Ethics in Human Resource Management:
A Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Most debates centered on HRM ethics have mainly concentrated on social and ecological responsibility of organizations; also, in recent years ethics has increasingly become an internal concern for organizations. In the past years, management has ignored employees' interests as they prioritized the interests of shareholders. Human resource has become a very important resource to many organizations. This calls for the need to ensure justice and fairness in the manner in which this resource is handled. Employers in a typical organization are in an increasingly advantaged position, whereby they dominate and govern the relationship between their employees and themselves. This shows the need for evaluating the role of the management in promoting morality and ethical procedures in dealing with employees, hence, this paper.

INTRODUCTION

Business ethics are the moral doctrines that direct the way to business behave. Business ethics determines the actions of every individual that distinguish the right or wrong (Business Case Studies, 2018). Every business organization must develop the codes of conduct and ethics that should be followed by all the members. Ethics can be taken as the crucial way to self-presentation and public perception of the organization. Ethics in human resource management is related to the employee's issues. Human resource management plays an important role in setting up and implementing ethics in the workplace. Implementation of ethics in the workplace has been one of the challenging tasks for the organization. Various human resources issues can be handled properly by the application of ethics and code of practices by the managers in the workplace.

Ethics generally determine what is right and what is wrong. With the help of business ethics, proper allocation and maintenance of employee in the workplace will be possible. Human Resource Management deals mainly with manpower planning and development related activities in any organization. It is these branches where ethics really matter, since it concerns issues like compensation, development, industrial relations, etc. As some authors stated in recent publications, ethics has become more of an internal concern of organizations.

Whereas formerly the interests of employees were ignored or only regarded as one of several stakeholders' interests, the "ethical management of employees" (Winstanley and Woodall 2020) itself gains in significance. Johns (2015) stated that "the time for ethical leadership has come." Especially human resource management (HRM) plays a decisive role in introducing and implementing ethics. The essay outlines key issues of ethics in HRM. Here, the focus is mainly on key issues to introducing ethical standards in HRM activities.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethics Defined
Ethics is a term. Many people think ethics has to do with a set of social conventions or a religious decree. In professional philosophy we do not typically consider this to be the definition of ethics. Philosophical ethics could be called the study of what is good and bad. Generally, philosophical ethics concerns itself with discovering a system one may use to determine who or what is good, or with evaluating systems that others have proposed.

Concept of HRM Ethics
The ethics of human resource management (HRM) covers those ethical issues arising around the employer-employee relationship, such as the rights and duties owed between employer and employee. HRM Ethics is "the affirmative moral obligations of the employer (business) towards the employees to maintain equality and equity justice". Do not treat people (employees) simply as a means for our own purposes without their full and free consent, because they are ends in themselves.

To What Extent Should the Organization Follow HRM Ethics?
Here, the two ethical concerns are
1. To what extent should people be used as a means to an end; and
2. To what extent the management has to act in the interest of the employees

The last part of the definition of HRM "effective and efficient" utilization of HR supports the first concern. The part "to achieve personal/individual goals" in the definition supports the second concern.

The definition of HRM clearly says that organizational interest cannot be compromised while doing justice to employees and vice-versa.

Areas of Human Resource Management Ethics

❖ Basic human rights, civil and employment rights. E.g. Job security, feedback from tests, openness and consultation over matters which affect the employees

❖ Social and organizational justice. e.g. procedural justice, egalitarianism, equity and equal opportunity

❖ Equity/Distributive justice (proportionate pay for proportionate contribution), autonomy and respect

❖ Safety in the workplace

❖ Respect, fairness and honesty based process in the workplace

❖ Privacy

Ethical Issues in HRM

Ethical issues abound in HR activities. Areas of ethical misconduct in the personnel function include employment remuneration and benefits, labor relations, health and safety, training and development, and HRIS (HR ethical issues).

