

Cultural Relativism and Moral Action

Course code

Course Title

Professor XYZ

[Institutional Affiliation(s)]

Cultural Relativism and Moral Actions

With an increase in workplace diversity, it is common to see cases of the judgment of an individual's cultural values by comparing them with the norms of the culture where they are residing. An individual's actions should only be judged based on cultural values, norms, and practices. A difficult situation arises when the morally right thing to do clashes with the individual's culture. The best solution is to therefore compromise between the two situations and reach a standstill that is acceptable to both parties

My best friend's father is a doctor at a government hospital, and he faced an intense moral dilemma at his workplace. A 17-year-old middle-eastern girl came to the hospital along with her parents. They complained that their daughter had been feeling severe pain in her bones for the past few days, and the pain was getting intolerable. The pain started 5 to 6 months ago and has become very intense. The doctor immediately recommended a few laboratory tests to check for cancer. Within a few hours, the results came in, and it was as the doctor had expected. However, the situation worsened over time, and a deep doctoral analysis proved that the girl had only a few months left to live. The parents took much time to decide whether to take the girl to the hospital or not. They kept on focusing on eastern medication and prayer, which eventually failed. The girl was thus admitted to the hospital, and after one month of treatment, the doctor gave up. He recommended that due to the daughter's intense pain, they should relieve her from her suffering and perform euthanasia. The parents immediately rejected the idea based on religious and cultural values. They classified it as suicide and told the doctors that this was not a plausible option, which resulted in a heated debate.

Subjective moral relativists would immediately side with the parents. Moral decisions are right or wrong from a particular standpoint (Wreen, 2018). From the suffering perspective, a

moral relativist would want to end the patient's suffering. But from the cultural perspective of the parents, the relativist would compel the parents not to compromise on their values. Therefore, subjective moral relativists would side with the parents. They would argue that if euthanasia is culturally inappropriate, they cannot be convinced otherwise. Subjective moral relativists would have this opinion because they understand that the parents also care about the patient's suffering. The parents love their child more than the doctor does; therefore, moral policing by the doctor would be inappropriate.

Cultural relativists would also have a similar opinion. The patient's culture does not allow euthanasia; therefore, suffering is the only option for the patient. According to cultural relativists, the doctor cannot judge the parents' decision because euthanasia is not as culturally appropriate in the middle-east as it is in the western world. As stated in the textbook, different cultures have different moral codes; therefore, there is no absolute truth regarding morality (Rachels, 2018). Some would say this approach is incorrect, while others disagree. In reality, doctors cannot force their decision on parents; therefore, the cultural relativist approach is appropriate.

My friend's father, the doctor, tried his best to convince the parents that their daughter's pain was endless. He tried to brand euthanasia as different from suicide and brought religion into the matter. According to the doctor, extending the patient's suffering was no need. The parents completely understood the doctor's concerns, but they believed their daughter's life was now in God's hands. Finally, after a few days of debating, the parents agreed with the doctor because the pain worsened exponentially. The doctor's approach was morally correct because he did not force the parents to make the choice but instead debated with them and convinced them to do the right thing.

The doctor adopted the objective moral truth. The primary example of objective moral truth is the avoidance of human suffering. All cultures and religions are united when it comes to avoiding suffering. The doctor should always have only the patient's health insight. The doctor did not force the parents into euthanasia; rather, he appropriately handled the situation. Extending the patient's suffering had no benefits, so euthanasia was the right thing to do

In conclusion, anyone can face severe moral dilemmas; in that case, a cultural and moral relativist approach must be considered. It is always best to compromise with the patient to avoid hurting their cultural values while watching out for what is best for them. Another dilemma could be the abortion in which the carrier's consent is not taken.

References

Rachels, J. (2018). *Elements of Moral Philosophy*. McGraw Hill Education & Medic.

Wreen, M. (2018). What Is Moral Relativism? *Philosophy*, 93(3), 337–354.