The Importance and Necessity of Professional Ethics in the Organization and the Role of Managers

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Abstract

Whereas human values convey personal conviction, ethics describe the accepted principles and standards of conduct about moral duties and virtues as applied to an organization. Codes of professional ethics guide the stakeholders of an organization about the desirable and undesirable acts related to the profession. Examples of ethical behaviors in the workplace include obeying the company's rules, effective communication, taking responsibility, accountability, professionalism, trust, and mutual respect for your colleagues at work. These examples of ethical behaviors ensure maximum productivity output at work. This article explains the concept of professional ethics, its importance, necessity, and the role of managers in the organization.

Abstract: Professional Ethics; Human Resources Strategy; Organizational ethics; the role of managers

Introduction

Every organization has an ethical code that guides its decision-making and activities to have effective productivity and maintain its reputation. Ethical behavior ensures that staff completes work with honesty and integrity and meets the aim of an organization by adhering to rules and policies [1]. The principles by which a manager leads his company will dictate everything from employee ethics to company morale and productivity. Managerial ethics can also significantly affect the legal standing of a company that is owned by big-name moguls like Harvey Weinstein and Steve Wynn, who have experienced significant legal and PR problems from sexual misconduct scandals [2] .

Wynn was the Las Vegas real estate mogul who resigned from his multi-billion-dollar company when his stock plummeted during his sexual misconduct scandal. Every company needs to set an ethics policy that applies to everybody in the company, from the highest executive level to the mail clerk. Established policies and ramifications for violations enable a company to effectively manage issues. Professional ethics is important because it dictates to professionals a series of rules related to the way professional acts towards the people with whom he/she relates professionally. From a philosophical point of view, ethics has to do with morality and with the way people act in the sense of goodness or badness.

Over decades, the concept of unethical conduct in the office is often seen as a cankerworm that eats up the goodwill of most organizations and this has served as a major setback to many functional organizations. Kehinde (2010) is of the view that in contemporary times many organizations are confronted with several challenges, which are evidenced in illegal and unethical business Practices in transactions [3]. In lieu of the foregoing, organizations have designed ethical codes to deal with challenging ethical issues. An ethical code is a set of moral principles, which are designed by organization to modify employee behaviors both within and outside the organization or workplace. No doubt, ethical behaviors in the workplace have been seen to have aided companies meet up their profit margin, this is a common measure of organizational performance as captured in organization performance literature. Ethics is very important to every organization just as its mission statement [4]. Initially, the concept of professional ethics was used to mean work ethic and job ethics. Even today, some professional ethics writers use the first meaning of this concept to define it. Terms such as Work Ethics or Professional Ethics are equivalent to work ethic or professional ethics in Persian [3,5].

There are Several Definitions of Professional Ethics

Work ethic is the commitment of the mental, psychological, and physical energy of the individual or group to a collective idea in order to acquire the inner strengths and talents of the group and the individual for development in any way. Professional ethics is one of the new branches of ethics that tries to address the ethical issues of different professions and oversees ethics in the professional environment [6].

Professional ethics refers to a set of rules that individuals must follow voluntarily and in accordance with the voice of their conscience and nature in doing professional work; without any external obligation or in case of violation, they will be punished legally. Individual ethics is a person's responsibility for his or her individual behavior, merely as a human being, and work ethic is a person's responsibility for his or her professional and professional behavior as the owner of a profession or organizational position.

In Most Definitions of Professional Ethics, Two Characteristics Can Be Seen

a) The existence of the attitude of individual originality and individualism

b) Limitation of responsibilities and moral requirements of the person in the job

This view of professional ethics seems to be a kind of transference and reduction of professional ethics, because the collective and organizational identity in business institutions in business is much more than the individual job of individuals. It was with this in mind that professional ethics in managerial resources and more in works and topics related to human resource management have been discussed recently. Today, in this regard, the new concept of professional ethics refers to the ethical responsibilities of the firm and organization, which is more comprehensive than the traditional definition [7].

