CHARACTER IN THE PROFESSIONS:

HOW VIRTUE INFORMS PRACTICE

RESEARCH REPORT

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The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is a unique and leading centre for the examination of how character and virtues impact on individuals and society. The Centre was founded in 2012 by Professor James Arthur. Based at the University of Birmingham, it has a dedicated team of 20 academics from a range of disciplines, including: philosophy, psychology, education, theology and sociology.

With its focus on excellence, the Centre has a robust, rigorous research and evidence-based approach that is objective and non-political. It offers world-class research on the importance of developing good character and virtues and the benefits they bring to individuals and society. In undertaking its own innovative research, the Centre also seeks to partner with leading academics from other universities around the world and to develop strong strategic partnerships.

A key conviction underlying the existence of the Centre is that the virtues that make up good character can be learnt and taught. We believe these have been largely neglected in schools and in the professions. It is also a key conviction that the more people exhibit good character and virtues, the healthier our society. As such, the Centre undertakes development projects seeking to promote the practical applications of its research evidence.

VIRTUES IN THE PROFESSIONS

Character in the Professions:

How Virtue Informs Practice

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Foreword

The University of Birmingham has many firsts to its name since its existence. In our December 2019 Degree Ceremonies, for the first time we awarded degrees in Character Education. We awarded the MA Character Education which is the first and only distance learning MA Character Education programme in the world focusing on the theory and practice of human flourishing. The programme is run by the University's Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. The Centre is widely recognised and respected as one of the world's finest centres specialising in how character and virtues impact individuals and society.

This research report, *Character in the Professions: How Virtue Informs Practice,* gives practical examples of ethical dilemmas faced by professionals and analyses these at different stages of a professional's career (trainees, entry-level, established professionals) by profession. The findings offer encouraging signs that the majority of professionals seem to select their actions based on the ethical implications of a situation. The report also offers considerations of why and when professionals may choose to 'whistleblow' on their colleagues. Specifically, the findings of the report offer new insights into the valuable role that virtue-led judgements have in guiding appropriate practice when professionals face ethical conflicts at work. Integrating character and virtues into professional training and working cultures will hopefully help professionals make sound ethical decisions. The report makes practical recommendations of how character and virtue can be integrated and embedded within professional organisations.

As a qualified chartered accountant, at one of the world's leading and largest firms – what is today EY, it was embedded in us to not only develop an expertise of the profession, gained through education and practised throughout our careers, but also a recognition of the virtue of integrity; important at all career stages and throughout one's professional development and lifelong learning. I am glad that this report recognises integrity as fundamental to good professional practice.

The report also explores character in three dimensions – (1) Interpersonal care: kindness, gratitude, forgiveness, teamwork, leadership, fairness and appreciation of beauty; (2) Self-control: honesty, prudence, perseverance, modesty, self-regulation, fairness, judgement and perspective; (3) Inquisitiveness: curiosity, creativity, zest, bravery, love of learning, hope, judgement, perspective and appreciation of beauty. As expected, established professionals reported higher virtue-based reasoning and also gave a higher degree of prominence to the character dimension of self-control.

The idea that professionals can demonstrate inquisitiveness reminds me of what Mahatma Gandhi said, 'Live as if you are going to die tomorrow and learn as if you are going to live forever'! This report will be a valuable read for professional institutes, firms and educational establishments to incorporate, embed and apply 'good' character at all levels of professional career.

Lord Bilimoria CBE DL
Founder and Chairman of Cobra Beer
Vice President of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Chancellor, University of Birmingham

Executive Summary

Professional bodies and their members are held in high regard by the public and are expected to demonstrate service which is competent, knowledgeable, and ethical. The upholding of this public reputation, however, has seemingly led to cultures of excessive auditing and performance monitoring becoming central within contemporary professional governance. Professionals are obligated to adhere to codes of conduct that aim to ensure quality practices, with sanctions usually imposed for breaches in these standards. Moreover, discourse regarding professional ethics has typically been grounded in code- or rule-based distinctions at the expense of qualities of character. As a consequence, professionals may be in danger of becoming overly focussed on meeting performance metrics and prescribed rules rather than applying the independent judgement fundamental to ethical practice. Building on research regarding character and professional ethics by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, this report examines how professionals may use virtue-based and rule-based reasoning to guide their professional practice. The report also explores whether the dimensions of character to which professionals give importance differ between distinct domains and those at different career stages.

Drawing on data gathered by the Jubilee Centre between 2012 and 2017, this report examines how 3,502 training, entry-level and established professionals from five distinct professions (law, medicine, teaching, business and nursing) responded to ethical dilemmas and differed in their self-reported character strengths. Specifically, the report explores:

- The extent to which professionals relied upon virtue-based, rule-based, and self-serving reasoning to justify their action choices in different professional situations. These situations specifically concern scenarios that require an ethical judgement between a chosen course of action and the stipulated regulations or instructions. The report also includes situations regarding the reporting of misconduct (ie, *whistleblowing*).

- If professionals at different career stages relied upon specific types of moral reasoning to guide their professional practice.
- The extent to which professionals gave prominence to distinct dimensions of character and if these distinctions vary across professional fields and different career stages.

Key Findings

The findings of the report offer new insights into the valuable role that virtue-led judgements may have in guiding appropriate and ethical practice.

- 69% of professionals indicated they would deviate from instruction or regulations when a potentially more ethical action was available. This decision to take the alternative action was associated with greater virtue-based reasoning than those opting to follow the instructions.
- 72% of professionals indicated they would not attempt to gain an ethically questionable benefit if instructed to do so. This decision was associated with higher virtue-based and rule-based reasoning, compared to those attempting to obtain the unethical benefit.
- Professionals' decisions to whistleblow on colleagues were associated with greater virtue-based reasoning, however this varied between professions. In some professions, speaking in private with colleagues was associated with greater virtue-based reasoning. These findings may be related to how whistleblowing is promoted within a profession or the perceived severity of the wrongdoing in question.
- Professionals opting not to formally report incidents of misconduct due to self-serving reasoning may be indicative of *'organisational silence'*. This pattern was most noticeable in professions where the decision to whistleblow was more predominant and when the wrongdoing could have severe implications.

- Established professionals reported greater virtue-based reasoning when responding to professional situations, compared to pre-service professionals who reported greater self-serving reasoning.
- Established professionals gave a *self-control* dimension of character greater prominence, compared to pre-service professionals, who gave greater importance to a dimension of *interpersonal care* for others.

Overall, the report evidences that virtue-based reasoning may underpin professionals' decision-making when they face ethical conflicts at work. Thus, it may be worthwhile integrating notions of character and virtue into professional training and working cultures. By helping professionals ground their practice upon virtue-based judgements, it is hoped they will be better equipped to make sound ethical decisions in every situation they face. The report offers a series of recommendations for how character and virtue may be integrated and embedded within professional institutions through their in-service workplace operations, regulatory documents, and pre-service training programmes.

> ETHICAL CONDUCT GROWS OUT OF SOUND CHARACTER THAT LEADS YOU TO RESPOND WITH MATURITY, JUDGEMENT, DISCRETION, WISDOM, AND PRUDENCE.
>
> *Corey, Corey, and Callahan (2003, p.11)*

1 **Purpose of the Report**

Individuals working in professional fields are required to operate within constantly changing environments. Professionals are held accountable to their clients, customers, patients, or students, and are often expected to act with qualities such as honesty, compassion, and fairness (Jubilee Centre, 2016). Professionals play a central role in the day-to-day operations of organisations and are required to uphold the reputation of their distinct profession through high standards of practice. Furthermore, professionals have responsibilities to help foster collaborative and supportive working environments for their colleagues. There is also an implicit demand for professionals to act as role models for the wider public, and society at large, by promoting values such as social justice, humanity, and equality (Carr et al., 2011). To meet these multiple demands, working professionals need to undertake a process of careful discernment when operationalising the best course of professional action. This task can be even more difficult when certain scenarios bring about demands that are in conflict with one another (ie, an action may be in the best interest of a client or patient but not the organisation, or vice versa).

Professionals are also bound to operate in accord with specified codes of conduct and regulations. These regulations provide a set of prescribed standards of practice that are important for safeguarding against non-standardised practices (Higgs-Kleyn and Kapelianis, 1999). Despite the importance of these regulations, it seems implausible they will sufficiently detail instructions for every eventuality of professional life, given the complex environments in which professionals work. Professionals that habitually base their decision-making upon regulatory policies and guidelines, without consideration of the contextual circumstances and requirements,

may be at risk of incidents of inappropriate practice. Even when acting in accord with such regulations, professionals should do so by implementing sound virtue-informed judgement to ensure their conduct is both ethical and appropriate. Such considerations have led to increasing calls for character-led professional judgement to be brought to the forefront of workplace discussions (Crossan et al., 2017).

The Jubilee Centre has attempted to bring attention to the valuable role that character and virtue can have in fostering ethical decision-making within UK-based professions, including law (Arthur et al., 2014), medicine (Arthur et al., 2015a), teaching (Arthur et al., 2015b), business and finance (Kristjánsson et al., 2017a), nursing (Kristjánsson et al., 2017b) and the British Army (Arthur et al., 2018). This series of research reports has shed light on the importance of professionals' 'good' character, as well as the influential impact that professional bodies and working environments can have on promoting, or hindering, 'good' character in their members. The current research into *Character in the Professions: How Virtue Informs Practice* aimed to take a broader look at these profession-specific findings by examining commonalities or dissimilarities in character that may exist when considering the professions collectively. Initial work identified groups of professionals who vary in their character values (see Arthur et al., 2019a). In short, this research showed that professionals who gave importance to qualities of character were more likely to report a sense of professional purpose towards a societal benefit compared to those who underrated character qualities. In addition, a volume of professional regulatory documents have been examined to assess the extent to which these codes of conduct may promote character and judgement within professional contexts (see Earl and Moulin-Stożek, 2019).

This report attempts to uncover new information regarding the application of character and virtue in the professional realm. Specifically, a series of research questions were outlined and explored:

- How do professionals selecting different courses of action vary in the type of moral reasoning they use to justify their action, and do these responses differ depending on the professional situation?
- Do professionals at different stages of their career vary in the type of moral reasoning they rely upon?
- Do professionals from distinct professional fields and at different career stages vary in the dimensions of character to which they give importance?

By gaining insights into these questions, the present report aims to offer new theoretical knowledge about how character and virtue may be operationalised in professional contexts. Understanding how professionals draw upon character virtues and regulatory codes when making decisions may be particularly telling of the true ethical nature of their practice.

