Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

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ABSTRACT

Professional code of ethics provides individuals with a set of guidelines to make good decisions in the workplace. Taking the effort to develop moral standards can foster harmony within an organization and elevate your reputation among clients and customers.

In this paper, we discuss what code ofethics,professional conduct are, why they are important, professional ethics in various industries and professions and how to develop ethical guidelines.

In the contemporary world, the well-designed code of ethics and professional conduct is an essential part of every successful and fruitful working environment. This research concept, including its characteristics, critical parts, and the outcomes of the application of such documents to the working practices. Moreover, pointing out the ethical approach that usually serves as a basis for the design of the code of ethics.

This paper attempted to focus on what ethics is and what the relationship is with the profession and eventually attempted to recommend a code of conduct.

Keywords: - code of conduct, Professional Ethics, workplace, environment.

I. INTRODUCTION

A code of professional ethics is a set of customs that outline an organisation's mission and values. A page on an employee handbook will often list rules for behaviour to help employees conduct their business with honesty and integrity. A code of ethics acts as a model of moral standards that employees should comply with. It ensures that every individual is personally accountable for their actions and their treatment of others.

Employers expect professionals to act in line with these principles, especially when approaching problems or making decisions that have a wider impact on society. People who violate the code of ethics compromise their trustworthiness and an organisation's reputation. It may lead to serious consequences, such as the termination of your contract.

A code of ethics is a guide of principles designed to help professionals conduct business honestly and with integrity. A code of ethics document may outline the mission and values of the business or organization, how professionals are supposed to approach problems, the ethical principles based on the organization's core values, and the standards to which the professional is held.

A code of ethics, also referred to as an "ethical code," may encompass areas such as business ethics, a code of professional practice, and an employee code of conduct.

Professional ethics

Teachers can deal with a variety of behavioural issues when they try their best to behave morally. There is a difference between being morally upright and being morally upright. Good behaviour depends on many factors and circumstances in which a person needs to change responses in order to be seen as 'ethical'. The lines between personal and professional ethics are not blurred to some extent which means that what we see as behaviour is not clear. It is best to avoid relationships in the professional field so that ethics have their role to play in situations as needed. Many practitioners deal with social situations as an indication of the existence of a code of ethics. For example, psychologists do not associate with their clients outside of treatment sessions to avoid personal contact with their patients and such separation should also be present in other professions. But since teachers are very close to students it may be somewhat avoidable to leave a comfortable environment with students but it is best to stay connected to your code of conduct to avoid unnecessary conflict.

In institutions of higher learning, the concept of morality is regarded as the key to achieving desirable goals and objectives. As people grow older, they are given information about morality. This information was provided to their family members and teachers. When people are able

to understand the meaning and importance of moral principles and act on them, they are able to make progress in their lives and achieve their personal and professional goals. In pursuing higher education, students need to take into account professional ethics. This concept is important not only for students, but also for other members of educational institutions, including directors, principals, professors, and staff. In the effective application of professional ethics, it is important for people to ensure that they communicate effectively, build good names and relationships with others, demonstrate honesty and integrity and perform their duties in an orderly manner. The key areas considered in this research paper include, definition and significance of ethics, ethical objectives, types of ethics, and measures to improve professional ethics.

Some situations between a teacher and student which may cross ethical boundaries are;

* Teachers are expected to contribute towards students' learning as well as their societal issues outside the classroom which may bring them to a comfortable and closer relationship. Not all teachers are aware and abide by the code of ethics and avoid biases in behaviour.
* Teachers not only deliver knowledge but interact and help learners achieve the level of knowledge required whether it exceeds time or not.
* Interpersonal relationships are embedded in teaching and learning which may be difficult to avoid.

Professional ethics important

Many firms have adopted professional ethics because it's an important tool that establishes rules for behaviour. When structured clearly, it sends out a coherent message to employees about expectations in the workplace. A code of professional ethics acts as a warning, informing people about the consequences should they break any guidelines. A moral statement is also valuable to a company's reputation in society because it's a public declaration of its principles.

THE PRINCIPLES

1 Responsibility to the Profession
Trust in the educational system depends upon a level of professional conduct and responsibility that may be higher than required by law. This entails holding one another to the same ethical standards.

2 Responsibility for Professional Competence
Commitment to the highest levels of professional and ethical practice, including demonstration of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for professional competence.

3 Responsibility to Students
A primary obligation to treat students with dignity and respect, including promoting the health, safety and well-being of students by establishing and maintaining appropriate verbal, physical, emotional, and social boundaries.

