WGU
Ethics-In-Technology
WGU Ethics In Technology QCO1 Exam

Latest Version: 6.1

Question: 1

An insurance company develops an artificial intelligence (AI) system to manage claims automatically. Although this technology benefits most customers, people from neighborhoods associated with a low socioeconomic status find it harder to get their claims approved. The company decides to keep using the system.
Which ethical theory justifies the company to come to this decision?

A. Pluralism
B. Utilitarianism
C. Virtue ethics
D. Deontology

Answer: B

Explanation:
The decision made by the insurance company aligns with utilitarianism, an ethical theory that evaluates actions based on their overall consequences and aims to maximize happiness or well-being for the greatest number of people.
Why Utilitarianism?
The company continues using the AI system because it benefits the majority of customers, even though it negatively affects a marginalized group.
Utilitarianism, as defined by Jeremy Bentham and later refined by John Stuart Mill, prioritizes actions that generate the most favorable outcomes for the largest number of individuals.
Since the AI system increases efficiency and improves claim processing for most customers, the company may justify its use under "the greatest happiness principle."
However, utilitarianism can be criticized for neglecting minority groups if their suffering is outweighed by the benefits to the majority, as seen in this case.
Why Not the Other Theories?
A . Pluralism: Pluralism acknowledges multiple moral values but does not necessarily justify sacrificing fairness for efficiency. The company's decision does not reflect a commitment to balancing competing moral principles.
C . Virtue Ethics: Virtue ethics, based on Aristotle's philosophy, emphasizes moral character and virtues such as justice and fairness. A company operating under virtue ethics would likely strive to ensure fairness for all customers rather than prioritizing overall utility.
D . Deontology: Deontology, rooted in Immanuel Kant's philosophy, focuses on duty, rights, and moral rules. A deontologist would argue that it is unethical to use a system that discriminates against certain groups, even if it benefits the majority.
Thus, the correct ethical framework that justifies the company's decision is utilitarianism because it prioritizes the greater good, even at the expense of fairness for a smaller group.
Reference in Ethics in Technology:
Mill, J. S. (1863). Utilitarianism. London: Parker, Son, and Bourn.

Bentham, J. (1789). An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Floridi, L. (2013). The Ethics of Information. Oxford University Press.
Binns, R. (2018). "Fairness in Machine Learning: Lessons from Political Philosophy." Proceedings of the 2018 Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAT).

Question: 2

An organization decides to provide its employees with additional parental leave benefits that exceed legal requirements. Which concept is the organization acting on to support employees?

A. Ethics code
B. Corporate social responsibility
C. Supply chain sustainability
D. Integrity

Answer: B

Explanation:
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the ethical obligation of organizations to go beyond legal requirements in improving societal and employee well-being. In this scenario, the organization is voluntarily offering additional parental leave benefits, which demonstrates a commitment to the welfare of its employees beyond what is legally mandated.
CSR involves initiatives that benefit various stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and the environment. By offering enhanced parental leave benefits, the organization acknowledges its responsibility to promote work-life balance, employee satisfaction, and overall social welfare, which are key principles of CSR.
Relevant Ethical Reference in Technology:
Utilitarianism (Greatest Good Principle) – Providing extended parental leave benefits leads to greater well-being for employees and their families, fostering a more positive and productive workforce.
Deontological Ethics (Duty-Based Ethics) – The company recognizes its ethical duty to care for employees
beyond legal obligations, emphasizing moral responsibility rather than mere compliance.
Virtue Ethics (Moral Character of the Organization) – The decision reflects virtues such as empathy, fairness, and social responsibility, reinforcing an ethical corporate culture.
Corporate Social Responsibility Frameworks – Organizations like the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and ISO 26000 emphasize the importance of CSR in areas such as labor practices, human rights, and community involvement.
By integrating CSR principles into employee benefits, the organization fosters a more ethical and socially responsible business environment.

Question: 3

A new IT employee has questions about how the organization determines resolutions to issues that impact its values and overarching principles. What should the employee refer to first for guidance?

