

## Providing an Ethical Marketing Model for Non-Profit Universities in Iraq

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### Abstract

*In the contemporary business environment, managers face ethical challenges that require making decisions that go beyond traditional operational considerations to include principles of rightness and ethics. Marketing is one of the most vulnerable areas to ethical abuses in organizations, as it represents an interactive interface that brings together customers and other stakeholders. Studying marketing ethics requires a multidimensional approach that includes individual, organizational, and social aspects. Accordingly, this research aims to develop an ethical marketing model that is suitable for non-profit universities in Iraq. The study included professors and experts from non-profit universities in Iraq as a statistical community. 215 samples were collected using the available non-probability method. The results showed that the ethical marketing mix is affected by several main factors such as increased social awareness, societal demand, competition in the education market, and legal and regulatory pressures. This research contributes to building a practical framework for ethical marketing in the context of non-profit universities in Iraq, which enhances their marketing strategies and their social and educational role. The results of structural equation modeling using Smart PLS program indicate confirmation of most of the relationships proposed in the research model. The study showed that adopting ethical marketing, taking into account the economic, cultural, political and social conditions in Iraq, represents a strategic option to support non-profit universities, ensure their sustainability and enhance their competitiveness. The results of this research show the importance of scientific planning and efficient resource management to ensure the success of non-profit universities and enhance their educational and social mission.*

**Keywords:** Ethics, Ethical Marketing, Non-Profit Universities, Iraq.

### Introduction

Iraq, as a country with a long history in the Islamic and Arab world that is welcoming to different ethnicities and religions, is considered a suitable platform for activists in the field of higher education. This is especially important in the current situation where political and economic stability has been established to some extent in the country and government programs for the development of the country are being presented and implemented quickly, because the development of a country requires the existence of a knowledgeable human resource and the transfer of new knowledge into the country. Higher education and universities have this important task. On the other hand, due to the government's focus on development and infrastructure programs, it has entrusted the management of universities to the private sector, like many countries in the world, and has limited itself to monitoring their performance. In such conditions, the platform for the growth and development of the private sector in the form of non-profit universities is very ready, and this has increased competition for attracting students. Currently, a large number of candidates for continuing their education are studying in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Iran, and Arab countries in the region. Especially the existence of branches of prestigious world universities in neighboring countries and Iraq has increased the competition for attracting students. In such circumstances, ethical marketing, considering the beliefs, culture, and understanding of ethics of the candidates, can be considered a winning card and a suitable tool for competition and success for Iraqi non-profit universities. However,

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the important point is to use a model that will lead to the success of ethical marketing for Iraqi non-profit universities. This research can play a significant role in presenting such a model.

### *Research Objectives*

Main research objectives:

Main objective: Presenting an ethical marketing model for Iraqi non-profit universities.

Sub-objectives of the research:

Sub-objective 1: Identifying the influential background conditions in the ethical marketing model for Iraqi non-profit universities.

Sub-objective 2: Identifying the influential causal conditions in the ethical marketing model for Iraqi non-profit universities.

Sub-objective 3: Identifying the influential central phenomenon in the ethical marketing model for Iraqi non-profit universities.

Sub-objective 4: Identifying the influential intervening conditions in the ethical marketing model for Iraqi non-profit universities.

Sub-objective 5: Identifying the effective strategies and actions in the ethical marketing model for Iraqi non-profit universities.

Sub-objective 6: Identifying the consequences of establishing an ethical marketing model for Iraqi non-profit universities.

Sub-objective 7: Validating the ethical marketing model for Iraqi non-profit universities.

### **Literature Review**

Ethical marketing focuses on applying ethical principles throughout the decision-making and marketing practices of organizations. This includes being transparent, providing accurate and truthful information, and maintaining equality between customers and other stakeholders. These practices contribute to enhancing trust and building long-term relationships with consumers (Smith et al., 2021). Adopting ethical marketing strategies is crucial to achieving organizational sustainability and long-term success, as it helps enhance brand image and increase customer loyalty by aligning organizational values with consumer aspirations (Johnson & Lee, 2022).

