

Critical thinking in comparative business ethics assignment

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I believe that having this self-confidence is necessary in our time and age where the social forces at large always try to push us into different directions, either through peer pressure or simply to satisfy the feeling of belonging to a whole, group or society, as in being part of the larger “Human Team”. I think that my upbringing and the role that my parents played in instilling these senses as well as promoting the development of “character” in me is what gives bearing to my moral and ethical compass. We are after all only products of our environment. 2.

Probably the strongest finding from the last decade research in behavioral ethics is that people simultaneously think of themselves as good people yet frequently lie and cheat (typically in a minor way). Is this consistent with your experience? Do you agree or disagree with the following statements from researchers in the field? “The empirical evidence seems to point to the conclusion that we lie and cheat much more often than we care to admit. At the same time, we strive to maintain a positive image of ourselves, and moral values are a central component of our self-image...” (Francesca Going) agree with this theory. We all want to look moral and standing and righteous at the least in front of our selves, facing the mirror and in front of others, we strive to nurture and build up this self image. When we break this image by beginning to lie and cheat our way around it, we are beginning to destroy what we have built so far, even if intrinsically so, so we will always rationalize our way around and make excuses for ourselves whenever we need to. Essentially, we cheat up to the level that allows us to retain our self-image as reasonably honest individuals...” (Dan Rarely) We can always cover up the smaller trespasses we commit onto our moral grounds and our

minds quickly forget these minor transgressions, while we try to avoid larger ones because these jeopardize our self image more gravely. “ Evolution prepared us humans to be devious, self-serving, and only half- honest, inclined to grab the lion share of goodies without being thrown out of the group.

Homo sapiens became wired for truthfulness only to the extent that it suited us, pleased others, and preserved our reputations. We are willing to break rules to benefit ourselves, but only within limits we can justify. We are good and fair, most of the time” at least in our own minds” but that doesn’t exactly make us straight shooters. Our internal cop stops us only when we contemplated big transgressions... (Mark Madhouse) Given the origins of Homo sapiens and our evolution from Hunter Gatherers and into Tribal and Nomadic societies, only later to be condensed into static and settled communities with the introduction of agriculture, I tend to strongly agree with the above statement by Madhouse because I believe that despite all our modernization, social elevation and even domestication if you would have it; we still retain a large part of our primal instincts “ Self Preservation”, we only practice it in more modern forms. 3. Most empirical research indicates that religiosity is not a significant factor in ethical behavior.

Atheists and religious people tend to say that the same actions are ethical and unethical. And while religious people tend to give more money and time to their churches and synagogues, religious and nonreligious people otherwise have similar profiles in terms of altruism and volunteerism. Does this surprise you? Not surprising at all, Religiosity and Atheism are just

additional “ layers” added only recently (during the last 2000? Or so? Years) to our moral “ layer cake”, imposed by our society. We are still not yet sufficiently evolved to transcend our primal hunter-gatherer instincts. 4. Have you known good people to do bad things?

Either personally, or you’ve heard or read about episodes in the media? Sexual abuse of children by certain priests? Clipper’s (NAB) Owner Donald Sterling’s most recent Racist remarks? Colonel Kurt, Apocalypse Now? 6. If so, how would you explain their conduct? Simply put, these are all people who have risen to high positions, power went to their heads and at one point they disassociated themselves with the rest of the “ Hoi Polloi”, in their opinion they do not rely on the public anymore, they even broken out of their chain and can only look down on us for not being able to do what is necessary.

Activity 2 – Bounded Ethically 1. Introduction: Economists have often modeled human decision makers as completely rational. According to this model, rational people know their own preferences, gather and accurately process all relevant information, and then make rational choices that advance their own interests. However, Herbert Simon won a Nobel Prize in economics by pointing out that people are rational, but only bounded so in that they seldom gather all available information, they often do not accurately process the information that they do gather, nor do they necessarily know what it is that will make them happy.

People are rational, but bounded so. If the last fifty years of psychological research has proven anything, it’s that the situational often dominates the

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dispositional. That is to say, our disposition or desire to be good people can be overwhelmed by psychological or organizational factors that we may not even be aware of. These factors adversely affect ethical decision making as well as economic decision making, meaning that people are bounded ethical as well as bounded rational.

The basic notion, as spelled out by Professor Ann Tunnels and her colleagues, is that systematic and predictable organizational pressures and psychological processes cause people to engage in ethically questionable behaviors that are inconsistent with their own preferences. Various factors cause us to make unethical decisions that we later regret. For example, although most of us want to act ethically, we also wish to please authority figures.

