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Arena Che Kasim, Shukriah Che Kasim & Jamiah Manap

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Amanah (Trustworthiness) Practice to Counter the Problems of Malpractice

Arena Che Kasim¹, Shukriah Che Kasim² & Jamiah Manap¹

¹Centre for Research in Psychology and Human Well-being, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, ²Academy of Islamic Study, University Malaya Education Centre, Mukim Telong 16310 Bachok, Kelantan, Malaysia
Corresponding Author's Email: arena@ukm.edu.my

Abstract

Malaysia which is known as a country with multi-ethnic and multi-religious society who live coexist in relative harmony. Unfortunately, the harmony and prosperity of Malaysia was torn because of the greediness and misbehaviour among the people in the country. This malpractice, misconduct and corruption happened every day and everywhere. This actions and behaviours not only happened among the people from the lowest position but it also involved the people in the highest status and level whether in the big firm, well-known companies and even in the cabinet as well. Therefore, the writing of qualitative concept paper with analysis content method attempts to analyse how amanah (trustworthiness) practice can contribute to counter the problems of malpractice among Malaysian by implementing the Appreciative Inquires Theory (AI). The finding showed by indicate the theory can help in combatting these problems. It is hoped that this method will be a comprehensive and accurate method which can be introduced and implemented to all in the effort to form Malaysia as a country of zero corruption and malpractice.

Keywords: Amanah (Trustworthy), Malpractice, Counter, Appreciative Inquiry Theory

Introduction

Dubbed as 'the mother of all crimes', corruption imposes significant costs on Malaysia. Inconsistent with the moral, ethical and religious values of Malaysians, corruption brings procedural and financial complexities to the public, contributes to socio-economic imbalances and erodes the value system of the country. Besides the social costs, corruption also robs our nation of its wealth and resources. For more than a decade, much of the Muslim world has experienced the impact of Islamic revivalism and it has emphasised upholding Islamic Laws and the assertion of Islamic Values in government administration and politics (Shaare, 1995). Malaysia as one the country which is known as the Islamic country also put a lot of effort in establishing Islamic values among the people. This article attempt to discuss about the implementation of *amanah* (trustworthiness) character which is also one of the Islamic value to the society in order to reduce if not eliminate the problem of malpractice, misconduct and corruption among professionals in Malaysia. It is believed that this article is important to indicate one of the solutions and alternative for the stated problems.

The most importance discussion is about the theory on how to instil and cultivate the character of *amanah* (trustworthiness) in people's due to counter the malpractice which had happened in community. This will focus on with the discussion the model of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as it foundation and a model to follow and by making some modification to suit the need and situation by taking into consideration the government's intention that is based on Malaysian mould. By discussing all of these aspects it is hope that there are alternatives in reducing if not eradicate the malpractice and corruption totally in the society can be realised.

Research Methodology

The data collected while writing this article is in a qualitative form that using the content analysis method. This method is used because it requires the authors to read and analyse a diverse collection of articles and other written resources. This way may help the authors to get the ideas about the importance of finding answers to the question regarding implementing *amanah* (trustworthiness) practice to counter the problems of malpractice among Malaysian.

Literature Review

Corruption is not only a human right issue but also a violation of human rights that can contribute to closing the gap of the implementation of international anti-corruption instruments and can complement the dominant criminal-based approach (Peters, 2019). Informal social control is an effective method of strengthening the value of integrity to restrict the misconduct of young people. Strong religious beliefs (Obasola, 2013) and followed by trust towards the Law Enforcement Agency (Costallo & Vowell, 1999) is expected to increase the integrity value of youth, where the level of neglect for the non-integrity activity is high. Nazirah (2021) in her research has identified 10 main causal factors of corruption in police departments in Southeast Asia including rationalization, leadership, supervision, report, bureaucracy, training, external forces, opportunities, reward and accountability.

The practice of religion and volunteerism among the youth are expected to enhance moral value and integrity (Sufiean, et al., 2018). The religious aspect has a significant relationship with social integration among the people under surveillance (Fauziah et al., 2020). This shows that religion is crucial that works as a human driver to practice a good and respected attitude. A work culture of integrity refers to competitive work culture, having a clear mission and direction and has good morals and attitude (Akrimi & Anuar, 2017). To own honest, responsible, trustworthy, sincere and transparent attitude in performing work is important for the individual. This is because these values can help to build and form human integrity (Hafizah, 2019). The level of piety towards the religion, religious practice, and the trust towards the agency of law enforcement able to increase the moral value and integrity of the young people (Sufiean, et al., 2018). The understanding and practice of continuous integrity attitude is a strong base to curb the problem of corruption and misconduct problems continue to be uncontrolled. A healthy society is not only a society with high per capita income but also a society that practices good ethics and professionalism in all fields. Thus sound morals and ethical behaviour must be institutionalised within our character over time and they must become a way of life and cannot be established or created in a day or a semester or a year (Hapsah, 2010).

