

APPLICATION OF ETHICAL THEORY IN PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the application of ethical theory in psychology as a discipline and profession. The definition of ethics and several schools of ethical theory such as virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and utilitarian ethics in psychology are explained. Every branch of psychology such as experimental psychology, industrial and organizational psychology, developmental psychology, clinical psychology, counseling, therapist psychology, etc. always deals with ethical issues in every decision making. For this reason, psychologists and psychological scientists need to be equipped with a correct understanding of ethics and ethical theories that underlie every action in carrying out their profession. According to the ethics of virtue, the main principle in behavior is the character and virtues that a person has. Meanwhile, deontological ethical theory emphasizes a person's obligation to act, regardless of all the rules and consequences of these actions. Meanwhile, utilitarianism emphasizes the usefulness and benefits of one's actions. By using a qualitative method based on literature studies (literature) analyzed the basic understanding (etymology), philosophical basis, and the peculiarities of each of these normative ethical theories and their relation to the science and profession of psychology.

Keywords: Application, ethical theory, psychology.

1. PREFACE

Psychologists, both experimental psychologists and industrial and organizational psychologists and therapists, are always faced with various moral situations in which they have to make ethical decisions (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2012). A sexual consultation center in an educational institution, for example, received a number of complaints from women who were harassed after taking drugs. They reported the bitter experience they received from the same institution. Even though this consulting center followed up on this report, they refused to mention the institution and the names of these female victims, because this involved confidentiality which was regulated in the ethical principles of psychologists and the code of ethics of psychologists.

An example of another case, for example, is the case of Stanley Milgran's research conducted in 1974 when he asked his respondents to accept a 450 Volt electric touch. Participants did not actually receive the electric touch, but were asked to act as if they did. Participants in this research obey the authority of the researcher.

From the two cases above, it appears a difficult choice for professionals. In the first case it is necessary to reinterpret the meaning of secrecy. If the therapist mentions the names of these female victims and their bitter experiences, it will certainly hurt women's hearts and can eliminate the client's trust in the therapist. But on the other hand, if the experiences of these women are not disclosed to the public, other victims will appear.

Likewise with the Milgran case, a dilemma arises, namely if this research is carried out, new knowledge will indeed be obtained, but it will result in pain (harming) to the experimental participants. On the other hand, the research was not carried out and did not cause pain (harming) for the experimental participants, but no new knowledge was obtained.

From these two cases it becomes clear that ethical issues are important in psychology. So it is necessary to formulate which ethical issues were violated? What is the basis that a psychological action is permissible and not permissible? Making a proper ethical decision from any activity in psychology requires an adequate understanding of normative ethical theories. For this reason, this research seeks to explore what ethical foundations underlie every activity, both research and decision-making in psychology.

Many people think that many ethical problems in psychology can be solved by applying a psychological code of ethics. It's not that simple. The issue of confidentiality, for example, needs to be aware of its limitations. During consultation, client consent is required (informed consent) to protect them from pain (harm). Does the therapist absolutely maintain client confidentiality or seek the consent of the clients to disclose the name of the institution where the abuse occurred?

Ethical issues can become problematic if there are no guidelines that can be used as a reference. Do psychologists have to refer to their personal values and judgments? Is the value decision valid and good? How to maintain that judgment rationally? Are there guidelines for making decisions? Is the code of ethics of every professional organization adequate?

The code of ethics as a basis for decision making is actually inadequate. It takes a philosophical model in general, especially regarding ethical theory that can be explained philosophically. The core of philosophical ethics is normative ethics which is also needed in psychology. The problem to be answered is what is the ethical theoretical basis in psychology both as a science and as a profession. How does this ethical theory affect the science and services of psychology, so that every decision taken can be accounted for ethically rationally. This study aims to explore the ethical foundations of psychology and describe the strengths and weaknesses of each normative ethical theory in the field of psychology.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method based on library research. Thematic analysis was carried out based on literature data that reviews ethics in psychology. Various data sources were then processed and criticized systematically to obtain a synthesis of the themes discussed. The results of the analysis are then mixed in a collection of ideas contained in the article. The result is a compilation and critical synthesis analysis of the themes. Starting from the results of this analysis, the following research plans were prepared that might be carried out.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition of "Ethics"