Therefore, if our boss asks us to do something unethical, we may do it without even realizing our mistake because we are focusing on pleasing the boss rather than on the ethical dimensions of the issue facing us. To take another example we also have a natural desire to be “ part of the team” at work. Therefore, if a questionable action advances the team’s interests, as we perceive them, we may act unethically because, again, we are focusing upon achieving the team’s goals rather than adhering to our own ethical standards.

Most of us want to act ethically, and are certain that we will because we just know we’re good people. But most of us are also overconfident regarding our own ethicality. This can lead to complacency that causes us to make decisions containing ethical dimensions without reflecting deeply. We’re

ethical, its true, but bounded so. I recommend a little humility. Only if we truly commit ourselves to being ethical people and diligently guard against the organizational pressures and psychological factors that put bounds upon our ability to be so, can we possibly realize our ethical potential. . Activity

Based on the videos that you watch above, answer the following questions (approve 200-300 words) Do you think that acting ethically is just a matter of wanting to badly enough? Why or why not? We can want to be ethical and moral, but unless this is also coupled with a very strong and developed moral compass that stays on all the time; we are bound to falter. Unless we are conscious at all times of the bearings of our ethical map and moral compass and we can regulate them at all times, we will be bound to falter and at times act contrary to the values we desire for ourselves.

What kinds of situational factors can you think of that might make it difficult for a well-intentioned person to always do the right thing? Peer Pressure is the first thing that comes to mind, we want to kick cool in the eyes Of our peers, so we are willing to do whatever it takes sometimes without thinking much just to scene to that pedestal of social acceptance. Think of all the fraternity initiation rituals young adults put themselves through yearly just to gain a form of acceptance and a feeling of belonging to something larger than themselves individually. Can you think of a time when you did not live up to your own ethical standards?

What caused you to depart from your own standards? I am guilty of manipulating my time cards at work, my justification: needed more money. And my rationalization of this transgression: they were not treating me fairly

at my job. Cause established, excuse in place, I could owe begin manipulating and tampering with my moral GAPS. Can you think of an example of a friend who acted unethically? Or someone in the news lately? Without making excuses for them, can you explain why they might have made bad ethical decisions even though they are generally good people? 2 Do you think it's possible to be completely rational when making ethical decisions?

Why or why not? Think we cannot remain completely rational when making ethical decisions because " Rational" is a highly relative term and quite subjective, this is why we say X did something bad and later justified it in rent of Y, the justification process entails a personal Rationalization, rationalization in my opinion is our way of motivating our acting and finding excuses as to why we acted so and so. Activity 3 - Conflict Of Interest 1. Introduction Written and Narrated by Associate Professor Lamar Pierce Incentives are pervasive in every aspect of society.

People are rewarded for taking certain actions, and not rewarded for taking others. Workers are paid for their effort and productivity, salespeople are paid for their sales, and small business owners are rewarded with profits for successful ventures. So long as these incentives are well-understood by everyone, they work reasonably well. They motivate effort, performance, and social welfare. But sometimes, individuals have incentives that conflict with their professional responsibilities, often in ways that are not transparent to the public or in their own minds.

These conflicts of interest produce serious economic and social problems. Conflicts of interest are pervasive in markets and in society, and can motivate professionals to act in ways that violate their responsibilities and hurt their client and employers. Doctors, for example, may face a conflict of interest when they are paid more for some procedures than for others. Their professional responsibility is to do what is best for a patient, but their financial incentive is not always aligned with this responsibility.

If an oncologist profits from selling chemotherapy agents to their patients, and some agents are more expensive than others, this conflict becomes a problem. Most doctors would never think of profiting in ways that hurt their patients, but some may either consciously or subconsciously. When there are conflicts of interest, you can almost guarantee that they will at least sometimes lead to bad outcomes. Surprisingly, in many states, real estate agents can represent both the buyer and the seller in a home transaction. The conflict in such transactions is clear.

The agent could never have both parties' best interests in mind, just as an attorney could never adequately represent both a plaintiff and defendant in a civil lawsuit. Even professors face a conflict of interest when they're designing courses that will be evaluated by students seeking high grades and low workload. A professor is ultimately promoted based on their popularity with students, will they consider making the course a little bit easier? The key implication is that managers and policy-makers must constantly evaluate whether professionals and employees might face incentives to act counter to their responsibility.

Eliminating conflicts of interest is one of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce unethical behavior. But in order to do so, we must be willing to acknowledge that professional codes of conduct, like those followed by doctors, lawyers, accountants, and real estate agents, do not make people immune to these conflicts, and that these codes are rarely a justification for ignoring the likely outcomes that conflicts of interest create. . Activity (approve 200-300 words) What conflicts of interest have you personally experienced in personal or professional roles?