Characteristics of Professional Ethics

In professional ethics today, the notion of "you have the right and I have the duty" is the basis of any business ethic. This basis of individual communication behavior is the main way for the organization to communicate with the environment, and the organization asks about its duties with the concern of respecting the rights of others. The characteristics of professional ethics in its modern sense are having the identity of science and knowledge, having a practical role, providing a professional form, indigenous and dependent on culture, dependence on a moral system, providing human knowledge with a clear motivational language, Presenting an interdisciplinary approach. Kadozir [8] talks about the characteristics of people with professional ethics:

Responsibility: In this case, the person is responsible and accepts responsibility for its decisions and consequences. He is an example to others, he is sensitive and moral, and he cares about honesty and reputation in his work.

Supremacy and competition: In all cases, he tries to be excellent, he is confident, he achieves high skills in his profession, he is serious and hardworking, he does not try to win the competition in any way.

Be honest: Is against hypocrisy; Listens to the voice of his conscience; In any case, it pays attention to honor; He is brave and courageous.

Respect for others: Respects the rights of others; Respects the opinion of others; He is eloquent and punctual; Gives others the right to decide; He does not prefer his own interests alone.

Basic Factors of Professional Ethics

In one article, one of the experts of this theory named Zionets considers the factors as basic factors for professional ethics [9], which are:

Professional Independence of Scientific Ethics

This factor, like ethics in any other professional system, should reflect the internal norms of the profession and the sense of moral commitment on the part of the professionals themselves and their specialized institutions, rather than being imposed, accepted, or warned in the form of moral do's and don'ts.

Professional Self-understanding

The basis of ethics is professional self-understanding. Only with an understanding of their work and professional activity, its philosophy, and its relation to people's lives, do they achieve a moral understanding of it, and as a result, in their relationship with nature and the world around them, an inner sense of commitment to it. They find values.

Objectivity, Neutrality, and Impartiality

One of the most important basic principles that is confirmed in most documents and topics related to scientific professional ethics. Observance of objectivity and neutrality. A person who applies professional ethics in his professional life is subject to objectivity and neutrality.

Going Beyond the Concept of Livelihood

As long as one is involved in physiological issues, attention to other issues will be less. The meaning of professional ethics emerges through its concept of livelihood.

The Need to Promote Professional Ethics in the Organization

Organizational development is a continuous, coherent, and well-planned effort to improve and modernize the system. The purpose of organizational development is to improve both the (professional) life of the individual and the functioning of the organization. Given the importance of professional ethics in the development of the organization, it is necessary to determine the effectiveness and direction of resources to the

extent of professional ethics training in the organization. Role of Management in Inculcating Workplace Ethics Management plays an essential role in inculcating workplace ethics in employees. Bosses need to set an example for their subordinates. You need to come on time if you expect your team members to reach office on time [10].

Management Needs to Act as a Source Of Inspiration for the Employees

It is generally observed that team managers, leaders influence their team members largely. Superiors strictly need to adhere to the rules and regulations of the organization for their employees to follow the same. Remember, you have no rights to scold your subordinates if you yourself are at fault. Moreover, no one would bother to listen to you as well. Do not expect your team members to sit until late if you yourself leave early [11].

It is the role of the management to motivate the employees and guide them as to what is right and wrong. Remember a boss is like the captain of the ship. It is your responsibility to take your team members along and provide constant mentoring. Rebuking is not the only solution. If you know one of your team members is meeting his girlfriend during office hours, do you feel insulting or criticizing in front of others would help? NO. Call him to your cabin or speak to him in private and make him realize that it is not morally correct to bunk office. You need to counsel him and make him understand his mistake politely. Trust me, being rude would make the situation more badly. Do not discuss the matter in front of others. The other person might not like it. Your job is to make the other person feel guilty and realize that indeed he has done something wrong. Believe me; he would never repeat his mistake.

