

Ethical behaviour in organizations research paper examples

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Importance of Understanding Ethical Behavior](#) \n \t
3. [Categories of Antecedents in Predicting Unethical Behavior](#) \n \t
4. [Most Important Category in Understanding Unethical Behavior](#) \n \t
5. [Conclusion](#) \n \t
6. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

Ethics refer to the question as to what is right or wrong. Consequently, ethical behavior in organization essentially defines practices which are right, moral and in line with public policy. In the cut-throat competition in the business industry that exists in modern day, some organizations tend to circumvent the requisite laws and policies in a bid to remain relevant in the market. In the quest to stay afloat, these organizations may have little or no regard for ethical behavior which is of key significance. Indeed, in the business industry, there is more pressure to increase the sales an organization makes, and to minimize the costs of production. Such pressure is present in different units of an organization including the supply and procurement management which is highly susceptible to pressures from the external environment as compared to the internal environment pressures, thus increasing the likelihood of deviating from the accepted norms. Further, the chances of an organization deviating from the accepted norms and

practices become even the more likely in modern day era, where transnational transactions take place outside national boundaries. Despite the various motivations to engage in unethical behavior, the importance of organizational ethics cannot be overemphasized.

Importance of Understanding Ethical Behavior

Unethical behavior is not only limited to the business industry but in virtually all organizations including non-governmental organizations, government and statutory corporations. The importance of inculcating, developing and maintaining ethical behavior in an organization cannot be gainsaid. Ethical issues and instances of unethical behavior perpetrated by organizations are a common feature in both print and visual media. It is beyond dispute that, such information as disseminated by the media to the public, weighs negatively on the particular organization due all the negative publicity that such information generates. Moreover, failure to adhere to ethical behavior in an organization ethical code breeds distrust not only among external partners of the organizations, but also among employees in an organization. Distrust is likely to arise between co-workers or between employees and their supervisors because persons engaging in unethical behavior always have selfish or malicious motivations. The upshot of this is decreased motivation and morale to work, increased stress levels and hence reduced worker productivity. In some cases, owing to the distrust at large in an organization, employees may fail to report misconduct in the organization with the consequence that such misconduct runs down the organization resulting in mass loss of jobs as happened in the Enron case.

In addition, unethical behavior also has financial implications for an organization. Usually, customers and suppliers prefer to deal with organizations that are ethical and have a good reputation. Customers will tend to buy goods and services from a specific organization depending on how they perceive the particular organization. More importantly, failure to practice ethical behavior may attract legal sanctions which may even include the withdrawal of licenses by the relevant regulatory authority. In other cases, the particular organization may be forced to pay large sums of money in the form of damages to customers, suppliers and other organizations as well as fines and penalties imposed by government. To this end, it follows that it is crucial to understand ethical behavior in an organization.

Categories of Antecedents in Predicting Unethical Behavior

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, a number of key concepts that attempt to explain the behavior inherent in people and thus enabling in predicting unethical behavior in organizations are espoused. The key antecedents subsumed in this theory include; attitude toward a certain behavior, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, perceived personal outcome and perceived social acceptance by others.

Attitude toward a particular behavior refers to the feelings or beliefs held by a particular individual towards a certain behavior. The feelings may either be positive or negative and are usually ascertained through an assessment of the particular beliefs of an individual as pertains to the consequences and impact of a certain behavior and an examination of their desirability. In effect, behavioral attitude is the sum of the individual consequence as well

as an assessment of the desirability of all expected consequences flowing there from. Subjective norm on the other hand refers to pressures from the external environment. Usually, subjective norm consists of the perception held by an individual as to the reaction of persons that matter to that individual. The particular person cares about what persons, who are important to them, will think should the individual exhibit a particular behavior. As such, the contribution of those important persons has a bearing on the individual's motivation to engage in a particular behavior or not. The concept of behavioral control encompasses the perception of a particular individual of the difficulty of performing a certain behavior. Therefore, it follows that the engagement of the individual in a certain behavior is dependent on the individual's view of the extent to which that behavior is wrong. Other key concepts for the theory of planned behavior are those of perceived personal outcome and that of social acceptance. Perceived personal outcome simply denotes the benefit that the individual engaging in a particular behavior is likely to accrue from such behavior. The individual evaluates the benefits, if any, that attends a particular behavior and thereby decides on whether to perform such behavior or not. The concept of perceived social acceptance by others is closely linked to that of subjective norm, but is tilted towards the positive note in the sense that the individual seeks to be cast in a positive light by being accepted. Such an individual will engage in a certain behavior not due to conviction, feeling or beliefs but so as to gain social acceptance from their contemporaries.

Most Important Category in Understanding Unethical Behavior

Unethical behavior refers to the practices or conducts that fall below the accepted standard and run afoul the relevant regulatory laws and policies. Of the several categories outlined above, one's attitude or belief towards a particular behavior stands out as the most important of the others in attempting to understand unethical behavior in organizations. Attitude of a person towards a given behavior shapes the behavioral intention of that person to a great extent as compared to the perceived benefits, acceptance, behavioral control or external pressures. According to the Fishbein and Azjen model, the evaluation of behavior as well as attitudes towards certain behavior by individuals is determined by the beliefs that are accessible to such individuals about a certain behavior at a particular time. The belief by that person refers to the subjective probability that a particular outcome will emanate from engaging in a certain behavior. The evaluation of the likely outcomes contributes to the resultant attitude in equal measure to the individual's subjective possibility that the conduct avails the particular outcome in issue.

Conclusion

It is the case that attitudes and beliefs of persons as to certain behavior supersede any societal pressures and expectations as the same are inherent in the person and constitute their very nature. The benefits derived, social acceptance and pressures by others are subservient to the attitude of individuals as to the question of human behavior. To this extent, the category of attitude and beliefs toward a given behavior must be

understood, if any inroads as to understanding unethical behavior among individuals and in organizations are to be made.

References

Bredeson, D. (2011). *Applied Business Ethics: A Skills-Based Approach* (Illustrated ed.). Stamford: Cengage Learning.

Cremer, D. D. (2009). *Psychological Perspectives on Ethical Behavior and Decision Making* (PB) (Illustrated ed.). Charlotte, North Carolina: IAP.

Schminke, M. (2010). *Managerial Ethics: Managing the Psychology of Morality* (2, Illustrated ed.). London: Taylor & Francis.

Shrader-Frechette, K. S. (2009). *Ethics of Scientific Research* (Revised ed.). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Yardi, Y. (2009). *Misbehavior in Organizations: Theory, Research, and Management* (Illustrated ed.). London: Routledge.