4 Responsibility to the School Community
Promotion of positive relationships and effective interactions with all members of the school community, while maintaining professional boundaries.

5 Responsible and Ethical Use of Technology
Consideration of the impact of consuming, creating, distributing and communicating information through all technologies. Vigilance to ensure that appropriate boundaries of time, place, and role are maintained when using electronic communication.

COMPONENTS OF A PROFESSIONAL CODE OF ETHICS

Organizations set clear guidelines on professional ethics to maintain transparency with key stakeholders inside and outside a business. Here are

four key components your professional code of ethics should include:

1. Work environment

A code of professional ethics should establish the acceptable norms and practices within your organization's work environment. It helps determine your corporate culture and encourages people to model similar values among their colleagues. By implementing explicit rules and policies, your work environment can be a place of sound moral judgment.

Here are some examples of professional ethics for the work environment:

- Equal opportunity
- Professional dress code
- Policy against discrimination and harassment
- Privacy policy
- Safety policy
- Non-violence policy
- Policy against destructive behaviour, including substance abuse and gambling

2. Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest occurs when there is a clash between an individual's competing interests or loyalty and the organisation. A code of professional ethics is essential to define the relationships and activities you should avoid that could be deemed unfair or damaging to an organisation's reputation.

Examples of conflicts of interest to avoid include:

- Significant financial interests in other companies
- Running for public office
- Insider trading or similar unfair financial practices
- Investing in competing organisations

3. Protecting company assets

Whether you are taking care of office equipment or handling sensitive information and customer data, a code of professional ethics compels you to prioritise the organisation's safety and its customers.

Examples of policies to protect company assets include:

- Information security
- Protecting intellectual property
- Use of company property
- Use of property owned by others
- Right to privacy

4. Anti-bribery and corruption

Trust is key to business operations. That is why a code of professional ethics is an effective tool to set clear boundaries on lawful and unlawful behaviour for employees. It ensures you uphold an attitude of honesty and fairness in your day-to-day operations.

Here are some examples of policies against bribery and corruption:

- Receiving gifts of significant monetary value
- Accepting loans or bribes
- Relationships with government entities, competitors, customers or former employers

II.   PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS IN DIFFERENT SECTORS

Here are some examples of professional codes of ethics in different professions and industries:

Lawyers

Lawyers are bound to a professional code of ethics, regardless of their place of employment, because as guardians of the court of law, it's their professional responsibility to uphold the virtues of fairness and righteousness.

In 1961, India introduced the Advocate Act to institute a regulatory body that would oversee the ethical conduct of those in the law profession. The Bar Council of India framed 39 rules under this law to guide moral practices in the court of law. These 39 rules cover four major areas, a lawyer's duty towards their client, opponent and colleagues and punishment for professional misconduct.

Clear ethical guidelines for lawyers ensure that our judicial system remains reliable and just.

Doctors

Like lawyers, doctors are also held to a universal code of ethics based on their chosen profession.The Medical Council of India addresses medical ethics in patient care, consent, a physician's duties, the maintenance of medical records and more. Here's a brief description from the Journal of Pharmacy &Bio allied Sciences on a few unethical actions that practising physicians in India should avoid:Physicians cannot advertise their practice, nor can they make formal announcements about their services in the press.Physicians cannot use a self-photograph for advertising themselves on a public signboard.Physicians cannot run an open medical shop.Physicians cannot take rebates or charge commissions to medical suppliers.Physicians cannot practise euthanasia.

Teachers

Teachers are role models for their young, impressionable students. They inspire and guide them through their own conduct. Not only do

teachers share knowledge, but they also have the power to shape the future as they prepare the younger generation for the actual world. Education has a crucial impact on society; that's why it's important for teachers to follow professional ethics. Here are examples of major ethical issues in the educational industry:
Collecting illegal fees and funds from students
Disclosing confidential school matters
Taking drugs or alcohol on school premises
Harassing, assaulting or abusing students
Corporal punishment
Turning up at school premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs
Damaging or stealing school property
Getting appointed based on fake qualifications
Bribing the higher educational authorities

Businesses
Professional ethics in business informs employees how to act in the face of ethical dilemmas or challenging situations. Some examples of this are:

Confidentiality and privacy policies
As an employee, your duty on behalf of an organisation is to keep trade secrets and protect sensitive information, such as customer data and the company's own propriety data. Some organisations may make you sign a non-disclosure agreement to protect their business interests even after you've left them.