Cash and Incentives Plans: This includes base salaries, annual incentive plans, long term incentive plans, executive perquisites, and separation agreements.

i. **Base salaries**- The HR function is often presumed to justify a higher level of base salaries, or a higher percentage increase than what competitive practice calls for. In some cases, pressure is exerted to re-evaluate the position to a higher grade for the purpose of justifying a larger than normal increase.

ii. **Annual incentive plan-** The HR manager is often forced to design and administer top-management incentive plans, at higher rates than what the individuals deserve. A common rationale presented to the HR executive for bending the rules is the fear of losing the outstanding executives, if higher incentives are not paid.

iii. **Long-term incentive plan-** Just as with annual incentive plan, many HR executives have the responsibility of designing and administering the firm's long term incentive plans, but in consultation with CEO and an external consultant. Ethical issues arise when the HR executive is put to pressure to favor top management interests over those of other employees an investor

iv. **Executive perquisites**- Executive perquisites make the ethical standard of the HR executive difficult because their cost is often out of proportion to the value added. For example, a story relates to Lagos based losing making public sector undertaking whose CEO spend 20 million Naira to get swimming pool built at his residence.

v. **Performance Appraisal:** Performance appraisal lends itself to ethical issues. Assessment of an individual's performance is based on observation and judgment. HR manager are expected to observe the performance in order to judge its effectiveness. Ethics should be the cornerstone of performance evaluation, and the overall objective of high ethical performance reviews should to provide an honest assessment of the performance and mutually develops a plan to improve the ratee's effectiveness.

vi. **Race, Gender, Age, and Disability:** The practice of treatment of employees according to their race, ethnic origin, sex, or disability has largely been stopped. A framework of laws and regulations has evolved that has significantly improved work place behavior. No enterprise today dare to publicly state it denies minorities, woman, and the disable opportunities for employment, remuneration, and growth prospects different from those given to others.

In this environment the role of HR function is to:

❖ Monitor the principles and norms of the enterprise to ensure that they reflect the values of the society as expressed in its law.

❖ Monitor the selection, rewards, development and, the appraisal system to ensure that they are consistent with the principles and norms.

❖ Vigorously pursue violations and, when necessary, vigorously work to defend the enterprise against unfounded allegations.

Employment Issues: While discrimination and harassment situation receives mort publicity, HR practitioners are more likely to face ethical dilemmas in the areas of employee hiring. One challenge commonly encountered is pressure to hire a relative or a friend of a highly placed executive. Another area related to employment is that of faked credentials submitted by a job applicant. While discovery of this kind of fabrication usually leads to termination of the employment, the choice becomes difficult when the applicant has a blend of skills set and a proven track record with his or her previous employers.

Privacy Issues: Privacy issues to protecting a person's private life from intrusive and unwarranted actions. The employee believes that his or her religious, political, and social believes as well as personal life style are private matters and should be safe guarded from being snooped or analysed. Exceptions are permitted grudgingly only when job involvement is clearly involved. For example, it may not be inappropriate to intrude into an employee's private matter if it is suspected that he or she discusses with competitor, through email messages, the specification of newly developed product not yet launched into the market.

Safety and Health: Much of the industrial work is hazardous. This is because of the extensive use of high speed and noisy machinery, production processes requiring high temperature, an increasing reliance on chemical compounds. Accidents, injuries and illnesses are likely to occur

under these circumstances. Over past decade, new categories of accident and illness have emerged, including the fast growing job safety problem of office injuries.

Restructuring and Layoffs: Restructuring and consequent layoffs have become relevant because of poor management, but incompetence does not become unethical. There are ethical implications in the process by which termination decisions are made and actions taken. For example if restructuring requires closing a plant, the process by which that plant is chosen, how the news will be communicated, and the time frame for completing the layoffs are ethically important. If conducted in an atmosphere of fairness and equity and with dignity of the affected individuals in mind, the action is ethical.

Ethics in the functions of HRM
Human resource department stands as the central entity that should lead in inculcating ethical principles in an organization. For an organization to adhere to ethical standards it depends more on cooperation of its employees. These include meeting the public expectations on ethics and adhering to ethical regulations set by the government and other private bodies. However, this practice must begin by handling employees ethically and introducing the ethical principles at the time of recruitment and all through the period the employee will be engaged to the organization. Therefore, ethics should be part of the HRM functions (Köster, 2007).

