

# Business ethics

Business



Business Ethics Business Ethics The success of any business rests on the dedication and hard work of its managers and workers. However, the overall success is not without the moral guidance of ethical behavior in terms of values and virtues of individual workers within the organization (Boylan, 2009). Therefore, critical theories such as virtue theory, utilitarianism, and deontological ethics attempt to explain how certain things occur in companies.

In ethics, things such as virtue theory, utilitarianism, and deontology are all manifestations that attempt to explain moral concepts, values and virtues in society. Virtue theory encompasses the individual behavior of an individual in the wider realm of character to benefit self and others. It is similar to utilitarianism that supports the happiness of person irrespective of societal conventions unless it affects their acceptable moral concepts. However, in terms of addressing values, deontological ethics differs from other theories because it is concerned with one's obligation or duty to do good (Trevino & Nelson, 2011). In other words, while virtue theory espouses a consequence as a result of contravening tolerable values, it imposes penalties on the person. This is different from deontological ethics or utilitarianism that largely focuses on the maximization of utility. According to Mill who started utilitarianism, reducing suffering through happiness is the role and responsibility of a person unlike the deontological perspective of attaining a good feeling as a duty. Similarly, in explaining moral concepts and values, all the theories concur especially in organizations on the need for workers to practice proper ethical conduct irrespective of the immediate gain. It, thus, becomes part of an organizational culture where morality emanates from each individual.

Another interesting aspect of the theories involves the possible ramifications in cases of slow implementation especially in organizational contexts. In my personal experience, for example, I think virtue theory explains ethics better than utilitarianism does to morality. This is because while the former revolves around character traits and habits of an individual, utilitarianism is an innate feeling that lacks respect for either good or bad. Contrastingly, while moral concepts in society are defined by people and culture, deontological ethics fails to demonstrate how free will contributes to a universal conduct found in most companies. It also fails to acknowledge the basic tenets of managing ethical challenges especially when they arise in firms where employees lack the moral drive. Values and virtues, on the other hand, in most contemporary organizations are guided by the doctrines of utilitarianism rather than virtue theory. I feel that it contravenes the need to increase one's productivity as a means of personal improvement instead of being an organizational affair (Boylan, 2009). Explanation for the moral concept of hard work and dedication also blends with deontological ethics. Unfortunately, it does not support virtue theory that is interlinked with moral behavior of an individual and the organizational set-up.

It, therefore, is fundamental for all individuals to strive toward attaining happiness while abiding by the maxims of duty and acceptable morality (Trevino & Nelson, 2011). This will ensure that organizations achieve success because its workforce has an intrinsic instead of extrinsic motivation.

#### References

Boylan, M. (2009). *Basic ethics: Basic ethics in action*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Trevino, L. K. & Nelson, K. A. (2011). *Managing business ethics: Straight talk about how to do it right*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.