A. Corporate responsibility matrix
B. Ethical decision-making processes
C. Code of ethics
D. Board of directors

Answer: C

Explanation:
A Code of Ethics is a formal document that outlines an organization's values, principles, and expected ethical behaviors. It serves as the first point of reference for employees seeking guidance on ethical decision-making within a company.
Why Code of Ethics?
The Code of Ethics establishes the foundational principles that guide an organization's decision-making, ensuring consistency in ethical practices.
It typically includes guidelines on conflicts of interest, integrity, fairness, and responsibility, helping employees resolve ethical dilemmas.
The new IT employee can refer to this document to understand how the company resolves ethical issues and enforces its values.
Why Not the Other Options?
A . Corporate Responsibility Matrix: This tool may help outline social and environmental responsibilities but does not explicitly guide ethical decision-making.
B . Ethical Decision-Making Processes: While important, this is a procedural framework rather than a reference document employees would check first.
D . Board of Directors: The Board oversees corporate governance but is not a direct source for employee guidance on ethical matters.
Thus, the best answer is C. Code of Ethics as it directly provides ethical standards employees should follow.
Reference in Ethics in Technology:
Moor, J. (1985). "What is Computer Ethics?" Metaphilosophy, 16(4), 266-275.
Floridi, L. (2010). Information: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press.
Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Code of Ethics (2022).
IEEE Code of Ethics (2020).

Question: 4

A factory manager must decide whether to replace assembly-line workers with robots but is concerned about employees losing their jobs. The factory manager also believes this automation would enhance worker safety, save the factory money, raise corporate profits, and lower the prices of goods produced. The factory manager weighs all possible outcomes and chooses the action that produces the greatest good.
Which ethical theory does this approach represent?

A. Deontology
B. Relativism
C. Virtue

D. Consequentialism

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Answer: D

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Explanation:
The factory manager is applying consequentialism, an ethical theory that evaluates actions based on their outcomes or consequences.
Why Consequentialism?
The manager is weighing all possible outcomes and choosing the action that produces the greatest good—a fundamental characteristic of consequentialist ethics.
This aligns with utilitarianism, a form of consequentialism, which suggests that an action is ethical if it maximizes overall benefits (e.g., higher profits, safety, lower costs).
Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill developed utilitarianism, emphasizing that ethical decisions should be based on maximizing happiness or well-being.
Why Not the Other Theories?
A . Deontology: Focuses on moral duties and rules rather than consequences. A deontologist might argue that replacing workers with robots is wrong if it violates workers' rights, regardless of the positive outcomes.
B . Relativism: Suggests that morality is subjective and varies by culture. The factory manager's decision is based on objective outcomes, not cultural or subjective ethical norms.
C . Virtue Ethics: Focuses on the moral character of the decision-maker rather than the outcomes of actions. The manager is making a cost-benefit analysis, not prioritizing virtues like fairness or compassion.
Thus, the correct ethical framework that describes the factory manager's decision is D. Consequentialism because it is based on maximizing benefits while accepting potential negative consequences.
Reference in Ethics in Technology:
Mill, J. S. (1863). Utilitarianism. London: Parker, Son, and Bourn.
Bentham, J. (1789). An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Brey, P. (2000). "Disclosive Computer Ethics." ACM SIGCAS Computers and Society, 30(4), 10-16.
IEEE Global Initiative on Ethics of Autonomous and Intelligent Systems (2019).

Question: 5

A team of game designers must decide if players whose game characters commit violent and unlawful acts should be rewarded. The team agrees that the acts are simul-ations, and the game will be rated for adult or mature audiences. One designer raises questions about how contributing to this work will reflect upon the team's moral character.
Which ethical theory does this represent?

A. Deontology
B. Virtue
C. Consequentialism
D. Relativism

Explanation:
Virtue ethics, as developed by Aristotle, emphasizes traits like honesty, integrity, and compassion. The designer is questioning whether contributing to a game that rewards violent or unlawful acts aligns with virtues such as responsibility and ethical integrity. This aligns with virtue ethics' central questio n: What kind of person should I be? rather than What rules should I follow? or What consequences will my actions have?

Relevant Ethical Reference in Technology:

Virtue Ethics (Aristotle's Ethics) – This ethical theory asks whether designing a game that rewards violent behavior aligns with good moral character.

Ethics of Representation in Media and Gaming – Studies have shown that media can influence real-world behaviors, raising ethical concerns about glorifying violence.

Industry Standards (ESRB, PEGI) – While rating systems classify content, ethical concerns go beyond ratings to the moral responsibility of developers in shaping digital culture.

Moral Identity in Design – Developers must consider whether creating certain game mechanics aligns with their personal and professional ethical identity.

Thus, the designer's concerns reflect virtue ethics by focusing on their personal integrity and professional responsibility in game development.

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