Ethics in Recruitment
A company should act ethically while advertising for job opportunities in the organization. They should ensure that the advertisement contains true information about the job rather than unrealistic information meant to attract the targeted applicant. The management should also ensure that they actually follow the due process in recruitment. For instance, the company should not use vacancy advertisements as a mere PR process, while recruiting employees through other unacceptable means. A case in point is when the management advertises vacancy for the public to apply, yet they have already picked on a candidate to fill the position (Köster, 2007).

Ethics in Selection and Orientation
During selection the HR panel needs to examine and discuss the values of prospective employees and use the findings of that process to make selection decisions. During orientation the company should emphasize the values that are upheld by the organization so that the employee can carry on with those values if selected. The staff at the human resource department should always show the importance of ethics in the organization. The potential employee is likely to come in to contact first with employees in this department before anyone else. This means that the new member will form his/her perception about the organization through their interaction.

For instance, the employee's expectation of ethical behavior will be influenced by the fairness in the selection process (Saiyadain, 2009). There are measures that the HR department can put in place to ensure that the selection process is fair and ethical. First, the managers should purpose to use selection tests that are in line with the organization's purpose. The criteria for selection should be clearly set out. This includes making the process known to everyone who

is involved in the process. The management should ensure that those in the panel are trained and well equipped for the task.

For instance, they should know to ask relevant questions and to draw conclusions from the respondents' answers.

The HRM department therefore, has a responsibility to ensure that the employees hired in the organization are able and willing to uphold ethical practices. When HRM hires ethical employees, chances are high that such employees will be consistent in ethical behavior when faced with ethical dilemmas at the work place (Saiyadain, 2009).

Ethics in Employee Training

Many organizations are increasingly finding it important to include ethics training as part of employee training. They have found that ethics training can be an effective component in dealing with unethical behavior within the organization. Therefore, the organization needs to develop an in-house training on ethics that covers two main aspects of ethics. Ethical awareness which deals with increasing employee's sensitivity to ethical dilemmas and ethical reasoning which educates the employees on strategies to be used in dealing with ethical dilemmas. Ethical training can also be helpful to new employees whereby training programs can be developed that provide them with information on the available resources and designated personnel who can provide them with ethical and legal advice in the organization (Ferrell, Fraedrich & Ferrell, 2009).

To ensure that the ethics training is effective, the management needs to put some measures in place. These include setting up a code of ethics for the organization, outlining the process for airing out ethical concerns and ensuring that all staff is involved in the development of the code of ethics. In addition, the management should communicate to the employees the organization's priorities on ethical issues. Furthermore, the training should take in to consideration the characteristics of the organization, such as size, employee base, culture and management style (Sims, 1994).

Ethics in Employee Reward Systems

The HR department can develop reward systems that promote ethical behavior within the organization. This can be in form of monetary compensation, employee benefits or even special employee recognition. Such measures can be helpful in reinforcing individual and group values as well as maintaining enthusiasm in adhering to ethical values of the organization. However, the HRM department should be very keen when selecting a particular reward scheme. This is because some of them produce negative results from employees. For instance, some tempt employees to do the prohibited things and some instill fear by emphasizing on punishment in case of the employee defaults (Sims, 1994).

Some reward systems promote contradictory norms which the employee in a dilemma. This is whereby, the organization advocate for a certain conduct, while it rewards the other. The management advocates for teamwork; however, when rewarding it seeks for the outstanding employee in the team. The employees will therefore be tempted to compete against each other

in the team. Another example is when the management advocates for good customer service among the salespeople, but pays them based on sales made. This will lead the employees to push for sales on customer without considering how they handle them. Therefore, the HRM should know that reward and appraisal systems can be harnessed to promote ethical behavior in the organization. However, they should remember that the same can also promote unethical behavior (Spencer & Sims, 1995).