Marketing ethics systematically addresses how to integrate ethical values into marketing behavioral decisions and address the ethical issues that marketers face in their daily operations. These ethics also include societal and environmental considerations in product design and marketing activities, which is essential in the face of intense competition in contemporary markets (Taylor & Green, 2023). These rapid developments have prompted international institutions and governments to form bodies and organizations aimed at protecting consumer rights and promoting adherence to ethical protocols and laws (Brown et al., 2022).

Ethical marketing is based on various ethical philosophies such as virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and the rights approach, as these philosophies help formulate professional and ethical protocols that organizations adhere to (Rodriguez-Rad & Ramos-Hidalgo, 2018). It is worth noting that unethical marketing may lead to immediate gains, but in the long run it leads to the erosion of consumer trust and the deterioration of the brand's reputation, making it an unsustainable approach (Williams et al., 2023).

Ethical marketing strategies are not limited to refraining from illegal activities, but rather extend to adhering to cultural and social norms that emphasize the principle of fairness and respect for customer rights. According to a study conducted by Cooper and Davis (2023), organizations that adopt ethical marketing are able to achieve a balance between profitability and commitment to societal values, which enhances their sustainability in the long term.

In conclusion, ethical marketing represents a strategic approach that enhances business sustainability and improves the performance of organizations in the contemporary competitive market, as it focuses on achieving compatibility between business goals and the needs of society.

#### *Definition of Ethical Marketing*

Ethical marketing is a management approach that focuses on applying ethical values and principles throughout the marketing process, from campaign design to the organization's interaction with its audience. This approach aims to find a fair balance between the organization's interests and customer requirements, which contributes to building a long-term relationship based on credibility and trust. Kotler and Armstrong (2021) also point out that ethical marketing goes beyond mere compliance with regulatory laws, to become an essential element in the strategies of organizations seeking to excel in competitive environments.

Moreover, ethical marketing is a strategic tool that reduces the risk of making wrong decisions by customers, by providing transparent and accurate information about products and services. Organizations that rely on clear disclosure of their policies, such as tuition fees or admission criteria, enhance public trust and demonstrate their commitment to responsible practices. According to Hunt and Vitell (2020), ethical marketing is a fundamental pillar in building institutional sustainability that focuses on serving society and promoting human values.

#### *Dimensions of Ethical Marketing*

Ethical marketing relies on a set of basic dimensions that work to establish a positive and sustainable relationship between the institution and its audience. Transparency is the first of these dimensions, as it is based on providing accurate and clear information about the products or services provided by the institution. According to Murphy and Schlegelmilch (2018), transparency plays a vital role in enhancing trust between the institution and customers, as clear disclosure of pricing policies and academic admission requirements reduces ambiguity and increases audience satisfaction. Social responsibility represents the second dimension, and it reflects the institution's commitment to supporting the community and contributing to achieving public benefits. This responsibility includes providing scholarships, supporting volunteer activities, and funding initiatives that serve the local community, which enhances audience loyalty and raises the institution's status. Crane et al. (2021) explained that social responsibility highlights the institution's role as an effective entity seeking to improve the community environment in which it operates. Respect for privacy is the third dimension, which has become a necessity in light of the increasing reliance on digital systems. This dimension refers to protecting the personal data of customers and students and ensuring that it is used ethically and responsibly. These three dimensions, transparency, social responsibility,

and respect for privacy, work together to form a comprehensive framework that enhances credibility and establishes a positive and sustainable reputation for the organization.

### *The Importance of Ethical Marketing*

Ethical marketing plays a pivotal role in enhancing the performance of institutions and increasing their competitiveness. According to Ferrell et al. (2019), institutions that adhere to ethical values in their marketing activities achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction, which leads to enhancing their loyalty and building sustainable relationships with them. These long-term relationships are considered a fundamental pillar for achieving institutional success in the long term.

