

The Psychology of Professional Ethics: Understanding Ethical Judgement in Professional Practice

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Abstract

Professional ethics plays a vital role in facilitating responsible decision-making and behavior in different fields of professionalism. For promoting ethical behavior among professionals, it is vital to understand the psychological aspects of ethical judgment. To this end, this narrative review synthesized existing literature on the psychology of professional ethics to comprehend the cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of ethical judgment among professionals. To identify the key factors in the judgment of ethics among professionals, peer-reviewed articles in the psychology of ethics literature were used. From the study's findings, it is evident that ethical judgment among professionals is affected by various factors, which include psychological factors of individuals (moral identity, empathy, and moral reasoning), social factors of individuals (social identity and reputational considerations), and organizational factors of individuals (ethical climate), among others. These factors interact with each other to form an ethical judgment through an ethical decision-making process consisting of ethical awareness, moral judgment, and moral motivation. About this study's findings on the psychology of professional ethics, an integrative conceptual framework is developed to explain the interplay of various factors on ethical judgment among professionals. To this end, this current study is an important addition to the already extensive literature on the psychology of professional ethics as it offers a comprehensive synthesis of literature on the psychology of ethics and identifies critical areas of research on ethical judgments of professionals.

Keywords

Professional ethics, Psychology of ethics, Moral decision-making.