

UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI
FACULTY OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
MAIN EXAMINATION
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TITLE OF PAPER : **BUSINESS ETHICS**

DEGREE : **MBA**

COURSE CODE : **BUS 606**

TIME ALLOWED : **THREE (3) HOURS**

INSTRUCTIONS : **1. THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF SECTIONS (A) AND (B)**
2. THE CASE STUDY ON SECTION (A) IS COMPULSORY. TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE: 40 MARKS
3. ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS FROM SECTION (B): TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE: 60 MARKS

NOTE: **MARKS WILL BE AWARDED FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH AND FOR ORDERLY PRESENTATION OF WORK**

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SECTION A

CASE STUDY

Adapted from:

Jihad Mohammad, Farzana Quoquab, Norsyila Bt Rashid, Nur Azlina Bt Rashid, Fazilah Bt Osman, Wan Muhammad Hamka Wan Shamsudin, (2018) "I'll do whatever I want ... who are you to prohibit me? A tattle tale of workplace deviance", Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies, Vol. 8 Issue: 1, pp. 1-14, <https://doi.org/10.1108/EEMCS-06-2016-0124> Permanent link to this document: <https://doi.org/10.1108/EEMCS-06-2016-0124>

I'll do whatever I want . . . who are you to prohibit me? A tattle tale of workplace deviance

Siphiwe Mavuso was the head of the supervision and monitoring unit, Eswatini Education Solutions (EED). EED was involved in facilitating and providing consultations to Private Higher Educational Institutions (IPTS) in Eswatini. Siphiwe had been staring at her coffee cup for the past 10 min without taking a single sip of coffee as she remembered her conversation with Andile Dlamini, the Executive Officer of EED. Andile had come to complain about Natasha's behaviour.

Natasha was a relatively new employee at EED. She had worked there for about a year. Since the very first day of her job at EED, her lifestyle and behaviour was a hot topic of conversation amongst staff. They used to gossip about her appearance which they regarded as too provocative and not acceptable for a work environment. She was also caught by her colleagues cheating on her attendance form, using the office internet to sell her own products through social media, going out for 3 to 4 h during office hours and so on. She was very attractive and people noticed this, with Norman, the Assistant Director, being no exception. Natasha took advantage of this situation. She was not only reported for slacking off but also used to spend time watching Nigerian movies during office hours. Apart from this, it appeared that she was having an affair with Norman who was married with two children. Natasha became a hot topic to be discussed among her colleagues at EED.

Susan, one of Natasha's colleagues knew more about Natasha's activities because she shared the same office with her. The first time Susan noticed all this, she could not hold herself back from asking Natasha, to which she answered. "*You don't have anything to do? Why you are spying on me?*" She was caught so many times, but no action was taken against her. She always had so many readily available excuses in response to her colleagues' queries. EED implemented a Biometric System to record all the attendance for their staff. However, Natasha used to cheat on her biometric access. Upon investigating, Susan realized that Natasha was cheating. She was physically absent, but the system had recorded her attendance as completed with eight working hours.

Susan informed Siphiwe Mavuso, the head of EED monitoring and supervision unit of this. It was not the first time that Siphiwe was made aware of Natasha's misconduct, but still she was helpless to take any action since Norman, the Assistant Director was in Natasha's favour lately. Based on EED Solution's client charter, all officers were required to complete and submit their reports within three days after completing their inspections. However, Natasha got special privileges in completing her report. Even though Siphiwe reminded her to complete the report as soon as possible, Natasha did not take it seriously and completed the report after one week.

Norman Nxumalo was 47 years old and married with two school-age children. Apparently, Norman was very firm to his subordinates. However, he was a bit flexible towards the female staff who were pretty and attractive. To prevent the image of EED from being further tarnished and to prevent an unproductive environment among the staff, Norman suggested the HR Department give a stern warning to her and instructed her to move closer to his room so that he could monitor her performance. All colleagues thought that Natasha would be punished by the Assistant Director and would behave properly. However, what they thought was proven wrong. Norman behaved very softly with Natasha and started to overlook her absenteeism and all other wrong doing. Not only Siphwiwe but other staff also noticed Norman's biased behaviour towards Natasha. Even though Norman received complaints about Natasha, he did not take any action against her. Slowly, all staff started to talk about it, as it made them feel demoralized and demotivated.

Siphwiwe was known as a workaholic among her colleagues and subordinates. Everybody used to praise her for her fairness and firm characteristics. The director of the unit Daniel Shongwe also trusted Siphwiwe's responsible and trustworthy nature. If any issue arose in this unit, he used to call her and get her opinion in regard to the matter. Norman's position put Siphwiwe in a dilemma. She did not want the top management to complain about her department, neither had she wanted Daniel to feel down about this unit. She desperately wanted to find a solution to this unhealthy office environment and to protect the image of her department. She wanted to discuss many things with Natasha but stopped herself by thinking that Norman could rebuke her. So she casually informed Natasha that everybody was talking about her absence, sneaking out of the office for long time and use of the office PC for her own business. She also mentioned that it would affect the workplace environment and could affect other colleagues as well. Natasha reluctantly mentioned that she would try to behave accordingly. Although Natasha gave her word to Siphwiwe no changes were seen in her behaviour.

Based on her nine years' experience in working at EED, Siphwiwe realized that Natasha needed to be given a warning letter by the Human Resource Department. Similar cases that she encountered in the past had resulted in receiving lower scores in their key performance indicators during performance reviews, which caused them to receive less or no salary increment and bonus. She thought about discussing the whole thing with Norman. But after few minutes, she cancelled the plan, thinking about his rough attitude and position in the hierarchy. Moreover, there was a rumour on the floor that Norman was having affair with Natasha. She sensed it too, however, without having any solid evidence, it would not be possible for her to report the issue to the top management. Siphwiwe started to feel light headed, thinking about all these unsolved issues. Already the work culture was polluted as backbiting, gossip, demoralization became daily activities. She was thinking about her next steps. Should she report the unethical behaviour in the department to the Human Resource Department? She knew that, if she lodged a complaint against Norman's discriminatory behaviour as well as workplace romance; it would negatively impact Norman's life and career.

Questions

- (a) Identify and explain all unethical behavioural issues and the perpetrators in the case study (20 marks)

- (b) Conduct a critical analysis of the actions taken by the Sipiwe to resolve the ethical issues, with emphasis on the dilemma she faces in taking those actions. (15 marks)
- (c) Discuss the consequences of these ethical issues to the organization (10 marks)

SECTION B

Question 1

All theories of ethics put emphasis and focus on specific unique considerations regarding making an ethical decision. Mostly they consider self-interests, social consequences, fairness, duty to others, entitlements of others, moral character, conflict resolution, harmonious relationships, impulse and emotions. Identify the theory compatible with each of these considerations and discuss the typical questions that would arise in making an ethical decision (20 marks)

Question 2

Ethics refers to a set of principles pertaining to what is right or good in the conduct or behaviour of an individual. Examine the meaning of "good" and the causes of bad behaviour in business. (20 marks)

Question 3

Businesses can not behave ethically a 100% of the time. Critically analyse the use of Cost Benefit analysis tool to measure the ethical behaviour of businesses. Further discuss the basic business ethics principles. (20 marks)

Question 4

Some advertising tactics that businesses use to attract customers can at best said to be ethically dubious. Information on advertisements may not be truthful, or advertisements may be used to manipulate the feelings of potential customers, enticing them to buy goods with false expectations of value. (20 marks)