

Applying moral theories to the housing allowance dilemma philosophy essay

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Cultural differences can cause different views on morals. Such was the case between Mutambara and NewCom. Mutambara was born and raised in the slums outside Stanley, the capital of Rambia. Through Mutambara's hard work and talent he received a scholarship to study in the United States, where he earned his MBA. He then went to work for NewCom, where after three years was given the opportunity to move back home to Rambia. As part of his relocation to Rambia, NewCom would provide a housing allowance of \$2000 every month so that he can live in a safe and convenient home, where he could maintain the company's image. Drawn between his obligation to support his family and his obligation to his employer, Mutambara falsified expense reports to NewCom so that he could provide for his family as they had once provided for him when he was young. It is difficult to say whether Mutambara was right or wrong in his actions, but his actions can be analyzed by the moral theories of Virtue Ethics, Utilitarian, and Ethics of Care.

Virtue ethics, places less emphasis on which rules people should follow and instead focuses on helping people develop good character traits, such as kindness and generosity. These character traits will in essence, allow a person to make the correct decisions later on in life. Virtue ethics emphasizes the role that motives play in these life decisions. Take for example the motives behind Mutambara's actions. He falsified his expense reports every month to NewCom so that he could send his eight nephews and nieces to school. His actions under virtue ethics was justified as kindness and generosity. But at the same time he was lying and committing fraud against NewCom, which goes against virtue ethics. According to virtue ethics

this is because people have multiple selves. And depending upon the situation is how each of those multiple selves will act. Just like how one behaves and speaks differently when addressing say a co-worker versus addressing one's boss.

Under virtue ethics it is important to keep in mind that one person's virtue may be another person's vice. The dilemma with Mutambara and NewCom is a good example of this. NewCom viewed Mutambara actions of falsifying his expense reports every month as unethical, while Mutambara viewed his actions as responsible and moral. The differences in viewing this moral dilemma are based on the cultural and social differences between Mutambara and NewCom. While in the United States fraud is unethical, in Rambia it is acceptable and widely accepted. These differences can cause many problems in the workplace as well as with the community. It is important to learn about the cultural differences upon entering into a new Market as NewCom has, and it is just as important to learn what behavior is acceptable and not acceptable in the workplace.

Utilitarianism is the concept that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by its utility in providing happiness to the greatest amount of people. It is a form of consequentialism, meaning that the moral worth of an action is determined by its outcome. To understand utilitarianism you must understand the concept of utility. Utility, the good to be maximized, has been defined as happiness or pleasure (versus suffering or pain), where happiness or pleasure is of the ultimate importance in life.

Under Utilitarianism, Mutambara viewed his actions as producing the greatest amount of happiness, because NewCom would be paying the \$2000 housing allowance regardless. Only now with the falsification of the expense reports his family could go to school. But when deciding how to act in a given situation under Utilitarianism, one must assess the consequences of each available course of action, including doing nothing. Not only one must consider the immediate results of their actions but also the long-term consequences and repercussions. Thus, under Utilitarianism Mutambara failed to evaluate all the possible course of actions to determine which would generate the greatest good. Mutambara failed to look at the possibility of speaking with NewCom about his family situation. He did not know whether NewCom could have offered another option that could have generated more happiness than his course of action. He also failed to consider the long-term consequences and repercussions of his actions. He did not think that his actions of falsifying the expense reports to NewCom would compromise his work ethics. His relationship with NewCom has now suffered due to his actions, because NewCom viewed them unethical behavior. His employment with NewCom could be at risk and he failed to realize this due to cultural and social practices.

The ethics of care is an ethical theory about what makes actions right or wrong based on the importance of relationships. As humans we are social creatures and long to have a sense of belonging. So we tend to do the right thing to create and sustain caring communities. To maintain these communities we must learn how to care, which is defined as the ability to

recognize and respond to the needs of others. Mutambara recognized that his nephews and nieces needed the money so that they can go to school and get an education, in hopes that one day they would succeed as he had. His intentions were good under the ethics of care, in that he was seeking to take care of his family. So he believed he was doing the right thing. NewCom viewed his actions as wrong. They saw Mutambara's actions as showing no regard for the relationship between him and his employer. But under the ethics of care, NewCom should be open to sympathetic understanding. They need to be willing to hear Mutambara's side of the story and be aware that there was a need for Mutambara to sustain and preserve the network of care within his family. The pressure Mutambara was under to assist his family should be taken into consideration to preserve the harmony, not only with the company but with their employee's family. Now that the company is located in Rambia, it is important to understand the social and cultural practices. If it is common practice for the residents of Rambia to assist their families, then it would be to the benefit of NewCom to abide by this customs to build a stronger relationship with its community. Mutambara must also work on building his relationship with his employer and become aware of what his company requires and needs from him. The relationship must be one of give and take, and built of caring relationships.

Each moral theory has its positive and negatives on how to approach a given situation. In the case of Mutambara and NewCom, it is difficult to determine which was morally correct. Each of their actions can be viewed as moral or

immoral, using the different approaches of moral theories. It is no wonder why philosopher's debate about which theory is the best.