Being Your Best Self Project - Part 2

Moral Decision-Making

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# Ethical Issue under Discussion

## Introduction

The chosen article offers a comprehensive look at an ethical issue that has been catching fire ever since the #MeToo movement (Tippett, 2018). In business, there are certain moral values and ethical principles that must be maintained in order to create a work environment that is nurturing for the employees, allowing them to grow and work to their full potential. These ethics are applied to all levels of business and guide a business onto a track that promises efficiency. However, a business reveals its ethical conducts when certain news articles are published in the media. “Female Microsoft employees accuse the tech giant of discrimination and of ignoring cases of sexual harassment in a 90-page leaked email thread shared among staff” (Ardehali, 2019). This article was published in a well-known newspaper, the Daily Mail UK on April 5, 2019, and raises awareness about a highly prevalent ethical issue in today’s global business market.

## Discussion

The article discusses a 90-page long email thread that has been passed back and forth between the female employees of the company ever since March 20th. It details the numerous instances of discrimination and sexual harassment they have had to go through. The email, leaked to a publication by the name of ‘Quartz’, gives details on how women have been treated in the place. These acts include the women being asked to perform various sexual acts for their male colleagues, with their complaints later being dismissed by the HR.

For someone like Microsoft, the 90-pages long email leak is not something that is easily dismissible. With 27 percent of its global workforce comprising of women, and 20 percent among them loading key leadership and tech position, these claims are nothing short of a bombshell. From being called names to being asked to perform sexual acts that were dismissed by the HR as casual flirting and even being threatened to be killed, these women had a lot to say about the state of things at the tech giant. However, the head of the HR at Microsoft eventually took notice of the thread to personally look into these claims and curb such behavior off of the Microsoft premises. This may not be the first time Microsoft has come under fire for sexual harassment claims. In March 2018, about 238 cases were filed against the tech giant, with most of them still being investigated.

This shows the ethical dilemma faced by the organization in terms of their practices and treatment of female employees at work. Sexual harassment and discrimination in a big, debatable issue, one that needs kind consideration and due diligence in its eradication from the workplace (Hersch, 2015). In recent years, a 28 percent decline has been observed in the reported cases with organization changing their policies to bring in stricter guidelines about the matter. Still, given the fact that there is an increase in the number of reported cases by men in the past few years shows that the problem is still at large and the ethical dilemma it makes for the organizations this issue has been prevalent in is still going strong (Quick & McFadyen, 2017).

## Conclusion

In the light of the aforementioned mentioned article, it can be observed that sexual disclination and harassment is not a problem which is limited to a specific region or a country, but it is much more commonplace and has even infiltrated household names like Microsoft. The issues highlighted in the leaked email should be discussed and taken care of by the concerned staff on an immediate basis. Furthermore, the individuals that make a mockery of the system by participating in such activities should be condemned and should be held accountable for their actions. The more they get away with their action, the more unsafe a workplace environment becomes for those who have been subjected to abuse and harassment at the workplace.

# Being Your Best Self: Making an Ethical Decision

## What decisions are possible (the ethical and unethical)?

The absence of well-developed models of ethical and unethical behavior in organizations shows a stark lack of research conducted in this regard. It is further elaborated when organizations do not discuss issues like these while implementing a new policy within the workplace. In the present scenario, the most obvious unethical decision to be taken by the company is to fire all the women involved as well as the whistleblower that released the list in the first place. However, doing so will be disastrous on so many levels, and would additionally earn Microsoft a bad rep apart from being completely wrong. The ethical decisions possible here would be to pay heed to the claims and investigate which ones are true. The next course of action would be to discuss the matter with the parties involved and solve it in a productive manner. Additionally, taking care of the system in places that require care would also help the system go a long way (Bommer, Gratto, Gravander, & Tuttle, 2013).

## What stakeholders should be considered and at what level of importance?

Out of the six primary stakeholders that have a stake in the progress and the future of the company, there are three that bear the brunt of such a situation directly. They are the managers, employees and the community the company works from (Austin, n.d.). The employees are the most important stakeholder in the matter since they are the one being subjected to harassment and discrimination at the workplace. Their claims should be heeded and processed in a manner that restores their faith in the company, making them a part of the productive workforce that lifts the company up. This is followed by the management, who sometimes have to take unethical decisions, especially under pressure under the force of those above them. This system needs to change in order to improve the present scenario and make the work environment the sort where an employee can flourish. Finally, the value held by a company in the eyes of the community it is set up in is what ensures its success in the long run. That is where it hires its employees from and that is also where it exists. Therefore, maintaining good standing and reputation in that particular area is crucial (Yamada, 2010).

## What decision you have decided is best in this situation that you have found?

The best decision would certainly be the one taken by the in-house HR head at Microsoft and that is to investigate each and every single claim and deal with the ones that are reported to be true. This saves the company from bad PR and at the same time restores the trust of the female employees in Microsoft.

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