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Ethical Decision Making

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Ethical Decision Making

Various ethical perspectives exist to help in making decisions when facing dilemma situations. Depending on the approach taken, a different rule applies, but common principles such as least harm and justice are usually in play (Schwartz, 2017). Deontologists' approach to ethical decision-making rule that an individual faced with a difficult situation should uphold their duties and obligations as that is considered ethical (Schwartz, 2017). The action taken by Lewis in the case study can be said to be correct depending on what Lewis perceived to be his duty. Having experienced life in a disadvantaged neighborhood, Lewis perceived that he had a duty to ensure students' success. Therefore, correcting students' answers to ensure continuity of the school was Lewis's duty. Still, in the eyes of the school board, Lewis did not adhere to the obligation of passing students without cheating.

Utilitarians rely on the rule that correct decisions seek to maximize benefits and minimize risks to all people involved. The decision style involves listing all the alternative ways, highlighting the people who will be affected by the alternative ways, evaluating the effects of the alternative actions on all people involved and lastly, making a decision that accrues maximum benefit (Schwartz, 2017). In light of the Utilitarian approach, Lewis did the right thing as the action taken was informed by the fact that failure to change the answers for the students would result in the school's closure and further diminish the community status. Consequentially, Lewis considered the result as being of maximum benefit as students would continue learning and later change the narrative of the community. As a utilitarian, Lewis dismissed his moral principles for the benefit of the school and society as large.

From Virtue Ethics perspective, an action taken in a certain dilemma is ethically correct by considering the individual's morals and character over time. Therefore, individuals are judged based on their character rather than the action that deviates from the individual's normal behavior (Schwartz, 2017). Lewis is described as a top-rated teacher worldwide and an individual who is likely to continue being of good help to society. Judging from a virtual ethicist's side, Lewis must have a good reason to facilitate cheating in the school. His past character in the education field indicates a dedicated and reputable teacher. Virtue ethicists would be more lenient in judging Lewis's negative behavior and maybe listen to the story behind allowing cheating in the school.

If Lewis's decision to facilitate cheating helped ensure students continued to school and performed well without cheating in institutions of higher learning, my thoughts on the utilitarianism approach would not change. Utilitarianism, specifically act utilitarianism dwells on taking the action that yields the greatest advantage; thus, the approach would still play. If school continuity is a learned and transformed community, then my opinion for utilitarian approach would still hold. The dignity of the teachers and the school may be put in line, but if taking the cheating action opens up doors for the whole community, then such an action would still be in play. Assurance of a better future eliminates the disadvantage of the uncertainty of results in utilitarianism, as seen in the case study where the predicted results were not realized. Instead of a having a prosperous school, the teachers were arrested and the school closed.

Reference

Schwartz, M. S. (2017). *Business ethics: An ethical decision-making approach*. John Wiley & Sons.

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