> **LEADERS WORTH FOLLOWING DO THE RIGHT THING BECAUSE IT IS THE RIGHT THING. VIRTUE IS NOT A MEANS TO AN END. IT IS THE END.**
>
> *Andy Stanley*

2 Background

The decisions and actions of professionals, and their organisations, have important implications for the wider public. Working professionals are at the very core of professional operations and are relied upon for moral probity to ensure diligent and effective service for the betterment of others and their organisation. Recent scholarship in professional ethics, however, has highlighted a growing number of obstacles encountered within different professions, which seem to inhibit the realisation of this ideal model of professional life (Blond *et al.,* 2015). Emerging examples of ethical failings risk eroding the public's confidence in the professions and seem to insinuate an apparent divide between moral principles and the realities of professional practice (eg, Dixon-Woods *et al*., 2011).

Growing cultures of managerialism, auditing and performance metrics may sit at the heart of this growing disconnect between the altruistic origins of the professions and their contemporary service. Such 'bureaucratisation' has been described as a form of 'social control' over the professions (Gustafson, 1982). Many private sector businesses, and their directors, are increasingly motivated by share prices and profit margins, which are often used as motivators to drive professional practice (Furlong *et al*., 2017). Practitioners in the health and education sectors regularly face challenges of excessive patient/student numbers, growing workloads under tighter time pressures, and restricted access to resources due to budget cuts. Under these conditions, professionals may be at risk of falling into a dangerous trap of feeling coerced to blindly follow instruction and mundane routine, without applying the autonomy required to determine ethical conduct. Although distinct professions will inherently have particular standard procedures and objectives, the true meaning of a professional cannot be fully captured by simple adherence to regulatory codes or auditing processes adopted by particular professional bodies. An intention of this report is to uncover the interplay between professionals' autonomous judgement and their adherence to professional regulations, and to reveal how both may work in combination to shape professionals' decision-making.

2.1 UNDERSTANDING OF A 'PROFESSIONAL'

The term 'professional' has sometimes been used to refer to individuals who are paid for their work or to signify a person who has achieved a high level of efficiency and quality in their work. Such interpretations would imply that any worker, in any trade or occupation, could be deemed a 'professional', with the potential to demonstrate 'professionalism' if they reach a desired standard of work. A more traditional interpretation of a 'professional' however, relates to individuals working within a particular category of occupation (Carr, 1999). This prestige of 'professional' status is often ascribed to the occupations included in this report (eg, medicine, law, teaching, business and nursing) as they fulfil distinct criteria:

- Firstly, they offer a service to the wider public.
- Secondly, practitioners working within these fields require a theoretical and practical knowledge base which informs their practice.
- Thirdly, these professionals are afforded a high degree of individual autonomy that requires them to make independent judgements.
- Finally, there is a distinct ethical dimension to the practices within these domains which is regulated through written codes of practice. These codes are stipulated to provide a normative ethical standard of practice, as well as guide the recruitment and discipline of the profession.

2.2 THE ROLE OF CHARACTER AND VIRTUE IN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The above conception of a 'professional' illustrates clear ethical dimensions that are integral to the role of the professional. That is, professional service is essentially a matter of moral judgement concerning the potential and actual contribution that practice can offer towards a wider public good (Carr, 2018). Organisational leaders, however, consistently indicate that discussions of ethical judgement and character are often overlooked in professional sectors at the expense of technical competencies or performance margins (Seijts *et al*., 2017). Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) explicitly distinguishes qualities of character (eg, integrity, justice, humanity, diligence, courage) from the more technical skills required for proficient practice (see Beadle and Moore, 2011). He emphasises the importance of both sets of 'goods'. The former reflect internal 'goods of excellence' that are necessary for professionals to be accountable, think for themselves, and meet the moral standards of their profession, while the latter reflect external 'goods of effectiveness' that are essential to demonstrate proficiency and garner outputs (eg, financial gain or material goods). Nevertheless, he cautions against professionals and organisations becoming overly focussed on the external goods of efficiency which may be used for unethical means if not accompanied by internal qualities of character. In accord, some contemporary professional sectors seem to be shifting their focus towards incorporating value-led principles into their normative working standards and professional ethics statements (see CIPD 2019, Executive Summary). These shifts towards professional ethics open the door for greater attention to be given to matters of character and the role that character virtues can play in shaping professional cultures.

A broad conceptualisation of character reflects positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioural traits that guide and foster human excellence (Kristjánsson, 2015). Virtues have been inherently rooted within many accounts of character in professional service. An Aristotelian perspective of 'good' character is founded upon this notion of virtues which reflect intrinsically and morally good qualities that help guide ethically sound decisions and actions (eg, honesty, kindness and modesty). These virtues can be characteristically different and unique, reflecting moral qualities that are intellectual, civic and performance-based in nature (see Jubilee Centre, 2017).

From a virtue ethics perspective, professional conduct can only be considered moral when it is underpinned by an awareness of the relevant virtues and following discernment of how these virtues can be applied in unison towards a contextually appropriate good end. Indeed, professional organisations have been found to demonstrate better financial margins, innovative ideas, and client/customer service when their workers demonstrate virtuous behaviours (eg, compassion, integrity, trust, forgiveness, gratitude; Cameron *et al*., 2004; also see Bright *et al*., 2006).

In contrast to compliant should/ought assumptions, a virtue-based account of character is grounded in individuals' autonomous judgement (Darnell *et al*., 2019). This judgement is central to what Aristotle refers to as practical wisdom, or *phronesis* (Aristotle, 2009: 106–107). Practical wisdom is symbolic of 'good judgement' and serves to critically evaluate the relative weight of competing virtues and determine how to integrate these virtues when operationalised. For example, a professional who judges a situation to require both honesty and compassion will act in a manner that relays information accurately to a client/patient/ student, but in a manner that is considerate of their feelings and opinions. A professional of practical wisdom will therefore apply virtue-led judgements to recognise the relevant virtues, identify the personnel involved, be open-minded to potential courses of action, and be thoughtful in their dealing of the situation. A broader understanding of *phronesis* includes the adjudication of all professional action, even when there may be no explicit ethical implications (MacIntrye, 1981). A professional using virtue-based judgement will be able to act with prudence, integrity, and critical-thinking in every situation they face to ensure they consider all eventualities and make well-informed decisions. Thus, adopting a virtue ethical approach helps understand how professionals may draw upon virtues in the appropriate amount to make judgements that are sensitive to the context and the people they serve.

It is impossible to ignore, however, the integral importance that professional codes of conduct have in shaping professionals' decision-making. These ethical codes offer an overarching structure of principles to guide professionals' conduct towards a normative conception of acceptable practice (Carr, 2018). Regulatory codes will specify actions that are permitted or prohibited and will typically be accompanied with sanctions if the accepted codes are breached (Erwin, 2011). These regulatory codes are principally outlined to highlight the moral dimensions of professional practice, although the aims and objectives of these documents vary between professional fields (see Earl and Moulin-Stożek, 2019).

Adherence to these regulations is analogous with a deontological (rule-based) view of moral thinking and decision-making (ie, Kantian ethics). From a broad deontological perspective, a 'good' and moral decision is proposed when action conforms to moral norms and duty-based responsibilities. Deontological thought-processing seems well-suited within professional contexts, given the high prominence for conformity to codes of conduct and prescribed standards of practice. A criticism of using a virtue ethical approach is that the 'right' action may not be overly apparent, and it can be difficult, at times, to determine if actions are based upon virtue-based knowledge. Although often portrayed as distinct from one another, some scholars have highlighted two overlaps between virtue ethical and deontological interpretations of moral reasoning (eg, Slote, 2010):

- Both accounts are grounded upon a sense of *personal agency* (ie, one's autonomous thought) and *intention* (ie, action towards good ends). True deontological thinking is underpinned by a volitional conformity to a standard norm with the intrinsic belief that this conformity is intended for a good end. Likewise, virtue-based thinking is determined by an intrinsically-driven and autonomous consideration of the medial worth of the appropriate virtues and how they apply to a good end.

- Both perspectives also suggest that professional action which is motivated by instrumentally 'bad' ends will be at best amoral and at worst immoral. From a deontological perspective, conformity to a regulatory norm due to feeling coerced to comply (ie, void of agency) or for self-serving motives (ie, to benefit at the expense of others) would not be considered ethical action. Likewise, virtue ethicists propose that professionals who rationalise their actions for ego-driven (eg, to gain personal recognition) or self-protective reasons (eg, to avoid trouble or reputational damage) will be more likely to apply particular virtues in excess or deficiency, resulting in them being operationalised in a vice-like manner. These professionals would be practising without practical wisdom and would operationalise the virtues in an instrumental way, synonymous with what Aristotle refers to as mere 'cleverness'.

The aforementioned parallels between deontic and virtue-based moral thinking illustrate an inherent need for professionals' autonomous virtue-led discernment and judgement in their practice, even when acting in accord with regulatory instructions (Moore, 2017). A potential shortcoming of professionals habitually relying on regulatory guidelines is that they may, at times, be too ambiguous to adequately cover every foreseeable circumstance. There may also be a risk that professionals portray their actions to be moral when aligned with regulatory codes or instructions, even though their action may derive from self-serving motives or result in adverse consequences for others. Furthermore, professionals are sometimes placed in difficult positions in which they could be requested or instructed by clients/ patients/managers to act in a manner that is contrary to regulations. Professionals who endorse virtue-informed judgements may be better equipped to deal with these complex situations by deliberating over the potential options and making ethical decisions that are appropriate to the circumstance, personnel, and organisational objectives.

2.2.1 Measuring virtue and deontological reasoning

Empirical assessments of virtue in the professional domain remain somewhat scarce. A systematic review of studies measuring professional decision-making found that of 71 studies, only one study adopted a holistic virtue-perspective (see Arthur *et al.,* 2015a), with the majority of the reviewed studies embracing a principles or rule-based focus. This dearth of measurement in virtue-reasoning is not exclusive to a professional context, but also extends to more general examinations of virtue (eg, Curren and Kotzee, 2014).

A valuable method for tapping into professionals' cognitive processes and decision-making is through the use of ethical dilemmas. Ethical dilemmas offer a credible way to gain insights into professionals' behaviour and reasoning when faced with moral conflicts. A dilemma-based instrument widely used within moral psychology has been the Defining Issues Test (DIT; Rest, 1979). Based on Kohlberg's model of moral development (see Rest *et al.,* 1999), individuals are required to interpret five hypothetical scenarios, with their responses indicating their stage of moral reasoning. Further developments have led to the creation of an Intermediate Concept Measure (ICM; see Thoma, 2006) which requires individuals to match the views of an expert panel by identifying the most appropriate/inappropriate actions and justifications to specific dilemmas (eg, Thoma *et al*., 2013).