Equal opportunities
Equal opportunity employers hire, promote and give opportunities to employees based on merit and performance. Most businesses state in their code of ethical conduct that no individual should be discriminated against due to their gender, marital status, sexual preference, race, caste, religion and political affiliation. Following these principles in the workplace shows care and compassion. It's your responsibility to treat others the way you want to be treated on a human level.

III. CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
Integrity, accountability, independence and impartiality, respect, professional commitment
These principles apply to all WHO staff members, independent of their location or grade, including Temporary Appointment holders, Secondees and Junior Professional Officers. This document refers to WHO staff members with the understanding that in spirit and principle, the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applies to all individuals who collaborate with WHO, notwithstanding their contractual or remuneration status.

1. Integrity
To behave in accordance with ethical principles, and act in good faith, intellectual honesty and fairness WHO staff members are expected to:
Observe national and local laws at all times. ƒ Avoid any action that could be perceived as an abuse of privileges and immunities. Demonstrate the same standards of integrity in their personal pursuits as they do in the workplace. Never engage in any level of physical or verbal violence or threat of violence. Demonstrate the highest standards of scientific integrity as public health practitioners and/or researchers. ƒ Protect the security of any confidential information provided to, or generated by, WHO. Report suspected wrongdoing or breaches of WHO ethical principles, rules, regulations or policy through established mechanisms (Integrity Hotline). Demonstrate the same discretion and prudence in their professional and private communications, emails or social media activities.

2. Accountability
To take responsibility for one's actions, decisions and their consequences WHO staff members are expected to:
Define clear and realistic objectives and deliverables for their activities in consultation with their supervisors. Take responsibility for carrying out the duties of their position to the best of their abilities. Take responsibility for their decisions and for the consequences of their actions. ƒ In the case of supervisors, take responsibility for assessing the performance of staff members in a fair and factual manner, in line with agreed objectives. Ensure that the human, financial and material resources entrusted to them are used optimally for the benefit of WHO. Record all transactions and prepare accurate and complete records, in accordance with established procedures. Provide advice and guidance to colleagues, where appropriate, and exercise adequate supervision and control over tasks they delegate. Bear in mind that they speak for WHO when speaking to the media on subjects within their area of responsibility and expertise, ask for permission from their supervisor and seek advice from WHO Communications Officers as appropriate.

3. Independence and impartiality
To conduct oneself with the interests of WHO only in view and under the sole authority of the Director General, and to ensure that personal views and convictions do not compromise ethical principles, official duties or the interests of WHO staff members are expected to:

Disclose promptly and fully any conflict of interest or potential situation of conflict of interest through a form of declaration of interest or by seeking advice from the Ethics team in the Office of Compliance, Risk and Ethics on a confidential basis. Or staff may consult their supervisor as applicable concerning the appropriate action, including possible recusal. Refrain from seeking or obtaining, under any circumstance, instructions or undue assistance from any government official or from any other authority external to the Organization. Exercise discretion at all times in their personal political activities and in expressing their personal opinions and beliefs. Ensure that any external experts and/or non-staff members with whom they collaborate complete declarations of interest forms and review them systematically, consulting the Ethics team for advice, and take responsibility for the final decision concerning their involvement with WHO. Bring any intimate relationship with another WHO staff member or other collaborator to the attention of their supervisor, Department of Human Resources or the Office of Compliance, Risk and Ethics (CRE) if there is a supervisory relationship between them. Seek written permission from their supervisor and the CRE before committing to any outside activity. Decline gifts whose value is in excess of US$100, unless it would cause embarrassment to refuse, in which case they must declare them to CRE. Seek authorization from the Director-General or the Regional Director, through CRE before accepting any decoration or honour. Resign prior to initiating a political campaign or a nomination process.

4. Respect
To respect the dignity, worth, equality, diversity and privacy of all persons WHO staff members are expected to:

Respect and value differences. Treat others with tact, courtesy and respect. Demonstrate awareness that statements or actions not necessarily intended to be offensive to another person may be perceived as such by exercising restraint and refraining from unpleasant or disparaging remarks or actions. Maintain a professional environment characterized by good working relations and an atmosphere of courtesy and mutual respect. Abstain from and actively discourage all forms of harassment, including verbal, nonverbal, written or physical abuse. Never engage in acts of sexual harassment, and report any they become aware of. Never engage in acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and report any they become aware of. ƒ Refrain from engaging in gossip. Never report erroneous facts in bad faith.