I have been in a hiring position where was in charge of recruiting personal to help in field surveys. The job was one off where we would hire temporary staff on a project that would usually last between 2 days and up to a week. In short we were offering high remuneration for short term highly responsible work. I had plenty of highly qualified, over qualified and needy for money applicants, in the same time I had 2 of my cousins who upon learning of this opportunity, desperately wanted to get with the program, other family members also pressured me into giving them the job.

If you perceive a potential conflict for yourself, what are some ways you might ensure that this conflict doesn't lead to unethical behavior for you and others? I try to ensure at the very least, that even if there was a conflict of interest occurring with me in the position I am in, I would do my utmost so that this does not affect the desired results or outcome or impact any stakeholder in the matter negatively, I practice collateral damage control. When have others' conflicts of interest impacted how you or those you know were treated?

I have been passed over for promotion and when applying to other jobs more times than can count; Nepotism. What types of policies can or do organizations implement to try to reduce conflicts of interest or their costs? Ethic codes and manuals can help an organization to minimize the occurrence and impact of conflicts of interests because they are able to spell out the extent in which such conflicts can be avoided, and what should all the parties involved do in such situations when they are and are not permitted.

These conflicts can be permitted by a written or implied code of ethics, such as disclosure and recall agreements. Professionals can never say that they were not made aware of conflicts of interest that has occurred through their improper behavior when it is unethical. There should also be some form of disciplinary action in place to stop such conflicts from occurring. Activity 4 – Conformity Bias Written and Narrated by Professor Robert Prentice Parents seldom accept as an excuse their child's plea of " Hey everyone else is doing it. However, psychological studies demonstrate that those same parents, and everyone else, tend to take their cues for proper behavior in most social contexts from the actions of others. This pressure is called the conformity bias. Psychologist Solomon Cash found that when he asked subjects to tell which of three lines is the same length as a fourth line, no one had difficulty unless they were placed in group with Sash's confederates who gave obviously wrong answers. Under those conditions, almost all the subjects found it very painful to give the obviously correct answer in contradiction to the strangers' wrong answers.

In fact, most participants gave an obviously incorrect answer at least once during the study. This bias to conform is much greater, of course, when the others in the group are co- employees and/or friends, or when the correct answer is not right there in black and white – as it was in the Cash Study – but is instead a subjective?? like an ethical questions. An employee at the accounting firm KEMP challenged the ethics of tax shelters that the firm was selling. He received a simple e-mail that said: “ You’re either on the team or off the team. ” Well everyone wants to be on the team.

We all realize that loyalty is generally an important virtue. But it causes a pressure to conform and this pressure to conform, it can be argued, helped cause Ford employees to sell the Pinto despite awareness of TTS gas tank dangers, and helped A. H. Robins employees to continue to sell the Dalton Shield contraceptive DID despite knowing its ghastly medical consequences. The impairment of individual decision making known as “ corrupting” – where people deciding in groups often make more extreme decisions than any individual member initially supports – can exacerbate the conformity bias.

It can be reasonably argued that loyalty and corrupting helped Morton Thickly employees to remain silent about known O-ring dangers that caused the Challenger space shuttle disaster. Psychological ND organizational pressures can cause even people with good intentions to lie or otherwise act unethically. Good character isn’t always sufficient. As Album Tumbledown told Harry Potter, “ It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends. ” Can you think of a

time when you did something just because everyone else was doing it??
even when it didn't feel quite right to you?

Do you regret it now? Have on numerous occasions cheated during my exams in middle school, all the cool kids were doing it. It never felt right, I always studied for my exams ND really had no need to cheat, but wrote my algebra formulas on small paper slips and smuggled these into class, because I didn't want to be the only person in class that knew his formulas, aka. Nerd. It was recently observed that " cheating is contagious. " Does that sound true to you? Why or why not? If it is true, why might this be the case?

Saying that cheating is " contagious" implies that there is more than one person involved for it to become and epidemic, you need more than one subject to transfer a contagion. Viral Biochemistry tells us that the larger the population is, the easier it is for a contagion to spread. Sees I believe cheating is contagious when a group of people is involved and even more contagious when that group/population is larger. I believe that the " herd mentality" IS responsible for this being so, also known as " corrupting" in some circles. Loyalty is generally considered a good quality.

When a group to which you owe loyalty seems to be making a decision that seems unethical to you, how should you go about trying to balance your loyalty to the group against your own ethical integrity? Have you had an experience like that? If so, how did you resolve it? It's called " Blowing the whistle", since 2009 we have seen plenty of hostellers that precipitated and occurred during the start of the financial crisis. I have not been in such a

certain situation personally, but I believe that Snowden (NSA Whistler's) and Changes (Wick leaks) would have a lot to weigh in on in this matter.