Studies using these dilemmas have shown that individuals may use different types of moral thinking depending on the situation they face. Nevertheless, these methods do not always distinguish clearly between virtue-based and deontological-based thinking that may be pertinent to professional contexts. These dilemmas also rarely include workplace-specific scenarios that professionals will face within their daily work, but rather favour general hypothetical life contexts. Some profession-specific dilemma-based tools do exist, however, in occupations such as dentistry (eg, Bebeau and Thoma, 1999), medicine (eg, Patterson and Ashworth, 2011), teaching (eg, Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011), and the military (eg, Arthur *et al*., 2018). Building on these measures, the Jubilee Centre has developed a series of profession-specific dilemmas within UK-based professions (eg, see Arthur *et al.,* 2014; Kristjánsson *et al*., 2017a). These dilemmas were explicitly designed to directly investigate the interplay between professionals' virtue-based, deontological (rule-based), and consequential reasoning within workplace contexts. Nurses and doctors were found to have a higher tendency to rely on rule-based reasoning than other professions, although doctors (along with lawyers) also reported the highest virtue-based reasoning. In contrast, business professionals were found to rely more on consequential reasoning (ie, the potential outcomes of their decisions) compared to other professionals. Although these three reasoning perspectives are in no way mutually exclusive, distinguishing the type of reasoning that professionals rely upon when responding to workplace dilemmas may help uncover the underlying moral thought processes that are indicative of true ethical practice. Such insights would not be apparent by simply observing if a professional's actions are aligned with the regulatory policies or instructions.

2.2.2 Distinguishing dimensions of character in professional contexts

In attempting to understand virtues, scholars from fields such as psychology, philosophy, theology, and sociology have long debated the specific virtues applicable to human flourishing. For example, Ancient Greek (eg, Platonic) philosophy proposes clusters of cardinal virtues that are essential for human excellence, such as *wisdom, courage, temperance,* and *justice*. The Jubilee Centre separates virtues into four distinct 'Building Blocks of Character' which distinguish virtues as moral, intellectual, civic, or performative (Jubilee Centre, 2017). Within professional contexts, Barker and Coy (2003) recognised seven virtues by which Australian executives could be identified (ie, *humility, courage, integrity, compassion, humour, passion,* and *wisdom*). Alternatively, Crossan and colleagues (2017) have identified ten specific dimensions of character which are essential for professional practice (ie, *courage, drive, collaboration, integrity, temperance, accountability, justice, humility, humanity,* and *transcendence*).

Empirical assessments of distinct components of character, however, have predominately relied upon six umbrella virtues outlined within positive psychology (ie, *wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance,* and *transcendence*; Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Specifically, the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths questionnaire (VIA) taps into 24 distinct character strengths which are collated to reflect each umbrella virtue and have been associated with greater well-being and life satisfaction (eg, Wood *et al*., 2011)[1]. Professionals' endorsement of their character strengths in their occupation has been associated with greater job satisfaction, work commitment, responsibility for societal issues, and higher task success (eg, Gander *et al*., 2012; Harzer and Ruch, 2014; 2015). Furthermore, groups of professionals who value qualities of character such as honesty, fairness, kindness, and leadership have been found more likely to report a greater sense of professional purpose towards a good societal benefit (Arthur *et al*., 2019b). This body of evidence offers valuable insights into the role

> IT IS THE SERVICE WE ARE NOT OBLIGED TO GIVE THAT PEOPLE VALUE MOST.
>
> *James Cash Penney*

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[1] These character strengths are conceptually equivalent to the notion of virtues. The fundamental distinction being that character strengths are concerned with the amount of experience and suggest that individuals should act upon their distinct strengths of character (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Moral philosophers, on the other hand, query if the character strengths actually reflect the complex nature of virtues which they propose require a mean experience acquired through *phronesis* (ie, the 'golden mean'), rather than an overall quantity (Schwartz and Sharpe, 2006).

that the promotion of character and virtues can have on professionals' workplace commitment, practice, and productivity.

An analytical shortcoming of the VIA is that the 24 character strengths rarely statistically map onto the proposed six umbrella virtues and more commonly reflect components such as s*ociability, emotional care, fortitude,* and *self-restraint* (see Littman-Ovadia and Lavy, 2012; Ruch *et al.*, 2010; Shryack *et al.*, 2010). The seminal work of Robert McGrath (2015) has offered the clearest conceptualisation of character that emerges from the VIA. Specifically, a distinct three-component structure of character has consistently been demonstrated (see McGrath *et al.*, 2018):

■ One dimension relates to the *interpersonal care* of others (eg, kindness, gratitude, and teamwork). This dimension includes qualities that are synonymous with what Park and Peterson (2006) refer to as 'heart strengths'. These qualities are predominately moral or civic in nature and are important for forming virtuous interactions, connections, and relationships with people.

■ A second dimension is concerned with qualities of *self-control* (eg, perseverance, prudence, and self-regulation). This dimension comprises a mixture of moral and performance qualities that relate to the self (ie, 'gut strengths'). These qualities are required for emotional regulation and the development of personal fortitude so that one can act with integrity, accountability, courage, and determination.

■ A third dimension reflects a sense of *inquisitiveness*. This dimension comprises qualities that are intellectual in nature (ie, 'head strengths') that relate to a passionate search for knowledge and engagement with the surrounding environment (eg, creativity, curiosity, love of learning, judgement). Such qualities underpin the concept of *wisdom* which is required for independent thought and critical thinking.

The emergence of this three-factor structure appears well-suited to explore professionals' general character as it makes the distinction between character towards other people, the self, and the environment. Indeed, professionals are required to interact with other people on a daily basis, they need personal fortitude to regulate themselves to deal with unpredictable working contexts, and they need to be able to interact with their environment with an open mind to generate effective solutions to professional situations. Exploring the extent to which professionals give importance to each dimension may unearth new insights into professionals' general character and help identify those who may overweigh the importance of one dimension against another.

2.3 OVERALL EVALUATIVE GOALS

The research presented here had three specific aims in examining character and virtue across professional domains:

1. The first aim was to explore the extent to which professionals chose different actions depending on the professional situation, and whether distinct types of reasoning underpinned these action choices. Inferring from virtue ethical and deontological accounts of moral reasoning, it was surmised that the most ethical action would yield from a consideration of the relevant virtues along with an understanding of the regulations applicable to the given situation. Professionals who favoured rule-based reasoning exclusively, without any discernment over the applicable virtues, could be at risk of choosing action that may not best meet the ethical requirements of a situation. In contrast, action that was selected due to self-serving or instrumental reasons would be indicative of unethical practice.

2. The second aim was to examine if reports of virtue-based, deontological/rule-based and self-serving reasoning statistically varied between professionals at different career stages (eg, training, entry-level, and established professionals). Previous Jubilee Centre reports have discovered that virtue-based reasoning was reported to a lower degree by professionals at the completion of their professional training compared to those already working within the profession (eg, Kristjánsson *et al.*, 2017a).

3. The third aim was to investigate if professionals across different fields and divergent career stages varied in the degree of importance they reported for the character dimensions of interpersonal care, self-control, and inquisitiveness (as identified by McGrath, 2015). Previous findings have indicated that pre-service and in-service professionals may give importance to different character strengths (see Arthur *et al.*, 2014; 2015a; 2015b). The qualities of leadership and judgement were rated as more important by professionals already working in the field compared to those beginning or completing their professional training (see Arthur *et al.*, 2015a; Kristjánsson *et al.*, 2017a). It may be that dimensions such as self-control and inquisitiveness are given a higher degree of importance by established professionals as they have gained the experience of dealing with dynamic working contexts.

> ‘ WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE DO, WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE. ’
>
> *Winston Churchill*

3 Methodology

This section of the report outlines the research methods, the measures used, and the respective analytical procedures conducted.

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 3,502 training or practising professionals (M_{age} = 31.37, SD = 14.02, 63% female, 37% male) from five professions based in the UK (medicine = 16%; law = 26%; teaching = 15%; business = 23%; nursing = 20%). Thirty-five percent of the participants were undertaking a university degree programme or professional training in their respective professional field, 32% were at an entry level, having just completed their course of study or professional training, and 33% represented established professionals with at least five years of practical experience in their respective field. Table 1 illustrates the number of professionals in each cohort across the five professions. The ethnicity of the participants ranged between Caucasian (81%), Black-African or Black-Caribbean (5%), Asian (12%), and other multiracial ethnic backgrounds (2%). The majority of participants reported being UK nationals (93%), with the remaining 7% identifying as non-UK nationals.

3.2 RECRUITMENT AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Full ethical approval was obtained from the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee. Prior to the study commencing, all participants were provided with full information regarding the study and questionnaire design, and provided informed consent to illustrate their willingness to participate. Trainee professionals were recruited through liaison with university departments and chartered institutions, entry-level professionals were recruited on completion of their university degree or professional training (eg, Qualified Teacher Status or Legal Practice Courses), and recruitment of established professionals was facilitated by university alumni offices and profession-specific regulatory bodies.

Table 1: Number of Trainee, Entry-level and Established Professionals by Profession.

Profession	Trainee	Entry-level	Established
Medicine	124	167	277
Law	342	286	297
Teaching	235	181	110
Business	284	252	258
Nursing	236	243	210
Total	**1,221**	**1,129**	**1,152**

A hardcopy of the questionnaire was first piloted with students who were studying in the relevant professional fields, but not participating in the research, to check clarity and comprehension. Participants completed the questionnaire electronically, with a hardcopy available to those who desired it, and it took a maximum of 15 minutes to complete. All participants were instructed that they did not have to complete any question if they did not wish to and had the right to withdraw or modify their contribution prior to data analysis.

3.3 MEASURES

3.3.1 Ethical dilemmas
Each professional responded to a series of profession-specific dilemmas which were relevant to their respective working domain. Responses to ethical dilemmas do not necessarily guarantee appropriate professional action, yet they can help uncover professionals' thought processes when making decisions in accord with specific contextual norms or instructions. Each set of dilemmas were based upon previously used scenarios and designed collaboratively between researchers and an expert panel of experienced professionals. The dilemmas relating to doctors were based on previously used medical situational judgement tests (see Patterson and Ashworth, 2011). The legal dilemmas were drawn from scenarios used with Australian law students (Evans and Palermo, 2003). Teaching dilemmas were developed by an expert panel of teacher educators and aimed to reflect potential situations that teachers may likely face in their work. The business dilemmas were designed by an expert panel of business and finance professionals, with one specific dilemma being adapted from a previous example used by the automobile company Audi (2009). Finally, the nursing dilemmas were created from discussion with expert panellists in the field of nursing, as well as previous dilemmas used in a medical context (see Arthur *et al*., 2015a).