Constant communication between the management and employees is of utmost importance in inculcating workplace ethics. Management ought to be transparent with its employees. Let them have a say in the company's decisions. Let them decide what is right and what is wrong for them. Sit with them, discuss, brainstorm ideas, and listen to what they have to say. Never ignore their opinions. Let them come out with their grievances.

Lend a sympathetic ear to their problems as well. Try to provide them with a solution. If you feel most of your employees have a problem coming to the office early as they, in any case, have to stay back till late in the evening as per the client's availability, please adjust the office timings accordingly. How can you expect your employees to reach office sharp at 8 AM when they are leaving for the day at 10 PM. Remember, rules and regulations should not act as a hindrance in their performance? Be realistic and logical. If the problem is genuine and faced by a major chunk of employees, there is no harm in changing the policies. Think from the employee's perspective as well. Policies should not be too rigid [12].

Do not be too strict with the employees. If someone is not present in the office, please do not call his family members to enquire about him. No one would like it. We all are mature professionals to understand that if there is work, we need to finish it first rather than waste our time gossiping and surfing social networking sites. Management cannot force employees to respect the organization. Respect must be commanded and not demanded. Respect your employees if you expect the same in return.

Some organizations do not easily release their employees. Remember, you cannot stop an individual from changing his job if he/she has already decided to move on. Try to convince him once and if he/she is still not willing to continue, let him go. Employees depend on fake relieving letters, experience certificates when they do not get it from their previous organization on time.

Tips to Promote Workplace Ethics

Workplace ethics ensures employees are treated with the utmost respect. It also leads to a sense of satisfaction among employees, and they develop a feeling of attachment towards their respective organizations. The feeling of loyalty is a feeling, which is seen in very few individuals. For them, going to work is the best source of earning money and keeping one-selves occupied. Organizations often complain of employees moving on when they are fully trained. An organization invests its time, money, and energy in training a new employee, and thus it is a big blow when he/she quits all of a sudden.

The best way to promote workplace ethics is to be very specific and careful while recruiting potential employees who would be representing the top levels especially the human resource department. It is rightly said that human resource professionals are the face of an organization. They need to understand the psychology of individuals well as they are the ones who have the responsibility of formulating policies, rules, and regulations of the organization. Remember, policies should be neither too flexible nor too rigid. If policies are too flexible, no one actually follows them and if policies were too rigid, again employees would depend on excuses and lies to escape them. You must understand your nature of business. An organization that works primarily for US Clients cannot ask employees to report early in the morning, as I am sure employees must be working till late or probably the whole night [13].

Human resource professionals ought to communicate the organization's policies and code of conduct clearly to the employees on the very first day. Also, send them a mail for their ready reference. Tell them very clearly the office timings, hierarchy, dress code, salary structure, leave procedure, reporting structure, and so on. In this case, they would never have an excuse later. Tell them from the very beginning that there are certain things, which are expected out of them, and organization is very strict on certain policies like those that coming to office on time, informed leaves, etc. Make them clear that if they were caught bunking the office or participating in unfair practices like stealing, passing on confidential information, they would be shown the exit door the next day. Trust me, no one would even think of doing the same

[14]. Problems arise when employees are not aware of rules and regulations. Transparency between management and employees is of utmost importance and the best way to promote workplace ethics.

Listen to what your employees have to say. Let them come out with their problems. Superiors need to interact with employees on a regular basis and address their grievances. Management needs to make employees feel comfortable. They might come up with lots of issues and as a boss, it is your responsibility to guide them and help them with a solution. Even if the problem is illogical, do not be harsh to them. Make them realize where they are wrong. Open communication is the best way to promote workplace ethics. Constant mentoring plays an important role in motivating the employees to adhere to the organization's policies.

No employee should be given special treatments. Bonuses and hikes must be proportional to the employee's performance over a period. Appreciating the employee who really deserves is essential. Do not favor anyone just because you like him/her. Fair judgment is of utmost importance. You have nothing to do with his/her personal life. There should be absolutely no problem if an employee goes out to meet his girlfriend after office hours [3].

