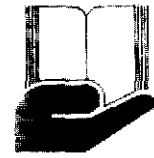


Ethical Issues in Organizational Behavior



Background

Many researchers have underscored the importance of ethical standards, and formal and informal communication of these ethics, as essential components of any profession. Fields and disciplines with the least paradigmatic development show little consensual agreement on important issues to be researched and methodologies to be employed. Many professions, including those in the social sciences, not only have standards but formal channels within their associations that permit criticisms to be administered anonymously, at arm's length, and in a known systematic manner. Currently the Academy of Management possesses no consensual agreement on important issues of ethics, no basis for consistent peer control, few agreed-upon standards of ethical behavior, and no structures that serve to maintain professional standards, although there have been efforts by a number of divisions such as Management Consulting, Social Issues in Management, and Organization Development to address ethical concerns. The OB Division's Task Force on Ethics was created for this reason in 1981. Five regional task forces on ethics were established and charged with developing five global topic areas, which seemed pertinent not only to the field of OB but to other areas within the Academy as well:

- Faculty and student collegial relationships (cro-

nyism, plagiarism, sharing of credit for contributions rendered, etc.)

- Client, participant and grantor relationships (ethical treatment of consultant clients, laboratory subjects, etc.)
- Matters pertaining to professional associations
- Matters pertaining to academic journals and book publishers
- Matters pertaining to the academic professional as a good citizen (including university service, balancing of teaching, research and service responsibilities, and ethical behavior with respect to the community at large).

These topics were developed by each of the following groups: The Western Region, the Southwestern Region, the Southern Management Association, the Midwestern Region, and the Eastern Region.

Each regional task force met to determine: (a) specific ethical issues pertinent to its topic; (b) what could be done by the OB Division to address these issues; and (c) what recommendations should ultimately be made. After continually polling the regions for inputs, a series of ethical responsibilities were generated, which we offer in abbreviated form in the following pages. Space constraints preclude us from identifying all the moderating factors su-

rounding questionable conduct that might lead to varying perceptions of ethicality. Nevertheless, we encourage you to read these ethical and unethical guidelines, and come prepared to discuss these at the All-Academy Symposium on Ethics at San Diego in August.

I. Matters Pertaining to Professionals and Professional Associations

Two areas have been collapsed (Academic Professionals as "Good" Citizens and Matters Pertaining to Professional Associations) since they share common dilemmas. In brief, academic professionals experience a variety of competing demands at their respective universities as well as at professional association meetings. The following broad areas seem to be pertinent when discussing professional association membership and good citizenship.

A. Qualifications

—Leaders and members should not nominate or accept nomination for offices, reviewer roles, discussants, or participants on panels if they do not have relevant qualifications—that is, demonstrated expertise through previous experience or preparation—as opposed to friendship, cronyism, "debts", or merely to get one's expenses reimbursed.

—If one cannot attend to present an accepted paper at a professional meeting, a qualified candidate must be found to replace one's vacancy.

B. Fairness

—Elections, meetings, and conferences should be conducted according to the constitution and in the spirit of a collegial and democratic self-governing body. Academy members should not manipulate votes, play favorites, or alter the constitution for any personal reasons. Individual rights should be protected; irregularities should be reported.

—Blind review procedures should be respected and guaranteed for editors, chairs, reviewers, and authors.

—Credit should be granted to all who make significant contributions to a project; credit should not be given to those who did not contribute.

—Multiple submissions of the same basic paper or data should not be done.

C. Performance

—One should actively honor and uphold contracts and responsibilities inherent in author, reviewer, and professional presentation roles. Included here are responsibilities such as fulfilling one's time commitments, attending scheduled sessions, registration, proper preparation, and not accepting reimbursement when travel expenses are used for personal rather than professional purposes. Out errors of content, methodology or design not mentioned by the author or discussant.

D. Decorum

—Members of a professional association should uphold the reputation, credibility and financial viability of the professional body.

—Members should avoid denigrating or spreading rumors about others or their institutions, especially for self-aggrandizement purposes.

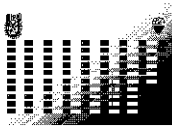
E. Good Citizenship

Clearly unethical behaviors include:

1. Behaving exploitatively or negligently toward members of a particular constituency of the profession with whom one has dealings.
2. Totally ignoring one of the four aspects of the profession while singlemindedly pursuing another (e.g., overemphasizing publishing to the detriment of good teaching).
3. Teaching or advocating unethical behavior to students and colleagues or, not providing relevant guidance in the content of one's courses and the conduct of oneself as a professional.