Action choices
Participants were asked to read each scenario and then select their preferred choice of action from two predetermined options. Each pair of action choices were created to be potentially viable responses and thus required professionals to use a degree of personal judgement to determine the action they would take. The dilemmas were designed to evoke a conflict between professionals' moral judgement, the regulations of their profession, and often included instructions that may be contrary to regulations or ethical considerations. These dilemmas have, for present purposes, been separated into three specific categories (see page 12), with the corresponding profession-specific scenarios that relate to each category displayed in Table 2.[2]

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[2] See Appendix 1 for an example dilemma as presented in the survey.

Table 2: Illustration of the Profession-Specific Scenarios Included in Each Type of Dilemma[3]

Dilemma	Dilemma 1: Regulations/ instructions	Dilemma 2: Unethical request	Dilemma 3: Whistleblowing
Medicine	Blood Transfusion During Surgery Against Patient's Wishes	Patient Request for Vaccine in Short Supply	Junior Doctor
Law	Children Act Matter	Rounding-Up Hours	Trust Deficiency: Stolen Funds
Teaching	Breach in Uniform Rules	Giving Students Exam Answers	Inappropriate Staffroom Chat
Business	Business Deal that Harms the Environment	Rounding-Up Hours	Boss's Favouritism
Nursing	Admitting an Elderly Patient to Hospital	Altering the Dosage of a Difficult Patient's Medicine	Drunk Colleague

- **Dilemma 1:** Professionals responded to a dilemma which elicited an ethical conflict between the regulatory instructions and an alternative action. These dilemmas were specifically designed to tap into scenarios where the regulations or instructions may not best meet the ethical circumstances of a situation, and require professionals to decide whether to use their judgement to select the alternative action. For example, doctors were asked if they would perform a blood transfusion during surgery to save a patient's life, despite the patient wishing not to receive a transfusion and medical protocol stating to consent to the patient's wishes. Conversely, teachers were asked whether they would follow school rules and send a poverty-stricken child home for breaking the school uniform rules, despite the child being unable to afford the full uniform as they come from a low-income, single-parent family.

- **Dilemma 2:** Professionals responded to another dilemma in which they were instructed or requested to act in a way that may bring about an ethically questionable benefit at the expense of others. These dilemmas were designed to include a request that may be contrary to the ethical codes and regulatory policies of their profession. Professionals could either choose to accept this request to obtain the benefit or decline to adhere to the request or instructions. For example, teachers were asked whether they would help their Deputy Head give students the correct answers in an exam, to ensure the school obtained good grades, or challenge the Deputy Head so that the exam procedure was fair for all students. Business and law professionals were asked to decide whether or not to follow the requests of a supervisor to round up the cost of the hours spent on each file and thus charge clients more for the work completed.

- **Dilemma 3:** Professionals responded to a third scenario which related to raising concerns over a colleague's working conduct. Professionals were required to choose whether they would speak up and formally report their colleague to a senior authority (ie, 'whistleblow') or opt to speak privately to the colleague about the concerns. Nurses were asked how they would deal with a colleague who continually arrived for their shift smelling of alcohol. Legal professionals were asked how they would deal with a nephew who worked in the same firm and who had stolen money from the firm's accounts to fund a gambling addiction.

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[3] For the specific scenario details, action choices and reasoning options for each dilemma, see Jubilee Centre reports on the specific professions of medicine (Arthur *et al.*, 2015a), law (Arthur *et al.*, 2014), teaching (Arthur *et al.*, 2015b), business and finance (Kristjánsson *et al.*, 2017a), and nursing (Kristjánsson *et al.*, 2017b).

Type of reasoning

After choosing an action choice, the participants were asked to report their top three reasons for that selection. Six possible reasons to justify each action choice were provided. These reasons differed in nature, being virtue-based, deontological/rule-based or self-serving. To accurately tap into these three reasoning types, previous consequentialism items used in Jubilee Centre reports (see Arthur *et al.,* 2014; Kristjánsson *et al.*, 2017a) were coded as either virtue-based (if they referred to virtues towards others) or self-serving (if they referred to consequences for the individual professional, ie, avoiding punishment or enhancing their own reputation).

■ Virtue-based reasons were reflected by a reference to specific virtues directed towards a moral purpose (eg, '*It is not fair on the client that the hours are rounded up'* [Law]; *'A just and caring person would take every opportunity to advance the cause'* [Nursing]).

■ Deontological/rule-based reasons reflected adherence to regulations or instruction (eg, *'You are employed by the school and it is part of your job to make sure the rules are followed'* [Teaching]; *'The rules state that you should protect your client's confidentiality'* [Law]), or a sense of moral duty (eg, *'You have a responsibility to work with colleagues to preserve the safety of those receiving care'* [Nursing]; *'Out of respect for your colleague, it is only right to raise the issue'* [Business]).

■ Self-serving reasons were underpinned by motives towards a personal benefit (eg, *'You'll gain a reputation as a team player'* [Business]; *'It is the easiest thing for you to do'* [Medicine]), a self-protective motive to avoid reprimand (eg, *'You have to protect yourself against possible criticism'* [Law]; *'The Deputy Head may think less of you if you do not support her, affecting your promotion chances in the future'* [Teaching]), or a justification which was more instrumental than ethical (eg, *'Going ahead* [with a potentially controversial deal] *will maximise profit for the firm'* [Business]; *'It is not really a big issue – if one school can do this, you bet everyone else can as well'* [Teaching]).

3.3.2 Dimensions of character

Participants were asked to rank their own personal top six character qualities from the 24 listed within the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS; Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Participants were asked to respond to the statement *'which of the qualities best describe the sort of person you are?'* and then rank the character qualities in descending order, with a value of one depicting the quality they gave the most importance and a score of six reflecting their sixth most important quality. The 24 character qualities were: appreciation of beauty; bravery; creativity; curiosity; fairness; forgiveness; gratitude; honesty; hope; humility; humour; judgement; kindness; leadership; love; love of learning; perseverance; perspective; prudence; self-regulation; social intelligence; spirituality; teamwork; zest. Hierarchal ranking requires participants to discriminate between different qualities and thus indicates which

qualities they give prominence, rather than signifying the extent to which they actually endorse them.

Based on previous analyses across 12 distinct databases (see McGrath *et al.*, 2018), each character quality was found to correspond with one of the three dimensions of interpersonal care, self-control or inquisitiveness. The qualities of *forgiveness, gratitude, kindness, leadership, love* and *teamwork* fell under the dimension of interpersonal care. Five qualities were found to indicate the dimension of self-control: these being *honesty, modesty, prudence, perseverance* and *self-regulation*. Conversely, the six qualities of *bravery, creativity, curiosity, hope, love of learning,* and *zest* reflected the dimension of inquisitiveness.

Table 3: Clusters of Character Qualities Collated to Explain Each Dimension of Character

Interpersonal care	Self-control	Inquisitiveness
Kindness	Honesty	Curiosity
Gratitude	Prudence	Creativity
Forgiveness	Perseverance	Zest
Teamwork	Modesty	Bravery
Leadership	Self-Regulation	Love of Learning
Fairness	Fairness	Hope
Appreciation of Beauty	Judgement	Judgement
–	Perspective	Perspective
–	–	Appreciation of Beauty

A further four qualities cross-loaded across multiple dimensions. The quality of *fairness* loaded onto both interpersonal care and self-control dimensions, both *judgement* and *perspective* loaded onto inquisitiveness and self-control, and *appreciation of beauty* was associated with interpersonal care and inquisitiveness. McGrath's analysis found that three qualities (humour, social intelligence and spirituality) did not load consistently across any of the three dimensions. Furthermore, previous findings from interviews with business leaders indicated that qualities such as *humour* and *spirituality* were not contextually appropriate within organisations (Crossan *et al.*, 2017). These leaders also viewed the terms 'compassion' or 'kindness', as more applicable to working environments than the term 'love'. In accord with these analyses, the qualities of *humour, social intelligence, love* and *spirituality* are excluded from any character dimension pertinent to a professional context in this report. Table 3 shows the specific qualities that were collated to reflect each dimension.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

All rankings were reverse-point scored. In the case of the reasoning scores, a ranking of 1 was assigned a point score of 3, a ranking of 3 assigned a score of 1, and a reason not ranked assigned a score of 0. Mean scores were then calculated for virtue-based, deontological/ rule-based, and self-serving reasoning for each dilemma, with higher scores reflecting a greater preference for each respective reasoning type. In regards to the three character dimensions, a ranking of 1 was assigned a score of 6, a ranking of 2 assigned a score of 5, etc, with any unranked qualities given a score of 0.

Mean scores for each dimension were then calculated based on these reverse-point scores for the respective character qualities shown in Table 3. Data analyses to explore the primary research questions consisted of three phases:

- Firstly, the percentage of professionals that selected each action option in the three dilemma categories was commuted. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA)[4] was then used to explore differences in each type of reasoning between professionals selecting either action choice. The two action choices for each category of dilemma were distinguished using a binary code (ie, values = 0 or 1).

- Next, separate ANCOVA were conducted to examine if differences emerged between trainee, entry-level, and established professionals' reports of virtue-based, deontological/rule-based, and self-serving reasoning. Significant ANCOVA were followed up with post-hoc tests using Tukey's honestly significant difference tests to explore specific differences between the three cohorts.
- Finally, ANCOVA were conducted to assess if the valuation of each character dimension differed between professionals across different fields and those at different career stages, with post-hoc tests then conducted for any significant ANCOVA results.

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[4] Gender and stage of career were controlled for as covariates in all ANCOVA, unless stage of career was included as an independent variable, in which case only gender was retained as a control variable.

4 Findings

4.1 PROFESSIONALS' ACTION CHOICES AND REASONING PROCESSES

Chart 1 shows the overall mean scores for virtue-based, deontological/rule-based, and self-serving reasoning across the whole sample. As shown, professionals typically reported higher virtue-based and deontological/rule-based reasons for their action choices, compared to self-serving reasons.

The subsequent sections consider the different dilemma categories separately, showing the percentage of professionals selecting each action choice and then their corresponding scores for each reasoning type.

Chart 1: Overall Mean Scores in Virtue, Deontological/rule-based and Self-serving Reasoning
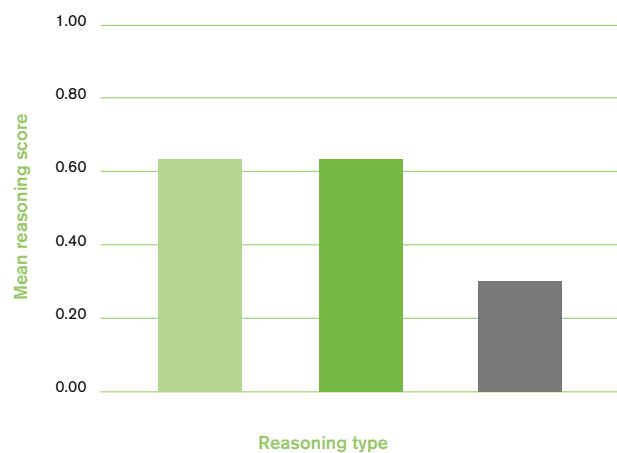
Key:
- Virtue-based
- Deontology/rule-based
- Self-serving

4.1.1 Dilemma 1: An ethical conflict between regulatory instructions and an alternative action

Chart 2 illustrates the percentage of professionals opting to act in accord with the regulatory instructions in the respective Dilemma 1 scenarios, compared to those choosing the alternative option. These scenarios reflected situations where the regulations or instructions may be in conflict with the ethical circumstances of a situation. Over two thirds of the professionals indicated they would choose the alternative option in these scenarios as opposed to adhering to the regulations or instructions. Further inspection revealed this proportional pattern between the two action choices was consistent within each profession.