The word "ethics" comes from the Greek, namely *ethos* which means habits, customs, character, feelings, and ways of thinking. There are various definitions of ethics from ethicists, for example R.F. Duska & B.S. Duska defines ethics in the following three principles: (1) a discipline related to what is good and bad and its moral obligations, (2) a set of moral principles/values, (3) a theory of a system of moral values and principles of behavior in governing individuals or groups (Sihotang, 2016). Meanwhile, another ethical figure, Karel Sosipater (2012) seeks to narrow down the notion of ethics in two aspects, namely (1) an assessment of what is right and wrong in human behavior, (2) a branch of philosophy concerning morality, moral issues and moral considerations. The first aspect is called ethics as practical (applied ethics), while the second aspect is ethics as a reflection (Bertens, 2013).

What is the relationship between "ethics" and moral teachings? Moral teachings are concrete instructions for how humans can live as good human beings. Moral teachings include values, virtues and norms that regulate personal interests, so that people can live in togetherness. The word "moral" in moral teaching is an adjective from the word "morality" which originates from the Latin word "mos-moris" which means customs (Sudar Minta, 2013).

There are two views regarding the relationship between ethics and moral teachings. The first view argues that ethics is the same as moral teaching. This idea was advanced by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. According to Aristotle, ethics, which comes from the Greek word *ethos*, is a way of behaving that characterizes a person. In this concept, morals are associated with special obligations and norms of action. So the function of moral teaching is to train individuals to behave well. Moral teachings shape human behavior. In this sense, ethics is the same as moral teaching.

The second view argues that ethics is different from moral teachings. According to Franz Magnis Suseno (1985) ethics is not an additional source for moral teachings, but rather provides critical and fundamental thinking about moral views. Therefore ethics is a critical science that originates from human beings. While moral teachings are more on a collection of advice or orders/rules that govern good and bad actions. This is supported by Zubair (1995) who argues that morality is used to assess human actions, while ethics is used to examine value systems.

So it can be concluded, ethics examines critically, systematically and methodically various views and moral teachings. While moral teachings provide concrete instructions for how humans live well. As a branch of science, ethics does not teach how to live a good life as the goal of moral teaching, but merely examines/analyzes it. Therefore, people who study ethics do not automatically guarantee that people who study a good way of life will also take ethical actions (Sihotang, 2016).

Ethics, Professional Ethics and Code of Ethics

Ethics in general can be divided into two, namely general ethics and special ethics. If general ethics discusses the basic condition of humans acting and making ethical decisions based on ethical theories, special ethics discusses the basic moral principles used in certain fields. Special ethics itself is divided into two, namely individual ethics and social ethics. In this case professional ethics are included in social ethics. So professional ethics are principles that apply to certain professions such as psychologists or psychological scientists, doctors, advocates, journalists, accountants, etc. This professional ethics is generally manifested in the form of a code of ethics that serves as a guideline for adherents of that profession what should and can be done, and what cannot be done.

The ethical principles that must be owned by the code of ethics are first, responsibility. All professional bearers are required to practice moral responsibility in their work. This includes the profession of psychologists and psychological scientists. Responsibility always has an impact on society at large. This means that the public interest is the main thing for professionals. So they need to consider every decision in line with the public interest. Second, justice. This requires that in carrying out their work professionals always act fairly, meaning that no party is harmed as a result of their actions. In addition, they must also respect all other professional fields and not seize the rights of other professions that are not part of their field. Third, autonomy. A professional is a free man. Indeed, on the one hand they are based on the code of ethics of their profession and the institution in which they take shelter, but on the other hand they are free and

autonomous human beings. They have independence in making decisions. Fourth, trust. Professionals are always in contact with the community in carrying out their profession. In this relationship, trust is required as social capital in carrying out its work. Trust is a personal expression that originates from personal qualities that have integrity and responsibility (Sihotang, 2016; Bertens, 2007). The four aspects of ethical principles are always contained in every professional code of ethics, including the psychological code of ethics compiled by the Indonesian Psychological Association (HIMPSI).

Various Normative Ethical Theories

After reviewing the meaning of ethics and its relationship with moral teachings. Then proceed with the discussion of ethics in relation to professional ethics and professional code of ethics, now we will discuss the normative perspective of ethical theory. Normative perspective means rational reasons in making a decision, so that the decision can be accounted for ethically. In the history of ethics there are many views in assessing the ethical weight of human actions. In this research, three main theories of ethics are discussed, namely virtue ethics, deontological ethics and utilitarianism ethics.