In the higher education sector, ethical marketing emerges as an effective tool to improve the reputation of universities and highlight their commitment to societal values and justice. Carroll and Shabana (2021) indicated that ethical marketing is not limited to attracting students, but also contributes to retaining them by providing an educational experience characterized by transparency and credibility. Universities that provide accurate information about their programs and policies are considered more trustworthy by students and parents, which enhances their ability to achieve a competitive position in the education market.

Moreover, ethical marketing enables institutions to achieve a balance between their commercial goals and the needs of society. This balance not only contributes to attracting more customers or students, but also enhances the sustainability of the institution at the financial and social levels. By committing to transparency and fairness, educational institutions can build a positive image that motivates the target audience to choose them as a reliable institution.

### *Ethical Marketing in Higher Education*

Ethical marketing is an essential element of educational institutions' strategies to achieve transparency and excellence in the higher education sector. According to Maringe and Gibbs (2020), ethical marketing contributes to building trust between universities and prospective students, by committing to providing accurate and transparent information about study programs, tuition fees, and admission policies. This transparency reduces anxiety and stress for students and parents, making the decision-making process easier and clearer.

In addition to transparency, social responsibility plays a pivotal role in promoting ethical marketing within universities. Universities that offer scholarships, support community projects, and contribute to local development demonstrate a clear commitment to society. These activities enhance universities' status as institutions of societal value, making them more attractive to students looking for educational institutions that embrace ethical values.

Furthermore, a study by Wilkins and Huisman (2021) showed that universities that successfully implement ethical marketing achieve higher enrollment rates and enjoy a stronger reputation. Ethical marketing in this context is not only about recruiting students, but also serves as a strategic tool to build a sustainable reputation that highlights the values to which the institution is committed. These values contribute to improving the student experience and enhancing their loyalty to the institution in the long term.

### *The impact of ethical marketing on the reputation of the institution*

Institutional reputation is one of the main assets that distinguishes institutions and determines their position in the market. Ethical marketing plays a crucial role in improving reputation by highlighting the institution's commitment to societal and ethical values. A study conducted by Singh et al. (2021) showed that institutions that implement ethical marketing strategies enjoy higher levels of trust among their target audience. A strong reputation reflects the institution's credibility and demonstrates its commitment to transparency and social responsibility.

In the higher education sector, a positive reputation is one of the critical factors in attracting and retaining students. Universities that adhere to the principles of transparency and social responsibility not only attract increasing numbers of students, but also build long-term relationships with the surrounding community. This good reputation not only enhances enrollment decisions, but also contributes to enhancing institutional loyalty and improving the institution's image with partners and the community.

Moreover, Jones et al. (2020) confirmed that ethical marketing gives institutions a strong competitive advantage, especially in saturated markets. Organizations that adhere to ethical values are not only able to enhance the trust of their customers, but they are also able to achieve sustainability in their relationships with the public, which supports their growth and long-term success.

### *Challenges of Ethical Marketing*

Despite the significant benefits that ethical marketing offers, organizations face several challenges when implementing it, which requires balancing business objectives with commitment to ethical values. According to Brown and Smith (2022), organizations find it difficult to achieve this balance, especially in competitive markets, where some organizations may be tempted to sacrifice ethical values for short-term gains. These short-sighted strategies can erode the institutional reputation in the long run, threatening the sustainability of the institution.

In the higher education sector, challenges include the costs of implementing ethical marketing policies, which include developing transparent programs, training employees on ethical practices, and ensuring adherence to ethical standards in all aspects of operations. Crane et al. (2021) indicated that these costs are a major obstacle, especially for universities operating in emerging markets where resources are limited. In addition, universities face market pressures that may push them to provide exaggerated information to attract more students, which is contrary to the principles of ethical marketing.

Overcoming these challenges requires strong institutional commitment from senior leadership, along with developing a comprehensive strategy that combines profitability and transparency. It also requires fostering a sustainable ethical culture within the organization by investing in employee training and encouraging responsible practices. This approach not only helps overcome challenges, but also enhances the organization's standing and supports its long-term sustainability.