More ambiguous behaviors include:

1. Good citizenship requires responsiveness to the needs of multiple stakeholders at the same time despite potential conflicts. Behaving responsibly toward all stakeholders must be achieved in setting priorities for action.



II. Matters Pertaining to Academic Journals and Book Publishers

Six broad categories thought to have ethical implications were generated. These include: (1) data fabrication, (2) plagiarism, (3) authorship abuses, (4) gatekeeper abuses, (5) multiple journal submissions, and (6) research subject abuse.

The following represents clearly unethical and ethically ambiguous behaviors in matters pertaining to publishing.

A. Clearly Unethical Behaviors Include:

1. The use of an idea or concept by a reviewer of an article rejected by that reviewer.
2. Doctoral advisors listing themselves as coauthors on papers where they had little or no input beyond normal advisory responsibility.
3. Use by an author of a key concept or principle from an unpublished manuscript of a colleague, without proper citation.
4. Simultaneous submission of an article to multiple journals.
5. Falsification or fabrication of data.
6. Attaching one's name to a paper to which no commensurate contribution was made.
7. Conscious misstatement of facts (e.g., misstatements about findings in previous studies).
8. When acting as an editor or reviewer, attempting to suppress publication or research that refutes one's pet theory.
9. Plagiarism.
10. Modification of a coauthored manuscript, originally rejected for publication, which is then re-submitted elsewhere without listing the original co-author.

B. Ethically Ambiguous Behaviors Include:

1. Suppression of disconfirming data, or selective presentation of data.
2. Failure to specify study limitations.
3. Repeated publishing of marginally different data, perhaps with some overlap.
4. Taking advantage of friendship with editors, or relying on reward or coercive power over editors.
5. Assignment of term paper topics corresponding to the outline of a book an individual is

writing, so as to obtain a literature review done that way.

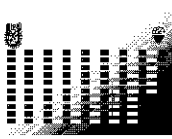
6. Submission of two or more barely different manuscripts based on the same data set to two journals at the same time.
7. Giving students who collect and analyze data nothing more than footnote acknowledgment in publications.
8. Using organizational records, with organization approval and with confidentiality protected, but without obtaining the consent of individual employees.
9. Use of deception in research, even when the hypothesis in question may seem to require such an approach.
10. Use of research ideas which arise from informal group or research team discussions, without acknowledging the group's role in later publications.
11. Circulation to colleagues by a reviewer of a submitted manuscript without the author's approval.
12. Using only most recent citations, rather than citing the original work on which a theory was based.
13. Encouraging or not correcting misperceptions an editor may have about one's professional status (e.g., incorrect assumptions about a terminal degree), to increase the acceptability of one's submitted work.
14. Multiple publications or presentation of a study without indicating that the study or component of the study has been presented or published elsewhere.

III. Matters Pertaining to Faculty-Student Relations

Faculty student collegial relations were considered in terms of: (1) the nature of the role of a professor, (2) specific actions and behaviors which are viewed as problematic, and (3) obligations and responsibilities. Clear ethical prescription in each area include the following:

A. The Role of the Professor

1. **Conduct of Education and Evaluation.** Instructors should:



- a. Not fail to revise and update course material and curricula on a regular basis.
- b. Not use one's own text when other newer or more appropriate texts are available.
- c. Not present an overly biased view of substantive material.
- d. Not allocate a disproportionate amount of time to research and/or consulting at the expense of teaching and course preparation.
- e. Not compromise one's impartiality in the evaluation of students.

2. Mentoring. Instructors should:

- a. Not impose post hoc demands such as revised thesis expectations on a Ph.D candidate which were not included when that particular student began his/her thesis.
- b. Not force students to adhere to a narrow substantive or methodological set of requirements and values (e.g., research only certain "acceptable topics" or use only "acceptable" methods, reflecting the professor, committee or school's bias).
- c. Not provide too little or excessive guidance, nor encourage overly dependent behavior. Guidance includes professional, and career developmental implications and opportunities.
- d. Not dictate the subject matter to be covered in the thesis. No dissertation should be signed by a professor unless that individual actually aided the student in the learning project.

B. Problematic Actions and Behaviors

1. Exploitation. Using power to manipulate or coerce others is inappropriate. Specifically, professors should:

- a. Not use students without granting proper credit in writing articles and developing grant proposals to which the students must contribute time and effort.
- b. Not use students to purchase equipment and/or supplies which later are claimed for the unit or by the professor.
- c. Not use students on consulting projects without "fair" compensation.