First, virtue ethics. Virtue is a fixed tendency in human beings. Priority is related to will. This is obtained through habituation. Virtue ethics has an orientation towards humans themselves. So the ethics of virtue is related to the formation of personal qualities, not to the principle of what is allowed and what is not allowed (Sihotang, 2016). The ethics of virtue discriminates between the most valuable of a set of human desires. According to virtue ethics, the meaning of life lies in excellence and compassion for others. While money, pleasure, prestige and power are just tools to live a more meaningful life. So it is true what David L. Norton (1995) said that virtue ethics is strength, because with it personal integrity becomes visible.

Virtue ethics can be traced to its origins in Aristotle's philosophy. According to Aristotle, the most noble and main goal of humans is to get happiness which is called eudaimonia. For Aristotle pleasure does not automatically give birth to happiness, but it is happiness that gives birth to pleasure. Happy people are those who carry out their functions well (Sihotang, 2016). Some critical notes can be given for this ethical virtue. The strength of the virtue ethic lies in its concern for self-development. Happiness comes from within, not from outside. So everyone must strive for happiness. Second, virtue ethics encourages the highest pursuit of one's desires. The highest value of virtue ethics is to live a quality life. The third strength, virtue ethics places a place on self-actualization to achieve happiness. Aristotle's opinion teaches humans to pay more attention to their potential and develop themselves continuously. Humanistic psychology then calls this self-actualization.

Behind the advantages of senior ethics, there are also weaknesses. This ethic tends to make people selfish. Excessive egoism that dwells on oneself will lead people to self-love. Another weakness is that by emphasizing oneself as a source of happiness, one can ignore the source of transcendental ethics. The concept of happiness as the fulfillment of the highest self-ability tends not to give space to supernatural moral sources. Whereas happiness that comes from oneself is limited and temporary. Whereas humans need eternal happiness, where the source comes from outside of human beings. Another weakness is that virtue ethics is elitist and aristocratic. Elitism means that practical excellence like this cannot be practiced by everyone. Only those who are used to contemplative activity are able to carry it out. Another weakness is that the ethics of virtue does not address actual problems in the modern world such as human rights and the environment for example. Virtue ethics is not able to provide solutions to all these problems.

Both deontological ethics. According to deontological ethics, the good or bad measure of an action is not through achieving goals and fulfilling desires, but depends on the goodness of the action itself. Deontology is an ethical theory that places the good and bad of an action in the obligation itself. The word 'deontology' comes from the Greek 'deon' which means duty and 'logos' which means science. Deontologists pay special attention to good will which in itself implies a duty. In other words, actions are considered good because of the action itself, not because of the achievement of goals or benefits. According to deontological principles, the measure of action is not just carrying out obligations, but also accompanied by noble awareness and motivation.

If you look at the history of philosophy, the ethics of deontology was originally conceived by Immanuel Kant (174-1804). On what question is the basis for asserting that one's will is good? Then Kant replied: "A person's will will be good if he acts according to duty. The will according to the obligation of duty is based on consideration, which means it can be universalized" (Sihotang, 2016).

The strength of this deontological ethical theory is first, the focus of deontology is human values. Deontology pays special attention to human dignity. Immanuel Kant argues that humans should not be manipulated. Man has a purpose in himself. As a result, everyone has their own obligations. For Kant, one important element in human beings is autonomy. A decision can be ethically valuable if it is the result of free choice. The second advantage of deontology is that it provides a solid basis for the rationality and objectivity of moral consciousness. Kant argued that actions are judged good or bad based on everyone's awareness. The third advantage is that deontology provides a benchmark for assessing someone's actions. Kant said, act solely according to principles that can at the same time wish to become general law.

The weaknesses of deontology are that first, Kant's ideas are very rigid because they only see one aspect of moral values, namely obligations, while other aspects, such as pleasure, are not given a place. The psychological side has no place in the ethics of deontology. Second, Kant's deontology model is difficult to be used as a solution for two obligations that have the same weight. Third, Kant's deontology knows no exceptions. Fourth, deontology has Kant's model of categorical imperatives which do not provide an understanding of which obligations actually bind humans. Fifth, deontology ignores other moral aspects such as friendship. Living with family and friends is existential. This does not receive any attention in Kant's thought.

