

Workplace Moral Code: My View on Ethical Theories and How They Apply to the Professional World

Humans are social creatures, and thusly will almost always have to consider how their actions not only effect themselves but everyone around them. Anyone planning on entering society as a productive and moral member must consider their own views on ethics and how those views apply to their profession and beyond.

Before any moral judgements or applications can be made, one must first establish what ethics posits as right and wrong. In my opinion, a balance of both Teleological and Deontological theories is necessary to fully understand the distinction between right and wrong.

Firstly, any Teleological theory is made up of the basic principle that “[one] has a moral obligation to promote whatever amoral good is deemed worthwhile” (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010). In laymen’s terms, any moral individual should choose the action or path that results in the most positive outcome. This would be the ‘right’ choice, while the opposite would be the ‘wrong’ choice for not promoting the most widespread good. To go further into these types of theories, there are two types of choosing good: Egoism, the best for one’s own self, and Utilitarianism, the best for optimal happiness in general. While yes, one must ensure one’s own happiness and benefit, I believe Utilitarianism is far more important in a professional setting, as said before a career in society inherently means your actions have a direct effect on others in that professional environment.

This brings us to the second type of theories centered on right versus wrong: Deontological theories. These theories “...hold that things other than consequences determine which actions are morally right” (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010). In other words, the means to the end are more important than the end itself. There are many ways to apply a Deontological lens,

including the Golden Rule and Kantian Ethics. While the Golden Rule is the well known “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (DeSensi & Rosenberg, 2010), Kantian Ethics posits that as members of human society we have a moral obligation to will good unto others and treat others with dignity. This is individual from experience; moreover, this viewpoint excludes personal experience from moral decisions. For example, a Kantian philosopher would disagree with the racist sentiment “I’ve only known violent [insert race] people, so they must all be violent and should be treated thusly”. In contrast, a Kantian philosopher would treat any individual with the same respect regardless of any previous interaction between another person of the same race or group.

I believe the most important right versus wrong theories for the professional world are Teleological Utilitarianism and the Deontological Kantian Ethics. I assert this because as a professional, one has a specific job and is both morally and contractually obligated to perform this job to the best of their ability. So, it is the theories that exclude personal bias and feelings that are best in this application. While I do believe that in one’s personal life the Golden Rule and a mixture of both Egoism and Utilitarianism are the most appropriate, filling a needed role in society automatically removes personal feeling from moral decisions.

As everything in the world, decisions and conflicts will not always present a clear distinction between what is right and what is wrong. When facing ambiguous moral decisions, I believe it is best to ask oneself these Utilitarian and Kantian questions: Which choice promotes the most overall good and happiness? Which choice allows for the most ethically good path to follow? Which choice allows my role to be fulfilled in the most morally good and most beneficial manner?

These questions are applicable in virtually any field and career, which I will exemplify by applying this moral code and its moral dilemma questions to both the sports manager career and my own laboratory project manager career.

For a sports manager, this moral code promotes the most ethical good by removing one's own feelings towards the sport and instead putting the needs and feelings of athletes and fans above all else. I believe this should go without saying, but any authority figure in sports should do what is best for the sport, not themselves. I do not know how a person could come to hold power in the sports world by being selfish, and if they do I assume they would not keep that power for long. It is the athletes' or team's success and wellbeing, and the inherent fans' satisfaction, that is the most important in the sports world and should be the crux of any moral decision. This ensures the most benefit to that sport, which is the main role of a sport manager and would ensure the most success.

On the opposite side of the career spectrum, this moral code can also be applied by a project manager (PM) in a laboratory setting. I have many duties as a PM at my lab, and none of those duties require my own personal feelings. It is my job to ensure my assigned projects and tasks are performed to my best ability to gain the most benefit for my lab. This is especially important at my particular lab, as we are the quality control for medical marijuana products before they are allowed to be prescribed and sold to patients. If we make an error during an analysis which causes us to work overtime, we cannot fake results to suit our own wants and needs to go home on time. Our own personal feelings are rarely applicable unless they encompass the greater good for our clients and for medical patients. Again, that is why the moral dilemma questions given earlier are so important: They ensure the greatest good in our field, which is the inherent role we serve.

Decisions are rarely cut and dry and taking moral stances in an ambiguous and uncertain conflict can be difficult. However, understanding of one's role in society and their career allows for clarity and simpler ethical analysis. The best and most successful professionals are educated on ethics, and therefore have the ability to ensure the greatest positive impact in their role by executing impartial judgement while navigating the professional world in a moral manner.

References

DeSensi, J.& Rosenberg, D.(2010). Ethics and Morality in Sport Management.3rd
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