## **Methodology**

### *Descriptive analysis of demographic characteristics*

To identify the nature of the sample under study, the demographic characteristics of the participants were analyzed. As shown by the data:

- Gender: The sample included 78% males and 22% females, reflecting a greater representation of males among the participants.

- Occupation: The percentage of participants who were professors was 34%, while managers constituted 16%, administrative employees 42%, and deputy managers 8%. These results show that the majority of the participants were administrative employees.

**Descriptive statistics:** The main variables in the study were analyzed based on the descriptive data. As shown in the table, all means were above the theoretical mean (3), indicating that participants tended to answer “a lot” or “very much”.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of organizational variables and their components**

Independent Variables	Count	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Causal Factors	215	3.287	1.024	1.012	4.00	1.00	5.00
Ethical Marketing Mix	215	3.540	0.990	0.994	3.77	1.23	5.00
Strategies (Action/Reaction)	215	3.514	0.656	0.810	3.78	1.22	5.00
Contextual Factors	215	3.434	0.624	0.790	3.89	1.00	4.89
Intervening Factors	215	3.466	0.767	0.875	3.67	1.22	4.89
Outcomes	215	3.507	0.854	0.924	4.00	1.00	5.00

*Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to check the normality of the data*

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the homogeneity of the data and to check their joint and normal distribution. According to Table 4-6, since the significance level values in the research variables are less than 0.05, the degree of skewness and kurtosis were used to accurately check the normality of the data. Given that the degree of skewness and kurtosis in the research variables is in the range of -2 to +2, the status of this variable is assumed to be normal.

**Table 2: Results of examining the normality of the frequency distribution of organizational variables and its components**

Variable	Test Statistic	P-Value	Skewness	Kurtosis	Distribution
Causal Factors	0.243	0.000	-0.723	0.105	Normal
Ethical Marketing Mix	0.132	0.000	-0.754	-0.304	Normal
Strategies (Action/Reaction)	0.128	0.000	-0.936	0.667	Normal
Contextual Factors	0.109	0.000	-0.864	0.578	Normal
Intervening Factors	0.122	0.000	-0.587	0.599	Normal
Outcomes	0.122	0.000	-0.652	0.226	Normal

*Research Model Analysis*

In this study, structural equation modeling with partial least squares (PLS) approach was used to analyze the model. This algorithm consists of three main steps: 1) fitting measurement models, 2) fitting structural model, and 3) fitting overall model.

*Measurement Model Evaluation*

In this section, the results of the measurement model evaluation, including the results of reliability tests, validity tests, and model quality tests, are presented.

In this section, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were used to measure the reliability of the model. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of reliability and a suitable measure for assessing internal consistency (internal consistency). Internal consistency indicates the degree of correlation between a structure and related indicators (Davari and Rezazadeh, 2012). Composite reliability is a more modern measure than Cronbach's alpha in PLS analysis, and its advantage over Cronbach's alpha is that the reliability of the constructs is not calculated in absolute terms, but is calculated according to the correlation between their structures. According to Table 7-4, it is clear that all Cronbach's alpha values and composite reliability of the model's categorical variables have sufficient values, because the values obtained for the variables are greater than 0.7. Therefore, it can be confirmed that the reliability of the measurement model is appropriate.

**Table 3: Measuring the reliability of the model through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability**

constructs	Number of Questions	Acceptable Threshold	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)
Increasing Awareness and Social Responsibilities	3	0.7	0.811	0.887
Maintaining Ethical Position in the Educational Market	3	0.7	0.863	0.915
Legal and Regulatory Pressures	4	0.7	0.845	0.895
Ethical Product	4	0.7	0.904	0.933
Ethical Pricing	3	0.7	0.887	0.930
Ethical Distribution	3	0.7	0.815	0.891
Ethical Promotion	3	0.7	0.927	0.954
Developing Ethical Charter	3	0.7	0.819	0.894
Community Engagement	3	0.7	0.824	0.895
Strengthening Ethical-Oriented Infrastructure	3	0.7	0.875	0.923
Managerial Support	3	0.7	0.743	0.856
Education and Empowerment for Staff and Faculty	3	0.7	0.701	0.811
Technology Platforms and Information	3	0.7	0.747	0.856
Economic Foundations	3	0.7	0.721	0.843
Political Foundations	3	0.7	0.858	0.914
Social Foundations	3	0.7	0.746	0.858
Enhancing Public Trust and Loyalty	3	0.7	0.815	0.890
Preservation and Distribution of Ethical Identity	3	0.7	0.865	0.918