Third, utilitarian ethics. Utilitarianism is part of the ethics of teleology or consequentialism. Utilitarianism emphasizes the principle of benefit or usability in action. The right action is one that is useful and felt by all other parties. Utilitarianism ethics was developed by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), then continued by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). They provide new views on how to evaluate actions based on the principle of benefit. There are three criteria for utilitarians in measuring an action. (1) Actions that bring certain benefits/results are a measure of goodness. (2) the greatest benefit. If there are two actions that are equally beneficial then the good is the one that has the greater benefit. (3) The greatest benefit to as many people as possible. So the ethics of utilitarianism lays down the criterion of a benefit on an act that brings the greatest benefit to as many people as possible.

The strength of this ethical utilitarianism, for example, is (1) being critical, meaning that utilitarianism questions the reasons behind an obligation. (2) this ethics takes into account the

consequences of an action. (3) Utilitarianism is more social than egoism, because utilitarianism pays attention to general groups. (4) Utilitarianism has a level of rationality that can be accounted for. (5) utilitarianism provides space for existential freedom.

The weaknesses of utilitarianism are (1) utilitarianism does not see the concept of benefits as a very broad concept. (2) Ethical utilitarianism is unable to see the deep dimensions of an action such as will and motivation. (3) utilitarianism does not take seriously the value of an act in itself, other than only relating to an effect. (4) utilitarianism ethics kills the rights of minorities for the benefit of the people (Sihotang, 2016).

The Role of Ethics in Psychology

Ethical competence greatly determines the quality and existence of the psychologist profession. This competency must be formed since receiving psychology education. According to F.F. Duska and B.S. Duska (2006) there are five reasons why ethics is important. Even though they speak in the context of accounting profession ethics, they can also be applied in other disciplines such as psychology.

First, psychologists and psychological scientists often have limited moral beliefs. Their belief and understanding is still inadequate. If this happens, they have not been equipped with the understanding and confidence to make a decision, especially when dealing with complex issues. So the study of ethics helps psychologists and psychological scientists make the right decisions that can be morally justified.

Second, if psychologists and psychologists experience a conflict of interest, it will be difficult for them to decide what to do. Ethical studies can provide insights on how to provide judgments in difficult situations and conditions and be able to provide reasons for making the right choices with the right arguments.

Third, the element of subjectivity always exists in every psychologist and psychological scientist, so that it has the potential to give an incorrect assessment. Subjectivity makes judgments relative. For this reason, clear thinking is needed in order to find the right assessment. This makes the study of ethics urgent.

Fourth, ethics makes ethical arguments more weighty. To be able to live a meaningful life, a person needs to examine his views. That means a psychologist and psychological scientist must test himself with a variety of basic questions to make his work meaningful for himself and others. Ethics helps humans to be able to argue critically. Fifth, the study of ethics helps psychologists and psychological scientists to identify various ethical principles in their lives. On this basis, psychologists have a basis for making decisions that are correct and rationally accountable.

Fifth, in the organizational context, a psychological code of ethics helps its members adhere to appropriate ethical principles and behavior. With this code of ethics, psychologists are helped in overcoming various problems in society related to their profession. The psychological code of ethics is made for the good of psychologists and is morally binding on all members who are members of the organization of psychologists and psychological scientists. The code of ethics is intended to enhance the status of a profession or organization in the eyes of the public or the wider community. Codes of ethics focus on the guidance of practitioners and the promotion of professional status and identity as many codes provide mechanisms for professional regulation.

Sixth, the psychology code of ethics contains standard provisions in the form of rules that aim to maintain the professionalism of the psychology profession. This code of ethics is typical for the study of science and the psychology profession, which in this case is the study of psychology and the profession of psychologists and psychologists. The code of ethics is designed based on the goals, objectives and essential values related to the study of the science and profession concerned.

So ethics as part of philosophy discusses the problem of human behavior from the perspective of good and evil. In applied psychology, for example, ethics is related to many things, such as ethics concerning science and the principles of psychology itself. There is also an ethic regarding psychological examination tools, an ethic regarding other people who act as clients. Ethics regarding the use of therapeutic and psychodiagnostic/assessment techniques, and the ethics of making reports and their confidentiality. Along with this ethical existence, a code of ethics or code of conduct appears, namely the procedures that psychologists should follow in carrying out their professional duties.