Chart 3 illustrates the mean differences in each type of reasoning that professionals selected for their action choice to the Dilemma 1 scenarios. Professionals who indicated they would choose the alternative action reported greater virtue-based reasons ($F = 366.99$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .100$) compared to those who opted to follow the regulatory instructions. Professionals choosing to follow the regulations or instructions reported greater deontological/rule-based reasoning ($F = 84.88$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .025$) and self-serving reasons ($F = 401.13$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .108$) compared to those selecting the alternative action.

Chart 2: The Proportion of Professionals Choosing to Follow Regulatory Instructions or Take Alternative Action

Key:
- Regulations/instructions
- Alternative action
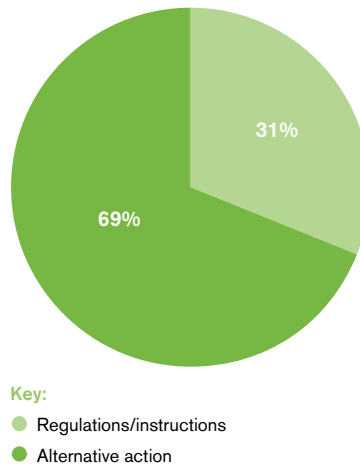
Chart 3: Reasoning Types When Following Regulatory Instructions or Taking Alternative Action

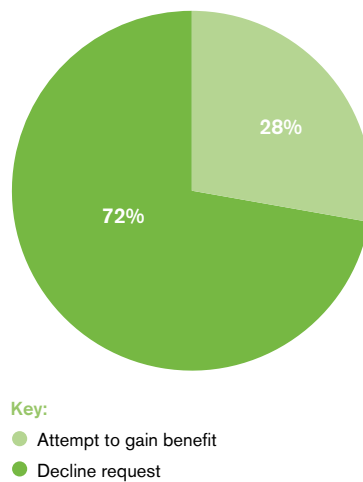
Key: ● Regulations/instructions   ● Alternative action
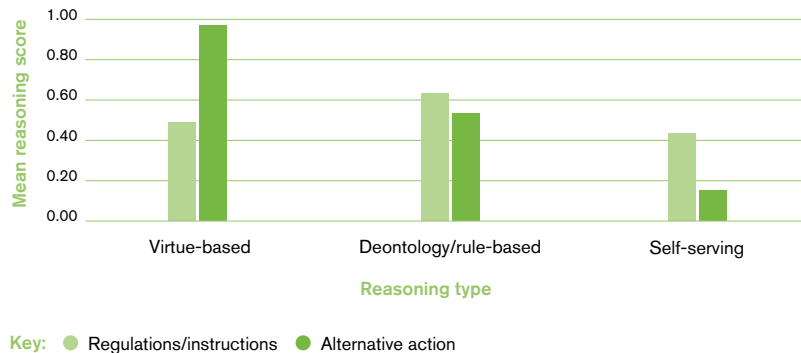
4.1.2 Dilemma 2: When requested to gain an ethically questionable benefit

When requested to act in a way that may bring about a potentially unethical benefit at the expense of others, the majority of professionals opted to decline this request (see Chart 4). This pattern between the selected responses was consistent within each distinct profession.

Professionals who indicated that they would decline the request to gain an ethically questionable benefit were found to report greater virtue-based reasoning ($F = 17.00$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .005$) and deontological/ rule-based reasoning ($F = 28.27$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .009$) than those who opted to follow this request (see Chart 5). In addition, these professionals who would decline the request were also found to report greater self-serving reasons than their counterparts who would attempt to gain the benefit ($F = 7.58$, $p = .01$, $np^2 = .002$).

Chart 4: The Proportion of Professionals Choosing to Accept or Decline an Ethically Questionable Benefit

28%

72%

Key:
- Attempt to gain benefit
- Decline request

Chart 5: Reasoning Types When Accepting or Declining an Ethically Questionable Benefit

Mean reasoning score

Reasoning type: Virtue-based, Deontology/rule-based, Self-serving
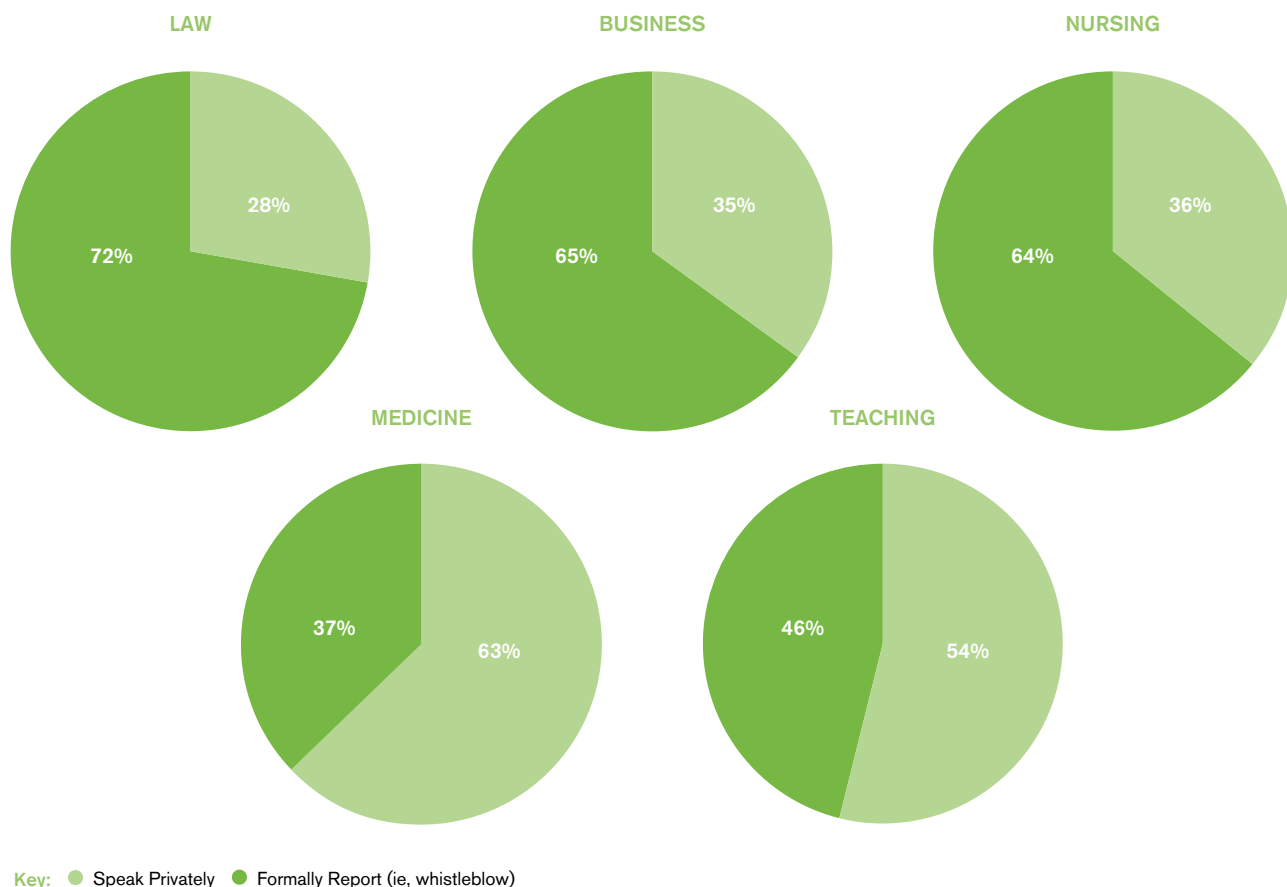
Key: Attempt to Gain Benefit   Decline Request

4.1.3 Dilemma 3: The raising of concerns (ie, whistleblowing)

A higher proportion of the overall sample (59%) indicated that they would formally report a colleague to a senior authority (ie, 'whistleblow') rather than speak with their colleague privately (41%); however, this pattern was not consistent across all professions.

A higher proportion of lawyers, business professionals, and nurses indicated they would report their colleague to a senior figure, whereas a higher proportion of doctors and teachers indicated that they would speak to their colleague privately (see Chart 6).

In light of these profession-specific differences, separate analyses were conducted to test whether the reasoning underpinning different action choices differed when whistleblowing may or may not be the more predominant response. Potential explanations for these profession differences in whistleblowing action are offered in the latter discussion section.

Chart 6: The Proportion of Professionals Choosing to Report or Speak Privately with a Colleague

LAW

28%
72%

BUSINESS

35%
65%

NURSING

36%
64%

MEDICINE

37%
63%

TEACHING

46%
54%

Key: ● Speak Privately   ● Formally Report (ie, whistleblow)

When the predominant action choice was to formally report the colleague (ie, lawyers, business professionals, and nurses), those who indicated they would whistleblow reported greater virtue-based ($F = 92.69$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .041$) and deontological/rule-based ($F = 53.61$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .024$) reasons than those who chose to speak in private with the colleague (see Chart 7). In contrast, professionals who opted to speak privately with the colleague in these scenarios were found more likely to use self-serving justifications compared to those who would speak up about the wrongdoing ($F = 481.57$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .183$).

By comparison, when speaking in private with a colleague was the more predominant action (ie, doctors and teachers), professionals who chose to speak in private reported greater virtue-based reasoning ($F = 431.82$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .312$; see Chart 8). In contrast, professionals who stated they would report their colleague in these scenarios were found to report greater deontological/rule-based reasoning ($F = 175.68$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .156$). Furthermore, self-serving reasoning was more likely to be used by those who would speak with the colleague privately ($F = 14.68$, $p < .001$, $np^2 = .015$), albeit the effect size was far smaller when compared to the professions in which the formal reporting of colleagues was more predominant (see Charts 7 and 8 for comparisons in self-serving reasoning).

