Ethics and Psychology; Utilitarianism

Students Name

Institutional Affiliation

Course Name: Course Code

Instructors Name

Due Date

Ethics and Psychology; Utilitarianism

**The Right and Wrong - The Trolley Problem**

Utilitarianism dictates that routine decision-making while facing a dilemma is based on weighing out the options and factors at hand. It uses moral reasoning, which advocates for the decision amounting to the greatest good and for the most significant number of persons. Utilitarianism has become a point of reference by many in the recent past since solving one particular moral problem creates another problem with similar effects. Its basis can oppress the less fortunate in a societal setting since it advocates working in the best preference for the people in the majority (Shearer, 2014). The whole scenario of the Utilitarianism implications can be viewed by studying and analyzing the trolley Problem. In the trolley problem, two dilemmas are displayed. The first is where the switch person can switch the train's path to the path with only one worker, killing him at the expense of the five other workers who will survive. It is viewed as a better solution by many; however, the second dilemma proves that it is not the best moral solution creating a conjunction between psychological decisions and ethical decisions. In the second dilemma, a fat man is thrown into the rail tracks, which will save all the workers and kill the man (Shearer, 2014). The second solution is less esteemed and is viewed as intentional murder despite similar logic with the first.

**Basics and Moral Principles of Utilitarianism**

The hypothesis of utilitarianism agrees that it is ethical to switch or even push the fat man over the bridge to stop the runaway train. Utilitarianism is based on the truths that pleasure, joy, and happiness are naturally worthy and valuable, whereas suffering and pain are naturally of no value (Shearer, 2014). Therefore, anything that brings more happiness, joy, and satisfaction to the people is valuable. It leads to the moral principles of utilitarianism which highly and mightily advocates for decisions that are of a greater good and for a more significant number of persons. Decisions made for the greatest good for most people often bring joy and happiness, thus connecting to utilitarianism's basic approach.

**Implications of Utilitarianism**

Utilitarianism has many varying implications. For instance, from the "trolley problem," both decisions are supported by the basics and the moral principle of utilitarianism. The first dilemma solved by switching the rail tracks killing only one worker and saving the other five workers, and also the second dilemma involving pushing the fat man over the bridge and to his death to save the lives of the workers are justified by utilitarianism because they all work for the benefit of the greater good and the more significant number of persons. However, utilitarianism can also be problematic because it favors the majority, leaving the minority groups to suffer and in pain. This situation is a negative implication of utilitarianism since it would cause division in the world, causing political implications. Utilitarianism has formerly been criticized to only look at the results of a particular action and not the motive and desires propelling the action. The decision to intentionally throw the man over the bridge to stop the runaway train or even switch the rails killing the worker, could result from harm by the doer, which is perceived as wrong (Shearer, 2014). However, utilitarianism only considers the benefits of making the decisions and hardly considers their motives. The idea of utilitarianism is also controversial since it seems to advocate for controversial topics like slavery and torture since their enormous benefits of a free workforce would outweigh the slaves' pain and suffering while serving the majority groups.

A person's thought and preference for what is right and what is wrong is more crucial to decision making than the benefits and losses of the decision of the situation. It explains why one could feel uncomfortable switching the rail tracks to kill the worker and save the more significant number of workers or even pushing the man over the bridge to stop the train and save the workers. Both scenarios show scenarios examining whether moral decisions are simply about the results of the actions chosen or the methods used to achieve the plans (Shearer, 2014). The decision to throw the man over the bridge is considered wrong since it's seen as an intentional motive for murder and therefore not worthy. Following this critic, it is justifiable that the option with more significant benefits is not always the better option for everyone based on their actions.

**Conclusion**

Following the discussion, I think my action would be hesitant to switch the rails or push the man over the bridge since it is impossible to measure or compare the happiness, satisfaction, pain, or suffering in different people. Basing my actions on what I previewed as a happy ending would imply the minority's happiness and pleasure, which stands for the man and the worker, are not considered. The action is taken based only on the more excellent goods of the results.

Reference

Shearer, H. (2014). The Right and Wrong. The Trolley Problem

<https://youtu.be/bOpf6KcWYyw>