Academics Generic Practices: Integrity Level

Prácticas genéricas académicas: nivel de integridad

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies show that there are still issues of integrity among academics. Therefore, the focus of this study is to identify academics' level of integrity in practicing their generic tasks. Based on the data collected via questionnaires, 164 academics evaluated themselves at a high level of integrity in their generic task with the mean score of 9.45 over 10.0. Academics also evaluated themselves as at a high level for all integrity values with the mean score of 9.41 to 9.54 that are for prudent, sincerity, accountability, credibility, self-discipline, and trustworthy. The implication is that, academics need no training to upgrade their integrity. However, from time to time, it is good to have a reminder of good deeds specially to ensure integrity becomes a culture among academics.

Keywords: Education, integrity, values, academics, generic practices.

RESUMEN

Estudios previos muestran que todavía hay problemas de integridad entre los académicos. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este estudio es identificar el nivel de integridad de los académicos al practicar sus tareas genéricas. Sobre la base de los datos recopilados a través de cuestionarios, 164 académicos se evaluaron a sí mismos con un alto nivel de integridad en su tarea genérica con un puntaje promedio de 9.45 sobre 10.0. Los académicos también se evaluaron a sí mismos como de alto nivel para todos los valores de integridad con un puntaje promedio de 9.41 a 9.54 que son prudentes, sinceridad, responsabilidad, credibilidad, autodisciplina y confianza. La implicación es que los académicos no necesitan capacitación para mejorar su integridad. Sin embargo, de vez en cuando, es bueno tener un recordatorio de las buenas acciones, especialmente para garantizar que la integridad se convierta en una cultura entre los académicos.

Palabras clave: Educación, integridad, valores, académicos, prácticas genéricas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The potential of human resources (HR) to influence ethical at the top level of organization is primarily depends on the nature of the organization (Tasoulis, Krepapa & Stewart, 2019). In other words, cultures of integrity enable human resource executives to influence ethical behavior in top management teams. A study by Cady, Brodke, M., & Parker, N. (2019) showed that integrity and team action had a significant indirect effect on individual performance. It shows that the organization citizens must understand the concept of integrity and the practices must be based on the integrity values in order to ensure the good performance of the individual and the organization as well. However, how far the concept of integrity understood and being practiced in organization? What actually means by integrity? According to Siddiquee (2010), Institutions of Integrity Malaysia (IIM) defines integrity as an individual trait based on pure values such as honest, truthful, trustworthy, just, responsible, transparent, efficient and wise. The National Integrity Plan (PIN) also defines integrity as the superior quality that exists both individually and collectively. In Islam, integrity is truthful, trustworthy, honest, sincere, loyal, responsible, decisive, just, efficient, diligent, wise, firm, personal, noble, and virtuous, and such as the nature of the Messenger of Allah is truthful (siddiq), trust (amanah), deliver (tabligh), and wise (fatanah). A person with integrity will do things in an ethical way, with acceptable values and beliefs. Civil servants with positions or responsibilities entrusted to act honestly in their jurisdiction and duties, be transparent, have no personal conflict, authority, accountable and adhere to all applicable laws and regulations so that the public's trust in the public servant is not impaired and thus disruptive, stable and harmony. Personal qualities which are the positive values of leaders are very important to ensure they can function effectively in organizations (Bity Salwana, Azlin Norhaini & Mohamed Yusof, 2018).

Abdullah and Abdullah (2016) said, public agencies are established with the primary objective of meeting the needs of the people and the country. Whereas, Abdullah and Abdullah (2016) stated that to achieve the objective, a high-quality public service delivery system is required, and integrity is important to create efficient and disciplined public administration and services. Integrity is about imposing moral values that can overcome problems and weaknesses in various aspects of governance such as financial management, handling of disciplinary cases, corruption, abuse of power and illicit abuse by regulation, legislation and religion.

Integrity is not something new (Abdul Rahman, 2015). It has been talked since ancient times of Greek civilization, Chinese civilization, Islamic civilization and others. Values and practices such as holding to the truth, being virtuous, trusting, honest, responsible, standing upright, fighting the wrong, have been the core of building individual identity, strengthening institution and building nation and society. Integrity builds civilization; lack of integrity led to the collapse of civilization. What is new is awareness of the need for integrity to be revived, polished, and institutionalized.

Integrity is important for an organization to attain excellence (Arifin & Ahmad, 2017). Arifin and Ahmad (2017) said focused their research by measuring the integrity of Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM), They found that PDRM has tried their best to enhance the value of integrity among the police but according to the reports released by the Bureau of Public Complaints (2014) and the Integrity Commission of the Agencies (2014), PDRM has received a number of complaints from the community regarding the deterioration in their service delivery system which involves a level of integrity. Studies using qualitative and quantitative methods of 760 members and PDRM officers working in the State of Perak show that while scholars disagree in determining whether organizational culture and individual integrity are more influential on police members' integrity, the study found that organizational culture were more relevant in explaining issues of integrity among PDRM members because of their significant influence on attitudes and behaviour.

The other opinion said that the value of individual integrity is eroded (Nilhusna, Noraisa & Khadijah, 2012). This discrepancy is said to be caused by humans, which is now increasingly influenced by elements that shake their faith. This is in line with the findings of Omar, Awang and Manaf (2012) which shown that there has been an increase in public complaints against the Road Transport Department (JPJ) from 2008-2011 which is alleged to have diminished its integrity. Complaint records show that deterioration in integrity was related to abuse of power, delay in action or no action at all, failure of power, poor quality of counter and telephone service, failure to comply with procedures, unresponsiveness, unjust acts and lack of public facilities during the four years of study.

