BUSINESS ETHICS THROUGH STUDENT LENSES

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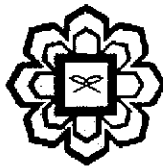
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CHAPTER 2

COMPREHENSION OF CORE TOPICS

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Introduction

Ethics means the standard of good or bad action. It sets the guidelines for people to follow. In their quest to make profits, pay more dividends can be distributed to stockholders, getting an advantage of being invested by some rich investors as well as getting costumers' loyalty some companies resort to unethical practices. They commit bribery, frauds, and all other criminal actions. *Business ethics* education plays a great role to overcome these unethical practices. The discipline defines which actions are acceptable, which unacceptable. Companies have to devise ways to treat these issues.

Business Ethics is a Management course that requires students to extract, analyze as well as understand the issues involved. The main references for the course contain some messages to be exposed to the students; they take the form of explanation, illustration pertaining to theories and concepts and practices. Organizational examples include issues that occurred in real-world context. Since the main textbook adopted for the course is published in the United States, plenty of examples originated from that country, but students can still benefit from the exposure. For example, Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 which is applicable in the United States conveys to the students some general principles of good governance. The Act requires higher authority of a company such as CEO to certify accurately his financial statements since many of the unethical conducts happen in this area.

Besides, the textbook also provides us with several situations that might occur in an organization that requires us to act wisely, and including according to the law. Both in ethics and law, *code of ethics* plays as a crucial role in defining which actions are appropriate to be applied and which are not. Whistle blowing is both *ethics* and the law. Whistle blower receives legal protection. One who exposes a company's wrong doing is good for the society and has to be given protection.

The essentiality of being able to comprehend the concepts involved in *Business Ethics* can be explained with several reasons. Figure 1 sums up the overall steps in comprehending *Business Ethics* main topics. First of all, students should all be familiarized with the ethical conduct expected in certain situations. For example, the book introduces several unethical conducts as well as the consequences (punishments). This would give an idea to the students about right and wrong when they work later. Other than that, they should as well be introduced to the obligation that one (whether individual or company) has towards others. For instance, taking one of the chapters from business ethics text book would be *Corporate Social Responsibility*. A company has to have the objectives of not merely achieving a large amount of profits but also to fulfill the needs of societies, called *Corporate Social Responsibility*. This topic

CHAPTER 3

BUSINESS ETHICS IN THE INTERNET AND ONLINE DATABASES

Hanisah Hamzah and Yusof Ismail

INTRODUCTION

One of the ways to learn about a discipline is to check on its relative availability through electronic media. Electronic media provide instant results. Availability does not mean quality materials. Availability simply suggests that the subject matter may be dealt with through the materials indexed in the system.

Terms related to business ethics used in this study comprised: ethics, business, accounting ethics, bank ethics, business ethics, corporate ethics, professional ethics, marketing ethics, Islam, Islamic ethics, Islamic business ethics, ethics education, ethics research, ethics training, bribery, corporate scandal, and corruption.

Methodology

A list of specified search terms related to business ethics is given by the book Editor to the author to start the basic input for the chapter (see Tables 3.1 and 3.3). There are two sources of data to be used to determine relative availability of the search terms: the Internet and the subscribed online databases in International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM).

Table 1 relates to selected search engines, i.e. Google, Yahoo, Alta Vista and MSN. Table 2 lists the selected IIUM library subscribed online databases, i.e. Islamic Finance News, Pasport GMID, Econlit and Business Source Complete.

The author accessed and recorded the number of hits or results for the specified search terms with each of the search engine. Later, she used the hits for each term as the numerator and the total hits under each search engine as the denominator. The resulting table shows ratios, i.e. standardized measures of availability of the search term. She repeated the same procedure with the IIUM Library's online databases, recorded the hits for each term, and then computed the resulting ratios under each online database.

The author searched the Internet hits on 23rd December 2011, 12.00 p.m. – 12.15 p.m. Malaysian Time in Gombak, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and recorded the results in Table 1.