The organization needs to support its employees always, even during the hours of crisis. Job security and constant career growth are the two most important factors, which ensure employees stick around for a long time and are satisfied with their current assignments [14]. If employees are happy and contented and feel respected, they would also strive hard to deliver their level best every time.

The Revised Code Establishes A Conceptual Framework for All Professional Accountants to Ensure Compliance With the Five Fundamental Principles of Ethics

Professional ethics are principles that govern the behavior of a person or group in a business environment. Like values, professional ethics provide rules on how a person should act towards other people and institutions in such an environment (Figure 1).
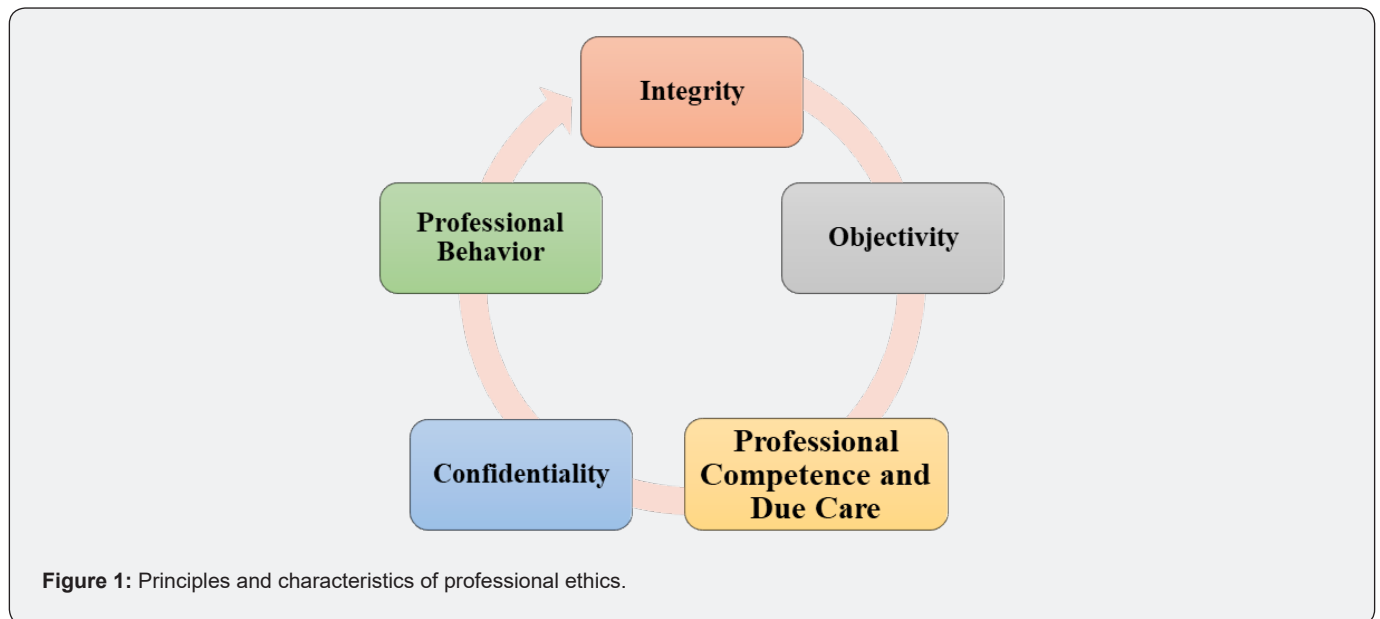

Figure 1: Principles and characteristics of professional ethics.

Professional Characteristics for the Workplace

Here are 15 professional characteristics that can help you earn the respect of others and position you for promotions:

Professional Appearance

Professionals should always strive for a professional appearance, including appropriate attire and proper hygiene and grooming [15]. Clothing should always be clean and ironed properly. Pants, dresses, formal skirts, crisp white shirts, and leather shoes are all appropriate for a professional's wardrobe.

