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## Implementing the ethics of public sector management

### Siyamoy Ghory

#### Abstract

Although the relationship of ethics and management of organizations considered more or less in the past, but with entering to information technology era, considering the ethical aspects in management for achieving to success are essential.

In this paper, we try to show that how ethic is important in management, especially in management of public organizations and the roles of ethics in public sector management. First, the focus is on describing ethics itself. Then concentration is on the roles of ethics in management and at the end we have considered the implementation of ethics in public sector management.

**Keywords:** ethic, management, public sector

#### 1. Introductions

The roles of ethics in management depend on the level of responsibility that public sector organizations are willing to take. The pro-active mode would characterize organizations that believe strongly in its mission as moral (or at least for the benefit of society). It would respond as a trend setter to some of the ethical dilemmas. The re-active mode would be the organizations though aware of social responsibility, respond to immediate situations rather than anticipating them. The passive mode leads the company to deviant behavior by refusing responsibility. There are two main extremes found in the corporate world: profit on one side and human safety, which constitute an ethical spectrum.

Managers in organizations face ethical issues every day of their working lives. There is seldom a decision they face that does not have an ethical dimension or facet to it. In addition to facing ethical aspects in their decision making, they confront ethical issues as they carry out their leadership responsibilities. Whether they be engaged in planning, organizing, motivating, communicating, or some other management role, they face the fact that matters of right and wrong, fairness and unfairness, and justice or lack of justice creep into their decisions, actions or behaviors. Furthermore, it does not matter what level of management is under consideration – top, middle, or lower; managers at all levels, and in all functions, face situations wherein ethical considerations play a major role.

The topic of ethics in management is a crucial one with which managers today must be informed. Therefore, it is the purpose of this article to survey some of the special topics about management ethics that may help the academic and practitioner alike to be more knowledgeable about this vital topic. In this quest to provide insights into the topic of management ethics, or ethics in management, we shall first provide an overview of the topic, and then discuss a number of important themes such as: why managers should be ethical, ethical issues managers face, models of management morality, ethical. To achieve our objectives, we have formulated the following research questions: 1) what is Ethics? 2) How the ethics roles are important in public sector management? 3) How will be ethic implemented in Public Sector Management? 4) Is there any problem with the ethic implementation in Public Sector Management?

#### 2. What is ethics?

At a simple definition, ethics is a system of moral principles. They affect how people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy. The term is derived from the Greek word *ethos* which can mean custom, habit, character or disposition. Ethics is applicable and any part of human life and computer science cannot be exception (Youhariprasestia, 2015) <sup>[11]</sup>. He also explained that: the advent of computers and the Internet has changed the way we

Communicate, learn, and do business with each other. It has created new dynamics and interactions and with it, new ethical dilemmas.

Doctor Walter in (1976) about 'Computer Ethics' said that however, the concept had existed as early as the 1950's, when MIT professor Robert Weiner published a book titled 'Cybernetics'. It is a theory of practical philosophy that takes a look at what developers and users can do with computers, contrasted to what they should. It also analyzes the moral and social acceptability of actions that happen strictly online, but can also have offline repercussions.

For example, Google is known to keep a record of every search you have done, with a record of when you did that search, and what links you clicked. So, the ethical dilemma becomes if it is morally justifiable or socially tolerable that one company can have such access to something you consider being a private activity. Can the fact it may help identify and capture dangerous criminals make it acceptable?

To add in doctor Walter's (1976) ideas similarly, the download of music or other copyrighted media is a heavily contested issue of computer ethics. Is it acceptable for a person who owns a music track to permanently share it with a friend, or does it constitute theft as argued by the music industry? And if it does constitute theft, is the responsibility with the one who shared, the one who received it or the online servers that facilitated the transfer?

According to Bynum (2011) computer ethics is not a clear cut set of values, by any stretch. While some organizations have published accepted principles basic standards and codes of ethics, the field itself is more a branch of philosophical thought than a list of industry-.

Therefore, Most of the ethical specialist and business specialists agree that their obligation is teaching their students ethics or social responsibilities, because these two terms must be related strongly. "Business schools have an obligation to do based on what they can to develop a sense of social responsibility and a high standard of business ethics in their graduates" (Gordon and Howell, 1959) [3].