Ethical Dilemmas in Human Resource Management

Several ethical dilemmas comfort an HR manager. The ethical dilemmas arise from three sources-faces to face ethics, policy ethics, and functional area ethics.

i. **Face to face ethics**: These arise mainly because there is a human element in most business transactions. Business is composed of this human transaction; it should not be surprising that face to face ethical dilemmas arise often. It is likely that the quality assurance man overlooks minor defects and approves a lot delivered by a supplier because of the personal relationship that the two enjoy.

ii. **Corporate policy ethics**: Companies are often faced with ethical dilemmas that affect their operations across all departments and divisions. The consequences of employment contraction in labour intensive basic industries because of the improved methods of production. Modern technology has replaced older methods of production which has in turn resulted in hundreds being jobless. The ethical burden of deciding corporate policy matters normally rests upon a company's HR management. The HR manager and directors are responsible for making policies and implementing them too. The ethical content of their policies can have enormous impact throughout the company. It can set an ethical tone and send right signals to all employees as well as external stakeholder.

iii. **Functional Area Ethics**: Functional area of a business is likely to comfort ethical issues. Accounting is a critical function of any business. Accounting statements reveals to the manager and owner the financial soundness of a company. Managers, investors, regulating agencies, tax collectors and trade unions rely on accounting data to make decisions. Honesty, integrity accuracy are absolute requirements of the accounting functions. Account standard ensure a high level of honest an ethical accounting disclosure. Ethical dilemmas crop up in purchasing departments where strong pressure is to obtain the lowest possible prizes from suppliers and where too felt similar need it bag lucrative contracts. Bribes, kickbacks, and discriminating pricing are temptation to both parties.

Methods for Achieving Ethical HR Standards

There are different ways by which such ethical standards can be achieved within the organization. At recent times interactive training methods that allow participants to approach ethical issues actively through case analysis or solving dilemmas produce the most positive perceptions and attitudes towards the organization.

i. Perceived organizational support for ethics contributes much more to favorable ethical outcomes than does any type of training method.

ii. Exposure to multiple training methods over the course of a year has a significantly greater impact on favorable outcomes

iii. Organizations that use online training programs as their ethics training efforts should consider adding regular discussions within the organization itself.

iv. We have seen the importance of ethics in an organization and therefore such ethics focus model should flow down from top level managers to all other levels in the organization.

From what we know that is happening globally to organizations, steps are taken to improve the ethical issues, so that their outcome physically and mentally is at a much higher rate. Ethical models are constructed and implemented in various organizations around the world. We should understand that now survival fights amongst companies across the globe, and in order to have a very free flow and less negative outcome HR management should be of very high level. Ethics is a full time responsibility. As for HR managers they should invest time to learn more about the principles of ethics. Effective ethical policies in place are holistic approach to the business growth.

The Ethical Concerns in Human Resource Management

Human resource management plays a vital role in the organization while dealing with workplace issues. As human resource management deals with the management of human resources in the workplace, the issues related with the human resource must be focused by the top level management. The major ethical issues that have to be deal by the human resource management are a concern with the privacy issues, cash and compensation plan, employment issues, safety issues, race and disability, performance appraisal and employee's responsibility (Johnston, 2018).

Each and every employee is important for the organization to achieve the stated goal so the issues related with the manpower must be identified on time for the better performance (Greenwood and Freeman, 2011). In a workplace, there will be a good and bad work performance with the application of right ethical theory the human issues can be managed. For the effective outcomes, all the employees must be treated ethically. Employment issues are the general issues faced by the organization as an individual belongs to different background, culture, religion, and races. So, hiring an employee creates a dilemma for the HR managers. The presentation of fake documents during the time of hiring may cause a problem in the future so, ethical action is the most essential aspects that should be adopted by both parties. HR manager must provide an equal opportunity and treatment for the individual while hiring.

Another human resource management issue is related to privacy. All the employees in the organization have their own personal life. The information may be related to religion, social beliefs and many more. An employee wants to maintain the privacy within the organization so they want the direct and indirect protection from the company. So, without the permission of

employee privacy should not be leaked. Such an unethical act should not be conducted by the organization. Most of the time people are treated badly in the workplace in the name of race, gender, and disability. The ethics-based organization should not focus on discrimination while the employees should be appreciated for their contribution to the organization (De Gama, McKenna, and Peticca-Harris, 2012).

