of the recent multitude of ethically questionable actions that have severely impacted the global economy, both the AACSB and the United Nations are concerned with ethics education in the classroom in an effort to advance ethical awareness and guide future business leaders as they take on leadership positions after graduation. As this and prior studies show, there is a significant relationship between a person's ethical orientation and tendency to engage in competitive behaviors. Given the previously demonstrated positive relationship between kiasuism and academic performance, this study investigated individual variables effecting kiasuism in an effort to better understand the individual components of ethics. This study built upon prior research and investigated the predictive impact of procedural justice sensitivity and ethical orientation on kiasuism. Analysis determined that sensitivity towards procedural fairness was a significant predictor of kiasu tendencies. This is not surprising since an instrumental approach to procedural justice posits that individuals deliberately work to change their

circumstances, thereby increasing the likelihood of their actions leading to desirable current decision outcomes.

We feel that the biggest contribution of this study is the inclusion of ethical orientation. Ethical orientations guide a person's perceptions and actions (O'Neill, 1993). Therefore, it is a logical finding that one's predisposition towards an ethical orientation is going to impact their tendency towards kiasu behaviors. As previously mentioned, egoism is the ethical school of thought where the best action is considered to be the one that maximizes an individual's long-run self-interest. Kiasuism is a term for a type of competitive behavior designed to yield precisely this type of outcome.

It is interesting that there was no significant relationship between a utilitarian orientation and kiasuism. As previously discussed, utilitarianism posits that the best outcome is the one that maximizes benefits for the collective, rather than the individual. We propose that culture may be a factor mitigating any relationship in this study. This study was collected in the southwestern United States, where there is a very strong "rugged individualism" regional and national culture. The United States is one of the most individualistic cultures in the world (Coon & Kemmelmeir, 2001; Hofstede, 1980). Within the U.S., this norm is particularly strong in the western part of the country (Vandello & Cohen, 1999). It is possible that individualism is overriding the elements of collectivism expected from a utilitarian approach to ethics. Within this culture, individualism can be seen as the vehicle to maximize collective utility. As egoism is extreme individualism, in this culture it can be argued that the way you achieve "the greatest good for the greatest number" is by each individual pursuing their own best interests. Therefore, in this sample it is not surprising to find utilitarianism and egoism intercorrelated.

It is also interesting that the control variables of age and sex were significant in the final analysis. Both younger subjects and women were more likely to report kiasu tendencies than were older subjects and men. The finding that older people value competition less highly than younger people is consistent with prior research (cf., Duda & Tappe, 1988). However the finding that women reported higher kiasu tendencies than men is puzzling. This may have to do with self-selection into competitive business fields. Given the history of sexual discrimination in business, many women believe they need to be better performers than men just to be treated equally (Brown & Pechman, 1987). Thus, women enrolled in business majors may very well be more competitive than average, and feel a greater need to engage in self-advancing behaviors than men do. Additionally, several studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between kiasuism and academic performance. This explanation may be supported by the fact that female respondents in this study have a higher average GPA (3.13) than the male students (2.99) ($t = 1.90, p < .05$).

4.1. Teaching Implications

Ethical leadership at multiple levels impacts the behaviors of subordinates (Schauerbroeck, Hannah, Avolio, Kozlowski, Lord, Trevino, Dimotakis, & Peng, 2012). By informing students about the linkages between justice orientations, ethical orientations, and kiasu tendencies they will be in a better position to appreciate their responsibilities as ethical role models in organizations. Research has shown that leaders who are self-reflective, advanced ethical reasoners are perceived as being more ethical leaders (Jordan, Brown, & Trevino, 2013).

Part of teaching strategic management is teaching students to look for ways of achieving competitive advantage. Using the finding of this study, those students concerned with procedural justice and those with a tendency towards an egoistic outlook are going to exhibit more extreme competitive tendencies. While these may very well help them achieve competitive advantages, at least in the short run, they should also be made aware that extreme competitiveness can have significant negative consequences as well.

4.2. Limitations and Future Research

The fact that this study was conducted in one university in the southwestern United States limits the generalizability of the findings. Since cultural differences exist across different regions in the United States (Coon & Kimmelmeir, 2001; Vandello & Cohen, 1999), replicating this study in other regions would inform our understanding. The context within which any study is conducted also has an impact on the findings. We choose to assess the impact of procedural justice sensitivity on kiasuism in an academic classroom setting. This is a limitation of all extant observations of the construct of kiasuism which have been in academic settings and all have utilized kiasuism to predict behaviors impacting student academic performance (Ho et al., 1998; Hwang et al., 2002; Hwang, 2003; Hwang & Arbuagh, 2006; Kirby & Ross, 2007; Kirby et al., 2010). Studies that measure kiasuism in non-academic setting are needed to more fully develop the construct and our understanding of extreme competitiveness. Given the increased GPAs for female students, future study might focus on female students enrolled in non-business majors in comparison to female business majors. Finally, an interesting methodological approach may be to return to the qualitative interview format originally employed by Ho et al (1998).

4.3. Conclusion

In sum, this study provides further answers to the question of what drives people towards kiasu tendencies. As educators, this is an important field of investigation

given the relationship between kiasuism and academic performance. The results of this study indicate that ethical orientation does play a significant role in predicting kiasuism. The more egoistic a student's ethical outlook, the more likely he or she is to report kiasu tendencies. Additionally, sensitivity to procedural justice plays a role. When people are sensitive to how allocations are determined, people with the ability to make changes may attempt to utilize kiasuism to modify the procedures in an effort to yield desirable decision outcomes. This study expands upon prior research, but has only exposed the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Kiasuism is a relatively new area of study in the realm of academic performance, and further research is necessary to better understand how, why, and where it manifests itself.

As previously noted, competitiveness is a significant factor impacting a person's skill in achieving strategic success. Understanding the factors driving this competitiveness is necessary for strategic management educators to better teach the necessary skills and how to effectively harness them. This is particularly true as the construct is explored in relationship to the study of justice and ethics in business. As the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business Ethics Education Task Force reminds us, understanding and promoting ethics education in business schools is one of our key responsibilities as educators.

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