

Ethics issues



Business ethics refers to values, principles and standards that operate within business and these attempt to make a distinction between something that is morally good from bad (Rossouw 2004). The concept of business ethics mainly derive from the value system obtaining from a business set up. Basically, values are described as the “ essential and enduring tenets” that help define the company and are “ not to be compromised for financial gain or short term expediency,” (DesJardins 2006: 5). Simply put, these are regarded as beliefs that often incline businesses to act in certain ways which are different from the others. Values range from financial, political as well as religious among others and these often shape the way an organisation operates towards the attainment of its goals. In pursuing these different values in business, there is need to take into consideration the concept of business ethics which is more concerned with serving the ends of human well being.

As already noted, the term ethics is primarily concerned with distinguishing between something that is good and bad while special attention is focused on issues of morality and professional conduct in an organisation where honesty and integrity should be seen as the guiding principles. When ethics is applied to business, we tend to consider the implications of economic activity on the interests of all those who are affected by it. In this way, there is need to identify and implement standards of conduct that will ensure that business does not negatively impact on the interests of the stakeholders as well as ensuring that the standard of behaviour will enhance the interests of all those affected by business.

There are various ethical aspects which are contentious issues in today’s business environment since they affect the organisations and communities in

which they operate. For instance, the issue of religion raises various ethical considerations both at workplaces and the environment in which business operates given that it can play a significant role in informing business behaviour especially in a globalised economy. In the workplace setup, there is often a clash of interests with regards to religious beliefs as the dominant cultural groups would tend to relegate other co-workers' religious beliefs. Ethically, the values of all the workers ought to be respected regardless of religion or creed.

As a result of globalization, incidents sometimes arise in business where people are no longer certain whether some actions should be considered right or wrong (Hiti 1999). When people look at the same thing and some would regard it as morally right while others would regard it as morally wrong which is one typical example of an ethical dilemma in business. The aspect of homosexuality is one that has caused serious confusion in workplaces as well as the environments in which businesses operate. There are mixed reactions where in some cases, there is nothing wrong with the practice while in some cases, the practice is condemned. This practice affects business in various ways as some people would end up shunning its products.

Indeed, the main objective of any business is to gain profit from its operations. However, as far as the issue of profit is concerned, it can be noted that in some cases, ethical values are not given the due prominence they deserve. For instance, the products that have passed their sale by date can still find their way into the market where an organisation would rather sacrifice the ethical values in preference of making profits. It can thus be seen that this aspect of ethics is controversial at times since it often conflicts

with the organisation's goals of making profits from its operations.

References

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