For a psychologist this situation is not always easy, for example when exposing the personality of someone using psychodiagnostic thinking or tools in the mass media or other publications. What is often the reason is because the person is a public figure, and has become the property of the community. Of course, this reason is ethically unacceptable.

In clinical psychology, ethical issues are very important, because clinical cases are generally people who have clinical problems. The American Psychological Association (APA) has nine principles in the code of ethics, namely: (1) the principle of responsibility, (2) the principle of competence, (3) the principle of moral and legal standards, (4) the principle of disclosing public statements, (5) the principle of confidentiality, (6) principles regarding user welfare, (7) principles regarding professional relations, (8) principles regarding the use of assessment techniques, and (9) principles regarding data retrieval in research activities.

An example is the principle of responsibility. According to this principle, psychologists are committed to being responsible for understanding human behavior. Psychologists value objectivity and integrity in providing their services. They maintain the highest professional standards. Psychologists accept responsibility for the consequences of their work and make every effort to ensure that their services are used as needed. So a psychologist must understand and understand the existing code of ethics. From the principles of the code of ethics, psychologists can appreciate and provide appropriate solutions for their clients. A psychologist must also protect the privacy of his clients.

According to the principle of psychological competence to provide services and social interventions in accordance with their competence. They serve in line with education, training and experience in accordance with scientific principles. Psychologists or psychological scientists as well as specifically able to practice psychology, especially those related to assessments and interventions that are determined after obtaining permission to practice limited to competencies based on education, training, experience, consultation, review and professional experience in accordance with scientific principles that can be accounted for.

In addition, psychologists and psychological scientists must follow applicable moral and legal standards. In terms of behavior related to morals and ethics, as well as legal psychologists

recognize it as a personal problem that is the same as other citizens. In the principle of public inquiries, announcements about services and promotional activities must be made to help the public or customers to make choices and judgments based on adequate information.

According to the principle of confidentiality, psychologists and psychological scientists must provide protection for information about a person that a psychologist has obtained from teaching, practice, or investigations, which is the main obligation of a psychologist. Such information is not communicated to others, if it is not essential.

In the principle of user welfare, psychologists or psychological scientists value integration and protect the welfare of the groups that work with it. If there is a conflict of interest between the client and the institution where the psychologist works, the psychologists explain the circumstances and direction of their loyalty and responsibility by upholding everything stated regarding their commitment. Psychologists are fully informed of the purpose and nature of evaluation, coping, education, and training procedures. They are freely informed that clients, students, or participants in research have the freedom to choose before participating.

According to the principle of professional relations psychologists act with a clear sense of the need for special competence, and the obligations of their colleagues in psychology and other professions. Psychologists respect the prerogatives, obligations of the institutions and organizations to which they belong. In the development, publication, and use of psychological assessment techniques, psychologists maintain relevant APA standards. The people being examined have the right to know the results, interpretations and if necessary, the original data on which the assessment/decision is based. The use of tests avoids unnecessary information, but provides information that explains the basis for decisions.

Regarding the search for data in research activities, the following principles must be considered. The decision to conduct research must be based on the individual psychologist's consideration of his or her contribution to psychology and human well-being. Psychologists carry out investigations with respect for the people involved and with concern for their self-esteem and well-being (Wiramihardja, 2007).

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Psychology as the science of human behavior requires an ethical foundation in its application. This application is especially evident in what is called the professional ethics of psychology, which means any ethical actions that need to be considered by every practitioner of psychology or psychology scientist so as not to violate ethical norms in carrying out their profession. In its history, there are several ethical theories that are commonly used as a basis for ethical behavior. First, the ethics of virtue (virtues ethics), which emphasizes that the basis of every human action is virtue, including good attitudes and good wishes from a person. Second, utilitarian ethics which emphasizes that the basis of every human action is to do things that are useful and beneficial to as many people as possible. Meanwhile, the third is deontological ethics which sees that the basis of our actions and actions is not related to good intentions or the good purpose of the action, but depends on the action itself. That is, the basis of human action is the goodness of the action itself. These three ethical foundations also apply to the psychological actions of both activists, practitioners or professionals, but also psychological scientists. The limitation of this research is that it is still in the framework of a descriptive study based on literature studies. For further research, it is also necessary to carry out quantitative research such as which ethical basis

dominates psychology practitioners, for example, or the extent to which psychologists' understanding of ethics relates to their behavior in serving clients.

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