Similarly, an employee should be compensated on the basis of their performance. A company must have an effective compensating plan for their employees. The general ethical issues involved while managing the human resource is related to the salaries, executive benefits, and compensation including the annual incentives, flexible working hours, holidays and many more. Compensating the employee for their contribution is one of the ethics that can be adopted by the organization. This action increases the morale of employees and increases performance. Along with the other responsibilities safety of employees is also one of the burning issues of human resource management. Employee's safety in the workplace is the ethical as well as the human right that should be provided by the organization. It is one of the sensitive factors that cannot be avoided by the organization to their employees (Janssens and Steyaert, 2009).

For the effective management of human resource in the workplace, ethics must be considered by the managers. Effective implementation of the ethic helps in controlling the human resources in a right way. Without the ethics in the workplace, there will not be the better performance rather it will decrease the morale of the employee and gradually increase the turnover in the organization. Thus, for the satisfaction of the employee within the organization, the business ethics is essential to adopt by the company.

Ethical demand in the workplace is the concern of the human resource management in the present context (Jack, Greenwood, and Schapper, 2012). Ethics in the workplace provides employee's right and well-being. Since, the success or failure of the business totally depends upon the ethical behavior shown by the managers in the organization. For the success of the organization, management must adopt the consistence ethical behavior to all the employees in the workplace. The ethical behavior of managers in workplace changes the behavior of the employee such as a change in attitude, interest and get motivated to perform the activities.

Ethical Principles
These are significant aspect of a normative theory which helps in the justification n or defense of moral values and/or judgement. These principles are not dependents on individual's subjective viewpoints. Ethical principle in human resource management refers to those generic judgements that serve as basis for justifying many ethical processes and evaluations of human resource management activities and functions (Johnston, (2018). These principles are clearly discussed below.

Beneficence
The principle of beneficence guides the decision maker to do *what is right and good*. This priority to "do good" makes an ethical perspective and possible solution to an ethical dilemma acceptable. This principle is also related to the principle of utility, which states that we should attempt to generate the largest ratio of good over evil possible in the world. This principle

stipulates that ethical theories should strive to achieve the greatest amount of good because people benefit from the most good. This principle is mainly associated with the utilitarian ethical theory discussed later in this set of notes.

Least Harm

Similar to beneficence, least harm deals with situations in which no choice appears beneficial. In such cases, decision makers seek to choose to do the least harm possible and to do harm to the fewest people. Students might argue that people have a greater responsibility to "do no harm" than to take steps to benefit others. For example, a student has a larger responsibility to simply walk past a teacher in the hallway rather than to make derogatory remarks about that teacher as he/she walks past even though the student had failed that teacher's class.

Respect for Autonomy

This principle states that decision making should focus on allowing people to be autonomous to be able to make decisions that apply to their lives. Thus, people should have control over their lives as much as possible because they are the only people who completely understand their chosen type of lifestyle. *Ask students if they agree. Are there limits to autonomy?* Each individual deserves respect because only he/she has had those exact life experiences and understands his emotions, motivations, and physical capabilities in such an intimate manner. In essence, this ethical principle is an extension of the ethical principle of beneficence because a person who is independent usually prefers to have control over his life experiences in order to obtain the lifestyle that he/she enjoys.

Justice

The justice ethical principle states that decision makers should focus on actions that are fair to those involved. This means that ethical decisions should be consistent with the ethical theory unless extenuating circumstances that can be justified exist in the case. This also means that cases with extenuating circumstances must contain a significant and vital difference from similar cases that justify the inconsistent decision. *Ask students if they describe what extenuating circumstances might be*.

Theoretical Underpinning

Ethical theories are employed for decision making guidance and emphasises an aspects of an ethical dilemma important to them and leads them to the most ethically correct resolution according to the guidelines within the ethical theory itself. For this study, four broad categories of ethical theory were examined and these are deontology, utilitarianism, rights, and virtues.

