

Chapter 2

Utility, Duty, Morality, and Justice

ABSTRACT

Utility is the theory of the greatest happiness to as many people as possible. The end justifies the means where consequences matter and what makes the action moral is the result. Duty deontology implies that we are doing a good job as long as we are following the rules even if it is against our will. It is our duty, our obligation, even sometimes leading to pain. All actions and decisions should be of a good will regardless of the results. On the other hand, moral virtue is acquired by habit and does not come by nature. Virtue represents the mean between extremes. Therefore, moral virtue has to do with feelings followed by actions, where the mean is not always the middle of two opposite extremes. This chapter explores utility, duty, morality, and justice as philosophical foundations of moral imagination in ethical decision making.

INTRODUCTION

Sensations of pain and pleasure are part of a continuum. Pain and pleasure are extreme states of mind felt in our everyday life. These extremes vary according to the phase of living. By taking into consideration that the life lived is socially attached, family oriented, and lived in normal conditions. Extremes vary with respect to age, to style of parental orientation, and to way of thinking. Pain and pleasure reflect the result of every feeling or action faced, from the physical to emotional. Emotions, imagination, learning, motivation, and maturation are mainly the basics

of these states of mind. Where the sole purpose of business might be viewed as a financial maximization of profit (Friedman, 1970), other more traditional philosophies dating back centuries, or even millennia, shed a more humanist light on the dilemmas of business ethics.

BACKGROUND: SIMPLE PLEASURES AND PAINS

Pain and pleasure are among main driving forces of behavior. Every intended action is driven by these two unseen forces in order to avoid pain and

to gain pleasure. The simple pleasures, according to Bentham, include the pleasures of sense, wealth, skill, amity, good name, power, piety, benevolence, malevolence, memory, imagination, expectation, dependent on association, and relief. Several simple pains can be listed as the pains of privation, senses, awkwardness, enmity, ill name, piety, benevolence, malevolence, memory, imagination, expectation, and dependent on association. Utilitarianism was revised and expanded by Bentham's student; John Stuart Mill (1850).

Sigmund Freud also added about pain and pleasure through an interesting article stating that we are born with a pleasure principle and that we will seek immediate gratification of needs, for which our bodies reward us with feelings of pleasure. And he also stated that the reverse is also true, and the pain principle says that, while seeking pleasure people will also seek to avoid pain. The pleasure-pain principle was originated by Sigmund Freud in modern psychoanalysis, although Aristotle noted the significance in his 'Rhetoric', more than 300 years BC.

The pleasure principle represents hedonism; the thought that life ought to be lived to the fullest and that pleasure should be sought as a main goal. Hedonists will engage in self-destructive ways through their extreme use of sex, drugs, rock and roll and other means of satisfaction. Pleasure is also linked to Jeremy Bentham's (1920) ideas in utilitarianism, where the assessment of supreme utilitarian gain in pleasure is measured through sensible calculus. Pleasure and pain are basic principles in conditioning, where you tend to get more of what you reward and less of what you punish.

Pain may be more instant than pleasure, making people think more about the avoidance of pain, thus paying more attention to it. Anticipated pleasure and anticipated pain are nearly as dominant as the feeling itself as people think about the pleasure and pain that may happen later in life. It is questionable that these have had an important outcome on human development as they move us towards a more bearable life.

PHILOSOPHY OF UTILITY: CONSEQUENCES OF BEHAVIOR

John Stuart Mill follows the consequentialist theory (Parker, 1863). Consequences of actions make them either right or wrong. John Stewart Mill begins to question the goodness of something good in itself. We need to go deep into the basics and see how they apply to life situations, thus making it easier to accept or reject it. Utility is not only physiological. It can be as simple as having fun. He then defines three meanings of pleasure that are beauty, ornament, and amusement. He distinguishes beauty from ornament by the idea that beauty is in the eyes of holder; ornament is in the eyes of the creator.

The Proof of Goodness

The proof of goodness is not intuitive or impulsive, but it is rather subject of formal knowledge that is verified and tested. No definite proof is given in the "Utilitarian" theory. In order to prove something is good, one must show that it is a means to something acknowledged to be good without proof. By the utilitarian formula there are two different types of philosophers: ones who consider that utility is only the test of right and wrong, and others who consider that everything in life is referred to pleasure and pain. Both groups can be mistaken when they are extremists. Many writers and philosophers are commonly falling into the mistake of opposing utility to pleasure at the time when the founders of the Utilitarian theory declare that utility is pleasure itself, along with the absence of pain. Thus, actions are right if they bring happiness, wrong if they cause the reverse of happiness; where happiness means pleasure and/or the absence of pain.

The Quality of Pleasure

Early on, utilitarianism was understood as simply pursuing corporal pleasures just like pigs.. The

6 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/utility-duty-morality-and-justice/122688

Related Content

Occupational Safety as One of the Important Factors of Professional Satisfaction and Stress in Regular Conditions and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Milica olovi, Vladimir Miti, Milena Nikoliand Danka Milojkovi (2022). *Handbook of Research on Key Dimensions of Occupational Safety and Health Protection Management* (pp. 122-143).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/occupational-safety-as-one-of-the-important-factors-of-professional-satisfaction-and-stress-in-regular-conditions-and-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/292287

When Robots Kill: A Root Cause Analysis

Riya Vinayakand Radha R. Sharma (2019). *International Journal of Human Capital and Information Technology Professionals* (pp. 46-59).

www.irma-international.org/article/when-robots-kill/229059

Enhancing Creative Performance: The Role of Knowledge Management System Usage, Absorptive Capacity, and Motivation

Tobias D. Herbrand J. Piet Hausberg (2024). *Innovation Capabilities and Entrepreneurial Opportunities of Smart Working* (pp. 98-125).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/enhancing-creative-performance/334249

Climate Change: Global Warming Mitigation or Adaptation

(2015). *Business Ethics and Diversity in the Modern Workplace* (pp. 100-109).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/climate-change/122694

Adjusting Higher Education Competences to Companies Professional Needs: A Case Study in an Engineering Master's Degree

Joaquim Alves, Natércia Lima, Gustavo Alvesand Francisco J. García-Peñalvo (2017). *International Journal of Human Capital and Information Technology Professionals* (pp. 66-78).

www.irma-international.org/article/adjusting-higher-education-competences-to-companies-professional-needs/169862