Reflection On Ethical Theories: Utilitarianism And Deontology

In today's world, people can choose to make a single choice that can have a positive or negative effect on their family, employer, coworkers, and even on the entire world. Personal Ethics are different for each person, but for the most part, people want to be known as good person, and as someone who can be trusted. Of the four Ethical theories, such as teleology, deontology, intuitionism and virtue, deontology is closely associated with how I choose to make ethical decisions. In the past I have said, “It is the principle of the thing.” I believe after learning these principles, I would agree that choosing all theories through critical thinking, supports a person in making the best ethical decision.

Ethical theories are ideas or moral values that decide whether the choices I make are right or wrong. The two ethical theories that I believe are the most obvious in the world are Utilitarianism and Deontology. Utilitarianism is a theory that “justifies the morality of an action on the basis of its consequences” (Geuras & Garofalo, 2011). In the end, we all want ourselves and the people I care for to be happy also. Deontology believes the purpose of the act is more important. When choosing the value of the decisions, the consequences are based on the rules of each ethical theory. Unfortunately, there are many circumstances when a person’s rights are vulnerable due to unethical situations like sexual harassment within the workplace. To avoid situations from happening, I believe all individuals should fully understand when to apply ethics to decision-making. In order to have this mindset, the public needs to be educated on the types of ethical principles and know how to approach situations based on ethical solutions. I believe that once the public is aware of ethical theories and how to avoid unethical situations, there will be a decline in the amount of sexual harassment within the workplace.

Deontology and Utilitarianism are ethical theories that were designed to deal with social norms, values, and morals. One of the few similarities between Deontology and Utilitarianism is that both ideas are guidelines of how individuals can make ethical decisions. In the end, the goal of both ethical theories is to determine the right or wrong value of choices based on the theory’s ideal society and morals. So, the ethical theories are created so people will be able to make constant moral decisions based on ethical reasoning and decision making. In the end, this results in Utilitarianism and Deontology guiding individuals through their decisions and actions. While this is the case, the two theories do not obviously tell individuals what to do, but how to understand the situation.

Deontology is a theory that I follow most to make an ethical decision because to me, the “act should be greater than the consequence” (Geuras & Garofalo, 2011). According the theory Deontology, an important aspect of this theory is not just happiness, but it is making constant decisions that always “determines humans as the ends rather than the means.” In other words, this means that no matter the consequence, we would stick to to the same action (Geuras & Garofalo, 2011). For example, if someone at work treated me horribly for years. Then, I became that person’s boss; would I take the opportunity to get even and treat them poorly in return, or do I treat them fair based on the worth they add to the organization? In the end, the consequence of treating them with kindness regardless of how they treated me, may be difficult to us, but it is the value of the person being the end consideration and should must be treated

well (Geuras & Garofalo, 2011).

In life, there are going to be instances where we are tested with unethical situations like sexual harassment as I stated earlier. In the workplace, it is common for females to become victims of harassment, causing them to lose their trust in others. During sexual harassment, females are degraded using sexist jokes, and unwanted advances in exchange for higher social positions. From a Deontological view, the sexual harassment is considered unethical because women are as viewed as an object, instead of a person. Women who are confronted with harassment have the right to choose how they want to follow their goals without unwanted advances from other individuals. As a result, sexual harassment restricts women from being treated with respect and fairness not only in the workforce, but in society as well.

From a Utilitarian view, sexual harassment is unethical because the ends of the actions do not justify the means. In other words, harassment does not increase the amount of good to the community or increase the amount of happiness. Common emotional effects of sexual harassment include anxiety, depression, the loss of a job, and a decrease in the amount of wages. Sexual harassment is unethical because neither the consequences nor the motives justify the actions of unwanted advances. Instead, it causes harm to the public which goes against one of the key Utilitarian values.

I believe that sexual harassment is unethical because the abuse of power causes women to become belittled and be in uncomfortable situations. I also believe that sexual harassment is unmoral because it does not have any benefits or advantages for the individual. The outcomes of sexual harassment can be traumatizing and can have long-term effects. I believe that circumstances like sexual harassment are still in existence today, because of the lack of education of ethics and morals. I believe if the public were trained on why situations are unethical and how to make ethical based decisions, I believe that the amount of sexual harassment would decrease.

My views are a combination of Deontological and Utilitarian. As for Deontology, I agree on the statement that humans should be treated equally and never to an end. Regarding sexual harassment, women should have the right to be respected. Thus, this gives women the right to peacefully work and choose their own decisions without being sexually objected. I also support the Utilitarian belief that we have a moral duty to prevent harm to others and maximize the amount of good for the community. The consequences of sexual harassment negatively affect the community by causing harm and pain. Consequently, because sexual harassment does not produce the most amount of happiness for all, it is seen as unethical.

In the end, as I reflect on the choice I make, I believe each person has a different ethical background that has been shown to them by his or her parents, teachers, mentors, religious beliefs. Many of our beliefs and patterns of behavior are made through our experiences of childhood through adulthood. Personally, my ethics originate from what I have learned from my parents, my religious background, my experiences of everyday life. It stems from knowing what is ethically right and wrong, what is acceptable behavior or not, and importantly, it comes from pride in my work and accomplishments.

References

1. Geuras, D., & Garofalo, C. (2011). Practical ethics in public administration. Vienna, VA: Management Concepts.