Application Of Ethical Theories To Assess Chipo’s Moral Action During The Race

1. Case

Assume Chipo is a Black African Christian young woman who is rated the world's best athlete. She is about to complete the 400m race during the Final Olympics Athletic games. Chipo stops running in order to assist her fellow athlete, Susan who is a White-American young woman (hypothetically speaking) who has fallen down and has sustained serious injuries. Because of this brief stop in order to assist her fellow athlete, Chipo finally finishes the race in second position:

a) From the perspective of Jesus’ ethics of the Kingdom of God give an assessment of Chipo's moral behaviour during the race.

Jesus’s ethics of the kingdom of God are the Christian ethics which are derived from the Holy Bible. The Bible contains numerous prescriptions or laws and many teachings of ethical relevance. The Holy Bible is the book with the moral guidelines that guide the actions of Christians who believe in it. It is a careful examination of who we should be and what we should do in light of what Jesus reveals to us about God.

According to Jesus’s ethics from the Bible, ethics identify with right and wrong behaviour with reference to Jesus of Nazareth. Chipo’s actions in the race where ethical according to these ethics. Her behaviour was moral and accepted under Jesus’s ethics. In the Bible Christians are taught to be selfless and to think of others before themselves. Philippians 2:4 “let each of you look not only in his own interest but also the interests of others. Philippians 2:3. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Chipo being a Christian already knew that it would be wrong to not stop and help the athlete who had fallen. Chipo stopped her race to tend to a seriously injured fellow athlete which goes with her moral values taught in the Bible. It would have been wrong for Chipo to continue with the race knowing that a fellow athlete was injured. This goes to why her actions in the race are ethical and morally right according to Jesus ethics.

Furthermore the bible states that each person has a duty to man, you should love one another. Jesus said, in John 13:34 to 35 “a new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love another.”

Chipo followed these rules and is morally right in her action of stopping to assist a fellow athlete, without discriminating as to whether she knew the girl or not. As to whether if she was the one who had fallen would a white American girl stop to help an African girl? She just acted in a way that was right according to her as a moral Christian African black girl. To not judge and love everyone the same.

Matthew 7:12 so in everything do to others what you would want them to do unto you. This means that as a person you should treat others as you want to be treated.

Chipo felt sorry for her fallen and injured fellow and if she had been the one to fall she would also had wanted someone to show some concern and compassion. Hebrews 13:16 “and do not forget to do good and to share with others for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” Chipo did the ethical thing according to Jesus’s ethics.

Assess Chipo’s moral action during the race using

i. one consequentialist western ethical theory; from Teology

Utilitarianism

This is consequentialism ethics which is an ethical theory that holds that the ends or consequences of an act determine whether an act is good or bad. Consequentialism is the view that the morality of an action should be determined solely on the outcome it brings. A good result means the action was probably good. Chipo’s actions in this case where good since the outcome was not bad. She did not lose the race, she came second and for a person who had made a brief stop, it was quite good. And she will be applauded for her efforts. A great number of people will be happy that she had assisted Susan who was badly injured.

Under utilitarianism, the most important consequence is that the action that happened caused the most happiness to the most people. The point of utilitarianism is to say morality's duty is to make life better and increase the amount of happiness in the world and try to decrease the number of bad things like pain and unhappiness.

Susan was happy that Chipo stopped to help. The spectators were happy by this show of compassion, Susan’s supporters were also happy that Chipo stopped to help. And Chipo’s family and friends and supporters will be impressed that Chipo stopped to help. Which makes this action morally acceptable according to utilitarianism. This is an ethics principle where people have a moral obligation to help because it has a positive contribution to those being helped and those around them. Chipo fulfilled that moral obligation.

However, utilitarianism can be dived onto two Act and Rule Utilitarianism. Act utilitarianism measures the consequence of a single act whereas Rule utilitarianism measures the consequences of the act repeated over and over again through time as if it were to be followed as a rule wherever similar circumstances arise. In Chipo’s case she is morally right under Act utilitarianism.

Assess Chipo’s moral action during the race using

ii. One non-consequentialist western ethical theory;

Kantianism ethics

Since Kantianism is a deontological ethic it follows that duty is not based on what is pleasant and beneficial to who but rather on the obligation itself. Based on this we can judge Chipo’s

action of stopping during a race was unethical and it violated her obligation to her duty as an athlete.

Kantianism is also a non-consequentialist theory that judges the morality of an action based on the 4 principles namely, Reason: under reason it stands true that human beings are rational beings. They use their reason to judge actions. Under this situation Chipo did not utilise her reasoning. Here actions become unethical according to Kant's ethics. It is proper to assume that there will be medical personnel watching the race.

They would come to assist and assess Susan's situation whilst the other runners finished their race then after Chipo was done with the race she could go and check on Susan. The reasoning would have allowed Chipo to finish her race fairly then come back to issue support to the fallen fellow athlete. If she had followed Kantianism ethics she wouldn't have lost her title then.

