

Case study on ethical issues citicorp case study

Profession



The paper discusses the ethical concerns for the Citicorp building case.

Engineering profession, like any other profession, is governed by a code of ethics. Ethics refers to a set of accepted moral standards to be followed by members of a certain group. Therefore, ethics in engineering profession is a set of values to be followed by engineers. The Citicorp building case brings various ethical issues of concern. These include following the structural design, respects of rights in structural design, taking responsibility for corrective measures, satisfaction of quality assurance regulations, and use of recommended materials (Harris, Pritchard, and Rabins).

Firstly, the design engineer (LeMessurier) respected the rights of the church in the design of the Citicorp building. He proposed a way to locate the supporting column of the building at the sides; since, the church had rights over the four corners. Also, the design gave ample space for the church by setting the first floor high at an equivalence of nine stories above the ground (Harris, Pritchard, and Rabins).

Secondly, the structural design was followed in the construction of the building. This was quite professional. However, the recommended materials of full penetration welds were replaced with bolted joints. This was quite unprofessional. The effects of such act had not been estimated; thus, compromising the safety of the building and posing a threat of Citicorp collapsing (Harris, Pritchard, and Rabins).

Thirdly, the design and the construction process satisfied the New York building codes requirements; this was quite professional. However, immediately after realizing the imminent danger, LeMessurier ignored the

facts. This was unprofessional. Moreover, the effects of 900 winds were calculated in accordance with the New York building construction codes; however, the design of the structure, with the supports at the sides, required calculation of the effects of quartering winds, and it was not done. This is professional negligence, and it is an unacceptable (Harris, Pritchard, and Rabins).

Fourthly, the corrective design of the Citicorp building was a brilliant idea and ethical. Initially, LeMessurier feared reporting his observation, as it could have brought his profession and firm at cross road. This resulted to delays in corrective measures. Moreover, he solely designed and estimated the cost and time required for the corrective measures. In addition, he presented the observation with a complete plan for correcting the building errors. This brings out a professional driven by selfish gains, as this problem was immediately and well responded by other stakeholders. Bringing the problem earlier, and to a panel of professional engineers, may have led to a better, easy and less costly plan of correcting the Citicorp building than LeMessurier presented (Harris, Pritchard, and Rabins).

Lastly, LeMessurier attempted to shun other people's ideas in the design problem. This claim is evident in LeMessurier argument that it was instructive for students to meddle with the design problem. In the problem design there is no single design that is perfect, and other professionals' ideas can bring insights into unnoticeable errors; thus, it is unprofessional to shun other people's ideas (Harris, Pritchard, and Rabins).

In conclusion, it is ethical for LeMessurier to respect the church rights in the problem design, following the design specification, and taking corrective

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measures for the Citicorp building. However, it was unethical for using bolted joints in the construction, and neglecting calculation of the effects of quartering winds. In addition, it was unethical for LeMessurier to delay reporting his observation, and attempting to shun the ideas of others in the design problem.

Cited Works

Harris, Charles, Pritchard Michael, and Rabins Michael. Engineering Ethics; Concepts and Cases. 4th ed. USA: Wadsworth publishing. 2008. Print.