

Ethics essay example

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Ethics are defined in the Business Dictionary as: “ The basic concepts and fundamental principles of decent human conduct.” The definition also refers to “ universal values such as the essential equality of all men and women, human or natural rights, obedience to the law of land, concern for health and safety and, increasingly, also for the natural environment” (Business Dictionary n. d.).

Ethical standards are very much ingrained in a particular culture and – more specifically – are a result of an individual’s upbringing within society in his/her native culture. Because that is so, individuals within one family are quite likely to have a different standard of ethics to other individuals who are part of a different family. For example, the ethical standards of someone brought up as a child of a very poor family living in a deprived inner city neighborhood will almost certainly differ from those of another individual raised in a middle-class family living in suburbia.

As stated by Alas (2006) “ Culture and the social world influence the values held by individuals.” Furthermore, because society evolves and acceptable behaviors change with time as a consequence, ethics will evolve too. So what is ethically acceptable in one generation may not be in the next (or vice-versa).

According to Pitta, Fung & Isberg (1999-2001), “ Different cultures have different rules of conduct” and “ Primary cultural values are transmitted to a culture’s members by parenting and socialization, education and religion.” They also note that secondary factors affecting ethical behaviour include different systems of law from one country to another, as well as other cultural differences. Those include such things as different organizational

cultures, different systems of management, and different codes of professional conduct (p. 241).

Because there are these inherent variations in ethical standards across societies and cultures, it is clear that laws applying within those cultures must take into account what is socially and ethically acceptable and what is not. There can be no universal standard of law that would be applied in all cultures, societies and countries.

When it comes to applying a country's laws in a particular court case, it is evident that a Judge must apply the law of the land. While ethical considerations are important, they will have been taken into account when the laws were drafted by the legislators, so it is not for the Judge to add his own interpretation of the ethical issues, but merely to base his judgements on the laws as drafted for his use.

Ethics also apply to the issue of governments acting on behalf of their citizens. For example, some may argue that for ethical reasons, all government official documents should be made public. However, that policy would mean that everyone could read sensitive documents that affect the nation's security, or documents that reveal private information about other individual's affairs that could have adverse consequences for that individual. "Government officials are obliged to respect that privacy" (Makarenko 2007).

In the field of Patent legislation, parts of the moral framework involved in Intellectual Property (IP) rights are what are termed "Right Ethics, Duty Ethics and Virtue Ethics." The first two are reciprocal in nature. For example, one may have a right to create something, but also a duty not to steal

another's idea. Virtue ethics can come into play when (for example) patenting something which as result prevents or restricts others from gaining humanitarian benefits such as better health, could be considered unethical ("The Ethics of Intellectual Property" n. d.).

Works Cited:

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