> ❛VIRTUE LIES IN OUR POWER, AND SIMILARLY SO DOES VICE; BECAUSE WHERE IT IS IN OUR POWER TO ACT, IT IS ALSO IN OUR POWER NOT TO ACT.❜
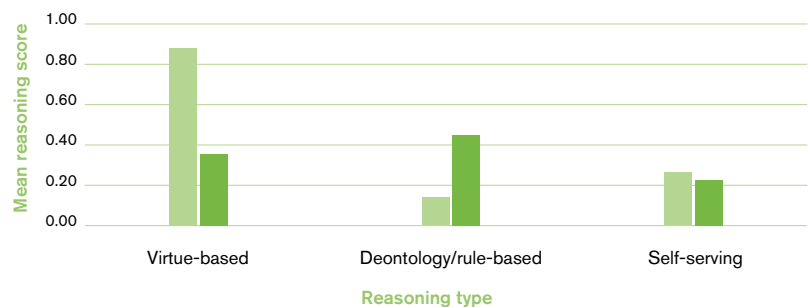>
> ✦ *Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics*

Chart 7: Reasoning Types When Reporting a Colleague was the More Predominant Response

Key: ● Speak Privately ● Formally Report (ie, whistleblow)

Chart 8: Reasoning Types When Speaking in Private was the More Predominant Response

Key: ● Speak Privately ● Formally Report (ie, whistleblow)

4.2 TYPES OF REASONING FOR PROFESSIONALS AT DIFFERENT CAREER STAGES

The mean scores for each cohort in the three reasoning types are presented in Table 4, along with the results of ANCOVA. Post-hoc tests revealed that established professionals were statistically higher in reports of virtue-based reasoning compared to both trainee and entry-level professionals ($p <.001$)[5]. In contrast, both trainee and entry-level professionals reported higher self-serving reasoning than established professionals ($p < .01$). Trainee and entry-level professionals were found not to differ in their reports of virtue-based or self-serving reasoning. No statistically significant differences were evident between any cohorts in deontological/rule-based reasoning.

4.3 PROFESSIONALS' RANKING OF CHARACTER DIMENSIONS

Mean scores for the total sample in the three character dimensions are presented below. The dimension of interpersonal care was given the highest degree of prominence by professionals, followed by self-control, with inquisitiveness given the lowest degree of importance:

- Interpersonal care (mean score = 1.05)
- Self-control (mean score = 0.93)
- Inquisitiveness (mean score = 0.62)

Table 4: Mean Scores in Reasoning Types between Different Career Stages

Cohort	Virtue-based reasoning	Deontological/ rule-based reasoning	Self-serving reasoning
Training	0.62	0.63	0.28
Entry-level	0.61	0.65	0.29
Established	0.70	0.63	0.26
$F(\eta p^2)$	44.50* (.01)	2.71 (.00)	10.81* (.01)

Note. *$p <.001$

Table 5: Mean Scores in Each Character Dimension across Professions

Cohort	Interpersonal care	Self-control	Inquisitiveness
Doctors	1.04	0.95	0.59
Lawyers	0.89	1.06	0.73
Teachers	0.98	0.73	0.70
Business professionals	1.08	0.98	0.62
Nurses	1.30	0.82	0.43
$F(\eta p^2)$	55.45* (.06)	28.87* (.03)	39.94* (.05)

Note. *$p <.001$

4.3.1 Profession differences in the ranking of each character dimension

Mean values and results of ANCOVA for each character dimension across the five professional domains are presented in Table 5. Post-hoc tests revealed profession-specific differences[6]:

- The dimension of interpersonal care was given the greatest degree of importance by nurses compared to all other professions (all $p <.001$), followed by business and medical professionals, then teachers, with lawyers giving the lowest degree of importance to interpersonal care.

- The dimension of self-control was given the greatest degree of importance by lawyers compared to all other professions (all $p <.001$), followed by business professionals and doctors. Nurses and teachers gave self-control the least prominence compared to the other domains.

- Lawyers and teachers reported the highest degree of importance for the dimension of inquisitiveness compared to all other professions (all $p <.001$), followed by business and medical professionals, with nurses giving inquisitiveness the least degree of importance.

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[5] See Appendix 2 for graphical representation of cohort differences in virtue-based reasoning.

[6] When professions are stated together (eg, business professionals and doctors), the respective professions were found not to statistically differ from one another ($p > .05$).

4.3.2 Ranking differences in each character dimension between career stages

Table 6 shows the results of ANCOVA and the mean scores for the three character dimensions across professionals at different career stages. Statistically significant differences were evident across the cohorts in the dimensions of interpersonal care and self-control, but not in the dimension of inquisitiveness. Subsequent post-hoc tests of these differences revealed that:

- Established professionals gave the dimension of interpersonal care a lower degree of importance compared to trainee (p <.001) and entry-level (p <.001) professionals.

- In contrast, established professionals were found to give a greater degree of worth to the dimension of self-control compared to both trainee (p <.001) and entry-level (p <.001) professionals.
- No differences were found between trainee and entry-level professionals in the degree of importance given to interpersonal care (p = .96) or self-control (p = .98).

Trainee and entry-level professionals demonstrated a similar type of profile, giving most importance to the dimension of interpersonal care, followed by self-control, and then inquisitiveness[7]. Conversely, established professionals displayed a profile with a higher importance given to self-control, followed by interpersonal care, and then inquisitiveness. Further inspection of these cohort differences within each professional domain revealed this generic pattern was most predominant within the legal and business fields. That is, established business professionals and lawyers gave greater worth to their own self-control than their interpersonal care. In contrast, established doctors, teachers, and nurses gave higher importance to interpersonal care than self-control, which may be related to the inherent nature of these different professions.

Table 6: Mean Scores in Each Character Dimension across Cohorts

Cohort	Interpersonal care	Self-control	Inquisitiveness
Training	1.09	0.86	0.64
Entry-level	1.09	0.86	0.60
Established	0.99	1.06	0.62
$F(\eta p^2)$	7.04* (.01)	39.57* (.02)	3.75 (.00)

Note. *p <.001

[7] See Appendix 3 for graphical representations of the importance given to the three character dimensions across each cohort.

5 Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

All too often, it seems 'good' professional practice is determined by the extent professionals display proficient technical expertise, which is administered in accord with stipulated regulations or instructions (Seijts *et al.*, 2017). In these circumstances, professionals may be at risk of becoming overly focussed on the routine following of instructions without deliberating over the contextual circumstances of a specific situation. The findings presented in this report indicate that virtue-based discernment may have an important role in guiding professionals towards an ethical course of action that is relevant to the situation they face. Virtue-based judgement appeared to be particularly important for situations when regulations or instructions may have been in conflict with the ethical requirements of a situation. Professionals who choose to follow instruction without consideration of the relevant virtues, or worse, due to self-serving reasons, may be prone to practising in an inappropriate or unethical manner. The findings further illustrate how professionals' moral reasoning, and the dimensions of character to which they give importance, may vary depending on their career stage.

5.1 THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN PROFESSIONALS' ACTION CHOICE AND REASONING

The majority of professionals indicated they would select alternative action if following the regulatory instructions may lead to an ethical conflict (see Chart 2), or if they were directly requested to gain an ethically questionable benefit at the expense of others (see Chart 4). This finding suggests that the majority of professionals appeared, on the surface, to consider the ethical implications of a situation and would be willing to make a personal judgement over the best course of action. Nevertheless, these action choices alone do not offer in-depth insights into the reasoning processes that may inform professionals' decision-making or judgements.

In situations where an ethical predicament may have arisen when following the regulatory instructions, the professionals who opted to select alternative action were found to report higher virtue-based reasoning than their counterparts, who indicated they would action the regulatory instructions (see Chart 3). These latter professionals reported greater deontological/rule-based reasoning. From a virtue ethical perspective, the decision to take alternative action here would be considered the more ethical option as it appears to be underpinned by a greater awareness of the virtues that are relevant to the specific context and personnel concerned (Moore, 2017). Moreover, this decision appeared to derive from autonomous discernment over the correct course of action as opposed to habitually abiding by instructions or regulatory guidelines. In contrast, the professionals who opted to follow the regulatory instructions in these scenarios appeared more likely to adhere to instructions out of a sense of duty but driven less by virtuous deliberations.

Alternatively, the professionals who opted to decline a request to gain an ethically questionable benefit were found to report both higher virtue-based and deontological/ rule-based reasoning than those who chose to adhere to this request (see Chart 5). In these scenarios, an ethical conflict arises as professionals appear to be asked to act unethically and likely deviate from the relevant regulatory guidelines and policies. The decision to decline such requests appeared to derive from both virtuous deliberations regarding the situation, that correspond with an understanding of the regulatory guidelines. Professionals may be best placed to make ethical decisions when they intertwine a conception of right and wrong, that is synonymous with virtue-based thinking, with a sound understanding of the policies and regulations of their particular profession (Moore, 2017).

It is important to recognise that the present dilemma scenarios were designed to provoke an ethical decision when the regulatory instructions may, or may not, be the most ethical action. This is not to say that ethical codes and regulations are not essential for maintaining high-quality standardised practices; in many cases, ethical codes will likely prescribe the most ethical practices for professionals. The present measurement of deontological/rule-based reasoning may simply reflect professionals' understandings of their respective profession's codes of conduct and regulatory guidelines. Nevertheless, even when abiding by professional standards and regulatory codes, there appears to be a need '…to develop and maintain the virtues or qualities of character as part of practice' (Arthur *et al.*, 2014: 10).

Reports of self-serving reasoning appeared to be higher for professionals whose action choice seemed aligned with regulatory instructions. This was the case for professionals who opted to adhere to regulatory instructions in the Dilemma 1 scenarios, and those who opted to decline an unethical request in the Dilemma 2 scenarios. These professionals may have elected to follow instructions or regulations for fear of receiving punishment if they did not abide by them, or to develop a reputation for themselves as a proficient professional who adheres to instruction. Compliance for such reasons would not be deemed to be moral from either a virtue ethics or deontological perspective and alludes to an inattentive type of conformity which is unaware of the potential requirements of the given situation. In particular, professionals who chose to follow the regulatory instructions, when there may be a more ethical course of action, appeared far more likely to report self-serving reasoning than those who chose alternative action (ie, Dilemma 1; see Chart 3, np^2 = .108). These differences were notably more prominent when compared to situations where professionals seemed to decline an unethical benefit which would likely correspond with regulatory codes

(ie, Dilemma 2; see Chart 5, np^2 = .002). Professionals who rely on self-serving thinking will likely practise without practical wisdom (ie, *phronesis*), which is needed for 'good' professional decision-making and ethical practice.

5.1.1 Scenarios regarding raising concerns (ie, 'whistleblowing')

Whistleblowing refers to 'the disclosure by organisation members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices… to persons or organisations that may be able to effect action' (Near and Miceli, 1985, p.4). By encouraging members to 'speak up' and raise concerns, organisations can identify early signs of any issues and deter members from acting unethically due to their belief that they will be reprimanded. This process of whistleblowing is often associated with a sense of moral duty to protect the ethical standards of the profession (Bouville, 2008).

