
ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

The ethical dilemma described involves Omar, a finance department member, facing the consequences of his coworker Bridget's recurring mistakes in managing the general ledger, which is crucial for month-end financial reporting. The errors are due to Bridget's challenging personal circumstances, including suspected domestic violence and significant family responsibilities as the sole breadwinner. Omar faces the dual challenge of addressing the repeated mistakes that impact the team's performance and supporting a colleague who is clearly in a difficult personal situation.

ETHICAL COMPLEXITIES

- 1) Responsibility to the company: Omar must ensure accurate and timely financial reporting.
- 2) Loyalty and compassion toward a coworker: Omar sympathizes with Bridget's situation and understands the potentially severe consequences if she loses her job.
- 3) Integrity and honesty: Omar must decide whether to disclose the full extent of the issues to management, balancing honesty with the potential impact on Bridget.

MORAL DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ETHICAL ACTIONS

- Moral danger of inaction: Failing to act or report the situation could lead to significant errors going unchecked, potentially harming the company and its stakeholders.
- Opportunity for support: Omar could help Bridget by encouraging or arranging for support through company resources, like employee assistance programs, which would be an act of compassion and integrity.

OWN INSIGHTS

If I were Omar, my instinct would be to help Bridget manage her workload more effectively while seeking additional support. My biases toward supporting team members in need might make it difficult to report the situation to management, but I recognize the necessity of maintaining professional standards and ensuring accurate financial reporting.

- **Justice vs. Compassion:** Balancing the need to uphold financial accuracy (justice) with the desire to protect Bridget's employment (compassion).
- **Integrity vs. Loyalty:** The challenge of being honest about Bridget's performance while being loyal and supportive as her teammate.

I would discuss the situation with Bridget privately, expressing concern and offering to assist in finding her support. I would suggest a meeting with management to discuss possible adjustments to her workload or deadlines, ensuring that the approach protects her dignity and job while addressing the department's needs.

MORAL ENGAGEMENT

In a dilemma involving Omar and Bridget, the concept of dual loyalty emerges as a pivotal ethical issue. Omar must navigate the complexities of his obligations to his employer and colleague, Bridget, who is experiencing significant personal challenges. This situation exemplifies the ethical tension between organizational loyalty and individual compassion, a tension that is often at the heart of workplace ethics. From the perspective of "**dual loyalty**", Omar's situation requires him to honor his commitments to his employer by ensuring accurate financial reporting, which is crucial for the company's operation and compliance with regulatory standards. Simultaneously, he must consider his loyalty to Bridget, whose performance issues stem from extenuating personal circumstances rather than professional incompetence and negligence. This dual loyalty is not just about balancing professional and personal considerations; it is about integrating them in a way that upholds the dignity and welfare of all parties involved (Wettstein "Silence as Complicity", 358-363)

Perhaps applying “**virtue ethics**” to Omar’s dilemma can offer a path forward. Virtue ethics focuses on the character and virtues of the individual, suggesting that ethical actions flow from a good moral character (Hursthouse, [Virtue Ethics \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)). In this context, Omar should embody virtues such as compassion, patience, and justice. Justice would drive him to seek a fair outcome that recognizes both Bridget’s rights and her responsibilities. By fostering an environment where Bridget can thrive, Omar would not only be supporting a colleague in need but also contributing to a workplace culture that values and supports its employees, potentially leading to greater overall morale and productivity.

The “**utilitarian approach**” offers another lens through which to view this scenario. Utilitarianism suggests choosing the action that produces the greatest good for the greatest number (Mill, [Utilitarianism by John Stuart Mill](#)). In practical terms, this means Omar might consider the broader impact of his decisions on all stakeholders, including other team members, the company’s financial health, and Bridget’s family. Ensuring the accuracy of financial reporting is crucial, but so is supporting a team member in need. By finding a balanced solution, such as proposing adjusted responsibilities or seeking additional support for Bridget, Omar could mitigate harm while maximizing the overall well-being of the team and the company.

WORDS: 720

BONUS TRACK: FURTHER QUESTIONS

- 1) How can Omar maintain transparency with management while protecting Bridget’s privacy and dignity?
- 2) What are the potential long-term impacts on the team if Bridget’s issues are not addressed effectively?
- 3) How does the company’s culture and policy framework support or hinder Omar’s ability to manage such dilemmas?