

Feasibility of the Work Ethics Quality to Promote Research, Publication, Consultation and Commercialization (MEK4P)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the feasibility of the work ethic module to promote research, publication, consultation and commercialization in public and private institutions of higher learning and institute of teacher education. The aspects emphasized in this study are the quality of work ethics related to honesty, confidentiality, expert reviews, misappropriation of funds, plagiarism, authenticity of reference, appreciation and recognition in its implementation. The study was conducted within one year and the sample of the study involved 152 lecturers consisting of 30 males and 122 females. Response from 85 respondents of the public institutions of higher learning, 38 respondents of the private institutions of higher learning and 29 respondents of the institute of teacher education were used to obtain quantitative data from the sample of the study. The data were collected through questionnaires and observations indirectly. Meanwhile, the raw data were analyzed using percentage and mean.

Keywords: Work Ethic, Research, Publication, Consultation and Commercialization
Honesty, Confidentiality, Expert Reviews, Misappropriation of Funds, Plagiarism,
Authenticity of Reference, Appreciation and Recognition.

Introduction

The quality of work ethics for the profession as a lecturer can contribute to the research, publication, consultation and commercialization of the country. Research is one of the issues emphasized among lecturers, especially new lecturers in line with national goals to produce more researchers in Malaysia. There are various issues associated with the quality of work ethics among lecturers due to certain factors that cause a lecturer to commit a wrong act and contrary to the principles of quality in the work ethic practiced as a civil servant.

Background

Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia have undergone various remarkable changes. The increase in the number of universities, whether public or private universities have managed to improve the performance on par with universities abroad. To boost the economy based on knowledge and innovation, cooperation between Higher Education Institutions (HEI), research institutions, private companies and relevant organizations should be strengthened. This core aimed to develop and strengthen the capacity of research activities at the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to contribute knowledge and skills in educational research and professional development of lecturers that enhance the quality of lecturers. By conducting research, lecturers can empower their personalities, intellectuality and leadership, especially in carrying out their duties as educators . Conducting action research also provides opportunity for educators to diversify their teaching techniques in order to facilitate the achievement of their students' understanding in certain subjects (Marcus,2017).

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Lecturers need to emphasize quality in their work ethics so that education can produce knowledgeable people and good work ethics. The quality of this work ethic is very important as it is a guide used to enhance the dignity of the lecturers' profession. Quality of work ethics is a guide and reference to civil servants about any prohibition or any act that violates the rules and regulations. It serves as an opportunity for educators to self-evaluate their teaching practices (Hong & Lawrence, 2011). Also, it allows teachers to make a change in their pedagogical practices that will have a positive impact upon teaching and learning (Mahani, 2012).

Value is the right thing to be assessed by someone and acceptable. It is associated with moral, ethical attributes. For university lecturers, they need to provide guidelines on the value of work ethics that can encourage research at the workplace. This is because academic profession is not like any other public profession. The academic profession involves special responsibility under public supervision and criticism. It is a great form of improving lifelong learning and of continuing professional development (Cain & Milovic, 2010; Ulla, Barrera & Acompanado, 2017).

Problem Statement

Lecturers are also heavily involved in direct sales, so there are allegations that lecturers make their career as a part-time job. Lecturers have neglected the essential task and took advantage of students by promoting their own business to students.

In the field of research, recently it is found that lecturers did something dignified, unsure, dishonest and unethical. For example, plagiarism of other people's research information through print, electronic media and internet. It is likely that this phenomenon occurs because the coordination and implementation of the work ethic code that is ineffective, insufficient and incomprehensible by the lecturers concerned.

Literature Review

Based on government support given to lecturers in higher education institutions by providing funding through research grants, researchers consider that studies on the feasibility of the work ethic quality modules are essential. Malaysian government allocated a sizable budget to support R&D and commercialization activities in research institutions, especially universities. However, it has been asserted that only a small percentage of the Malaysian universities R&D outcomes have been commercialized (Aziz et al., 2011). Previous research has also shown that the work ethic is needed in research, publication, consultation and commercialization. Knowledge, attitudes, awareness and research experience among lecturers who have done research are at high level. However, they are not transferred to a new lecturer. Subahan (2011) found that every university is responsible for training lecturers in conducting ethical research.

