

MBA Management Ethics: Professional Ethics.

What can we/must we demand from individual managers?

Systems approaches might argue that individuals will find it hard to work against the system.

However even in the worst systems we have certain expectations of ethics in our managers.....

Professional Ethics: Moral development/ Kohlberg Model Tasks

1. How could you use Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development and Education to advise on improving Computer Professionals' ethics?
2. Examine Langford's case for the usefulness of professional codes to improve computing ethics
3. What areas are covered by the BCS codes?
4. What gaps or problems do you anticipate when you access this and other codes?
5. Use your investigations and your past notes on Codes of Behaviour to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of using codes to improve behaviour.
6. Answer Adams and McCrindle's questions posed to a consultant discovering Customer Malfeasance.
7. Use Baase's cases to review possible areas of ethical risk.
8. Can IT/Computing professionals learn from other professions' attempts to improve ethical behaviour?
9. Check the BCS and ACM codes referenced in Adams and McCrindle's bibliography.
10. Apply to the "ethical dilemma" you are interested in for the assignment.

Professional Ethics: Linking CSR, Developmental Stages and Philosophical Traditions

- 1. Read the account of Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development. Is professional autonomy a myth or reality? Map the stages against various CSR models including Carroll's (2004) "Pyramid of Social Responsibility".**
 - 2. Try to match the statements about the audit dilemma in Keef's (1992) article, to the Kohlberg Stages.**
 - 3. How would the stages help in examining professionals' activities in case material?**
 - 4. How do the stages help in advising organisations on future training and recruitment? See Bean and Bernardi (2007)**
- Find critics of Kohlberg. Is his "Just Community" the same as Kitson and Campbell's (1996) "Virtuous Organisation"? How much democracy and autonomy do they require? See Brown (2007) on how her personal code is informed by Kohlberg in her management role.
- 5. Can organisations afford (in the face of risk to their corporate reputations) to allow significant manager autonomy?**
 - 6. Revisit the Teleological and Deontological philosophical traditions to examine your cases and the Kohlberg framework. Do Virtue ethics threaten the developmental approach?**



Lawrence
Kohlberg

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development and Education

Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) modified and elaborated Piaget's work, and laid the groundwork for the current debate within psychology on moral development. Consistent with Piaget, he proposed that children form ways of thinking through their experiences which include understandings of moral concepts such as justice, rights, equality and human welfare. Kohlberg followed the development of moral judgment beyond the ages studied by Piaget, and determined that the process of attaining moral maturity took longer and was more gradual than Piaget had proposed.

On the basis of his research, Kohlberg identified six stages of moral reasoning grouped into three major levels. Each level represented a fundamental shift in the social-moral perspective of the individual. At the first level, the preconventional level, a person's moral judgments are characterized by a concrete, individual perspective. Within this level, a Stage 1 heteronomous orientation focuses on avoiding breaking rules that are backed by punishment, obedience for its own sake and avoiding the physical consequences of an action to persons and property. As in Piaget's framework, the reasoning of Stage 1 is characterized by ego-centrism and the inability to consider the perspectives of others. At Stage 2 there is the early emergence of moral reciprocity. The Stage 2 orientation focuses on the instrumental, pragmatic value of an action. Reciprocity is of the form, "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." The Golden Rule becomes, "If someone hits you, you hit them back." At Stage 2 one follows the rules only when it is to someone's immediate interests. What is right is what's fair in the sense of an equal exchange, a deal, an agreement. At Stage 2 there is an understanding that everybody has his(her) own interest to pursue and these conflict, so that right is relative (in the concrete individualist sense).

Individuals at the conventional level of reasoning, however, have a basic understanding of conventional morality, and reason with an understanding that norms and conventions are necessary to uphold society. They tend to be self-identified with these rules, and uphold them consistently, viewing morality as acting in accordance with what society defines as right. Within this level, individuals at Stage 3 are aware of shared feelings, agreements, and expectations which take primacy over individual interests. Persons at Stage 3 define what is right in terms of what is expected by people close to one's self, and in terms of the stereotypic roles that define being good - e.g., a good brother, mother, teacher. Being good means keeping mutual relationships, such as trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude. The perspective is that of the local community or family. There is not as yet a consideration of the generalized social system. Stage 4 marks the shift from defining what is right in terms of local norms and role expectations to defining right in terms of the laws and norms established by the larger social system. This is the "member of society" perspective in which one is moral by fulfilling the actual duties defining one's social responsibilities. One must obey the law except in extreme cases in which the law comes into conflict with other prescribed social duties. Obeying the law is seen as necessary in order to maintain the system of laws which protect everyone.