Trevino and Nelson (2011) were the people who analyzed and addressed the problem of teaching ethics not just in schools, but also at the institutional level. So, the authors appreciate that employers have a responsibility to teach their employees how to recognize ethical dilemmas and problems and learn how to deal with them.

Based on the collected information, the real problem in ethics management is not the lack of proper tools or instruments which managers should implement in their institutions in order to prevent or diminish unethical issues, but the lack of an adequate communication and dissemination of these mechanisms. For example, we have codes of ethics, but in many cases, if you ask the employees or even the managers themselves they do not know where exactly they can read these codes or what these codes really refer to. Definitely, there may be also a lack of individual interest in these problems, but here comes the abilities of a real manager in ethics management: be a model and lead employees to the right path. Another tool used in ethics management but not in many companies or institutions is the expertise of ethics counselors in some ethical trainings or seminars for employees and managers. If some institutions implement this system, it might also be the case for just an activity to check and not seen as a serious one. As that student of mine told me during a seminar on Ethics,

these issues are seen as out dated in a corrupted society and the challenge to convince people to be open in front of ethical dilemmas and understand the importance and role of ethics in our lives, no matter the sector is private or public, is very hard and difficult. The problem becomes even more serious in public sector where the budget is in many cases very limited and there are no money left for expensive ethics training programs or hot lines or for hiring ethics experts. So, the challenge is bigger for managers, not only because of the limited budget but also because salaries in public sector are lower than in other sectors and there is a correlation between the income and the corruption level. This idea was proven in the research of Rijckeghem and Weder (2001) [9] where the authors show there is negative relation between wages of public servants and the corruption. This connection between wages in public sector and corruption was also analyzed by Muttreja (2012) [5, 7] that made a quantitative research where corruption was the dependent variable and the independent variable was the wage in public sector. His conclusion was that corruption is related to wages and one of the solutions to decrease corruption might be increase wages.

### 3. Role of ethics in management

We may have heard repeatedly that "society has ethic problem" or "our society's problem is cultural" or "society has managerial problem". Propounding of these matters in spite of that it seems correct but it is expressive of this matter that we are faced to discussions that have been provided in form of general and undefined and also we have not any specific solution for its removal for example if we ask how we solve the cultural or moral problem there will not be any answer in most of time or finally we will suffice to this statement that as time pass the situation will be better (Puiu, 2015) [8]. In addition, this matter is arising of non-execution and providing an ethic model for removal of ethic intricacies. we were much witness that the weakness of scientific structures of management such as weakness of basic principles and regulations and rules, weakness of supervising and evaluating systems, weakness of powerful communicating systems all causes for appearance of anti-ethic prospects that are recalled as "official corruption" in popular saying. For sample in conditions of production monopoly of a product and abundance of demand the how much can ethic and beliefs be leaded to supply of goods with high quality? Or what is number of individuals who have been employed in to governmental organizations in reasons and account for ethics or political family and party belonging?

Furthermore, Saremi (2014) [10] claimed about the place that specialization, experience and management science as compare with communication have secondary share and off course this matter is observable in regional researches clearly, the individuals continuing in to immoral futile cycle with use of relation efficiency in state of lawful and self-control society and reply to any opponent with this sentence that "any work can be well done with informal communication better". Saremi (2014) [10] also added that the management is perforce to take decision and decisions execution causes that a group benefiting from and other group is in lost and depending in which groups they belong it, they reveal various reactions from themselves that have finally numerous positive or negative ethic results.

To powerful his speeches he also mentioned that there is no doubt that whatever the matters and values of ethic be used more in structure of an organization there will be less negative result for its owners and managers. If a system be administrating without secreting and honestly the result is that the nature of such system will be less in suspicion and doubt. When working discipline as most important factor of success be constituted from top level of management to lower level it will be obstacle of problem arising such as delay in goals achievement, irregularity in working times, paying wages more than size of work done and,... among the important benefits of ethic management in working environment we can indicate to following cases:

1. Organizing empowered working groups and productivity increase.
2. Preventing of relationship system' abet.
3. Preventing of bribe taking.
4. Suitable attitude with colleagues and clients.
5. Rough behaviors reduction such as quarrel, rebellion, flattery.
6. Obligation feeling increases and moral of faithfulness to organization.
7. Following the complaints of clients and removal of probable defects.
8. Discipline and regularity increase
9. Intendancy to resistance against to goals of organization.
10. Preventing of hide and obvious easy working.
11. Preventing of appearance of faithfulness feeling to informal and negative groups of organization.
12. Organizational effectiveness and productivity increase.
13. Service useful life increases.
14. Providing a favorite picture of organizations of a country.

