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In any society or system, there are rules and norms that govern the people. Without these rules, there would be misalignment on values, goals, and mission. This principle also applies to organizations; an ethical organization will create a sustainable and reputable brand. Ethics is a crucial element in corporate communication; it defines what is wrong or right. According to Brinkert and Chewning (2021), ethics has an underlying basis in every act of communication to enable the stakeholders and organizations to have a good brand association. The Hard ethical boundaries exist when ethics meet legal limits, policy requirements, and specialized stakeholder areas (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). As a communication expert, it is imperative to be grounded in ethical values, both hard and soft, to avoid dismissal (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). That is why applied ethics, which guides the day-to-day actions of professionals, is essential. Ethics, morality, beliefs, values, corporate social responsibility (CSR) all go hand-in-hand because they add value to the human race by minimizing potential harm to others (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021).

There are 3 significant categories of ethics, virtue ethics, rational ethics, and postmodern ethics (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Virtue ethics involves adopting good character traits to make good ethical decisions (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Rational ethics uses logic to understand the principles that can be applied to different situations (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Rational ethics operates on two levels: Deontological ethics, which looks at the principles for taking action and not the consequences, and Consequentialist ethics, which focuses on the outcome of an action (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). The third category of ethics believes that individuals need to understand the world before determining what is wrong or right (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Therefore, this leads to two major schools of thought: Feminist ethics and

Dialogic ethics (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). While Feminist ethics looks closely at women's empowerment, Dialogic ethics believes that individuals should be focused on ethical learning (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Although Milton Friedman opined that an organization's responsibility was to create more wealth for its stakeholders, the idea of the greater good remains a discussion today (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). CSR takes on different perspectives such as economic, legal, ethical, and directional responsibility (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Most organizations participate in CSR to protect their interest and enable social change.

The responsibility bestowed upon communication experts is beyond creating a campaign or strategy document but involves working in the influence business. Corporate communication involves setting goals, achieving them with the use of influence. Therefore, influence is how an individual can change others' thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Influence can be rational or non-rational, verbal or non-verbal (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). With influence comes persuasion, compliance, and power. An essential theory under the ethical influence is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which influences the central or peripheral route (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Another theory is the Framing theory, which uses storytelling to pass across information (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Framing identifies which information is relevant or irrelevant (Brinkert & Chewning, 2021). Other theories include stakeholder influence, image restoration theory, compliance techniques, and popular influence models.

In general, Johannesen *et al.* (2008), noted that an unspoken assumption is that words can be trusted, and people should be truthful. Therefore, communication professionals should be grounded in ethical morals and standards, stay updated with industry trends, skills, knowledge, network and be members of communication associations.

REFERENCES

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- Johannesen, R. L., Valde, K. S., & Whedbee, K. E. (2008). *Ethics in human communication*. Waveland Press.