Finally, the post conventional level is characterized by reasoning based on principles, using a "prior to society" perspective. These individuals reason based on the principles which underlie rules and norms, but reject a uniform application of a rule or norm. While two stages have been presented within the theory, only one, Stage 5, has received substantial empirical support. Stage 6 remains as a theoretical endpoint which rationally follows from the preceding 5 stages. In essence this last level of moral judgment entails reasoning rooted in the ethical fairness principles from which moral laws would be devised. Laws are evaluated in terms of their coherence with basic principles of fairness rather than upheld simply on the basis of their place within an existing social order. Thus, there is an understanding that elements of morality such as regard for life and human welfare transcend particular cultures and societies and are to be upheld irrespective of other conventions or normative obligations. These stages (1-5) have been empirically supported by findings from longitudinal and cross-cultural research (Power et al., 1989).

Moral Education

Kohlberg used these findings to reject traditional character education practices. These approaches are premised in the idea that virtues and vices are the basis to moral behavior, or that moral character is comprised of a "bag of virtues", such as honesty, kindness, patience, strength, etc. According to the traditional approach, teachers are to teach these virtues through example and direct communication of convictions, by giving students an opportunity to practice these virtues, and by rewarding their expression. However, critiques of the traditional approach find flaws inherent in this model. This approach provides no guiding principle for defining what virtues are worthy of espousal, and wrongly assumes a community consensus on what are considered "positive values". In fact, teachers often end up arbitrarily imposing certain values depending upon their societal, cultural, and personal beliefs. In order to address this issue of ethical relativity, some have adopted the values-clarification approach to moral education. This teaching practice is based on the assumption that there are no single, correct answers to ethical dilemmas, but that there is value in holding clear views and acting accordingly. In addition, there is a value of toleration of divergent views. It follows, then, that the teacher's role is one of discussion moderator, with the goal of teaching merely that people hold different values; the teacher does attempt to present her views as the "right" views.

Kohlberg rejected the focus on values and virtues, not only due to the lack of consensus on what virtues are to be taught, but also because of the complex nature of practicing such virtues. For example, people often make different decisions yet hold the same basic moral values. Kohlberg believed a better approach to affecting moral behavior should focus on stages of moral development. These stages are critical, as they consider the way a person organizes their understanding of virtues, rules, and norms, and integrates these into a moral choice (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). In addition, he rejected the relativist view point in favor of the view that certain principles of justice and fairness represent the pinnacle of moral maturity, as he found that these basic moral principles are found in different cultures and subcultures around the world (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971).

The goal of moral education, it then follows, is to encourage individuals to develop to the next stage of moral reasoning. Initial educational efforts employing Kohlberg's

theory were grounded in basic Piagetian assumptions of cognitive development. Development, in this model, is not merely the result of gaining more knowledge, but rather consists of a sequence of qualitative changes in the way an individual thinks. Within any stage of development, thought is organized according to the constraints of that stage. An individual then interacts with the environment according to their basic understandings of the environment. However, the child will at some point encounter information which does not fit into their world view, forcing the child to adjust their view to accommodate this new information. This process is called equilibration, and it is through equilibration that development occurs. Early moral development approaches to education, therefore, sought to force students to ponder contradiction inherent to their present level of moral reasoning.

The most common tool for doing this was to present a "moral dilemma" (see Classroom Practices) and require students to determine and justify what course the actor in the dilemma should take. Through discussion, students should then be forced to face the contradictions present in any course of action not based on principles of justice or fairness.

While Kohlberg appreciated the importance and value of such moral dilemma discussions, he held from very early on that moral education required more than individual reflection, but also needed to include experiences for students to operate as moral agents within a community. In this regard, Kohlberg reconciled some of the differences in orientation that existed between the theories of moral growth held by Piaget and Durkheim. In order to provide students with an optimal context within which to grow morally, Kohlberg and his colleagues developed the "just community" schools approach towards promoting moral development (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). The basic premise of these schools is to enhance students' moral development by offering them the chance to participate in a democratic community. Here, democracy refers to more than simply casting a vote. It entails full participation of community members in arriving at consensual rather than "majority rules" decision-making. One primary feature of these schools is their relatively small size (often they are actually schools within schools), aimed at providing the students with a sense of belonging to a group which is responsive to individual needs. The central institution of these schools is a community meeting in which issues related to life and discipline in the schools are discussed and democratically decided, with an equal value placed on the voices of students and teachers. An underlying goal of these meetings is to establish collective norms which express fairness for all members of the community. It is believed that by placing the responsibility of determining and enforcing rules on students, they will take prosocial behavior more seriously. At the same time, this approach stems from the cognitive-developmental view that discussion of moral dilemmas can stimulate moral development.