5. Professional Commitment
To demonstrate a high level of professionalism and loyalty to the Organization, its mandate and objectives WHO staff members are expected to:

Deliver on the duties of their position in an ethical and professional manner. Keep in mind the longer term objectives of WHO when managing short and medium term activities or operations. Follow professional developments in their domain of activity to maintain excellent technical standards. Use their professional expertise constructively for the benefit of WHO. Uphold and promote the standards of their professional codes of conduct. Demonstrate openness to new ideas and approaches, and favour new thoughts and concepts.

TYPES OF CODES OF ETHICS
A code of ethics can take a variety of forms, but the general goal is to ensure that a business and its employees are following state and federal laws, conducting themselves with an ideal that can be exemplary, and ensuring that the business being conducted is beneficial for all stakeholders. The following are three types of codes of ethics found in business.

Compliance-Based Code of Ethics
For all businesses, laws regulate issues such as hiring and safety standards. Compliance-based codes of ethics not only set guidelines for conduct but also determine penalties for violations.

In some industries, including banking, specific laws govern business conduct. These industries formulate compliance-based codes of ethics to enforce laws and regulations. Employees usually undergo formal training to learn the rules of conduct. Because noncompliance can create legal issues for the company as a whole, individual workers within a firm may face penalties for failing to follow guidelines.

To ensure that the aims and principles of the code of ethics are followed, some companies appoint a compliance officer. This individual is tasked with keeping up to date on changes in regulation codes and monitoring employee conduct to encourage conformity.

This type of code of ethics is based on clear-cut rules and well-defined consequences rather than individual monitoring of personal behavior. Despite strict adherence to the law, some compliance-based codes of conduct do not thus promote a climate of moral responsibility within the company.

Value-Based Code of Ethics

A value-based code of ethics addresses a company's core value system. It may outline standards of responsible conduct as they relate to the larger public good and the environment. Value-based ethical codes may require a greater degree of self-regulation than compliance-based codes.

Some codes of conduct contain language that addresses both compliance and values. For example, a grocery store chain might create a code of conduct that espouses the company's commitment to health and safety regulations above financial gain. That grocery chain might also include a statement about refusing to contract with suppliers that feed hormones to livestock or raise animals in inhumane living conditions.

Code of Ethics among Professionals

Financial advisers registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or a state regulator are bound by a code of ethics known as a fiduciary duty. This is a legal requirement and also a code of loyalty that requires them to act in the best interest of their clients.

Certified public accountants, who are not typically considered fiduciaries to their clients, still are expected to follow similar ethical standards, such as integrity, objectivity, truthfulness, and avoidance of conflicts of interest, according to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).

Example of Code of Ethics

Many firms and organizations have adopted a Code of Ethics. One good example comes from the CFA Institute (CFAI), the grantor of the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation and creator of the CFA exams. CFA Charter holders are among the most respected and globally recognized financial professionals. According to the CFAI's website, Members of CFA Institute, including CFA Charter holders, and candidates for the CFA designation must adhere to the following Code of Ethics:

- Act with integrity, competence, diligence, respect, and in an ethical manner with the public, clients, prospective clients, employers, employees, colleagues in the investment profession, and other participants in the global capital markets.
- Place the integrity of the investment profession and the interests of clients above their own personal interests.
- Use reasonable care and exercise independent professional judgment when conducting investment analysis, making investment recommendations, taking investment actions, and engaging in other professional activities.
- Practice and encourage others to practice professionally and ethically that will reflect credit on themselves and the profession.
- Promote the integrity and viability of the global capital markets for the ultimate benefit of society.
- Maintain and improve their professional competence and strive to maintain and improve the competence of other investment professionals.

HOW TO DEVELOP A CODE OF ETHICS

Follow the five steps below to help your organization develop a code of professional ethics:

1. Review your mission statement

Your code of ethics should reflect the values of your organization. It should clearly state how employees are expected to behave to manifest the reputation you want to portray among your coworkers and customers.

For example, if your business values compassion, your code of ethics should outline how people treat each other, such as using polite language or attentive listening skills.

2. Gather feedback from employees

Ask key stakeholders in your company about their thoughts on professional ethics. Ask them about the values that they believe best represent the business. Also, gather feedback on professional, ethical practices they would like to see improved. Receiving input from various parts of an organisation will inspire coworkers to take greater responsibility when governing their own behaviour.

3. Understand past ethical issues

If you are unsure where to begin, it's best to examine the functions of the business that need to be improved. Look for trends of employee or customer dissatisfaction. For example, if you discover that customers have to wait too long to speak to a customer service representative, implement ethical guidelines that target this issue. In this case, your guidelines may suggest that employees speak to clients with respect and care.