- d. Not extract "ego" gratification from students or sexually exploit them.

C. Obligations and Responsibilities

1. Program. Professors should:

- a. Not impose post hoc standards, requirements, and costs on "in stream" students, thereby prolonging the program.
- b. Not impose an overly rigid program structure (e.g., all courses set in advance, with no electives).
- c. Not fail to articulate program standards and requirements; analyze student abilities as they relate to these standards, and counsel students in light of the results.
- d. Not fail to strike a balance between demand for marketability of students and more academic demands.
- e. Not establish or change program policies without student involvement.

2. Institutional. Professors should:

- a. Provide consistent review and appraisal of faculty competence and other relevant behavior.
- b. Provide clear public information about programs and financial support.
- c. Appeal directly to minorities and thereby avoid de facto discrimination against minorities.

Ethically ambiguous issues include:

- a. Currency in course materials may not be appropriate for all courses. However, instructors should not focus exclusively on "faddish" topics.
- b. Courses which advocate an overly biased view of substantive material may be useful if the overall curriculum presents a more balanced view and if cooperation among colleagues is achieved.
- c. The line between mentoring and dependency is thin. There should be a normative stance on the part of the entire faculty regarding mentoring.
- d. A teacher who wins a popularity contest, walks a fine line between good teaching and exploitation. Similarly, a student who sexually seduces a teacher may or may not

be exploited. Further, if romantic attachments result in marriage, additional subtleties are raised.

IV. Matters Pertaining to Client, Participant, and Grantor Relationships

Relationships with consulting clients, research participant, and granting agencies and officials emphasize different issues, yet many commonalities were found to exist.

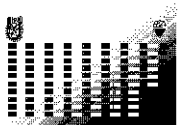
Clearly unethical and ethical behaviors include:

- A. **Deception.** It is unethical to deceive participants in experiments or other research, or to add a well-known researcher's name to a grant proposal when equal effort is not committed to the project.
- B. **Contracting.** Consultants should engage in accurate and realistic contracting about fees, services, and ranges of consequences in consultation. Similarly, risks to research participants and regranting agencies about the probability of fulfilling the proposed research as specified must be stated.
- C. **Informed Consent.** Voluntarism should be encouraged for research participants at all stages of research and consulting clients with regard to continuation or extensions of activities. Institutional actors affected by grants and projects should be fully consulted.
- D. **Privacy.** The confidentiality and anonymity of data as promised or implied should be protected. If on a granting review board, confidential materials should not be used to one's own advantage and/or to the disadvantage of the proposal writer(s).
- E. **Professional Responsibility.** Professional responsibility must take precedence over immediate and even long term self-interest.

Ethically ambiguous behaviors involve such issues as:

- A. **Deception.** Can one use a previous client's name in advertisements without authorization? How much background information should be disclosed to participants when conducting a research project? How much should literature and sources of research consultation be referenced in grant applications?
- B. **Contracting.** How explicit can consultant promises be and with what subset of the major actors can contracting be done?
- C. **Informed Consent.** When can one manipulate contingencies such as rewards, punishments and coercion which would violate informed consent of participants? How much can stakeholders or participants anticipate possible repercussions and outcomes of a given intervention? Should participants always be informed about all modes and moments of data gathering?
- D. **Privacy.** At what time can information that was private become public (e.g., 8 years, 12 years)? Does behavior in a public place deserve the same privacy guarantees of some other setting? How much must one mask events with clients when sharing those events with colleagues or in a class? How much expense or inconvenience should be borne by the professional in storing data and for how long?
- E. **Professional Responsibility.** How much effort and time should be directed at presscreening research participants to assess and avoid risks, and screening training and supervising assistants to guarantee professionalism? How much talent and sensitivity should be directed at unraveling and responding to the complexities of institutional, organizational, and community values and norms of relevance to the intervention? How open about professional goals and values should a consultant be and at what stage in the consultation? How creative and original versus prepackaged should a consultation be? What level of commitment is appropriate to the various actors of a system?

As a result of investigations into these four broad areas, we propose the following as core areas of



agreement. In essence, we believe that the following represents a minimal set of ethical responsibilities.

