Essay on major ethical issues associated with conflicts at work

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Abstract

Conflicts are frictions that arise among people due to differences in opinions, perspectives, orientations or values (FAO, 1983). These collisions are inevitable in a setting where people have to constantly interact. Such a setting is at the workplace. Most conflicts at the workplace are associated with the ambitiousness of employees as everyone seeks the best in terms of rewards, promotions, authority or monetary gains. However, ethical issues are also major causes of conflicts.

Major Ethical Issues Associated With Conflicts at Work

Carroll (1996) brings the issue of ethical misconduct at the workplace to the spotlight. He argues that organizations have counselors who more often than not deal with workers' ethical problems. Carroll notes that sexual misconduct and violation of individual's privacy are the main complaints. This situation can arise either amongst the workers or between the subordinates and the management. At whichever level, the issue creates anxiety at the workplace resulting to reduced concentration. As a result, the worker's productivity is reduced (FAO, 1993). It can also be a precursor for blackmail where the

offender threatens the victim of adverse consequences such as dismissal if they don't submit to the offender's demands.

For instance, for instance, if the boss seeks sexual favors from a subordinate, the worker can disregard the authority of the boss hence not follow orders. This compromises the productivity. Taylor (2000) identifies a situation where a male worker sexually harasses a female colleague. As a result, there is so much tension between them and this ultimately leads to the transfer of the lady. The department suffers a loss, since a talented and resourceful individual has to depart.

Insensitivity of some workers is another major upset. According to Carroll (1996), about five to ten percent of workers are insensitive to the work ethics. These workers are a constant irritation to their workmates but the unfortunate bit is that the offenders are usually oblivious of the discomfort they cause. As FAO (1993) observes, this phenomenon creates distrust between workers as everyone avoids the insensitive individual. Carroll (1996) further observes that other workers are caught in a dilemma as to which approach would be best to confront the situation. No one is bold enough to directly stand up against the offender and no one wants to sell him to the administration. This is despite the fact that everyone agrees that the colleague is wrong. This causes strained work relations.

Insensitivity can be observed in a situation where an employee makes long private calls on the company line, falsification of working hours, duplicating company software for private use or out-rightly going against the

organizations code of conduct. In another example, Taylor (2000) cites an incident where an employee picks a nagging behavior and repeats it over and over again. Initially, the behavior may pass just for a normal behavior but with time, it becomes irritating. As a result, the perpetrator has to be evaded by all means. Ultimately, the company loses the benefits of a cohesive team. Taylor demonstrates this through a male worker who sexually assaults a female worker. He is apologetic and the lady forgives. However, the male colleague repeats the apology and expresses his remorse over the incidence every time he is alone with the lady. Though not with an ill motive, the man creates tension between them.

In conclusion, the contemporary workplace is an amalgamation of people of diverse backgrounds. This is more so due to the technological advances that has enabled outsourcing. This brings together different cultures, religions, virtues, beliefs and tradition. As discussed above, this diversity is a good recipe for conflicts. Ethical considerations are of great importance in cultivating good working relations. It is therefore necessary to understand the major threats to ethical integrity. As evidenced above, sexual misconduct and ethical insensitivity top the list and have disastrous effects on the organization.

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