<b>Strengthening Competitiveness and Financial Stability</b>	3	0.7	0.781	0.872
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### *Testing the validity of a measurement model*

When one or more characteristics are measured by two or more methods, the correlation between these measures provides two important indicators of validity. If the correlation between test scores measuring one characteristic is high, the tests have convergent validity. If the correlation between tests measuring different characteristics is low, the tests have discriminant or divergent validity.

### *Convergent Validity Examination*

As mentioned, when one or more traits are measured by two or more methods, if the correlation between the scores of the tests measuring a single trait is high, the tests have convergent validity. To examine convergent validity, two confirmatory validity tests (measurement of factor loadings) and the extracted mean variance test are used, and the results of these two tests are presented separately below.

Confirmatory validity (measuring factor loadings) Factor loadings are calculated by calculating the correlation value of the indicators of a construct with that construct. According to Holland (1999), the criterion for the appropriateness of factor loading coefficients is 0.4. In other words, if the aforementioned correlation value is equal to or greater than 0.4, the validity of that measurement model is acceptable. However, authors such as Rivard and Hoff (1988) set the number 0.5 as the measurement criterion for greater certainty (Davari and Rezazadeh, 2014). In the present study, the criterion for the appropriateness of factor loadings is 0.5. Figures 4-2 and 4-3 show the output of the software for calculating factor loadings. The values obtained for factor loadings are also presented in the fourth column of Table 4.