4. Learn from other companies

Investigate case studies of what your competitors have done, right or wrong. Look at the principles they have put in place to run their business efficiently. You can choose to emulate their successes and learn from their ethical failures.

5. Share your code of ethics with others

Once you have put together a code of professional ethics for your business, communicate it throughout the organisation. Send a copy to each individual and update your employee handbook to

communicate ethical expectations to new recruits. Run training exercises to model ethical guidelines for your colleagues. This will help them understand the moral standards of the company and learn how to act accordingly.

UNDERSTANDING CODES OF ETHICS

Business ethics refers to how ethical principles guide a business's operations. Common issues that fall under the umbrella of business ethics include employer-employee relations, discrimination, environmental issues, bribery, insider trading, and social responsibility.

While many laws exist to set basic ethical standards within the business community, it is largely dependent upon a business's leadership to develop a code of ethics.

Both businesses and trade organizations typically have some sort of code of ethics that their employees or members are supposed to follow. Breaking the code of ethics can result in termination or dismissal from the organization. A code of ethics is important because it clearly lays out the rules for behavior and provides the groundwork for a preemptive warning.

Given the importance of climate change and how human behavior has led to severely impacting the climate, many companies have taken to include climate factors in their code of ethics. These principles include manners in which the company is dedicated to operating sustainably or how they will shift to doing so.

In many cases, this commitment to sustainability adds to the costs of a company, but because consumers are becoming more focused on the types of businesses they choose to engage with, it is often worth the cost to maintain a good public image.

Regardless of size, businesses count on their management staff to set a standard of ethical conduct for other employees to follow. When administrators adhere to the code of ethics, it sends a message that universal compliance is expected of every employee.

IV. CONCLUSION

A code of ethics is a guiding set of principles intended to instruct professionals to act in a manner that is honest and that is beneficial to all stakeholders involved. A code of ethics is drafted by a business and tailored to the specific industry at hand, requiring all employees of that business to adhere to the code.

The moral choices of businesses have evolved, from the industrial age to the modern era. In the world we live in today, working

conditions, how a business impacts the environment, and how it deals with inequality are all areas that society deems important that perhaps two centuries ago it did not as much. A code of ethics helps ensure that businesses will always act with integrity.

- A code of ethics sets out an organization's ethical guidelines and best practices to follow for honesty, integrity, and professionalism.
- For members of an organization, violating the code of ethics can result in sanctions including termination.
- In some industries, including banking and finance, specific laws govern business conduct. In others, a code of ethics may be voluntarily adopted.
- The main types of codes of ethics include a compliance-based code of ethics, a value-based code of ethics, and a code of ethics among professionals.

A focus on climate change has become an integral part of companies' codes of ethics, detailing their commitment to sustainability.

- A code of ethics in business is a set of guiding principles intended to ensure a business and its employees act with honesty and integrity in all facets of its day-to-day operations and to only engage in acts that promote a benefit to society.
- A code of ethics for teachers defines the primary responsibilities of a teacher to their students and the role of the teacher in the student's life. Teachers are required to show impartiality, integrity, and ethical behavior in the classroom

The Code of Conduct is important as it helps to run the program smoothly. It sets standards of what is acceptable and what is not, thus protecting the interests of both teachers and students. Ethics in Education has been given prominence over the years and institutions are offering courses that help students to understand these values. Ethics in Education applies to both teachers and students. Although it is the teacher's job to make students aware of these values, school administrators often take it upon themselves to familiarize teachers with their work ethic.

Professional ethics may help teachers but also vary in degree of responsibility and types of decisions. It is not always right or wrong but it begins with the gray areas that exist in the countless interactions of the teachers' daily work. It is always better to consider keeping balance and consider the consequences of our actions in order to maintain

balance and discuss matters in a non-judgmental way to inform the authorities and keep them functioning properly. Embracing these gray areas by making ethical decisions for students, teachers, institutions and communities

To conclude, ethics performs a critical role in particularly every aspect of life, providing moral guidance for decisions and doings. In spite of the wide range of ethical approaches, you should be able to know when and what perspective can be applied. Ethics research allows you to get acquainted with the specifics of ethical interpretation of a particular issue; therefore, the increased awareness will boost your ability to make the right decisions. However, you should remember that ethics research itself requires a high concentration and devotion to the long-lasting and profound study of academic literature to be conducted appropriately.

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