Among others, (Zainal Abidin, 2008) stated that SMEs have sought to enhance the integrity of their citizens by instilling awareness and sensitivity to quality, efficient and prudent work. The initiative aims to build an image of the workforce of a committed and capable individual or team. These efforts are said to require challenging, people-driven, mind-numbing changes, to be practiced as a whole, and to require value chain from top management to the bottom line. The success of the venture based on four core values that are trust, respect, innovation and self-esteem (based on one's ethics and integrity) (Zainal Abidin, 2008). Therefore, the degree of integrity among UKM academics has not yet ascertained, as there is no such study to date. This study is a turning point to answer the question.

2. METHODOLOGY

The population for this study is 1108. Based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the acceptable number of samples is 291. A few steps taken to collect the data, including visited the target sample and uploading the questionnaires on line. This study finally responded by 164 academics. The instrument is a questionnaire, which contains items to measure integrity as main construct and values of integrity as a sub construct. The sub constructs which are the values of unity (proved by statistical analysis), are accountability, trust, self-discipline, honest, credibility, and prudent means to measure integrity of academics in generic practices. The instrument can be access online with the aim of getting more response and at the same time to ensure respondents feel free and secured in fulfilling the questionnaires. The return rate is 56.38 % which is equal to 164 over 291 determined by Krejcie and Morgan) The data, which is quantitative, was

analysed descriptively to determine the mean score and standard deviation using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The basis to interpret the mean score is the interpretation by Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia (2018) as shown in Table 1. Mean score of 0.0 to 2.5 explains a low level of integrity, 2.6 to 5.0 as a moderately low level of integrity, 5.1 to 7.5 as a moderately high level of integrity, while 7.6 to 10.0 as a high level of integrity.

Table 1 Unity Level Interpretation

Mean score	Unity Practice Level
0.00 to 2.49	Low
2.50 to 5.09	Moderately low
5.10 to 7.59	Moderately High
7.60 to 10.00	High

Source: Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education (2018)

3.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows a research finding for a research question "To what extent is the academic integrity level for generic practice?"

Table 2 Academics Generic Practices: Integrity Level

Construct	Mean	S.D	Unity Practive Level
Generic Practices	9.45	.62	High
Accountability	9.51	.69	High
Trust	9.41	.99	High
Self-discipline	9.51	.65	High
Honest	9.47	.78	High
Credibility	9.48	.76	High
Prudent	9.54	.68	High

*N=164 S.D=standard deviation

Referring to the table, integrity level of academics in generic practices is high (mean score = 9.45, S.D. = 0.62). Academics' prudent is at the highest level (mean score = 9.54, S.D. = 0.68), followed by accountability (mean score = 9.51, S.D. = 0.69) and self-discipline respectively (mean score = 9.51, S.D. = 0.65). The next ranking goes to credibility (mean score = 9.51, S.D. = 0.69), honest (mean score = 9.47, S.D. = .78), and trust (mean score = 9.41, S.D. = 0.99). The findings showed that all the sub construct or values of integrity achieve a high level, but the lowest level is "trust" which is very important values in ensuring integrity being an "umbrella" in an organization. It shows that there is a room for improvement for integrity among academics since trust is a very important value to ensure academics do their job ethically.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of the study (Ali & Puteh, 2017), which show that a culture of work ethic exists in an organization where citizens are morally upright, have good values, are committed to work and are responsible. The characteristics expressed by Ali and Puteh (2017) are that a work culture of integrity is a work culture that is competitive, has clear goals and direction and has a good moral and moral atmosphere in line with the elements of integrity studied. The institutions that are being studied are also excelling in their achievements and are undeniable, a work culture of integrity can enhance organizational excellence and positively impact the country's economic, development and stability. Human appreciation of the value of integrity will also serve as a deterrent to the organization's people from practicing morality, bad values, and corruption and so on.

The findings of this study are also consistent with the review of Arifin and Ahmad (2017) on the National Integrity Plan, which states that integrity is a set of superior qualities that exist holistically and integrally within individuals and organizations. Integrity embodied in the actions of individuals and organizations in achieving their goals. In other words, integrity is not just about the individual, it involves the systems and institutions of the nation and society.

The findings of the study show that academics of high integrity also have similarities to what is presented by Jasmi and Tamuri (2007) in their paper which discussed the integrity of Islamic Education teachers as the Qudwah Hasanah model to make Islamic Education Research and Development more attractive. As educators, either lecturers or teachers need to have the ability to set a good example (Qudwah Hasanah or role model). Our education system has succeeded in having a dedicated educator in line with the requirements of the National Philosophy of Education. According to [12], integrity is a fundamental approach to education in the form of Qudwah Hasanah and is an excellent self-identity that is capable of controlling passions, purifying the heart, and enhancing piety.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the generic practice of academic's integrity is at the high level. The implication is that academics need no training or program to increase their integrity. In order for integrity to be practiced in an organization, the value of integrity needs to be emphasized and to be reminded from time to time. To achieve the status of a developed nation by 2020, knowledgeable, competitive, dynamic and performance-oriented society and workforce are needed. The application of moral, ethical, spiritual as well as objective and purposeful physical development plans and social institutions is also expected to generate a society of people with integrity and vision.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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