According to Khademi et al., (2014), universities are known as talent promoters in the knowledge economy, which are operating as an essential infrastructure towards building such capacities for nations and regions to survive and succeed in the knowledge economy. Most lecturers are concerned about the research findings but do not know how to publish the findings. Scientific publication is a challenge for newly established universities. Guidelines for publishing research findings are not available and are not taught to new lecturers.

Malaysia is still behind in terms of its research capabilities. On the other hand, most of the literatures that are related to university research commercialization in Malaysia investigate institutional and external factors of technology transfer. There is still a shortage in the amount of commercialized products in universities. Therefore, examining behavioral characteristics of university researchers can be crucial to enhance the university commercialization rate (Khademi et al., 2014). A study conducted by Ngang and Badrul (2015), aimed to examine leadership relationships with ethics, affective commitments, work involvement and organizational support. The findings showed that the level of leadership with ethics, organizational support and work involvement was at moderate level, while affective commitment was at high level.

General Objective

This study aimed to identify the extent to which the feasibility of the work ethic quality modules to promote research, publication, consultation and commercialization (MEK4P).

Specific Objective

Based on the problem statement that has been discussed, the specific objective of the study was to examine the extent to which lecturers are responsible for adhering to work ethics in research, publication, consultation and commercialization as stipulated. Specifically, aspects studied, including honesty, confidentiality, expert reviews, misappropriation of funds, plagiarism, authenticity of reference, appreciation and recognition.

Research Design

Procedures for conducting research on the feasibility of ethical quality modules in research, publication, consultation and commercialization at the public and private of higher learning institutions as well as the institute of teacher education in Malaysia. Among the methods used in this study are indirect observation and survey methods. The selection of the method above

is appropriate because researchers are at the university all the time. This method facilitates researchers to connect with nearby universities and collect actual data. The variables to be studied in this study are research work ethics, work ethic of publication, work ethic of consultation and work ethic of commercialization among lecturers at the study location.

Sample of the Study

Table 1

Sample of the Study By Institution

Public Institution of Higher Learning		Private Institution of Higher Learning		Institute of Teacher Education	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
13	72	9	29	10	19
85		38		29	

In this study, simple random sampling was used and involved 152 lecturers, namely 13 male lecturers and 72 female lecturers from Public Institute of Higher Learning, 9 male lecturers and 29 female lecturers from Private Institute of Higher Learning. Whereas, 10 male lecturers and 19 female lecturers from selected Institute of Teacher Education in North Kinta District, Sungai Petani, Bukit Mertajam, Tanjung Malim and Kuala Lumpur.

Data Collection

The data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaires were distributed by researchers and research assistants. After two weeks, the researchers collected all the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Various methods have been used to measure the quality of lecturer's work ethics. The work ethic quality measurement procedure can be described as 'driving force' and 'centralization of the response'. The best example to measure the quality of work ethics is the 'concentration of the subject' of the Likert scale used by Likert (1932). The 'driving force' approaches was adopted from Thurstone and Chave (1929) and 'centralization of the response' was adopted from Guttman's Skalogram Analysis (1944). In the centralization of the subject (1932), researchers provide some relevant statements about the quality of work ethics to be conducted.

The Likert method was used to administer a large sample. This scale asked respondents to give an answer to the statements given by the scale of 4 points, namely 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree'. The answers given by the respondents can be grouped into two categories, namely agree or disagree. After analyzing the details, it will show the score for each subject. Using factor analysis, some scores within the sub-scale will be obtained. By using the Likert approach (1932), an analysis was made with the purpose of obtaining the details which represented the difference between the subjects. Skalogram analysis by Guttman (1944), using a centralized response approach, the most important procedure is to analyze in depth the form responses obtained from the

respondents. In this approach, the subjects are arranged in a specific order so that positive or non-positive responses to the quality of work ethics are manifested in a continuum. This technique involves the position of statements so that the statements can be arranged according to their strengths from the most positive level to the most negative level.

