Discussion 1 – Responses to Peers

Hi David,

Your discussion effectively captures the ethical tension found between professional responsibility and corporate pressure in safety-critical contexts such as medical software development. The link you draw between the ACM and BCS codes is particularly relevant, as it demonstrates how shared professional standards encourage the primacy of public welfare over organisational interests. Your emphasis on moral courage and the duty to disclose risk aligns well with the ACM’s imperative to “avoid harm” (ACM, 2018), and I appreciated you touching on the relationship between ethics and law.

However, the analysis could be strengthened by engaging with additional scholarly or regulatory sources. For instance, incorporating academic perspectives on whistleblowing (e.g. Gotterbarn et al., 2018) or referencing ISO 14971 on medical device risk management would demonstrate a wider contextual awareness. The reference list is also incomplete: the BCS Code of Conduct (2021) is mentioned but not cited in full.

Finally, while your conclusion highlights transparency and trust, it might benefit from a more critical reflection on the systemic factors that make ethical decision-making difficult - such as organisational culture, economic pressures, and the limits of professional autonomy.

References:

Gotterbarn, D., Miller, K., & Rogerson, S. (2018). ACM Code of Ethics: A guide to ethical decision making. Communications of the ACM, 61(1), 121–128. https://doi.org/10.1145/3173016

ACM (2018). Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Association for Computing Machinery. https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics

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Hi Chih,

Your post demonstrates a clear understanding of the ethical breaches in the “Abusive Workplace Behavior” case and correctly identifies how Max’s actions contravene both the ACM and BCS Codes of Conduct (ACM, 2018; BCS, 2022). The link between abuse of authority, discrimination, and wider social consequences is well observed. I particularly enjoyed your recognition that unethical conduct at leadership level can normalise harmful behaviours across teams and reinforce systemic inequities (Brown and Treviño, 2006). The inclusion of legal and cultural dimensions also adds useful context, helping to situate professional ethics within a broader societal framework.

From an academic standpoint, the piece could be strengthened by adopting a more analytical tone and by referencing additional academic perspectives and industry reports. For example, the claim regarding India’s gender inequality, while relevant, would benefit from the support of a reputable reference, such as UN or World Bank reports (United Nations, 2023).

Additionally, while the reference list is appropriately formatted, the essay lacks in-text citations to indicate where each source is applied. Structurally, the argument might also flow better if you linked specific actions by Max to explicit ACM principles (e.g. 1.2 “Avoid harm” or 1.4 “Be fair and take action not to discriminate” [ACM, 2018]).

Overall, your response captures the key ethical concerns but would benefit from deeper theoretical engagement and clearer academic referencing, though I appreciate this can be difficult given the length constraint!

References

ACM (2018) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Association for Computing Machinery. Available at: https://www.acm.org/code-of-ethics

BCS (2022) Code of Conduct. British Computer Society. Available at: https://www.bcs.org/membership-and-registrations/become-a-member/bcs-code-of-conduct

Brown, M.E. and Treviño, L.K. (2006) ‘Ethical leadership: A review and future directions’, The Leadership Quarterly, 17(6), pp. 595–616. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.10.004

United Nations (2023) Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023. UN Women. Available at: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/