#### **4. Implementation of ethics in public sector management**

Codes of ethics are everywhere and, in my opinion, the problem is not with the tool but with the one who creates the tool. As Lao Tzu the Taoist said in the poem Tao Te Ching: "The more laws and commands there are/ the more thieves and robbers there will be".

So, this doesn't necessarily mean that there should not be laws or codes of ethics, but more important is to communicate these in a proper and efficient manner to the members of a community.

Can we say there is a lack of codes of ethics and this fact is one of the reasons for which public sector is perceived in many countries as highly corrupt, especially in less developed countries? The answer is definitely negative. In most public institutions, there are these codes of ethics: in schools, hospitals, universities or other public institutions.

In my opinion, the real problem in ethics management is not the lack of proper tools or instruments which managers should implement in their institutions in order to prevent or diminish unethical issues, but the lack of an adequate communication and dissemination of these mechanisms. For example, we have codes of ethics, but in many cases, if you ask the employees or even the managers themselves they do not know where exactly they can read these codes or what these codes really refer to.

Definitely, there may be also a lack of individual interest in these problems, but here comes the abilities of a real manager in ethics management: be a model and lead employees to the right path. Another tool used in ethics

management but not in many companies or institutions is the expertise of ethics counselors in some ethical trainings or seminars for employees and managers. If some institutions implement this system, it might also be the case for just an activity to check and not seen as a serious one.

As that student of mine told me during a seminar on Ethics, these issues are seen as out dated in a corrupted society and the challenge to convince people to be open in front of ethical dilemmas and understand the importance and role of ethics in our lives, no matter the sector is private or public, is very hard and difficult.

The problem becomes even more serious in public sector where the budget is in many cases very limited and there are no money left for expensive ethics training programs or hot lines or for hiring ethics experts. So, the challenge is bigger for managers, not only because of the limited budget but also because salaries in public sector are lower than in other sectors and there is a correlation between the income and the corruption level. This idea was proven in the researcher of Walsham, G. (2012) where the authors show there is negative relation between wages of public servants and the corruption.

This connection between wages in public sector and corruption was also analyzed by Muttreja (2012) <sup>[5, 7]</sup> that made a quantitative research where corruption was the dependent variable and the independent variable was the wage in public sector. His conclusion was that corruption is related to wages and one of the solutions to decrease corruption might be increase wages. But in order to be among the first 50 less corrupt countries, developing countries should increase wages in public sector with more than 40% and this is unrealistic at the moment.

Of course, corruption is not the only problem in public sector, but it is an important one, because here we can include also bribery or the problem of giving and receiving gifts. And to some extent, all the other problems are connected with corruption, in a broader meaning.

International Monetary Fund (1998) <sup>[4]</sup> agreed that increasing wages you reduce the number of corrupted acts but not always the total money involved because people who will continue be corrupt will ask more amounts of money.

#### **5. Conclusion**

This article has analyzed the main ethical issues and the main tools that a manager can use in his or her company too. I focused my research on those issues and mechanisms which are specific to public sector. Corruption, bribery, nepotism, conflict of interests and, in general, bad administration of public funds is the main ethical issues. The mechanisms are the usual we find in the professional literature, but with some of them (like ethical codes or committees), the problem is not they do not exist, but the fact they are not properly communicated and disseminated among employees. For other tools like ethical trainings or hotlines, there is the problem of money involved, also the expertise required. As Adams (2009) <sup>[1]</sup> said, we might address the right questions if we want the right answers: "What are the real causes and dependent variables in corruption or unethical behaviors in the public sector?" Of course, ethical management is not enough for a better ethical climate. As we saw and a lot of authors proved that in their researches, corruption (as an ethical issue) is in a negative relation with wages. So, a manager must well know

all the issues and ethical dilemmas, the mechanisms that he or she can implement in public institutions, but also have a proper human resources policy and an adequate remuneration program. The article doesn't offer a typical and theoretical approach of ethics management focusing more on addressing the right questions and the real problems that a public manager has to deal with.

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