

Books and Literature Review Society (BLRS) presents:

Critical Review of the Article:	A Critical Reflection on Utilitarianism on the Basis for Psychiatric Ethics
Author of the Article:	Michael Robertson (Discipline of Psychological Medicines, University of Sydney)
Review Presenter:	Muhammad Asim
Date:	September 28, 2014
Review Publisher:	Books and Literature Review Society (BLRS) under Rehmat and Maryam Researches (Islamabad & Lodhran)

**Core Idea**

In this article, writer defines utilitarianism as a normative philosophy. He firstly describes the theory of consequentialism which defines act of an individual on the base of any right or wrong decision. He says that behavior of an individual is based on any goodness or badness. Similarly, people feel pain and pleasure in their fears and interests respectively. This is an actual theme of utilitarianism which was presented by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). According to writer, this is in fact an ethical framework of political liberalism in the post-Enlightened West. Utilitarianism generally means to maximize interests with reducing sufferings but this is basically a psychological term which is also define by J.S. Mill, argued that cultural, intellectual and spiritual pleasures and actual human pleasures and basic interest of human beings. He related pleasure with religious teachings like Christianity. GE Moore (1912) although, defines pleasure in terms of aestheticism but later, this term used in economic meanings. However, Singer called it personal interests of life which give the feeling of playing. This concept was criticized a lot. Karl Popper (1945) argued that just to achieve maximum pleasure is in fact totalitarianism. This must be called negative utilitarianism. On the other hand, Ronald Dworkin (1977) has distinguished between personal preferences referring to self and external preferences referring person's choice about others. Kymlicka (2000) argued that Bentham's time utilitarianism was progressive theory but in modern liberal democracies, it is conservative one. Similarly, Beauchamp and Childress (2001) have devised a set of criteria by which any moral theory may be assessed. These include clarity, coherence, comprehensiveness, simplicity, explanatory power, justificatory power, output power and practicality. On criteria such as output power, practicality and clarity, utilitarianism fares well. However, on issues such as justificatory power and comprehensiveness, there are problems. The ethical decision-making process in utilitarianism may be quite straightforward. However, the justification and practicality of many utilitarian based decisions are limited, and its comprehensiveness as a moral philosophy is also a source of criticism.

Research Methodology

This study is based on experimental, comparative and qualitative research method. Writer compared theories of sociology with economics, politics and psychology, and presented qualitative conclusion.

Copyright

© All rights have been reserved and protected in accordance with the Copyright Ordinance 1962 of Pakistan & SECP Registration 2022

Disclaimer

This is hereby clearly stated that the responsibility of the contents and the opinions expressed in any forum associated with the Rehmat and Maryam Researches is exclusively of the author(s) or internee(s) concerned. The opinions/views/analysis/results presented at any portal/webpage/forum do not necessarily represent the opinion of the publisher/editor(s) or Rehmat and Maryam Researches. So, there is no responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of information contained in it.

Personal Views

Several thinkers relate utilitarianism with different theories of social sciences. The basic meaning of utilitarianism is even to maximize profits and minimize deficits, but I learn, as all the subjects of social sciences are related to the society, we can easily relate this term with economics, politics or psychology with defining increment in profit, happiness, pleasure or goodness against loss, sadness, pain or badness respectively.