



Ethics A

ELEC273*

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1 Scenario 1

1.1 Dilemma

You have undertaken some consultancy work with a foreign company, under a scheme whereby half of your fee comes from the central government. However, the client company informs you after the work has been done that they are in financial difficulties, and that the only way you will be paid in full is if you falsify the invoice document so that the government pays 100% of your fee. You are also told that this is standard practice, and happens with the cooperation of the administrators of the government fund.

1.2 Analysis/Discussion

1.2.1 Is Moral Useful In This Situation?

Although it is struggling to make a decision, one thing is clear that the behavior of accepting the scheme of the building company seems to be not moral. However, it is meaningful to argue that is the feeling of moral really useful in this situation. As the word 'moral' is defined with the principles of right and wrong in behavior, it is suspectable that these principles which were developed during the past thousands of years can be not as suitable as what we think in a few situations. The purpose of morality, from my understanding, is to benefit the society by regulating people's behavior beyond law. In this case which happens in a developing country, just make a decision basing on the feeling of moral is irresponsible.

1.2.2 Behind The Normality of Cheating Fund

What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational. If the situation is really like what the manager said that the cheating behavior in local is general, it may indicate that the situation is not as simple as what we think. For example, what if the building company actually do not have the cash flow to pay the bill. Considered that this is a building company in a developing country, if we force them to pay the bill as deal, is it possible that the salary of hundreds of grassroots workers would be decreased or delayed, or even worse that the building company could be bankrupted and the workers may lose their job. Another example is that, assuming that if we do not get the other 50% payment from the government fund, where could this money go rather than helping a local building company which built a hydroelectric dam to develop. Is it possible that these money is risky to be corrupted because of the inefficient management of the central government.

1.2.3 Gain and Pain for Sudobuild

If accept the scheme, Sudobuild can get full paid on time but with shame of doing things immoral. Furthermore, it is risky that this cheating behavior is exposed by media and this could be significantly harmful for an international well-known consulting company. If not accept the scheme, then Sudobuild can only get 62.5% of the expected payment, and the payment of the rest of the bill is uncertain, which might cause a great pressure to the account department. Besides, the cooperation with this building company might stop and next time they may find some other international consulting company which is willing to accept the cheating fund.

1.2.4 Gain and Pain for Building Company

If accept the scheme, local building company can get consulting service with no extra payment and their cash flow can be managed as scheduled. However, if the Sudobuild do not accept the cheating plan, they could be painful on struggling the shortage of cash flow, which may cause a series of problem for the company.

1.2.5 Gain and Pain for Central Government

The policy was made by government, but the implementation is conducted by the fund administrator. As I can not figure out a possible way that the administrator can get corrupted from giving more money to the local building company, one explanation is that as the implementer, the administrator has more experience in this filed than policy maker, he thinks that giving more money to the local company than just following what the policy ruled is more helpful on promoting energy production facilities construction.

1.3 Recommendation

Firstly, it is recommended to assess the cash flow of Sudobuild company and figure out the possible loss if 37.5% of the bill is not paid on time. Secondly, have a little investigation on the cash flow of the building company, assess whether they can afford the payment and also evaluate the possible result (e.g. the delay of grassroots workers' salary) and their social influence. Thirdly, the source and direction of the government fund need to be explored. It is also suggested to have a talk with the fund administrator if possible. Fourthly, if the cash situation of both sudobuild and the building company can afford the loss, and the money in the fund is more useful than benefiting the building company, just refuse the cheating fund scheme. Fifthly, if the cheating scheme happened just because of corruption, it is suggested to make use of local and international media to further expose it to promote the social development of this developing country.

2 Scenario 3

2.1 Dilemma

You have started consultancy work on a project to develop a sophisticated monitoring system for a residential building, and you learn that the proposed use is as a surveillance system for elderly and infirm individuals. There is a concern that as some of those individuals will not have the mental capacity to understand the system, and so will not be able to fully consent to the system. Your work might lead to an invasion of individuals' privacy.

2.2 Analysis/Discussion

2.2.1 The Concept of Privacy

The concept of privacy is generally explained as the control of personal information. People need privacy because people tend to feel unsafe and uncertain when their personal information is exposed. Correspondingly, there are law and moral to regular people to respect and protect each other's privacy. Nevertheless, there are cases that protecting privacy becomes harmful for individuals. For example, a person die for lack of blood because people do not known his blood type which is regarded as privacy. Thus, it is considered that, in vital cases, the rule of protecting privacy can be broken if we commit the principle to save life first.

2.2.2 Possibility of Better Explain to Clients

The purpose of designing this surveillance system is to serve elder people. However, some infirm people do not have the mental ability to understand the content of the service. As a consequence, these people may need the help of professional person such as a psychological counselor comprehend the service terms. Besides, the psychology and mental state of client should also be considered in the design process of the system. This gives the designer big challenges that let users calm down and make the system get along well with them.

2.3 Recommendation

It is suggested that, firstly, try to find a better way to help the elderly people to understand the product. Possibly, cooperating with a psychological counseling solution provider. Secondly, outline the security of user privacy. Which means that, keep the technical workers away from the real personal private data. Instead, user's private information can only be accessed by user-authorized people. Thirdly, make full advantages of less sensitive sensors and design the system to achieve the same goal with as few sensitive information as possible. For example, if we can use PIR sensors to achieve the goal to capture people's motion, then we never use cameras. Fourthly, try to design the user interface more user-friendly and give the clients the feeling of relief. Fifthly, work on improving system reliability. Try to make the system always run as expected thus cultivate users to regards it just like air and water. Therefore, the client can get used to it and not even notice it any more, not to mention the privacy issue.