Kohlberg’s Morality in Criminal Justice

Name

Institution

**Q. 1:**

**Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development:**

Kohlberg was a renowned Developmental Psychologist who wanted to test the moral development of individuals irrespective of their ages. He argued that moral development is irrespective of the age and depends solely on personal experiences and understanding about moralities (Kohlberg, 1981). He presented his theory of Moral Development in 1958 with following stages (Kohlberg, 1981):

1. **Preconvention morality**

At this level, there is no concept of morality at all, our behavior is shaped by the consequences that we face while breaking the conventions. This level is split into further two stages:

1. ***Obedience to authority and avoidance of punishment****:* individual acts in a certain way not because he has some moral dispositions but because he wants to avoid punishment.
2. ***Exchange of favors:***individual does good to whom he likes or whom he gets any reward or benefit. He does not show regard to those who do not attempt to reward him in any way.
3. **Conventional morality:**

It is the second level of morality in which individual develops a moral sense through internalizing social norms. This level has further two stages:

***iii. Good boy/ Good Girl Orientation:*** Individual behaves in a certain way because he wants social approval and desirability. Those who do not show any regard for social desirability are mostly involved in anti- social activities.

***iv. Social order maintenance:*** Individuals behave in a certain way in order to obey laws and keep social order on track. All that he cares about is society and its harmony. He tries to be good citizens.

1. **Post convention morality**

Individual rights and concept of justice determines the mortality of individuals who reach at this stage. Only 15% of the individuals reach at this level because it follows highly idealistic approach. It is categorized into further two stages:

***v. Social contract:*** individual develops realization that rules and laws are established to benefit individuals but sometimes it is inevitable to break rules when something good is intended to attain.

***vi. Universal principles:*** individual develops his own set of moral values that may or may not harmonize the laws.

**Application of levels in Justice Department**

These levels may help understand the criminal behavior of individuals through evaluating the stage of moral development that they embrace. For example, if someone committed crime with the intention of holistic well- being, he must be investigated further as he possess some moral ethics.

**Q. 2:**

Kohlberg used Heinz dilemma to evaluate the moral development of individuals. Officers can use various dilemmas developed by moral psychologists to assess the level of morality. Applying Heinz dilemma, if one criminal says Heinz did right because he saved someone’s life; he is at the stage 5 of post- conventional morality. If the second criminal responds by saying that Heinz did right because druggist was greedy; he is at the stage 2 of moral development, if the third criminal responds, Heinz should steal medicine because his wife expects this; he would be at the stage 3 of moral development (Kohlberg, 1981).

**Q. 3.**

It can be done through rewards and punishments of committing and not committing corruption and presenting a desirable model who gets reward when works honestly. Kohlberg’s theory of moral development can be applied to evaluate their current stage and interventions must be applied accordingly.

**Q.4**

1. **Justice:** Justice is the crux of police department and police officers must be insightful about their obligations with respect to the promotion of justice (IACP, n.d).
2. **Beneficence:** Police officer must act in a way that it is beneficial for the common people and their subordinates. They must avoid any act that disrupts the well-being of others (IACP, n.d).
3. **Fidelity:** Police officers must perform their duties sincerely and should not indulge in any activity that threatens their professional integrity (IACP, n.d).
4. **Self improvement:** they must make themselves available for the ongoing and upcoming opportunities of advancement (IACP, n.d).

**References**

Kohlberg, L., (1981). *Essays on Moral Development, Vol l. I: The Philosophy of Moral Development*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

IACP (n.d). Code of Ethics, <http://www.iacp.org/codeofethics>