However, this is not to say that just community school simply leaves students to their own devices; teachers play a crucial leadership role in these discussions, promoting rules and norms which have a concern for justice and community, and ultimately enforcing the rules. This role is not an easy one, as teachers must listen closely and understand a student's reasoning, in order to help the student to the next level of reasoning. This requires a delicate balance between letting the students make decisions, and advocating in a way which shows them the limits in their reasoning. A primary advantage to the Just Community approach is its effectiveness in affecting

students actions, not just their reasoning. Students are, in effect, expected to "practice what they preach", by following the rules determined in community meetings.

The most comprehensive and authoritative source for work on Kohlberg's approach to moral education is to be found in : Power, F. C., Higgins, A., & Kohlberg, L. (1989). "Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education." New York: Columbia University Press.

KOHLBERG'S MORAL STAGES

Kolberg's theory specifies six stages of moral development, arranged in three levels.

Level I: Preconventional/Premoral

Moral values reside in external, quasi-physical events, or in bad acts. The child is responsive to rules and evaluative labels, but views them in terms of pleasant or unpleasant consequences of actions, or in terms of the physical power of those who impose the rules.

Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation

- Egocentric deference to superior power or prestige, or a trouble-avoiding set.
- Objective responsibility.

Stage 2: Naively egoistic orientation

- Right action is that which is instrumental in satisfying the self's needs and occasionally others'.
- Relativism of values to each actor's needs and perspectives.
- Naive egalitarianism, orientation to exchange and reciprocity.

Level II: Conventional/Role Conformity

Moral values reside in performing the right role, in maintaining the conventional order and expectancies of others as a value in its own right.

Stage 3: Good-boy/good-girl orientation

- Orientation to approval, to pleasing and helping others.
- Conformity to stereotypical images of majority or natural role behavior.
- Action is evaluated in terms of intentions.

Stage 4: Authority and social-order-maintaining orientation

- Orientation to "doing duty" and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order or its own sake.
- Regard for earned expectations of others.
- Differentiates actions out of a sense of obligation to rules from actions for generally "nice" or natural motives.

Level III: Postconventional/Self-Accepted Moral Principles

Morality is defined in terms of conformity to shared standards, rights, or duties apart from supporting authority. The standards conformed to are internal, and action-decisions are based on an inner process of thought and judgement concerning right and wrong.

Stage 5: Contractual/legalistic orientation

- Norms of right and wrong are defined in terms of laws or institutionalized rules which seem to have a rational basis.
- When conflict arises between individual needs and law or contract, though sympathetic to the former, the individual believes the latter must prevail because of its greater functional rationality for society, the majority will and welfare.

7.

Stage 6: The morality of individual principles of conscience

- Orientation not only toward existing social rules, but also toward the conscience as a directing agent, mutual trust and respect, and principles of moral choice involving logical universalities and consistency.
- Action is controlled by internalized ideals that exert a pressure to act accordingly regardless of the reactions of others in the immediate environment.
- If one acts otherwise, self-condemnation and guilt result.

8.

W.C. Crain. (1985). *Theories of Development*. Prentice-Hall. pp. 118-136.

CHAPTER SEVEN

KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

An outstanding example of research in the Piagetian tradition is the work of Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg has focused on moral development and has proposed a stage theory of moral thinking which goes well beyond Piaget's initial formulations.

Kohlberg, who was born in 1927, grew up in Bronxville, New York, and attended the Andover Academy in Massachusetts, a private high school for bright and usually wealthy students. He did not go immediately to college, but instead went to help the Israeli cause, in which he was made the Second Engineer on an old freighter carrying refugees from parts of Europe to Israel. After this, in 1948, he enrolled at the University of Chicago, where he scored so high on admission tests that he had to take only a few courses to earn his bachelor's degree. This he did in one year. He stayed on at Chicago for graduate work in psychology, at first thinking he would become a clinical psychologist. However, he soon became interested in Piaget and began interviewing children and adolescents on moral issues. The result was his doctoral dissertation (1958a), the first rendition of his new stage theory.

