

The unethical behaviour essay sample

[Psychology](#), [Behaviorism](#)



With the example of Kenneth Lay, one is faced by a situation that is not easily explainable. It is not expected that a senior staff should be involved in unethical behaviour at all. The people in high leadership positions undergo a lot of training on ethics which they are supposed to apply in conducting office affairs. So, in a case like Lay's one keeps wondering why he could commit such. It is this dilemma that made some theoreticians of leadership stipulate some models and theories for understanding the issue. The problem partly lies in the training and partly on matter of personality (Gladwell 2002).

The study of ethics strives to teach people on what they should not do. It is however not satisfactory just to teach people on what not to do because here are so many unethical things. These unethical behaviours cannot be covered in class. Again there is exists no consensus on what unethical behaviour is. The studies hence fail to achieve the goal of behaviour modification they aim at.

Theories of leadership are based on a realization of what culture considers as ethical or unethical according to the context. Leadership has a wide meaning that covers ethical and unethical behaviours. In the case of unethical leadership behaviour, a leader may lead an enterprise with an attitude that the end justifies the means (Gardner 1995). In this case they may misinform the junior workers or act in other unethical manner, and later defend themselves by appealing to the good intentions. As in the case of Lay who tried to pass the buck to junior workers in defence he appealed to the fact that the work in the organization is well delegated from the CEO to achieve good performance. Unethical behaviour in the current day is used by many

leaders to fulfil their intentions. The popular view concerning this states that; it is never an unethical behaviour if one is not caught.

There is no evidence that ethical behaviour in the office produces better results than unethical behaviour. This is because the good leadership is measured by success in the areas of work and there is no concern about the leadership behaviours that belie the success (George, 2007). It has hence been hard to define ethical leadership qualities and unethical ones.

In such a case of gross mismanagement as that faced Kenneth Lay, it is obvious that the unethical conduct he was accused of is excessive. However, such a conduct may have started as a desire to get more for himself so as to feel more motivated to perform better (Folger 2000). However there exists a tendency to overdo the fraud and hence creation of grand bankruptcy as in the case of Enron. The unethical behaviour is discovered when there is realization of a mess. In the case of Enron it was realized when the employees lost jobs and life savings. The model of ethical leadership is several aspects that are aimed at achieving success in the modern day enterprise. They include probity, and purpose. Probity means honesty, and purpose stands in for profit (Fullan 2007). The practice of ethical leadership seeks to reconcile the purpose of the organization with the needs of their clients. According to Dubrin (2006), a new approach needs to be adopted in defining what good leadership is. He proposes that leadership should be defined as creation of worthwhile opportunities and fulfilment of the same by honourable means. If leader's actions are neither honourable nor worthwhile then he can be said to be unethical leader.

This can be based on a new definition that leadership entails thought that is based on rules of conduct for what one has to do. The understanding must take in ethical behaviour not as a natural good but only for reasons of being pragmatic. If the above mentioned causes of unethical behaviour are well understood then solution is going to be easier to formulate. Redefinition of what is ethical or unethical is not enough. There is a need to cultivate a positive attitude of leaders towards ethical performance of their duties in their ethics learning

Reference list

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