Whistleblowing is widely promoted within professional codes of conduct and thus it is somewhat unsurprising that professionals who opted to 'speak up' and formally report a colleague were found more likely to do so based on deontological/rule-based assertions, compared to those who opted to speak with a colleague in private (see Charts 11 and 12). This latter decision would not be deemed as 'whistleblowing' given that the reporting of wrongdoing is between co-workers, rather than to senior management (Watts and Buckley, 2017).

The present findings revealed that the decision to whistleblow was more prominent in the professions of law, business, and nursing, compared to medicine and teaching. It is difficult to determine exactly why whistleblowing was more prominent in these professions, although speculative interpretations are offered throughout this section. Perhaps most telling is that, in the professions where whistleblowing was more predominant, greater virtue-based reasoning was associated with the formal reporting of colleagues, compared to privately speaking

with colleagues (see Chart 11). Here, professionals who chose to whistleblow appeared more likely to do so out of a sense of moral duty that considered how their virtuous service may have protected the public interest. A possible explanation for these associations could be that the perceived wrongdoing in the legal, business, and nursing scenarios may have potentially direct negative consequences for the profession and their clientele, if left unaddressed. Lawyers were asked if they would report their nephew when he had stolen from the firm's accounts to fund a gambling addiction, and nurses were asked if they would report a colleague if they arrived for a shift when smelling of alcohol. Under these circumstances, professionals would have a duty to report the wrongdoing to protect the public and profession from potential harm.

In contrast, when the option to speak privately with a colleague was the more predominant response (ie, in medicine and teaching), this response was associated with greater virtue-based reasoning compared to reporting the colleague. One possible reason for this may be that these scenarios may have a potentially less direct impact on others and could be feasibly addressed by speaking with the colleague. For instance, teachers were asked if they would report a colleague for making dismissive comments in the staffroom about a specific class. Although this attitude may not be tolerated, the comments may not directly impact the students and could be addressed with the colleague in private. Here, the perceived wrongdoing may be deemed as simply misguided or thoughtless which could be rectified through informal discussion as opposed to formal disciplinary proceedings being brought against the colleague. This informal discussion is akin with professionals 'taking charge' (see Morrison and Phelps, 1999), whereby they take discretionary action in private to facilitate change in their colleague's behaviour.

> TO EDUCATE A MAN IN MIND AND NOT IN MORALS IS TO EDUCATE A MENACE TO SOCIETY.
>
> *Theodore Roosevelt*

From a virtue ethics perspective, a sense of ethical judgement would be evident when privately speaking with a colleague for virtue-based reasoning as the decision derives from a process of virtue-based discernment. An alternative explanation may be that the teachers and doctors who responded to these scenarios sought to protect their colleague from reprimand. Indeed, ethical codes in teaching have sometimes been found to be driven by motives that protect teachers and schools from public ridicule (Earl and Moulin-Stożek, 2019). Likewise, doctors may be driven to protect junior doctors from formal reprimand during their training in the respective medical scenario. From this interpretation, it may be that teachers and doctors applied virtue-based reasoning more towards their colleague as opposed to those the profession serves.

Nevertheless, professionals who opted to speak privately with colleagues for virtue-based reasons are not comparable with professionals who chose to speak in private due to self-serving reasons. Higher reports of self-serving reasoning across all professions were displayed by those who chose to speak privately with colleagues. Not reporting any wrongdoing due to self-serving reasons would be indicative of 'organisational silence', whereby professionals may keep quiet about their concerns to avoid causing disruption or ridicule to themselves and the organisation.

This is the precise behaviour that professional bodies aspire to eliminate in their organisations and working practices (Morrison and Milliken, 2003). Noticeably, greater differences in self-serving reasoning were evident in the professions where whistleblowing was more predominant (see Chart 11; np^2 = .138). This may indicate that if the consequences of a perceived wrongdoing could be severe, professionals choosing not to formally report a colleague may be more likely to demonstrate this maladaptive and self-serving type of 'organisational silence'.

5.2 DIFFERENCES IN TYPES OF REASONING ACROSS CAREER STAGES

Established professionals were found to be more likely to use virtue-based reasoning when choosing their action compared to trainee and entry-level professionals. Experienced professionals may have greater tendencies to use virtue-led judgements when dealing with the demands of in-service professional practice, having learned through experience how to deal with situations in ways most suitable for the people they serve and the wider organisation. In contrast, trainee and entry-level professionals were found more likely to report self-serving reasoning compared to established professionals. When learning their craft and trying to forge a successful career for themselves, training professionals may be inclined to choose action

based on what will help them establish a good reputation in their institution or avoid ridicule and reprimand. Such a finding supports calls for greater emphasis to be placed upon the promotion of character and virtuous reasoning within professional educational programmes.

No differences were found in deontological/rule-based reasoning across three cohorts; this may be unsurprising given the emphasis towards written codes of conduct and policy regulations within professional operations (Corey et al., 2003). Both pre-service training programmes and in-service professional ethics courses typically use regulatory codes as a guiding benchmark for ethical conduct. Thus, it seems inevitable that professionals at all stages of career will likely rely on rule-based reasoning to equivalent degrees.

5.3 DIMENSIONS OF CHARACTER ACROSS PROFESSIONS AND CAREER STAGES

Nurses were found to give greater importance to the character dimension of interpersonal care compared to other professions. The nursing profession is underpinned by an explicit concern for the compassionate care of patients, and thus interpersonal care may be given particular prominence within the nursing profession (Varghese and Kristjánsson, 2018). In contrast, lawyers were found to give the greatest degree of importance to self-

control as well as inquisitiveness (along with teachers). The growing demands of clients and emphasis on generating profit margins within legal sectors may result in the dimensions of self-control and inquisitiveness becoming prominent for working lawyers (eg, Feenan *et al.*, 2016). That is, lawyers require consistent high levels of self-control and cognitive analysis to remain impartial and deal with the diverse legal cases with which they are presented.

Teachers were found to give a high degree of importance to the dimension of inquisitiveness compared to other professions, yet displayed the lowest level of prominence for self-control and second lowest for interpersonal care. Teaching is traditionally viewed as a vocation, based on educating others, and thus teachers may give worth to the dimension of inquisitiveness as they attempt to instil a curious search for knowledge and love of learning in their students. Nevertheless, shifts in UK education have seemingly created cultures of overbearing pressures for teachers deriving from a focus on assessment outcomes and behavioural management (Edgington, 2016). It seems important that educational bodies ensure environmental pressures do not result in teachers losing sight of the qualities of interpersonal care and self-control in their daily practices. Doctors and business professionals were found to give all three character dimensions a moderate degree of importance in relation to the other professions.

Established professionals gave greater importance to the character dimension of self-control compared to their trainee and entry-level counterparts. These established professionals will have had at least five years of experience working in their respective fields and thus may have internalised the qualities of self-control to help them to deal with the requirements of professional life. A central part of in-service practice is to respond to the unpredictable circumstances of the working environment. Professionals will be required to persevere with routine tasks, regulate their emotions to ensure they act in accord with working standards, and maintain personal integrity by acting with honesty and humility.

The prominence given to self-control was most noticeable from established business and legal professionals. These professions are typically performance-based, requiring established professionals to exercise high levels of self-control to meet a variety of objectives, such as juggling multiple legal cases or liaising with a variety of business clients (Furlong *et al.*, 2017). In contrast, professions such as teaching, medicine, and nursing typically require a more inherent commitment to the care and education of others. Thus, the prominence given to self-control by established medical and education professionals may be less distinct from their training counterparts, compared to those in the business and legal sectors.

Conversely, trainee and entry-level professionals were found to give greater worth to the dimension of interpersonal care compared to established professionals. Professional training programmes will typically introduce students to the general objectives of a profession, teach them profession-specific knowledge, and familiarise them with the standard practices expected of them. During this training, it is unlikely that pre-service professionals will be accustomed to, or be required to deal with, the normative working demands of contemporary practice. As a result, training professionals may internalise a greater importance for the interpersonal care and service to others rather than qualities of self-control which may become more important as they gain experiences of in-service professional practice.

> **BY CONSTANT SELF-DISCIPLINE AND SELF-CONTROL YOU CAN DEVELOP GREATNESS OF CHARACTER.**
> *Grenville Kleiser*

5.4 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A particular strength of this report is that it offers valuable insights into the reasoning processes that may be indicative of the true ethical nature of professional action. These distinctions would not be apparent through exclusively observing professionals' behaviour. Reasoning alone, however, may not be sufficient to produce ethical action. Future work could incorporate assessments of professionals' motivations, their experiences of environmental pressures, and their perceived workplace culture, to see how these factors may also influence professional decision-making. Previous work has also differentiated individuals' utilitarian (ie, action for the greatest good of the maximum number of people) and deontological thought-processes when responding to ethical dilemmas (see Greene *et al.,* 2001). Indeed, professionals may have employed a degree of utilitarian thinking when responding to the present dilemmas by considering how their actions may influence the largest number of people. Future studies could include assessments of utilitarian reasoning to evaluate if the most appropriate professional action is perhaps underpinned by considerations of virtue, deontology, and utilitarianism in unison.

The dilemmas used in this research require professionals to choose between two predetermined choices. Alternative measurement methods could offer professionals free choice options over their preferred action. Dilemma instruments such as the ICM provide participants with up to 12 different action choices to specific scenarios (see Thoma *et al.,* 2013). Gaining a wider range of potential action choices may uncover new knowledge of how virtue-based reasoning underpins ethical practice or whether self-serving reasoning potentially underpins more extreme cases of professional malpractice.

In addition, the hierarchal ranking method used in this report is not strictly aligned with the view that a person of 'good' character will operationalise each dimension of character in a medial and interrelated way (see Schwartz and Sharpe, 2006). Instead, ranking requires one dimension to be prioritised over another. Replicating the present research using quantitative scores of interpersonal care, self-control, and inquisitiveness may help identify the extent to which professionals actually endorse, or lack, each dimension in their professional work. Such a measurement method would also facilitate analyses to examine if certain dimensions of character are associated with greater virtue-based, deontological/rule-based or self-serving reasoning.

Finally, the present findings are cross-sectional in nature and explore the degree of importance that professionals gave each dimension of character at a specific point in time. Future longitudinal examinations could explore how changes in the value of each character dimension may associate with changes in work-related outcomes over multiple years, such as job satisfaction, work commitment, and productivity (see Gander *et al.*, 2012; Harzer and Ruch, 2014; 2015).

