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**Topic*:*** Define and discuss consequentialism, liberalism, utilitarianism. Demonstrate how these approaches relate to each other and critically evaluate their application to business ethics.

Companies are creating day by and business men are increasing in our society. Some of them care about ethics principle but some do not. This can be explained in the fact that many of them do not have idea on ethics principles. So, in the following lines, I will first define Consequentialism, utilitarianism and Liberalism. Secondly, I will demonstrate how they are related to each other then evaluate their application to business ethics.

Consequentialism is a type of normative ethical theory and holds that the consequences of one conduct are ultimate base for any judgment about the rightness or wrongness thus for the consequentialism, a more morally right act is one that will produce a good outcome, or consequence.

Utilitarianism is a version of consequentialism founded by Jeremy BENTHAN English philosopher, legal scholar and social reformer (1748-1832) which holds that the best moral action Is the one that maximize utility (happiness or pleasure) and minimize pain. It is about the greatest good for the greatest number. It tries to find out what is best for the society overall. There is two form of utilitarianism first of all, we have Act Utilitarianism which support that in any given situation, we should choose the action that produces the greatest good for the greatest number. The other one is Rule Utilitarianism which says we ought to live by rules that, in general, are likely to lead to the greatest good for the greatest number it allows us to refrain from acts that might maximize utility in the short run, and instead follow rules that will maximize utility for the majority of the time.

Liberalism was founded by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). It is an expansion of utilitarianism which supports that “we should not only consider the quantity but also the quality of pleasure”. For MILL, people are completely free to make their own choices as long as their action don’t harm the others. According to this theory, to be completely happy, we have to be free and independent. MILL does not agree that the happiness can be calculated because some forms of happiness are wealthier than others. So, Liberalism are more focus on happiness with absent of pain.

According to the definition of Consequentialism, Utilitarianism and liberalism, I can say that all of them are related to each other. Starting by Consequentialism, Utilitarianism was borne in order to improve the consequentialism. Later, liberalism will be borne at its turn to redirect the focus of utilitarianism on happiness and remove pain by supporting that “no one should be forcibly prevented from acting in any way he chooses provided his act are not invasive of the free acts of the others”. All of these theories are based on the consequences of humane action and aim to build an organized society.

These theories come with number of problems that we should take account.

First, about Utilitarianism which transform ethics in to exact science by weighting the pleasure and pain of any given action has some limit because it is impossible to calculate a utility. How will we ever know which utility people derive this consequence? Difficult because people have not the same utilities. Another problem is that in utilitarianism the right of individual is less important than the society so we can harm a person for the wellbeing of the society. With these problems from utilitarianism, we cannot guarantee that it will bring happiness in the society in long term.

Second, about Liberalism which supports to let people free to do anything they want if them do not harm the others, this theory solves the basic problems of utilitarianism. People in the society are all created by almighty Good so they should have the same right and should do anything which can make them happy. The very good point in liberalism is that people are free but this freedom has a limit if it harms the others. So, Liberalism seem logical for managing a society. So, can we apply these concepts to business ethics?

To evaluate the application of these concept to business ethics, we have to know more about business ethics? In fact, business ethics involves the application of general ethical principles to the actions and decisions in businesses and the conduct of their personnel. According to this definition, I can say that for any business, we should evaluate the consequences of our actions and the consequences should take account our utility and the wellbeing of the others in the society. Every business should consider these ethical principles and apply them. As Consequentialism, Utilitarianism and Liberalism are link to other, it is necessary to take all of them account in business ethics.

To summarize, Consequentialism, Utilitarianism and liberalism are link each to other and for the wellbeing of the society, every business should take account all of them and apply them in order we can have an organized society.

Source:

Different types of normative ethics by (Dr. Matthias Uhl (TUM) Introduction to Business Ethics | WS 2019/2020

YouTube: Consequentialism, Consequentialism & Utilitarianism part 1, Business Ethics.