Duty: people must act from duty, an obligation. Her duty was to run and finish the race. Before anything else. Chipo's brief pause is unethical under Kant's ethics. Kantianism ethics respect duty. Africa wanted the gold medal to come back home and all that lay in Chipo's hands, probably people had raised money for her to be at that competition. She had a duty to do what she was supposed to do aside from whatever might come at her during the course. She did not fulfil that duty therefore Chipo's actions were morally wrong. She should have showed her goodwill and support after the race as it was due not during the race by which she was obstructing her duty as an athlete.

Categorical imperative means that an action is good if it can become a universal law, applicable to everyone in a similar situation. We can attest if an action is morally right according to Kant by checking if it is in accord with a correct moral rule and also if you can imagine everyone following this rule all the time without producing a logical contradiction that undermines the rule.

In Chipo's case it will not make sense if the rule was to stop and assist the ones who fall every time. Especially if they did not fall with you or because of you. It wasn't Chipo who made the fellow athlete fall. The moral rule to follow would be to finish the race to make sure that a person wins with everyone in the same situation.

Otherwise, people will keep on recording bias and wrong information. So that rule cannot apply and it was morally wrong for Chipo to stop during the race she caused a person to win who probably would not have under the same and unchanged situation. That's if Susan had not fallen. Chipo would have come first. So we can see why Chipo's actions are deemed unethical.

Assess Chipo's moral action during the race using

iii. one ethical theory of responsibility;

Ethical responsibility means fulfilling obligations in all ethical areas, or as many areas as possible. When an ethical dilemma occurs, involved individuals must choose between a wide varieties of ethical principles and weigh which ones should be emphasized.

Ethics of responsibility includes the context of the agent or the situation of the moral agent in determining what is right and what is wrong. A moral agent is in dialogue with the context in

which he or she is involved in.

We can assess Chipo’s actions using situational ethics. It is ethics that look at the context of the situation and right moral action, which is a fitting action should be taken. Basically, this means good and bad rely on the circumstance. Choices should be made on the situation, not prescriptively. Situational morals rejects pre-made choices and prescriptive guidelines. It says that moral choices should follow adaptable rules as opposed to total and rigid standards and be taken dependent upon the situation. It looks past the standard right or wrong and deals with the action that the prevailing situation wants.

Chipo as a groomed Christian African woman already had her culture of brotherhood and the Christian teachings of being compassionate and to love others chose to stop and assist a fellow athlete and this is ethical according to ethics of responsibility as well as situational ethics. Situational ethics is about looking for an action that is in the best interest of those involved and affected by it.

There is no universal moral norms here and the assessment of whether an action was good or not depends on the person and the situations he is in. although situational ethics is derived from Christian ethics these decisions made should be able to respect the love of mankind and its preservation, and people will always be of first concern that’s why we can say Chipo’s actions where morally right and good.

Chipo sacrificed the title of Number 1 in the race to help her fellow athlete which is a true example of situational ethics, because the guiding factor or guiding norm is self-giving love for the sake of the neighbour. Her decision was moral because what she did was the most loving thing to do

Assess Chipo’s moral action during the race using

iv. Relevant aspects of African ethics.

In African ethics people strive to have Ubuntu.to not have the spirit of Ubuntu is to be missing of human excellence and you are not worth to be called a person. Under these African ethics the good or moral value of an action are determined by its consequences to other humans in society. This is because of the traditional values and culture that come from the concern for the welfare of each and every member of the community.

Brotherhood which is the notion about the relations between individual human beings made for their own interests and well-being. African ethics is a morality of duty requiring each individual to demonstrate concern for the interests of others. They teach to always try to take care of the needs of others when they are in need.

The African perception of humanity is the recognition of all persons as brothers. The person is a social being. This is expressed through moral virtues such as concern for others and compassion. This value can be seen in Chipo’s action when she stopped to help a fellow athlete who was injured. And besides Susan being white she is still a human and worthy of the African brother ship cultivated through our ethics and because of that brotherhood generally people come before fame and fortune.

There’s hardly ever bad and strict competition. People would rather they crossed the finish line together. The morals of brotherhood teach that you should never leave a fellow person behind. Chipo was morally correct according to African ethics and culture. Chipo’s action made sure that the other fellow athlete was okay before she carried on with her journey.

African ethics are those of compassion. Chipo’s actions were ethical as she made sure to take her fellow athletes welfare and wellbeing over hers.

She ended up coming second rather than first but in African ethics the point that she was person enough to put others before herself proves that her decision was ethical. In Africa, in the Shona culture, they have a saying which says munhu hunhu which translates to “character maketh a man”. The quality of a person as a person is judged on the quality of your actions. Chipo can be accounted amongst real persons because she did a humble and moral thing.