6 Conclusions

This report offers an in-depth examination of how character virtues may be applied within professional spheres and how these considerations may underpin professional practice. Reliance upon the development of technical competencies, and adherence to regulatory instructions, has seemingly emerged within professional domains at the expense of considerations of character, ethical commitment, and virtue-informed judgement (Gandz et al., 2013). Furthermore, cultures of auditing and performance outputs can often lead to professionals facing challenging situations in which the most ethical response may conflict with the practice stipulated by clients, managers, or policies. From a perspective of virtue ethics, an understanding of 'good' professional practice should not be exclusively confined to simple adherence to ethical codes or instructions, but should concern professionals' autonomous discernment over the ethical implications of a situation. The present evidence illustrates how and when professionals may use virtue-led decision-making when choosing their professional action:

- The findings offer encouraging signs that the majority of professionals seemed to select their action based on the ethical implications of a situation. Specifically, professionals were found to predominately choose the alternative action choice when the regulations or instructions may have been in conflict with the ethical circumstances of a situation, or when they were requested to gain an ethically questionable benefit.
- Professionals who selected the alternative action choices were found to report greater virtue-based justifications for these decisions compared to professionals who opted to follow unethical instructions or attempted to gain an unethical benefit.

- Professionals who base their decisions upon self-serving reasons would choose action that benefits themselves, often in attempts to avoid punishment or reprimand.
- The findings offer new insights into when professionals may choose to 'whistleblow' on their colleagues. In some circumstances, professionals who opted to whistleblow reported greater virtue-based justifications for doing so, yet this was not consistent across every profession and may be related to the perceived severity of the wrongdoing. Those who chose not to whistleblow in these situations appeared to portray an adverse type of 'organisational silence', which seemed to be associated with self-serving reasons.
- Established professionals reported higher virtue-based reasoning, whereas pre-service professionals were found to report higher self-serving reasoning. It may be beneficial to incorporate initiatives of character education into professional training programmes. Regulators may seek to ensure that students receive adequate opportunity to develop the personal qualities that enable them to make well-informed judgements, as opposed to making decisions based on self-serving reasons, such as avoiding punishment or creating a good reputation for themselves.
- Established professionals also gave a higher degree of prominence to the character dimension of self-control compared to those undertaking or completing their professional training. In contrast, training professionals gave greater importance to the dimension of interpersonal care for others.

Overall, the findings offer support to calls for professional ethics to be grounded upon notions of character and virtue-led decision-making. The final section of this report outlines a series of recommendations that regulators may implement within their continuing professional development programmes (CPD; see Mulvey, 2013), organisational cultures, and pre-service training initiatives.

7 Recommendations

Regulating bodies may seek to develop professionals' ethical decision-making, rather than simply ensure they act in accord with regulatory codes of conduct. Through virtuous reasoning, professionals may be better equipped to practice in an ethical manner as opposed to being prescribed to act in specific ways. Initiatives of virtue-based character can be integrated into in-service working practices, codes of conduct documents, and pre-service training programmes. These three areas are discussed in more detail below.

7.1 IN-SERVICE INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE CHARACTER

Character can be promoted within organisations when it is embedded in the overall operational culture. Specifically, this can involve giving explicit attention to character through targeted training strategies. By applying a 'top-down' approach, virtuous character can be nurtured or 'caught' by professionals when 'virtuous character' is modelled by professional leaders (eg, moral exemplars; Carr, 2018). Good leadership character would involve reorienting management processes to provide more constructive feedback, using a clear language of character and offering professionals guidance on their demonstration of good character, not just on their technical competencies (see Leader Character Insight Assessment; Seijts et al., 2017). Regular training activities, such as ethical dilemma activities (eg, Dutelle and Taylor, 2017), can be employed to help professionals understand how character and virtue can inform their decision-making. The use of ethical dilemmas offers a valuable training tool to help develop moral (and virtue-based) thinking by facilitating discussion and shared reflection between in-service professionals. Furthermore, in response to incidents of professional malpractice, the promotion of character has often been portrayed in a deficit manner; that is, professionals are often punished for episodes of poor professional judgement and vice-like behaviour. While sanctions may serve as deterrent for poor judgements, 'good'

character may be more effectively fostered when professional leaders recognise, and even reward, ethical decision-making in their members (eg, Crossan et al., 2017).

The effective promotion of virtue-based decision-making may also require the lessening of external pressures often encountered by professionals. Overbearing workloads due to large patient/student demands, limited time, and reduced resources have been suggested to inhibit professionals' ability to demonstrate good character at work (eg, Arthur et al., 2015b; Kristjánsson et al., 2017b). Excessive auditing within education systems and an over-emphasis towards financial margins in the business and legal sectors (eg, Furlong et al., 2017) may also present barriers to the cultivation of virtue-based character. The creation of supportive working environments, accompanied by character-led professional ethics training, may help ensure professionals do not lose sight of the moral intentions of their practice (Evetts, 2009).

7.2 DEVELOPMENTS IN PROFESSIONAL REGULATIONS AND CODES OF CONDUCT

The present findings may have implications for the structure and emphasis of regulatory documents and policies circulated within professional institutions. Codes of conduct are of fundamental importance in outlining the ethical standards that professionals are expected to meet. In principle, these regulations are proposed to help foster a 'moral community' to ensure ethical professional service to society. It is noticeable in the present findings, however, that a proportion of professionals still selected the less ethical action options, yet cited rule-based reasons for making these decisions (see Charts 3 and 5). Thus, it seems apparent that some professionals may still misinterpret the specified regulations of their profession. Often these regulatory policies are written with an obligatory tone which mandates professionals to follow strict normative standards to avoid unethical conduct

(Erwin, 2011). It may be worthwhile for regulators to provide information about how their members can use virtue-based judgements within their practice. Such information could include which specific virtues may apply to situations and to whom they may apply, how virtues can be reflected upon, and how these deliberations may be actioned. In this regard, regulatory documents could offer clear examples of good virtue-based reasoning to foster an 'active-thinking' approach, whereby professionals consider their own thinking in situations as opposed to adopting a 'passive' approach which relies on conforming to instructions.

Regulatory documents could also offer informative strategies for dealing with particularly challenging situations, such as instances concerning 'whistleblowing'. This could include information on how professionals may judge a situation, outlining when raising concerns (either formally or informally) may be appropriate, and ensuring that the available channels to whistleblow are clearly communicated to members. These procedures should also protect 'whistleblowers' so that they can trust the process is confidential and be confident they will not face retaliation from others in their profession if they do raise concerns (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2005).

7.3 PRE-SERVICE TRAINING ON CHARACTER EDUCATION

There may also be scope for programmes of character education to be implemented within pre-service training and university courses to help inform future professionals' 'good' character. Traditionally, professional education programmes familiarise students with the bespoke objectives of their chosen profession, instruct them on context-specific knowledge, and introduce them to the normative working standards expected of them. It seems important that up-and-coming professionals do not overly prioritise technical knowledge and regulatory policies at the expense of qualities of virtuous character. The ethical dilemmas used in this report offer a valuable training instrument to help develop the virtue-based decision-making of pre-service professionals. These dilemmas may be especially useful in helping them apply virtues as they are learning the other necessary knowledge and skills-sets required for their profession. By discussing how they would approach and deliberate over hypothetical scenarios, pre-service professionals may develop a better understanding of how virtues can be applied in their placements and apprenticeships.

‘YOU CANNOT MAKE MEN GOOD BY LAW: AND WITHOUT GOOD MEN YOU CANNOT HAVE A GOOD SOCIETY.’
C.S. Lewis

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Acknowledgements

Appendices

Appendix 1: Example Dilemma Presented in the Survey

LEGAL ETHICAL DILEMMA: CHILDREN ACT MATTER

In this dilemma, respondents were presented with the following dilemma and options:

> You represent the mother of three small children in a divorce and Children Act matter. Your client has previously shown you some old photographs of bruises and marks on the children's bodies. At that time, she claimed that the bruises were caused by the father. One of the children now has blurred vision. Your client claims – unconvincingly, as far as you are concerned – that the injuries were inflicted by her new boyfriend and not by the children's father that she was seeking to divorce. Your client instructs you to stop all legal proceedings against the father and holds that she intends to move with the children back to the father.
>
> You have strong grounds to believe the children will be at risk if this happens. You have already counselled your client against moving back to the father but she instructs you firmly to withdraw proceedings.

What would you do?

Option 1	Withdraw the proceedings, as instructed
Option 2	Report the matter to Social Services

Now please rank the three answers that best match the reasons for your decision.

**OPTION 1:** WITHDRAW THE PROCEEDINGS, AS INSTRUCTED

Reason 1	You put your client first and would lose her trust if you did not do so
Reason 2	This is none of your business
Reason 3	Your client is best placed to decide what is best for her and her children
Reason 4	Getting involved in this will be unpleasant
Reason 5	The rules state that you should protect your client's confidentiality
Reason 6	You should protect your client

OPTION 2: REPORT THE MATTER TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Reason 1	You have to protect the children
Reason 2	You should report this so that someone can properly investigate the case
Reason 3	You have to protect yourself against possible criticism
Reason 4	You could not live with your conscience if something happened to these children
Reason 5	The risk to the children is more important than client confidentiality
Reason 6	Usually, family lawyers will discuss this with Social Services

Appendix 2: Mean Reports of Virtue-Based Reasoning for Trainee, Entry-level and Established Professionals
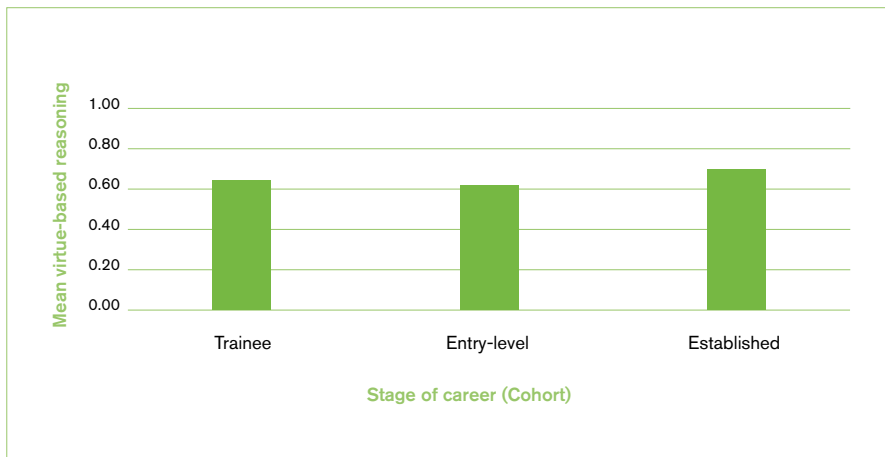
Appendix 3: Mean Valuations of Each Character Dimension for Trainee, Entry-Level and Established Professionals Across the Sample

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