Kohlberg is an informal, unassuming man who also is a true scholar; he has thought long and deeply about a wide range of issues in both psychology and philosophy and has done much to help others appreciate the wisdom of many of the "old psychologists," such as Rousseau, John Dewey, and James Mark Baldwin. Kohlberg has taught at the University of Chicago (1962-1968) and, since 1968, has been at Harvard University.

PIAGET'S STAGES OF MORAL JUDGMENT

Piaget studied many aspects of moral judgment, but most of his findings fit into a two-stage theory. Children younger than 10 or 11 years think about moral dilemmas one way; older children consider them differently. As we have seen, younger children regard rules as fixed and absolute. They believe that rules are handed down by adults or by God and that one cannot change them. The older child's view is more relativistic. He or she understands that it is permissible to change rules if everyone agrees. Rules are not sacred and absolute but are devices which humans use to get along cooperatively.

9.

At approximately the same time--10 or 11 years--children's moral thinking

Studying Moral Ethos Using an Adapted Kohlbergian Model

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Abstract

Alasdair MacIntyre's (1988) analysis of moral philosophy shows that liberal individualism, the dominant contemporary tradition, has failed to secure consensus on ethical principles. It follows that Kohlberg's stages model of socio-moral development, which proposes universal morality, lacks universal foundations. There are further pitfalls when applying the model to organizational moral ethos (OME). I argue that these problems can be circumvented, and I reformulate the Kohlberg model, building it into a framework for analyzing five interrelated sub-systems of organizational moral ethos. These are: approach to formal moral governance; basis of moral authority; deep implicit socialization; morality behind normative structure; and corporate outlook towards social responsibility. I present 19 propositions based on the core idea that in liberal individualist societies, postconventionally orientated OME would lead to a reduction in ethical dysfunctions such as bribery, discrimination, employee exploitation, dangerous products, and environmental damage. I conclude with six further questions to consider in OME research.

Descriptors: ethics, morality, moral atmosphere, climate, Kohlberg

Introduction

Moral ethos is a set of force-fields within organizations, comprising everyday norms, rules-in-use, social pressures, and quality of relationships, all of which impinge on members' understandings, judgements and decisions concerning good and bad, right and wrong (Jackall 1984; Snell 1993). As a 'hidden' curriculum (Jackson 1990) of morality in the workplace, moral ethos is synonymous with moral or ethical climate, i.e. shared member perceptions about how ethical dilemmas are to be viewed and resolved (Cohen 1993, 1995; Wimbush and Shepard 1994) — atmosphere (Lovell 1995), culture (Brigley 1995), and milieu.

By way of introduction, I argue that moral ethos is an important area in organization studies. I then go on to note that if we accept Alasdair MacIntyre's (1988) analysis of the state of contemporary moral philosophy, no model or perspective on moral ethos is in a position to gain universal acceptance.

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The Measurement of Principled Morality by the Kohlberg Moral Dilemma Questionnaire

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The four stages preceding the postconventional level in the Kohlberg (1958, 1971, 1976) system of moral development are described as involving moral judgments that conform to external conditions of punishment, reward, social expectation, and conformity to the law. No special level of self-control seems necessary to behave in keeping with these conditions of external reinforcement. In contrast, the two stages of postconventional (principled) morality involve defiance of majority opinion and defiance of the law—actions that would seem to require greater self-control. This study was concerned with whether postconventional moral reasoning, as measured by the Kohlberg Moral Dilemma Questionnaire (MDQ), can be associated with higher self-control. If so, prediction of principled moral behavior from the MDQ would be based not only on postconventional moral reasoning but bolstered by the necessary level of self-control as well. College students who came the closest to postconventional moral reasoning showed better self-control than college students who were more conventional or preconventional in their moral judgments. These results support the validity of the MDQ for predicting principled moral behavior.

Waterman (1988) recently provided a set of definitions that distinguish among the various aspects of personal ethics. Individual *moral values* represent the criteria used by the person as standards for determining what is moral. *Moral reasoning* embraces the cognitive processes utilized in reaching decisions that have moral implications and in how individuals apply their values in reaching moral judgments. *Moral behavior* refers to the actual overt activity displayed within a situation calling for some level of moral commitment. Although reviews of the research bearing on personal morality have concluded that some prediction of moral behavior from moral reasoning is possible (Blasi, 1980; Waterman, 1988), the literature reveals limited predictability.