

Synergistic Ignatian and Business Values for Efficacious Business Ethics

Jason Cavich and Ravi Chinta

Nova Southeastern University, USA

Abstract. Many organizations are struggling to be run in an ethical fashion that consider all stakeholders and contribute comprehensively to society. As is true in much cross-discipline research, concepts and values can inform and enhance one another to produce broader contributions to society. This paper suggests this is the case when cross-pollinating Ignatian and business values for teaching business ethics that results in more ethical organizations. However, teaching Ignatian values as an ethical view in business schools is fraught with several practical issues including its place within the broader ethics literature. Our paper addresses a way that Ignatian values can be taught within a discipline-specific framework – namely by cross sectioning the values with “innovation” and “efficiency”. The practical utility of this framework is illustrated through several real-life examples. This framework is pragmatic and useful in guiding the personal and professional lives of students and organizations who seek to acquire business knowledge and intertwines the fields of management, ethics, and spirituality in a practical manner. The framework proposed in this paper provides moral and spiritual guidance for teaching, living, and running ethical organizations.

Keywords: business ethics, Jesuit values, Five Gifts of Ignatian heritage, innovation, efficiency.

1. Introduction

Business education is facing many challenges, especially in the teaching of business ethics. Recent review and meta-analysis articles on teaching business ethics show that its impact is far below what would be expected or hoped for in helping instill values within individuals that would lead them to run organizations in an ethical fashion that can lead to higher returns, happier employees, and greater contributions to society (Floyd, Xu, Atkins, & Caldwell 2013; Medeiros *et al.* 2017; Waples, Antes, Murphy, Connelly, & Mumford 2009). Daily organizational scandals in the headlines that demonstrate greed, sexism, and selfishness abound. So, how do business schools, who have been called upon to help remedy organizational scandals, increase the effectiveness of teaching business ethics leading to more ethical organizations? While there may be numerous pathways to answer this question, they have remained elusive as evidenced by the very mixed research results (Medeiros *et al.* 2017). These authors propose a values-based education where the worldview and mission

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inculcate many of the perspectives and behaviors that drive highly ethical organizations to significantly outperform less ethical ones (Ewing 2019; Ludolf 2015).

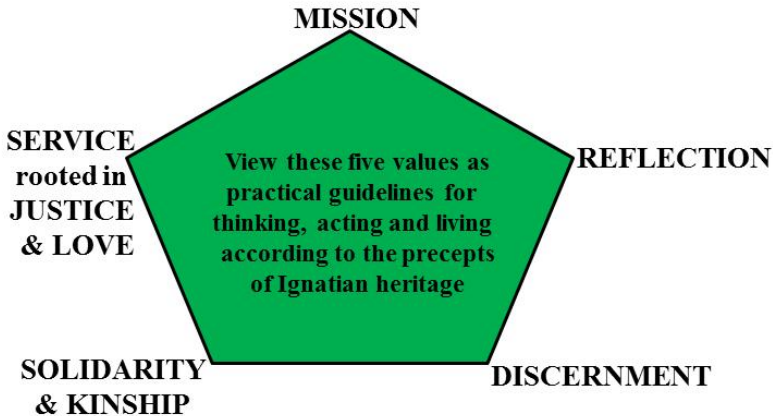
Jesuit universities are one type of institution that promote values-based education that may offer key insights into how teaching business ethics can be more impactful and lasting despite the challenging university environment. Considering the changing times, the more competitive nature of higher education, and pressures to increase enrollment to head off economic issues in the long term, universities are called upon to examine their mission and long-term goals. Jesuit universities face these challenges as well, and based on a 450-year-old model of Jesuit ideals, academic rigor, and excellence, they must not only sustain this marriage of ideas and excellence, but strengthen their focus to include new growth goals. The reality of this expansion includes increased faculty, employees, and students from a wider range of diverse backgrounds. To continue to grow, yet also grow in the level of commitment to a contemporary vision based on the ideals first set forth by St. Ignacio de Loyola, one must recognize that the Ignatian values are unique and can offer a sustained competitive advantage for organizations, students, and the teaching of business ethics. In addition, we suggest there are generalizable learnings from the Jesuit perspective that can enhance and/or connect with the secular teaching of business ethics.

Great organizations are constantly improving, changing, innovating, and incorporating ideas from any discipline that will help their cause. However, researchers have also discovered that what makes these organizations great is their steadfast commitment to their mission (Collins & Porras 2005). This position paper will examine the Ignatian values set forth by Xavier University President's Discernment Group (Xavier University, Cincinnati 2009), and will expand upon the model by integrating aspects of business and management to improve the efficiency of the university as an entity while at the same time permitting significant innovation in its design and operation. Innovation and efficiency are not gifts endowed upon us, but are human constructions that translate the gifts into more practice outcomes.