Deontology Theory

The deontological class of ethical theories states that people should adhere to their obligations and duties when engaged in *decision making when ethics are in play*. This means that a person will follow his or her obligations to another individual or society because upholding one's duty is what is considered ethically correct. For instance, a deontologist will always keep his promises to a friend and will follow the law. A person who adheres to deontological theory will produce very consistent decisions since they will be based on the individual's set duties.

Deontology contains many positive attributes, but it also contains flaws. One flaw is that there is no rationale or logical basis for deciding an individual's duties. For instance, a business person may decide that it is his/her duty to always be on time to meetings. Although this appears to be something good, we do not know why the person chose to make this his duty. *Ask employees what reasons they might provide for certain behavior(s)*. Sometimes, a person's duties are in conflict. For instance, if the business person who must be on time to meetings is running late, how is he/she supposed to drive?

Is speeding breaking his/her duty to society to uphold the law, or is the businessperson supposed to arrive at the meeting late, not fulfilling the duty to be on time? *Ask employees how they would rectify the conflicting obligations to arrive at a clear ethically-correct resolution. Also ask employees to bring into play the consideration of the welfare of others as a result of the business person's decision*.

Utilitarianism Theory

Utilitarian ethical theories are based on one's ability to predict the consequences of an action. To a utilitarian, the choice that yields the greatest benefit to the most people is the one that is ethically correct. There are two types of utilitarianism, *act utilitarianism* and *rule utilitarianism*. Act utilitarianism subscribes precisely to the definition of utilitarianism that a person performs the acts that benefit the most people, regardless of personal feelings or the societal constraints such as laws. Rule utilitarianism takes into account the law and is concerned with fairness. A rule utilitarian seeks to benefit the most people but through the fairest and most just means available.

Therefore, added benefits of rule utilitarianism are that it values justice and includes beneficence at the same time. Both act and rule utilitarianism has disadvantages. Although people can use their life experiences to attempt to predict outcomes, no one can be certain that his/her predictions will be accurate. Uncertainty can lead to unexpected results making the utilitarian decision maker appear unethical as time passes, as the choice made did not benefit the most people as predicted.

Another assumption that a utilitarian decision maker must make concerns his/her ability to compare the various types of consequences against each other on a similar scale. But, comparing material gains, such as money, against intangible gains, such as happiness, is very difficult since their qualities differ to such a large extent. An act utilitarian decision maker is concerned with achieving the maximum good. Thus, one individual's rights may be infringed upon in order to benefit a greater number of people. In other words, act utilitarianism is not always concerned with justice, beneficence or autonomy for an individual if oppressing the individual leads to the solution that benefits a majority of people.

Rights Theory

In ethical theories based on rights, the rights established by a society are protected and given the highest priority. Rights are considered to be ethically correct and valid since a large population endorses them. Individuals may also bestow rights upon others if they have the ability and resources to do so. For example, a person may say that her friend may borrow her

laptop for the afternoon. The friend who was given the ability to borrow the laptop now has a right to the laptop in the afternoon. A major complication of this theory on a larger scale is that one must decipher what the characteristics of a right are in a society.

The society has to determine what rights it wants to uphold and give to its citizens. In order for a society to determine what rights it wants to enact, it must decide what the society's goals and ethical priorities are. Therefore, in order for the rights theory to be useful, it must be used in conjunction with another ethical theory that will consistently explain the goals of the society. For example in Nigeria, people have the right to choose their religion and because this right is upheld in the Constitution. One of the goals of the Founding Fathers' of Nigeria was to uphold this right to freedom of religion.

Virtue Theory
The virtue ethical theory judges a person by his/her character rather than by an action that may deviate from his/her normal behavior. It takes the person's morals, reputation, and motivation into account when rating an unusual and irregular behavior that is considered unethical. For instance, if a person plagiarized a passage that was later detected by a peer, the peer who knows the person well will understand the person's character and will judge the friend accordingly.