Reliable

Professionals are dependable and keep their commitments. They do what they say they will do and do not overpromise. Professionals respond to colleagues and customers promptly and follow through on their commitments in a timely manner. Punctuality is a key aspect of this professional characteristic. It is always important to clarify any areas of uncertainty when dealing with customers or members of your team to ensure there are no mistaken assumptions or surprises.

Ethical Behavior

Embodying professionalism also means to be committed to doing the right thing. Honesty, open disclosure, and sincerity are all characteristics of ethical behavior. Many organizations include a commitment to ethical behavior in their code of conduct. Professionals can adopt a personal code of conduct and make the same commitment on an individual basis.

Organized

A professional keeps their workspace neat and organized so that they can easily find items when they need them. All files and paperwork should be in place and, if they have to deliver a presentation, all materials should be ready well in advance so there are no unexpected delays.

Accountable

Just as a professional accepts credit for having completed a task or achieved a goal, they also are accountable for their actions when they fail. They take responsibility for any mistakes that they make and take whatever steps necessary to resolve any consequences from mistakes. They are accountable and expect accountability from others.

Professional Language

People who behave with professionalism monitor every area of their behavior, including how they talk. They minimize the use of slang and avoid using inappropriate language in the workplace. They even are conscientious of the language they use in informal settings.

Separates Personal and Professional

Professionals understand the importance of separating their personal lives from their professional lives. While professionals may experience the same challenges in their personal lives as others, they maintain a clear separation between their professional lives and workplace demeanor.

Positive Attitude

Part of being a professional means maintaining a positive, can-do attitude while working. A positive attitude will improve a professional's overall performance and increase the likelihood of a positive outcome. It will also impact the behavior and performance of others, improving employee morale in the office.

Emotional Control

Emotional control is another key characteristic of professionalism. Professionals understand the importance of maintaining their composure and staying calm in all situations. By remaining calm, even during challenging moments, others can rely on them to be rational and of sound judgment.

Effective Time Management

Their peers view an employee who knows how to manage their time well as a professional. Some characteristics of time management abilities include showing up at the office on time in the morning, being on time for meetings and letting someone in the office know if they suspect that they might be late.

Focused

A professional is clear about their goals and understands what they need to accomplish to achieve them. They know how to stay focused on their work to maintain their productivity. Professionals recognize the importance of maintaining focus to improve the quality of their work and be as efficient as possible.

Poised

Professionals should demonstrate poise, a calm and confident state of being. Being poised means maintaining a straight posture, making eye contact when communicating and helping establish a friendly and professional presence. Being poised means also staying calm during times of heightened pressure.

Respectful of Others

Professionals always treat others with respect. They understand that though humor is appropriate in the workplace, they should always use it with respect to others. The only time that professionals engage in conversations about other people is if they are evaluating their performance and looking for constructive ways to improve their performance in the workplace.

Strong Communicator

A professional must have strong communication skills. This means that they not only can effectively and efficiently convey messages to others but also that they can actively listen to and understand what others are telling them. By engaging in open and constructive communication with others, professionals can collaborate more effectively and accomplish a lot.

Possesses Soft Skills

soft skills are personal attributes that allow someone to interact effectively with others. Soft skills include things like leadership, critical thinking, teamwork, and people skills. Soft skills help professionals to behave courteously when addressing colleagues and managers, use the right language when communicating and respect the opinions of others.

Conclusion

HR professionals have to raise awareness of ethical issues, promote ethical behavior, disseminate ethical practices widely among line managers, communicate codes of ethical conduct, ensure people learn about what constitutes ethical behaviors, manage compliance, and monitor arrangements. One of the ways to improve the organizational environment is to revive ethics in it. Ethics in the organization creates effective communication, leads to organizational productivity and job satisfaction in employees, and ultimately leads to the excellence and progress of the organization.

Acknowledgement

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