The remainder of this paper is organized into five sections. In the following section, we outline the Five Gifts model of the Ignatian heritage. Next, we present an expanded model created by including the business concepts of innovation and efficiency to the Five Gifts model. In the third section that follows, we illustrate the linkages between the Five Gifts, innovation and efficiency, and teaching business ethics. Fourth, we suggest that innovation and efficiency when cross-referenced with the Five Gifts model make the model more pragmatic for teaching ethics in business education leading to more ethical organizations and practical application. Fifth, we discuss how the Jesuit values in this paper connect or not to the existing ethics literature in hope that some broader insights and generalizations can inform the broader ethics' audience.

Figure 1

THE (FIVE GIFTS MODEL OF IGNATIAN HERITAGE)



2. The Jesuit Values Model

Dulles (2007: p.10) states that a gift of grace is conferred not for one's personal sanctification but for the benefit of others. The President's Discernment Group at Xavier University identified five expressions or "gifts" of Ignatian Heritage: Mission, Reflection, Discernment, Solidarity & Kinship, and Service Rooted in Justice & Love (Xavier University, Cincinnati 2009). At Xavier, the president charged the discernment groups through communal discernment, education, immersion, and spirituality, to consider ways to deepen the Jesuit identity across the campus. These values are the foundation of the University and can enhance the teaching of business ethics. Xavier uses the second-order of Ignatian values as each Jesuit institution may use slightly different orders. The second order is not necessarily better than the other orders, but it is what they selected to guide their institution, and for this paper, the second order provides an exemplar of the power of values-based education that the other orders may be able to do as well. The authors leave that up to future researchers.

The **Mission** of Jesuit universities focuses on academic excellence that is rooted in a Catholic faith tradition. Jesuits are one religious order of many in the Catholic faith that has its own religious and social traditions. The Gift of Mission, as identified by the discernment group, calls for the university to "attract and nurture students and employees who are interested in understanding and affirming this heritage." Xavier is part of a network of 28 universities and 52 high schools in the United States and 160 institutions worldwide with a heritage dating

back to 1548 (Mooney, D. 2002 p. 1). A Jesuit education values academic excellence and rigor, an education that challenges students to reach their fullest potential and “...seeks to develop the whole student-mind, body and spirit” (Jesuit Education and Ignatian Pedagogy, A desktop Primer). Jesuit universities have excelled at their mission as demonstrated by their rankings and powerful brand (Freeman 2018). These are evidence-based indicators of the power of a values-based education.

Several precepts of Jesuit philosophy, such as *Magis*, *Cura Personalis* and *God in all Things* are integrated in the first gift of Mission. *Magis* is “striving for more, striving for excellence,” according to Marik and Mooney (2004, p. 12). *Magis* involves passionately working towards excellence, seeking greater knowledge, and finding more purposeful ways in which to carry out our life goals and work. “The Latin root *excel* conveys the sense of rising out or rising above. That is what excellence is: *rising above ourselves, and lifting those around us, by getting the most from our talents and gifts*” (Lowney 2009, p. 80). The most recent definition of *Magis* is “the more universal good” which is closely linked to the Society of Jesus model, “for the Greater Glory of God” (Geger 2012). This unending quest for excellence is conceptual in the Jesuit philosophy, but is emphasized as a clear goal in business management as *kaizen*-continuous improvement of the status quo.

A Jesuit Education values *Cura personalis*, “Care of the (Whole, Individual) Person” (Mooney 2002, p. 2). As part of its mission, faculty at a Jesuit institution must consider the multiplicity of student needs including their academic, spiritual, physical, emotional, and social well-being. Faculty strive to educate and care for the whole person by encouraging students to find appropriate ways to deal with stress, to set priorities, to balance work with reflection and to meet the responsibilities of various academic pursuits during the semester.

Finding God in all things and in all circumstances of life, is another Jesuit Value inherent in the Mission. This mission challenges faculty, staff, and students to consider encounters with others and our environment in a positive manner; to see the good in everything and every experience. Although sometimes challenging, the community of a Jesuit University is encouraged to be open to and to recognize our spiritual creator in the simple, difficult, and joyful moments of everyday life. Part of the mission is acknowledging and appreciating that all that exists is a gift from God.

Reflection has been identified as another gift of Ignatian Heritage. This gift applies as much today as it did 500 years ago, during the time of the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola. “The Gift of Reflection invites us to pause and consider the world around us and our place within it. It calls us to infuse a culture of attention, reflection and reverence throughout the university” (Traub & Mooney, 2010, p. 36). Faculty and staff propose various means of utilizing the gift of reflection. Luther G. Smith asks a series of self-reflective questions to determine positive results of life experiences (in Mooney 2002, p. 13). In *What do we mean by an Ignatian Vision?* Steve Yandell suggests that “...reflection is the