

Ethics and its categories literature review example

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Question 2

Ethics is a philosophical discipline that attempts to answer fundamental questions regarding what is right and wrong in the contemporary society (Von, 13). Ethics define the acceptable code of conduct of an individual. It also seeks ways to determine the right course of action in practical scenarios.

Categories of ethics

Emotive ethics

This holds that what is right or wrong should be based on an individual's emotions and feelings. It falls into the empirical category of ethics. Here, ethical sentences do not express propositions but the emotional attitudes of the concerned.

Ethical Egoism

The idea behind ethical egoism is that all persons have to act for their own self-interest. We have no moral obligation to others. People are motivated to act ethically by crass selfishness and benign selfishness. However, the moral agents should not harm the well-being and interest of others when making moral deliberation. For the egoist to choose what is in his own self-interest, then personal freedom is mandatory.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism holds that the proper course of action is the one that maximizes happiness and reduce suffering. One must act to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number. Happiness is the only thing that has

intrinsic value. Our duty is therefore to minimize pain and maximize pleasure (Von, 21). What is good for the society can only be defined empirically.

Religious Ethics

Religious Ethics are moral principles that guide religion and set standard for what is ethical. To a large extent, the religious books clarify what is right and what is wrong (Von, 19). People do not have to think of what is ethical but simple to follow what has been defined to be ethical by their religious beliefs.

Question 5 How does Harris et al define professional ethics? What are some problems with Harris et als view that personal ethics should ordinarily be given up in favor of professional ethics.

According to Harris et al, professional ethics are rules that prevent unethical conduct by professionals (engineers) and preventing threats from technology to the health and safety of the public and that professions use their knowledge to promote human good. The codes of ethics define what professionals should do and what they should not. Professional ethics are primarily in place to ensure that professional guard against harming the public and that they do not take unfair advantage of their specialized skills and knowledge to promote their own advantage.

However, Harris criticizes the provisions of the NSPE codes in that they are explicitly negative because the major terms used are “ not” and “ only.”

Problems with Harris et al view that personal ethics should ordinarily be given up in favor of professional ethics

Personal ethics enables an individual to live virtually as it gives them satisfaction: it is in accordance with who they are. Giving up personal ethics

in favor of professional ethics will make an individual lose the sense of honesty, courage and compassion. This has a negative effect on the individual's virtues and morals.

Harris et al states that, " The principal goal of human services is to enable people to live more autonomous, more satisfying, and productive lives, through the utilization of society's technological innovations, resources and knowledge" (Harris et al, 11). The individual providing the services to the society is also part of the society. Adhering to professional ethics at the expense of their personal ethics will only make their lives terrible. We may therefore end up having professional who live very pathetic lives while those they serve live an awesome life. Finally, they may become inefficient and unable to deliver services.

Question 8

Ladd's arguments against codes of ethics

John Ladd opposes the codes of ethics because they serve no good purpose.

He argues that ethics should be insightful and open-ended (Ladd, 19).

Relying on a code of ethics makes people to confuse ethics with law. He is for the idea that ethics and law should be clearly differentiated and that people should be allowed to act without necessarily formulating codes of ethics that will guide and guard their conduct.

He further asserts that it is a great mistake to assume that professionals have a special code of ethics that is distinct from the ethics of ordinary human beings within our just society (Ladd, 19). Professionals have no special duties and rights separate from their duties and rights as moral people. This therefore makes him conclude that codes of ethics are

pernicious and senseless.

Ladd argues that if codes of ethics are implemented, it may create a scenario that is in conflict with the moral autonomy that is expected of an individual (Ladd, 20). He therefore proposes that the society should not be subjected to the codes of ethics. He supports this view by illustrating how professional codes of ethics rest on both moral and intellectual errors. He states that the role of ethics is to criticize, appraise, and defend principles, rules and regulations. However, it does not punish them. When a punishment is attached, then it becomes a law. Laws are already in existence and imposition of codes of ethics might bring confusion. The codes of ethics are also set in a very one-sided manner with those setting them not following them but targeting other people. Ladd perceives codes of ethics as pointless and irrelevant in the contemporary society.

Works cited

Charles Harris, “ The Good Engineer; Giving Virtue its Due in Engineering Ethics”.

Ladd, John. The Quest for a Code of Professional Ethics: An Intellectual and Moral Confusion. Ethical Issues in Engineering. Ed. Deborah G. Johnson. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991. Print.

Von, Hildebrand D. Ethics. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 2002. Print.