Work Ethics Study Findings To Promote Research, Publication, Consultation and Commercialization

Table 2

Distribution of Percentage and Mean For Work Ethics (Public Institution of Higher Learning)

Item No	Item	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	Mean	SD	%
A1	Conducting research honestly		24	49	12	2.84	.672	60.35
A2	Maintaining confidentiality	2	1	55	27	3.31	.601	70.33
A3	Looking for an expert review	2	3	55	25	3.24	.589	68.85
A4	Using the funds wisely	2	6	58	19	3.13	.503	66.51
A5	Plagiarism		7	56	22	3.15	.573	66.93
A6	Authenticity of reference	1	10	48	26	3.18	.638	26.72
A7	Appreciation		6	51	28	3.25	.578	69.06
A8	Recognition	2	13	54	16	3.02	.678	64.17
	Total					3.14	0.542	61.61

n= male 13, female 72 (85)

Table 2 shows the lecturers' work ethics at the Public Institution of Higher Learning, namely conducting research honestly (60.35%), maintaining confidentiality (70.33%), looking for an expert review (68.85%), using the funds wisely (66.51%), plagiarism (66.93%), authenticity of reference (26.72%), appreciation (69.06%), and recognition (64.17%).

Table 3

Distribution of Percentage and Mean For Work Ethics (Private Institution of Higher Learning)

Item No	Item	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	Mean	SD	%
A1	Conducting research honestly		12	21	5	2.84	.672	26.98
A2	Maintaining confidentiality	1	1	22	14	3.31	.601	31.45
A3	Looking for an expert review	1	1	23	13	3.24	.589	30.78
A4	Using the funds wisely	1	1	28	8	3.13	.503	29.73
A5	Plagiarism		4	25	9	3.15	.573	29.92
A6	Authenticity of reference		3	25	10	3.18	.638	30.21
A7	Appreciation		3	18	9	3.25	.578	24.37
A8	Recognition		5	25	8	3.02	.678	30.40
	Total					3.14	0.542	29.23

n= male 9, female 29 (38)

Table 3 shows the lecturers' work ethics at the Private Institution of Higher Learning, namely conducting research honestly (26.98%), maintaining confidentiality (31.45%), looking for an expert review (30.78%), using the funds wisely (29.73%), plagiarism (29.92%), authenticity of reference (30.21%), appreciation (24.37%), and recognition (30.40%).

Table 4

Distribution of Percentage and Mean For Work Ethics (Institute of Teacher Education)

Item No	Item	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	Mean	SD	%
A1	Conducting research honestly		12	10	7	2.84	.672	20.59
A2	Maintaining confidentiality			15	14	3.31	.601	23.99
A3	Looking for an expert review			20	9	3.24	.589	23.49
A4	Using the funds wisely		1	21	7	3.13	.503	22.69
A5	Plagiarism		4	18	7	3.15	.573	22.83
A6	Authenticity of reference		3	16	10	3.18	.638	23.05
A7	Appreciation		2	18	9	3.25	.578	23.56
A8	Recognition	1	6	13	9	3.02	.678	22.40
	Total					3.14	0.542	19.98

n= male 10, female 19 (39)

Indicator;

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Agree
4. Strongly Agree

Table 4 shows the lecturers' work ethics at the Institute of Teacher Education, namely conducting research honestly (20.59%), maintaining confidentiality (23.99%), looking for an expert review (23.49%), using the funds wisely (22.69%), plagiarism (22.83%), authenticity of reference (23.05%), appreciation (23.56%), and recognition (22.40%).

Discussion

The overall findings of ethical honesty in conducting research, publication, consultation and commercialization indicated that public institutions of higher learning are more ethical than private institutions of higher learning and institute of teacher education. It is likely that

lecturers in public institutions of higher learning are more prone to existing ethical guidelines and there are also many experienced lecturers who provide guidance to new lecturers.

One of the features of this research in terms of quality of work ethics is to maintain confidentiality. All lecturers of higher learning institutions are highly conscientious in maintaining confidentiality. Data showed a high level for all three institutions. Lecturers have understood and have been trained at school level that maintaining confidentiality is very important in carrying out tasks or jobs.