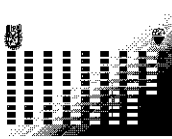
Ethical Conduct: Core Areas of Agreement

It is the ethical responsibility of Members of the OB Division of the Academy of Management:

1. TO maintain currency and proficiency in course materials in terms of the evolving knowledge base of the field and advanced teaching materials and procedures (e.g., not use out-of-date textbooks).
2. TO extend necessary effort toward disadvantaged, handicapped, and other minorities and thereby aid them as necessary in their efforts to develop their capacities (e.g., early reading lists provided for blind people).
3. TO clearly articulate course and program standards and requirements of students (e.g., doctoral program methodology requirements for dissertation).
4. TO foster an awareness of the ethical dimensions within the managerial decision-making process.
5. TO grant recognition including authorship credit in research consistent with the contribution of all contributors.
6. TO make any multiple submission of a manuscript known to the editors and program chairpersons of the Academy.
7. TO respond constructively to reviewer comments on rejected manuscripts before submitting the manuscript elsewhere.
8. TO provide constructive and detailed critiques and reviews in a timely manner when acting as a reviewer for any purpose within the profession.
9. TO ensure the proprietary nature of any research data, and to protect participants and maintain confidentiality.
10. TO sponsor and support maximally democratic election processes for regional, national and any other official positions (e.g., peer and self-selection to offices should be encouraged).
11. TO accurately represent consulting competencies and to seek contractual clarity at the beginning and duration of the relationship.
12. NOT TO exploit sexually or put oneself in a position of being exploited sexually.
13. NOT TO coerce or manipulate students or others to write articles or books on a coauthored or non-coauthored basis or perform other services.
14. NOT TO intentionally neglect or de-emphasize one area (e.g., teaching, research and service) of endeavor to the detriment of the education of students and the advancement of the profession.
15. NOT TO submit proposals which consciously hide potentially damaging information about the research or to expose or commit the OB Division, research institutions or employers to legal or financial liabilities.
16. NOT TO fabricate, falsify or alter research data.
17. NOT TO use ideas or publish works of others without giving full credit.
18. NOT TO personally exploit the manuscript review process (e.g., idea plagiarizing).
19. NOT TO indulge in speculative criticism (e.g., rumors) aimed at damaging the image of individuals and groups in the eyes of others.

Action Recommendations

Four sequential recommendations seem appropriate. First, as previously indicated, research on



the ethical issues outlined above should be encouraged. Clarification of issues and creation of objective information on the prevalence of questionable behavior is clearly needed if the field is to be self-regulating. The task force recognizes the inherent difficulties associated with this type of research, but urges creative investigators to turn their attentions in this direction.

Second the task force believes that an explicitly stated code of ethics should eventually be developed for the Academy of Management. This educational code and its guidelines must be systematically developed within the profession over time with the broad involvement of the membership and adopted only after extensive education has occurred. Such a code would provide specific behavioral guidelines, especially in ethically complex or ambiguous areas.

Third, the Academy needs to begin searching for new and creative avenues by which it can provide support to the membership and thereby mediate the external pressures toward unethical behavior. Nothing less than the management of the profession is the domain for such mediative innovation. Review time, ethical conduct of journals, increased opportunity for recognition for quality of contributions rather than quantity, and a host of other agenda items could be pursued by a body wishing to become ethically proactive for the profession.

Fourth, in the longer term, some comprehensive self-monitoring mechanism needs to be developed. Prior to this, however, the ethical and unethical factors need to be clearly defined and broad agreement must be established. Also important will be a special Academywide decision to establish procedures and a body to oversee this self-management component of the profession. Almost at once, however, we need to develop at least temporary mechanisms for handling serious and flagrant ethical violations. Then, further refinement and implementation could be pursued in a staged manner as

the mandate to do so is given by the membership. The task force is aware of the enormous amount of work associated with the implementation of these suggestions; we nonetheless believe that the topic warrants such efforts and that these efforts will ultimately prove their worth in nurturing the field.

Invitation

Now is the time for you to become involved in the development of the ethics of your profession. Please bring your reactions to the contents of this newsletter, your ideas, and your willingness to talk and to listen to an Academy-wide Symposium on Ethics at the National Academy Meetings, August 11-14, 1985, in San Diego. We welcome your reactions, influence, questions, and contributions.

About the Report

Ethical Issues In Organizational Behavior was prepared by Mary Ann Von Glinow, Donald J. Campbell, Bruce H. Charnov, Rose Knotts, Steven Payne and Gordon A. Walter. All are members of the OB Division's Task Force on Ethics. Gordon Walter is also Ethics Liaison Representative of the OD Division.

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