If the plagiarizer normally follows the rules and has good standing amongst his colleagues, the peer who encounters the plagiarized passage may be able to judge his friend more leniently. Perhaps the researcher had a late night and simply forgot to credit his or her source appropriately. Conversely, a person who has a reputation for academic misconduct is more likely to be judged harshly for plagiarizing because of his/her consistent past of unethical behavior.

One weakness of virtue ethical theory is that it does not take into consideration a person's change in moral character. For example, a scientist who may have made mistakes in the past may honestly have the same late night story as the scientist in good standing. Neither of these scientists intentionally plagiarized, but the act was still committed. On the other hand, a researcher may have a sudden change from moral to immoral character may go unnoticed until a significant amount of evidence mounts up against him/her.

Application of Ethical Theories in Human Resource Management
Within the organization, several human resource issues have to be faced by the human sources managers that are concerned with the ethics. An employee can give their best when the needs and demands are fulfilled as well as when they are treated ethically. Employees in the workplace may belong to different background and culture. Equal opportunity and treatment for the employees is the common issue that must be regularly monitored by the company. For the better performance and the better result, the managers must show the ethical behavior to the employees. The ethical issues related to human resources must be solved on time. The ethical behavior must be maintained within an organization (Frey & Wellman, 2008).

For instance, Justin is the boss of the organization where Anna is the office manager. Janet is the receptionist in that organization. Under the supervision of the Anna, Janet performs her

activities and Janet is a hardworking and good employee. Janet is going through a rough time due to the divorce so to fulfill the financial requirement she used to perform in the theater which is not liked by her boss. The performance of Janet in the organization is appreciable but due to dislike, Anna was asked to terminate Janet from the work within the next 30 days by writing a negative appraisal.

Anna is in a dilemma that whether she goes with the boss and terminate Janet from job or fight for the Janet (Society for Human Resource Management, 2010). The example of Janet reflects the importance of ethics in the workplace. As Janet is a good employee and her performance is better than others the boss should not behave unethical behavior with her. In such a situation, ethics play a vital role in providing justice for the right one. Ethics in the workplace is very important to implement for building a fair workplace for all employees.

The decision making in the organization must be based on the theories related to the ethics. An appropriate decision can be taken with the help of various ethical theories. As solving the human issues within the organization is a very challenging task with the help of ethics and codes of conduct the problem can be solved easily. The issues may be related to cash and compensation, safety, employee performance appraisal, race, gender and disability, and employee responsibility. These issues can be minimized by the application of ethical theories.

In the case of Janet that has been discussed above that she deserves the right to know the reason for her termination. The rights theory explains that every employee has the right to know about the problem. The problems must be informed to the employee so that he or she gets an opportunity to improve it. Implement of utilitarian theory the best and least harm can be consummated (Gustafson, 2013). Due to the unethical activities or behavior of managers to the employees, it may cause the long-term harm to the organization.

So, punishing a non-guilty person is wrong which may lead to the legal problem in the future. The employee of an organization must be provided an equal opportunity of employment without any discrimination. All the employees must provide with the fair and competitive work environment. The distributive justice theory is a concern with providing a fair action to all the member and employee of the organization. According to the performance of the employees, the compensation along with other incentives and facilities must be distributed (Phillips, Freeman & Wicks, 2003).

The deserving candidates must be appreciated for their performance; such behavior of manager will improve the working environment and enhance the performance. With the implementation of caring theory in the workplace, managers can retain the employees in the organization. Implementation of this theory in the workplace helps to build the relationship between the employees. Similarly, one should not be unjustified by providing negative appraisal so the virtue ethics should not be violated by providing a false statement about the employee (Graham, 2004).

Both the employees and the managers should not show the unethical activities in the workplace. The issues related with the human resources must be sorted out on time. With the proper

application of ethical theories, the appropriate decision can be made to improve the working condition and maintaining the justices in the organization. The decision taken related to the employees of an organization must be justified without any discrimination in the workplace (Johnston, 2018).