Findings on referring items or looking for an expert review found that the private institutions of higher learning and the institute of teacher education were in second place, while public institutions of higher learning was in third place. This finding shows that private institutions of higher learning and the institute of teacher education do not have many experts. Therefore, the consent was made by the lecturers as compared to public institutions that already have many experts, the consent of the lecturers may be perceived not important.

The findings of the study on the use of funds wisely through grants or money from the institution, it is found that lecturers were unethical because they spend the funds on the extreme and outrageous needs. For example, purchasing equipments or tools that are not needed or used for longer. Another example, lecturer booked a hall to organize a workshop, but deliberately booking a hall that is too expensive.

In conducting research, there are often experts or experienced individuals to validate the research findings. Such works can often and should be inserted with appreciation in written form, which is a letter of appreciation or uploaded in a report issued. It is aimed at appreciating the work done by someone.

The public institutions of higher learning agreed to elect the second highest award in the second place, followed by the private institutions of higher learning. Meanwhile, the institute of teacher education is in third place. This suggests that appreciation is emphasized in the value of ethical work as a tribute to the contribution, assistance and advice given.

Work ethics in terms of authenticity of the reference, it is found that the public institutions of higher learning agree to be ranked in the lowest eighth place compared to the private institutions of higher learning and the institute of teacher education chooses to be ranked in the fourth place. This shows that lecturers in the public institutions of higher learning are less concerned about reference. In fact, some are not included in the writing text, but are included in the bibliography and vice versa.

The findings indicated that lecturers in public institutions of higher learning chose the work ethic in the form of recognition in the sixth place and the institute of teacher education in the seventh place compared to the private institutions of higher learning in the third place. This suggested that recognition is less important for statutory bodies institutions and it is never made in writing to parties who provide data, such as samples, respondents, and public officials who can be contacted. On the other hand, the private institutions of higher learning are highly appreciating contributions provided by data providers and research information.

In conducting research, lecturers are prohibited from plagiarism. Data shows that the lecturers in these three institutions of higher learning are unethical when conducting research. Lecturers carry out research by copying and pasting information from the internet and stealing the work of others.

If lecturers comply with work ethics in research, publication, consultation and commercialization, they are able to demonstrate good work performance in order to produce good results and enhance the reputation of the institution. Most institutions of higher learning often ignore continuous monitoring issues among lecturers and eventually make the institution less competitive and unproductive as there is no action leads to quality improvement in work ethics from time to time. Therefore, by deepening knowledge in the quality of work ethics, the lecturer will be able to become a truly efficient and effective researcher. Action research is widely regarded as a powerful methodology to improve the educative process (Mills, 2014). Action research offers many benefits for educators committed to a critical, investigative process of improving school practice, policy, or culture.

The result of the discussion found that lecturers at the Public Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTA) dominated in complying with the quality of work ethics in conducting research compared to the Private Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTS) and the Institute of Teacher Education (IPG). The results of the study showed that lecturers are constantly working to enhance their knowledge or expertise through research activities and sharing knowledge within and outside clusters, as well as enhance the image of the organization through the domestic and international network of industrial relations. The findings show that lecturers wishing to produce good research, writing and publication need to create positive relationships and seek help from colleagues before establishing research teams. The importance that doing research has upon the professional development of teachers/ lecturers and their practices has been widely acknowledged in the literature. It equips teachers and other education practitioners with the skills necessary for identifying what the problem is in a school, and knowing how to address that problem systematically (Hine, 2013).

Conclusion

The Quality Module in Work Ethics to Promote Research, Publication, Consultation and Commercialization (MEK4P) should be provided by each institution of higher learning as a guideline for lecturers, especially the newly assigned lecturers. Each lecturer needs to comply with the quality of work ethics set by their respective institutions in order to make the institution more competitive in the future. The findings show that the implementation of the work ethic module is very much needed by the lecturers of the Public Institutions of Higher Learning, the Private Institutions of Higher Learning and the Institute of Teacher Education.

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