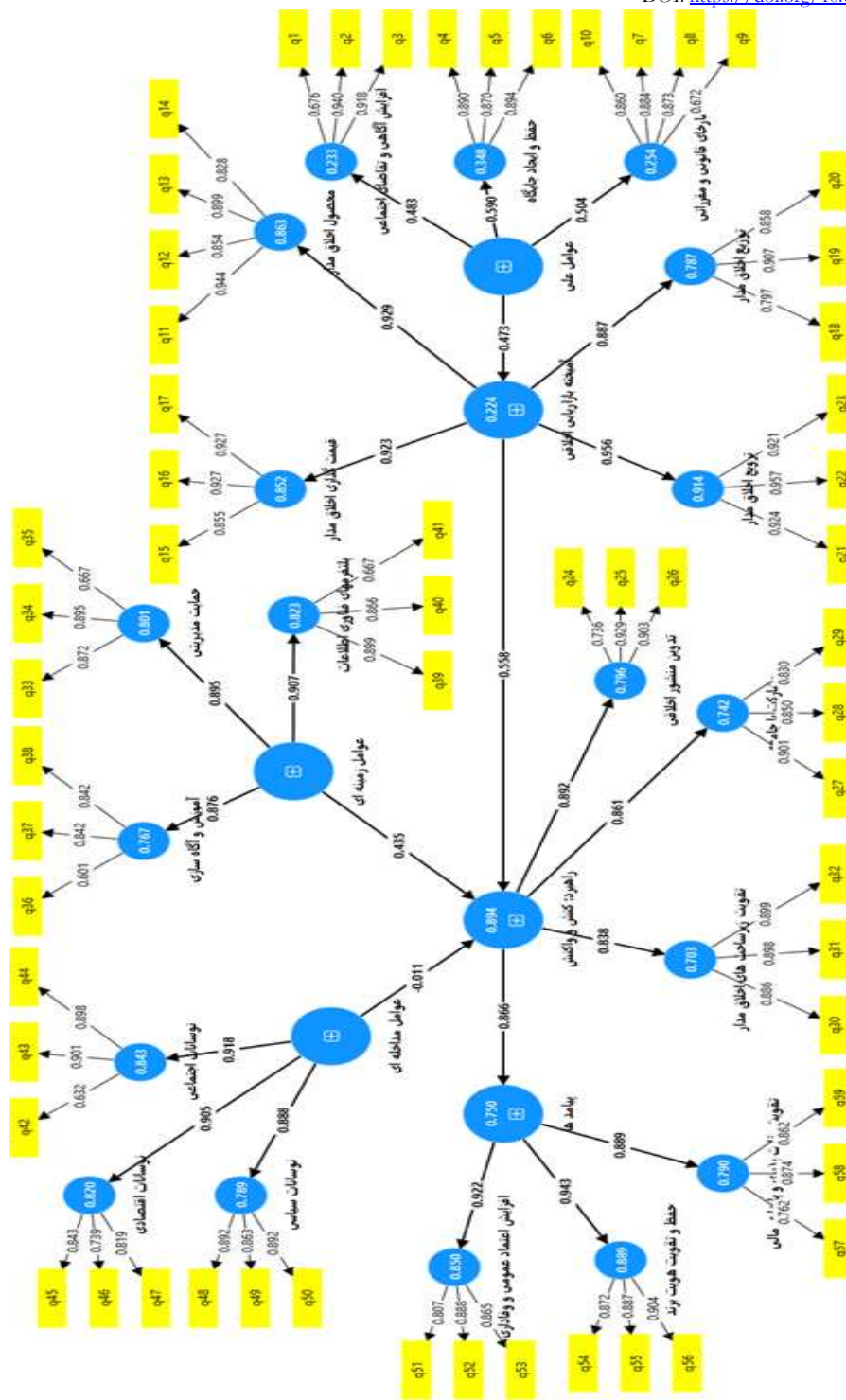


Figure 1: Software output related to calculating factor loads



	Maintaining Ethical Position in the Educational Market	q4	0.890	50.648	0.000	
		q5	0.873	37.791	0.000	
		q6	0.927	55.977	0.000	
	Legal and Regulatory Pressures	q7	0.672	49.925	0.000	
		q8	0.873	36.872	0.000	
		q9	0.814	12.800	0.000	
		q10	0.804	36.040	0.000	
	Key topic: Ethical marketing mix	Ethical Product	q11	0.904	110.846	0.000
			q12	0.891	26.097	0.000
			q13	0.927	69.123	0.000
q14			0.828	29.092	0.000	
Ethical Pricing		q15	0.858	36.626	0.000	
		q16	0.921	83.555	0.000	
		q17	0.927	92.183	0.000	
Ethical Distribution		q18	0.921	20.982	0.000	
		q19	0.858	62.880	0.000	
		q20	0.927	43.424	0.000	
Ethical promotion		q21	0.921	77.907	0.000	
	q22	0.936	178.992	0.000		
	q23	0.951	83.639	0.000		
Strategies: Action and Reaction	Developing a Code of Ethics	q24	0.736	18.364	0.000	
		q25	0.929	95.592	0.000	
		q26	0.903	64.688	0.000	
	Partnering with the community	q27	0.901	60.614	0.000	
		q28	0.850	34.305	0.000	
		q29	0.830	33.687	0.000	
	Strengthening ethical infrastructure	q30	0.886	40.316	0.000	
		q31	0.898	44.259	0.000	
		q32	0.899	73.288	0.000	
Contextual factors	Management support	q33	0.872	59.711	0.000	
		q34	0.895	54.429	0.000	
		q35	0.667	10.367	0.000	
	Employee-faculty training and awareness	q36	0.601	6.599	0.000	
		q37	0.842	30.698	0.000	
		q38	0.842	33.581	0.000	
	IT platforms	q39	0.899	71.928	0.000	
q40		0.866	38.324	0.000		
q41		0.667	11.678	0.000		
Intervening factors	Social Fluctuations	q42	0.632	12.561	0.000	
		q43	0.901	78.452	0.000	
		q44	0.898	62.041	0.000	
	Economic Fluctuations	q45	0.843	35.764	0.000	
		q46	0.739	16.943	0.000	

