

Candidate 1 evidence

15.	I do not believe that Utilitarianism is a successful theory to give an analysis of the case study due to its focus on consequence, the problem of equity, flexibility of act act and the strength of rule furthermore that act could lead us to commit immoral actions.
	Although I believe that Rule Utilitarianism gives a the more successful analysis than Act.

Utilitarianism is based on the Greatest happiness principle which claims that the moral action is the one in which creates the greatest happiness or least amount of pain. Mill states that "Utility or the Greatest Happiness principle holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness and wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness." This idea is based on three main principles. The consequentialist principle claims that the moral rightness of an action is determined by the consequences that an action produces rather than the intentions or motives it is based on. The hedonic principle claims that the only

consequence of any moral ~~work~~
worth is happiness or unhappiness:
pleasure is the only thing worth valuing
in itself. Bentham states that "nature
has placed mankind under the
governance of two sovereign masters,
pain and pleasure" and that these
are twin motivators of human action.
The Equity principle holds that we
should ~~take~~ count everyone involved
equally in our moral deliberations,
distinguishing the theory from
Ethical egoism. There are two forms
of Utilitarianism: Act utilitarianism and
~~Act~~ Rule Utilitarianism.

Act utilitarianism maintains that
we should assess each situation

individually and work out which action would maximise happiness in those particular circumstances.

Rule utilitarianism maintains that we should follow general rules which tend to be of overall benefit to society in all situations. There are two types of Rule: Soft rule utilitarianism maintains that we can deviate from fixed rules under special circumstances and Hard Rule Utilitarianism maintains that we should always follow these general rules in all situations.

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In this Scenario, an act utilitarian would assess the choice of actions available these are: To stop at the red light or

not to stop at the red light. ~~So~~ They would then assess the likely consequences of each action. Stopping at the red light could result in the child becoming even more ill ^{and} the chances of them getting sufficient help in time decreasing. Not stopping at the red light could ~~lead to~~ a traffic accident mean that the child would get the help they need in time but could lead to a traffic offense fine. They would then assess which action would create the greatest happiness in that situation. ~~Then not stopping at the red light would lead to the greatest happiness in that situation because~~

~~An act utilitarian would then apply the equity principle.~~ An act utilitarian would then apply the equity principle to ensure the interests of everyone involved are counted equally. These are the parent, child and police officers. Not stopping at the red light would create the greatest happiness because the child ~~can~~ would have the chance to feel better quicker and ~~the guilt of running a red light.~~ Happiness of helping their child faster would outweigh the guilt or ~~the unhappiness~~ of running a red light.

A rule utilitarian would also assess the choice of actions available, these are stopping at the red light or not stopping at the red light. They would then consider the general rules behind each action. Stopping at the red light could be said to be following the general rule "always comply with traffic rules and regulations". Not stopping at the red light could be said to be following the general rule "It is okay to deviate from traffic rules and regulations". They would then assess which general rule would be of overall benefit to society if followed in all situations. I believe that a rule utilitarian would

maintain that we should ~~should~~ follow the general rule to "always comply with traffic rules and regulations" as these measures are in place to protect the overall safety and happiness of society when followed at all times.

It is unclear whether we should judge the actual or predicted consequences, the global or local consequences, the long or short term consequences and consequences can be difficult to accurately predict. In this scenario, an alternative consequence could have been that they caused a traffic accident injuring many others. It could be counter argued that

consequences are ~~a~~ more observable and objective than ~~intent~~ hidden intentions or motives. However this principle gives us little ~~help in~~ guidance on which of the numerous possible consequences to judge and is therefore unhelpful in moral decision making. Furthermore Rule Utilitarianism seems to avoid this criticism as it relies on following general rules in all situations to maximise happiness in all situations, making Rule seem more successful than Act.

It could also be said that act allows us to commit seemingly immoral actions on the basis that they maximise

happiness in that situation. In this scenario the parent could commit a traffic offence just to maximise happiness for themselves and their child. However it could be counter argued that this gives utilitarianism a degree of flexibility to make judgements of right and wrong dependent on relevant context and circumstances. Although I still don't believe this justifies committing an immoral action, and again rule seems to successfully avoid this criticism by following general rules for the benefit of all of society.

Furthermore it could be considered an issue dealt according to the Equity

principle we should have to count everyone's interests equally in the situation. For instance we have to also consider the views of the police in the scenario as well as the parent and her loved one, the child. It could be considered counter intuitive and unfair that we cannot make special obligations under this principle for our loved ones or the more vulnerable in society. Although some may say that it is a strength of theory to make unbiased judgements on the interests of all concerned. Although I believe this goes against our moral intuitions to protect the ones we love. - Rule utilitarianism

Follows general rules to the benefit of society and does not take into account specific considerations again avoiding this criticism.

It could be considered a strength that rule provides us with fixed rules to follow in all situations for the benefit of the whole of society. Yet it has been counter argued that such a practice could in some situations lead to a great extent of pain. In this scenario following the general rule "always comply with traffic rules and regulations" could mean that the child would become extremely poorly and a great deal of guilt for the parent for ~~not~~ stopping at the

red light. However this would only be an issue for Hard Rule utilitarianism, as soft rule utilitarianism would allow us to deviate from fixed rules on special occasions.

In conclusion

I do not believe that utilitarianism is a successful moral theory due to issues with consequences, equity, Act and Rule. However I do believe that Rule gives a more successful analysis of the scenario overall.

~~Overall utilitarianism~~ compared to Act utilitarianism.