Conceptual Framework
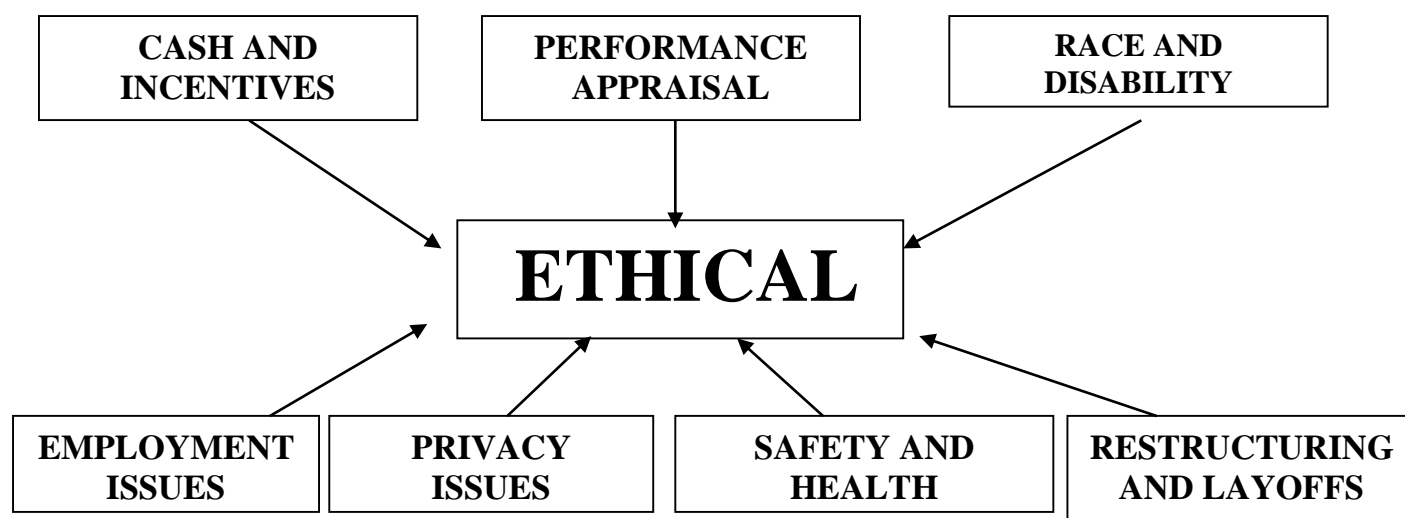
Fig I: Conceptual analysis of Ethical Issues in Human Resource Management
Source: Authors Construct, (2022)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Ethical issues are burning issues in the field of human resource management. Ethical issues may arise in every organization such as employment issues, safety issues, performance appraisal, equal treatment and opportunity and many more. Such issues lead to the situation of conflict in the workplace so for the maintenance of conflict ethical practice must be conducted in the organization. An ethical behavior of managers helps to determine what is right and what is wrong. Ethical practice and codes of conduct help to punish the guilty and appreciate the right one.

It is evident that the HRM can play an important role in promoting ethical behavior in the organization. The human resource department can achieve this by initiating programs that promote ethical culture in the organization. These programs can be incorporated in the human resource functions, which include recruitment, selection, training and orientation as well as rewarding. However, the management should ensure that the programs put in place do not promote the very behaviors they are meant to restrict. Without the implementation of ethics for the management of human resources in the organization, achievement of objectives becomes a mirage. Business ethics must be implemented and maintained by the organization for better performance and for providing justices.

Recommendations

The recommendations for the implementation of ethics within an organization are as follows:

i. Constant reviewing of the code of ethics by the board members
ii. Educate employees about the code of conducts
iii. Organizational rules and regulation must be printed and displayed in display areas
iv. Provision of ethics training facilities
v. Handling of violators with fairness and equal application.

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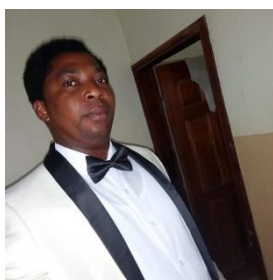
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