Consequences	Political Fluctuations	q47	0.819	24.309	0.000
		q48	0.892	45.575	0.000
		q49	0.863	27.817	0.000
		q50	0.893	63.574	0.000
	Increasing Public Trust and Loyalty	q51	0.807	27.511	0.000
		q52	0.888	56.466	0.000
		q53	0.865	51.138	0.000
	Maintaining and Strengthening Ethical Identity and Brand	q54	0.872	43.577	0.000
		q55	0.887	56.367	0.000
		q56	0.904	62.497	0.000
	Enhancing Competitiveness and Financial Sustainability	q57	0.762	17.540	0.000
		q58	0.874	74.495	0.000
		q59	0.862	48.186	0.000

#### *Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Test*

In order to measure convergent validity, Fornier and Larcker (1981) introduced the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) criterion and stated its acceptable value as 0.5 and above. This is while Magnes et al. (1996) considered a value of 0.4 and above sufficient for AVE. In the present study, in order to increase the accuracy and quality of the model, the number 0.5 has been used as the criterion. Table 4-9 presents the values obtained for the average variance extracted for different research variables. As can be seen from the table, all values are greater than the minimum acceptable value, i.e. 0.5.

**Table 5: Mean values of variance extracted for research variables**

Constructs (Latent Variables)	Number of Questions	Acceptance Level	Extracted Variance Mean (AVE)
Increasing Awareness and Social Responsibilities	3	0.5	0.728
Maintaining Ethical Position in the Educational Market	3	0.5	0.783
Legal and Regulatory Pressures	4	0.5	0.683
Ethical Product	3	0.5	0.779
Ethical Pricing	3	0.5	0.816
Ethical Distribution	3	0.5	0.731
Ethical Promotion	3	0.5	0.873

<b>Developing Ethical Charter</b>	3	0.5	0.740
<b>Community Engagement</b>	3	0.5	0.741
<b>Strengthening Ethical-Based Infrastructures</b>	3	0.5	0.800
<b>Managerial Support</b>	3	0.5	0.668
<b>Education and Empowerment for Staff and Faculty</b>	3	0.5	0.593
<b>Technological Information Platforms</b>	3	0.5	0.668
<b>Economic Challenges</b>	3	0.5	0.642
<b>Political Challenges</b>	3	0.5	0.779
<b>Social Challenges</b>	3	0.5	0.673
<b>Increasing Public Trust and Loyalty</b>	3	0.5	0.729
<b>Preserving Ethical Identity and Brand Integrity</b>	3	0.5	0.788
<b>Strengthening Competitiveness and Financial Stability</b>	3	0.5	0.696

Table 6: Results of partial least squares analysis and hypothesis testing

Row	Research Hypothesis			Standardized Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	P-Value	Hypothesis Testing Result
1	External Conditions	→	Ethical Marketing Mix	0.713	8.223	0.000	Confirmed
2	External Conditions	→	Ethical Pricing Mix	0.558	9.742	0.000	Confirmed
3	Contextual Factors	→	Ethical Marketing Mix	0.635	8.473	0.000	Confirmed

4	Intervening Factors	→	Ethical Marketing Mix	0.151	1.204	0.880	Rejected
5	Strategies	→	Ethical Marketing Mix	0.866	43.703	0.000	Confirmed

*First hypothesis: Causal conditions affect the ethical marketing mix.*

Zero hypothesis: Causal conditions do not affect the ethical marketing mix.

Research hypothesis: Causal conditions affect the ethical marketing mix.

According to the results of Table 4-15, it can be said that the standardized coefficient between the two variables of causal conditions and marketing mix is  $0.473\beta=$  and the significance coefficient (t-statistic) between these two variables is  $8.223t=$ , which is significant at the  $P > 0.01$  level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed, and it can be concluded that causal conditions have a positive and significant effect on the ethical marketing mix.