Can you explain how “ corrupting” works? Can you think of a time when you have been subject to corrupting? “ Corrupting” happens when a group of people have a strong desire to maintain group harmony and conformity, which results in sometimes irrational individual decision making. Conflict is minimized between members of the group in order to maintain that armory, consensus is reached on critical decisions without thorough evaluation of alternative viewpoints, viewpoints of those outside the group. Dissidents are expelled and singled out, or isolated and neutralized either voluntarily or forcibly.

Loyalty to the group is a major component in Corrupting, individuals avoid going against the flow. Blind loyalty is essential after a certain point when member start becoming aware Of erroneous activity inside the group. They either close their eyes and chalk it off as “ not my responsibility/decision”

Activity 5 – Ethical Fading In the book he wrote about his crimes, disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramson?? Casino Jack?? asked: “ What was I thinking? ” This is a familiar refrain among white collar criminals. Why can they see their ethical failings in retrospect, but not earlier when it really mattered?

Part of the explanation is what professors Ann Tunnels and David Missies call ethical fading. Imagine that you work for a company in internal audit and your boss asks you to inappropriately massage some earnings numbers. And it happens to be the week that the company is deciding whom to lay off in the most recent round of cutbacks. And you want to keep your job, of course.

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It is possible that you will not even notice the ethical dimensions of the action you have just been asked to take by your boss. These ethical dimensions may just fade from view.

Ethical decisions are often made almost automatically by the parts of our brain that process emotions. Only later do our cognitive processes kick in. When we think we are reasoning to an ethical conclusion, often all we are really doing is searching for rationalizations to support the decision that we have already made instinctively. As time distances us from the decision we have made, the ethical issues may start to reappear. We may feel the need to reduce the dissonance that results from the conflict of our view of ourselves as ethical people and the unethical action we have committed.

Studies show that offering people an opportunity to wash their hands after behaving immorally are often enough to restore their self-image. There's a reason we talk about starting with a "clean" slate. Even if our minds cannot cause an ethical issue to fade from view, a process known as moral disengagement can mitigate the sting of an unethical decision. Moral disengagement is a process by which our brain enables us to turn off our usual ethical standards when we feel the psychological need to do so, just like we'd turn off a TV when a show comes on that makes us uncomfortable.

Studies show, for example, that people who want to buy an article of clothing that they know was manufactured with child labor will suddenly view child labor as less of a societal problem than they thought before. Moral disengagement allows us to suspend our personal codes of ethics, yet continue to view ourselves as ethical people. There is no easy cure for

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ethical fading and moral disengagement. Our only option is to be vigilant in looking out for ethical issues and equally circumspect in monitoring our own actions and generalizations. 2. Task - Watch the following Videos:

[HTTPS://www.YouthGOAL3.com](https://www.YouthGOAL3.com)

Activity (approve 200-300 words): Can you explain the concept of ethical fading and perhaps give an example of when it happened to you? Ethical Fading is a situation one finds themselves in where they either consciously or subconsciously decide to “fade away” constraints imposed on them by their morality and ethics in order to meet a desired outcome. I found myself in such a situation when asked to manipulate the results in a certain field survey that we conducted in order to please a superior, we was implied upon us to drastically” inflate our numbers in order to justify future funding for a project we were working on.

Can you think of a situation where you were so intent upon pleasing an authority figure, fitting in with your friends, or achieving a goal that you failed to give an ethical issue your full attention? Did that situation cause you regret? In the situation I gave earlier, went along and did what was asked from me, I inflated our figures by 10 - 15% sometimes up to 30% in some cases. I was not so much intent on pleasing my boss as was on ensuring my employment for the coming months by extending our project by another master.

I do not feel regret from doing this, as this was a rampant phenomena in the industry, or maybe not enough time has passed since then for me to feel back-guilt coming from this situation. I also rationalize and justify my actions

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when I look back and remember how I panicked at the thought of unemployment. Can you think of an example of a friend who might have been the victim of ethical fading? Or a person in the news recently? Plenty of people have been the victims of Ethical Fading, almost everyone who has had a mortgage in the USA these past 6 - 7 years has been touched by the ethical fading of the orals of some pretty well known companies.

Activity 6 - Framing In any kind of decision-making, context counts. The simple reframing of a situation or question can produce a totally different answer from the same person. For example, people would rather buy a hamburger made of meat labeled 75% fat free than meat labeled 25% fat. In fact, when questioned, these people will tell you that the 75% fat-free burger tastes better than the 25% fat burger, even though the burgers are identical. When NASA was deciding whether to launch the ill-fated space shuttle Challenger, Morton Thicket's engineers at first opposed the launch on safety grounds.