

Ethics And Responsibility In Doing The Right Thing

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Introduction

Some issues are considered to be ethical but illegal, while others are unethical but legal. Ethics is a prescription for the right way that people should behave. Ethics is also composed of guidelines that people ought to follow to ensure that the right thing is done for the fairness of all. Many countries have in the past gotten into the dilemma of the ethical and legal aspects. For instance, traditions dictate that same-sex marriages are unethical, but the same is legalized in various countries in the world, including the US. Also, the abuse of drugs is taken to be unethical in society due to the results that follow the behavior, but some countries, such as Jamaica, allow the use of bhang. This indicates that not all legal aspects are right. Many organizations tend to bend their rules and engage in legal aspects that turn out to be unethical. It is necessary to consider both ends to attain a balanced form of behavior. In any case, the legal and ethical aspects of the organization affect its performance as well as its reputation. Therefore, there lies a thick line between the legal and the ethical, as well as between the unethical and the illegal.

Legal But Unethical Aspects

There are many examples of things done by people that are unethical but are not illegal. For instance, it is taken to be unethical to fire an employee for no apparent reason, but the same is not unlawful. The fact of not being illegal is gained from the ability and right of the employer to determine who is to work in the organization and who is not to work. In the same way, the employer has the right to decide the time that the services of a person are needed and the time of termination without consulting the affected individual. However, this amounts to unethical behavior as it inconveniences the employees. The firing without notice and consideration leads to unnecessary and unpredicted problems for the employee. The general ethical conduct discourages such acts and encourages a fair process of firing the employees.

On the other hand, acts such as slavery were considered to be legal in the United States and other countries in the world. This allowed the smuggling of people in the same way that goods are smuggled. In the same way, the governments of the day received payments and taxes for the people sold into slavery. However, this indicates the lack of respect for human beings and the loss of morals in the society. As much as the activity was a source of labor and income, it went against the rights of the people to have their freedom, make personal decisions, and enjoy life. At the time, therefore,

slavery was legal, but it never was ethical.

The use of drugs such as alcohol is considered legal in many countries across the world. However, the consumption of the same drugs leads to the deterioration of people's health, thus raising the costs of the government even higher. The world is under the pressure of ensuring that people enjoy their rights in deciding what they wish to take and what not to. For instance, Bhang is legalized in Jamaica. Most of the young people end up dropping out of school and engaging in criminal activities (Vitell 2015). Others lose their dreams for no good reason but drugs. As a result, doing drugs is a legal aspect, depending on the area of jurisdiction, but it is not ethical for the community and the people affected.

Selective promotion of the employees in the workplace is not illegal. However, the selective promotion of employees affects fairness, thus making the entire process unethical. By promoting some of the employees at the expense of others, the organization creates tension among them. In the same way, the act leads to the psychological torture of the sidelined employees as they feel unworthy of working for the organization. The leaders of the organization cannot, however, be arrested for not promoting the employees on a fair basis. They are, however, expected to ensure that promotion is done in consideration of justice for all the employees in the organization.

Organizational leaders also portray some characteristics that may be considered unethical, although not illegal. Being human, leaders get emotional depending on the situation at hand. In the same manner, they get angry when issues get out of hand. It is considered to be unethical for leaders to show their anger in public instead of dealing with it amicably. On the other hand, the same behavior is not illegal and thus cannot be auctioned in a court of law. It goes against the expectations of society that the managers and the leaders ought to set the pace for the followers as the peacemakers in their respective areas of authority.

Illegal But Ethical Behaviors

Some behaviors are taken to be illegal by the law even though society considers them to be right. Thus, they can be actionable in a court of law. Organizations get to such levels, especially when tenders are offered. In this case, the law states that it is illegal for a person to give gifts as a form of appreciation for winning bids. This is because the same may act as a form of influence for a long-term relationship, which hinders the chances of having a fair platform for competition among all the applicants. As such, gifts offered before the application of the tenders are illegal, as are those provided after the awarding of the tender. The illegality of the matter materializes in that it may lead to the cancellation of the contract.

Another instance of illegal but not unethical behavior is the case of wearing a helmet while riding a motorcycle. In this case, it is unlawful for any person not to have a helmet on when riding a motorbike. This is provided for by the transport laws aimed at minimizing the rate of accidents and

fatalities. However, it is not an ethical requirement for one not to have the helmet on. The general public considers it okay for a person to either wear or remain without a helmet.

Illegal And Unethical

This category represents the behaviors that are taken to be unethical in the eyes of society and illegal in the eyes of the law. Many of the behaviors taken into account, in this case, include criminal behaviors. For instance, it is illegal to kill and also unethical to take somebody's life. It is also illegal to steal and also unethical. Kidnapping is also illegal and actionable in a court of law, and it is unethical to induce such suffering in an innocent person (Trevino & Nelson 2016). Assault on people is illegal and unethical in the eyes of the law as well as society. The law also prohibits extortion, which is also considered unethical in society. Thus, such behaviors are condemned by the community and actionable in a court of law against the offender.

Establishing A High Level Of Ethical Standards

The establishment of a high level of ethical standards requires that the culture meets the values. As such, there should be a culture advocating for the implementation of the best values as provided for in the vision and the mission of the organization. Values account for the good and right things and behaviors that ought to be adopted by the organization.

The top management ought to pave the way for the rest to follow. They ought to come up with the best ethical standards that would be followed by all others in the organization (Comer & Vega 2015). In this regard, the change and implementation of high ethical standards need to start from the top and move downwards. In the same way, the leaders have to be role models who can be emulated by the lower-level employees. Inducing a high level of ethical standards in the organization means introducing a new and better form of culture. The top management has the role of changing and improving the culture of the organization and thus ought to start from there.

There is also the need for well-written ethical codes in the organization. A written code of ethics forms a good platform for communication with all the stakeholders, including the employees in the firm. Communication is the key to better implementation of the organization. Having the codes written down acts as a reference at all times from which a mistake can be corrected efficiently and on time.

It is also important to involve the employees in the formulation of the code of ethics. The employees are human and thus require a high level of motivation to act ethically and also maintain the required high-level standards (Bowie 2017). Consulting the employees in the formulation of the codes ensures that their needs and expectations are well captured in the end draft. In the same way, the employees are motivated to take part in the implementation of the ethical standards that they take part in their formulation.

Conclusion

Indeed, some issues may be ethical but remain illegal, while others may be legal but unethical. Also, other aspects may be legal and ethical. There is a need to determine the various categories to which all the behaviors belong. While the legal issues are actionable in court, the ethical issues pertaining to behavior are not actionable. The perception of society determines ethical matters. However, all the issues have an impact on the performance of the organization. Organizational leaders need to strive for the implementation of a high level of ethical standards. This can only be attained by drafting a code of ethics that matches the values of the organization. A culture based on values will promote a high level of ethical standards. It is also necessary to ensure that the organization engages in legal acts only to limit the legal proceedings against it. Ethical standards promote the reputation of the organization while acting legally creates a good relationship with the authorities.

References

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