*Second hypothesis: Ethical marketing mix affects action and reaction.*

Zero hypothesis: Ethical marketing mix does not affect action and reaction.

Research hypothesis: Ethical marketing mix affects action and reaction.

According to the results of Table 4-15, it can be said that the standardized coefficient between the two variables of ethical marketing mix and action and reaction is  $\beta=0.558$  and the significance coefficient (t-statistic) between these two variables is  $t=9.742$ , which is significant at the  $P > 0.01$  level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed, and it can be concluded that the ethical marketing mix has a positive and significant effect on action and reaction.

*Third hypothesis: Contextual factors affect action and reaction.*

Null hypothesis: Contextual factors do not affect action and reaction.

Research hypothesis: Contextual factors affect action and reaction.

According to the results of Table 4-13, it can be said that the standardized coefficient between the two variables of contextual factors and action and reaction is  $\beta=0.435$  and the significance coefficient (t-statistic) between these two variables is  $t=8.473$ , which is significant at the  $P > 0.01$  level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed, and it can be concluded that contextual factors have a positive and significant effect on action and reaction.

*Fourth hypothesis: Intervening factors affect strategies.*

Zero hypothesis: Intervening factors do not affect action and reaction.

Research hypothesis: Intervening factors affect action and reaction.

According to the results of Table 4-15, it can be said that the standardized coefficient between the two variables of interfering factors and action and reaction is  $\beta=-0.011$  and the significance coefficient (t-statistic) between these two variables is  $t=0.151$ , which is significant at the  $P=0.880$  level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is confirmed and the research hypothesis is rejected, and it can be concluded that interfering factors do not have a positive and significant effect on action and reaction.

*Fifth hypothesis: Strategies affect the outcome.*

Zero hypothesis: Action and reaction do not affect the outcome.

Research hypothesis: Action and reaction affect the outcome.

According to the results of Table 4-15, it can be said that the standardized coefficient between the two variables of action and reaction and outcome is equal to  $\beta=0.866$  and the significance coefficient (t-statistic) between these two variables is also equal to  $t=43.703$  which is significant at the  $P>0.01$  level, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed and it can be concluded that action and reaction has a positive and significant effect on outcome. Therefore, according to the obtained results, the final model is presented as follows.

## Conclusions

Ethical marketing initiatives in non-profit universities have the potential to yield several desirable outcomes that enhance both their reputation and operational efficiency. By integrating ethical values such as honesty, trustworthiness, equity, and compassion into their marketing strategies, universities can build stronger and more sustainable relationships with key stakeholders, including students, faculty, and donors (Demetriou et al., 2018; Emad & Von Büren, 2014). This approach not only contributes to the university's positive positioning in a competitive educational arena, but also protects the institution from deviation from its core mission (Dašić, 2014). Furthermore, as demonstrated by the increased reputation for successful social responsibility resulting from the University of Nicosia's marketing campaign, ethical marketing practices can foster a culture of volunteerism and social responsibility within the university community (Gibbs & Murphy, 2009). Engaging with nonprofits also allows students to put marketing theories into practice, thereby increasing their preparedness to face professional challenges. In addition, ethical marketing can overcome financial barriers to nonprofit universities by building trust and credibility with donors, which is essential for revenue diversification and sustainability (Bezuidenhout, 2017; Arambewela et al., 2006). A comprehensive marketing strategy, tailored to the unique characteristics and goals of the nonprofit sector, is more likely to help create a favorable image and a stronger position in the marketplace (Simmons & Laczniak, 2014). However, the ethical climate within the organization is of paramount importance, as unethical behavior can cause a series of problems and undermine the institution's reputation and student achievement (Simmons & Laczniak, 2014). Hence, adopting ethical marketing practices not only aligns with the ethical leadership expected of educational institutions, but also contributes to their flourishing and sustainability by ensuring that marketing continues to serve the institution rather than merely promoting consumerism (Barber et al., 2023). This holistic approach to ethical marketing ultimately increases student satisfaction and organizational responsibility and fosters a stronger and more respectful learning environment.

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