Discussion and Findings

Creating and asking people to behave with *amanah* character and manner is somehow or rather quite difficult but with the continued efforts, the dream of seeing all the people who have this nature and character will become a reality. It is undeniable that this expectation will take some time to be realised but we cannot despair and lose hope with the situation. The determination to see it become a reality must become as the main target in each of the designed plans and programmes whereby it should be done continuously and regularly. Being and acted as a person with *amanah* character and behaviour, is same as being acted as an integrity person. We need to realise that the *amanah* character is also means that behaving with the integrity. This character or behaviour is not a commodity that can be created with the blink of an eye. Notwithstanding, that *amanah* and integrity is a quality and thus it cannot be guaranteed to exist by the laws and regulations, even if we accept that the infrastructure has a role in shaping these characters and behaviours. By the way, this cannot take over the role of commitment and sincerity in achieving the ideals of acted with *amanah* and integrity. Any expression, terminology or system that was created there was no guarantee in ensuring that this idea can be generated if the commitment to the goals of the vision of the system and the provision did not exist (Abdul Aziz, 2007).

Amanah sometimes regarded as rather fixed behaviour concept (H'akan, 2010). In other words, the existing system and environment must be determined to make changes or shifts that they are then placed in a state are forced to see themselves in the mirror and make decisions to improve the situation. Thus the whole system needs to change or accept a shift without any excuses. But notwithstanding we should not expect the results happened in an overnight. The efforts to build *amanah* and integrity as well does not work overnight, this will involve the construction of generation to realise it. What we build today will only be seen the results in 20 or 30 years ahead (Anis et al., 2007). It is because what is already rotten and decay cannot be removed immediately, and definitely it takes some time to recover or at least change. Other than that, to recover and replace them with the new and better quality is also takes time. Furthermore, if we are really keen and committed to this idea, we at least require a generation to see the results though.

The effort to enhance *amanah* character should be related to the personal and spiritual awareness. In this regard, we are fortunate because most of the races in this country have a belief, culture and traditions respectively. Due to that, this should be a privileged for sustainable *amanah* since it is something that comes from within and this should be based on religion and spirituality that always have the power to monitor and assess the movement of body language and our work (Anis et al., 2007). This is an important and determining the factors and also other external frame in realising this expectation. The scandals involving big companies such as Enron, Arthur Anderson, Morgan Stanley, Worldcom and others had awakened the people towards the importance of ethics and integrity (Sharifah, 2010). Due to the lack of good behaviour conduct has resulted these companies experience a big lost and bankruptcy despite nobody expecting this situation can happened especially for these established and well known companies all over the world.

Furthermore, the number one reason for these scandals are due to infectious greed of the corporate leaders who are usually professionals. Thus issues related to ethics and professionalism needed to be brought to the forefront given those scandals had disturbed the

business landscape around the world. These scandals and their massive negative impact resulted from unethical behaviour and made people aware that this behaviour not only failed to protect the stakeholders but also disturbed the equilibrium of the business landscape around the world (Sharifah, 2010). In overcome or reducing the problem of malpractice, misconduct and corruption among Malaysian in general and particularly among the government servants, it is suggested that by adopting and using the theory of Appreciation Inquiry (AI) which is considered as one of the most suitable alternative theory to solve the problems and at the same time as one of the practical effort in cultivating *amanah*.

The reason of choosing this theory because it is still not widely use particularly in Malaysia, despite the approach which always use until now is try to making good and improve the rotten part by trying to identify the other alternative way rather than make it better based on the opportunity they have at that time and in that situation. Furthermore, this theory mostly concentrates on changes management in the organisations to achieve and produced the best maximum output. By using the new approach, it is hope it can give a different dimension and ideas to the parties concern in recovering the damage in the society rather than continuously using the commonly used method. Normally in whatever courses or workshops organised by the government agencies or any organisations in Malaysia with regard to motivation and improvements in management, they preferred to use the method of SWOT analysis in any kind of problem solving and decision making no matter what type of departments are they or what is the problem they are facing. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The SWOT analysis is said can provide a good framework for reviewing strategy, position and direction of a company or business proposition (Chapman, 2011).

Even though the purpose of this method is try to stimulate the participants to identify and recognise all the possible factors by doing brainstorming at the starting point, on the other hand people tend to create issues which sometimes did not relevant to their current situations or problems. Due to the identifying of some weaknesses in this SWOT analysis approach so the researcher tried to find out the best alternative approach or theory in overcome the problem of malpractice, misconduct, and corruption among the people in the country and the civil servants in particular especially the best way on how to cultivate *amanah* character as an agent for sustaining the human development. By identifying the new theory and making some adaptation onto it due to suit the need of the target group it is hope it more practical and effective to overcome the problems discussed.

The Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Model

The model of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a way of thinking, seeing and acting for powerful, purposeful changes in organisations and it is a new model of change management, uniquely suited to the values, beliefs, and business challenges facing managers and leaders today. AI refers to Ap-pre'ci-ate, v., 1. Valuing; 2. To increase in value, meanwhile In-quire', v., 1. The act of exploration and discovery. 2. To ask question (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The approach is based on the premise that 'organisations change in the direction in which they inquire'. This means that, an organisation which inquires into problem will keep finding problems but an organisation which attempts to appreciate what is beat in itself will discover more and more that is good and to build up a new future where the best becomes more common. AI is a narrative-based process of positive change and the process is called 4-D Cycle

that are (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005):

1. Discovery- people talk to another, often via structured interviews, to discover the times when the organisation is at its best. These stories are told as richly as possible.
2. Dream- the dream phase is often run as large group conference where people are encouraged to envision the organisation as if the peak moments discovered in the 'discover' phase were the norm rather than exceptional.
3. Design- a small team is empowered to go away and design ways of creating organisation dreamed in the conference(s).
4. Destiny- the final phase is to implement the changes.

This theory is basically deals with the strategy on how to improve the development in businesses organisation. Base on this theory the organisational can change into positive changes when all of the member in the organisations work and think in some positive ways rather than in the negative aspects. Instead of asking the employees what is wrong with the company, then change it to what is working well in the company. It is a particular way of asking questions and envisioning the future that fosters positive relationships and builds on what is best in a person, a situation, or an organisation. In doing so, it enhances a system's capacity for collaboration and change (Zera, 2011). This AI is very useful in strategic planning and development by specific framework for consultation and supervision. Starting with positive rather than negative or problems can give a lot of advantages in many aspects. By asking about the positive things it will help the participant to be more motivated rather than asking about the negative aspects which sometimes it seems like we put the blame on them.

By using the same approach that is 4D-Cycle which has been introduced in AI with some modification to suit Malaysia situation and atmosphere, it is hope that the approach can practically use in upgrade the civil servants' attitudes and lead them to practise and aware of the importance of *amanah* characteristic or behaviour in their daily life especially among the government servants and for the betterment of society in the country in general. The reason for choosing this theory is really important because as a human being basically they love to see and hear the positive thing rather than the negative issue to be highlighted and indirectly they will be motivated with the praise and sharing rather than condemning. This discussion is believed can upgrade and motivate them to perform their tasks in the better way. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, at the fourth stage or level most of the people start to acquire some respect, achievement, status and reputation from his surrounding (Chapman, 2001). Failure in satisfying the needs at this level can cause retardation in achieving successfulness on the other higher level in their life.

Hierarchy of Needs is very well known for measuring the development of human personality and self-perfection. The theory which was pioneered by Abraham Harold Maslow was not taken by the emotion which was distracted as Carl Rogers, but in fact it came from a healthy personality. The fact that Maslow is often expressed: 'to study the malfunction, to stop the growth, an immature, and unhealthy either half or partly to be taken as an example, will only produce the psychological limp, paralyzed and crippled' (Maslow, 1970). Due to that, the theory is being chosen because it is more suitable with the nature of human being as being said by Maslow. Despite that, Islam always reminds the Muslims to be aware of the lust in their life which always drive them to behave in the negative ways and too obsessed to the property and wealth that could lead to disruption and destruction to themselves. It is for the

fact that there are four natures of man that are, beastly nature, animal nature, devilish nature and angelic nature. In fact, the roots of these four natures are in man and centred in human soul. For example, if he has got only the nature of the devil, he becomes a devil and if he has got divine qualities, he becomes a truly wise man (Karim, 2008).

By using this theory of disciplining people it is hope that it can contribute to the betterment of the society. Due to the needs of the government that the approach in moulding and cultivating good moral conducts is within a set of affirmative values, stressing that the development of human capital should be balanced by the spiritual strengthening of the Malaysian people, including all the diverse ethnic communities in their own shape, so the theory of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is seem to be the most relevance theory and it will also be discussed with some modification to suit the needs and aims of the government. The discussion also need to take into consideration that Malaysia is a multi-religious and multi ethnic and racial country which demand very high alertness in ensuring the discussion will not become as a sensitive or sensational issue to certain community or religion. On the other hand, for some reasons the discussion will also reflects the researcher belief and should be notice that the discussion on *amanah* character in this context is refer to the innate characteristic of the prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. Even though this discussion will refer to the *amanah* basically seems more inclined to Islam but the researcher will not focus on the Islamic teaching and it will rather refer more on the discussion of the positive value in practising this valuable character (*sifat mahmudah*).

Theory of Human Development in Incorporating *Amanah* (Trustworthiness)

The problem of malpractice, misconduct, abuse of power and corruption are something which is very hard to identify and figure out. It is due to the secrecy which will be kept by both parties who involved with this bad behaviours and activities. The definition or perception of corruption also differs in some places and it adding to more difficult to interpret and far from that is acknowledging it as a serious problem which should be taking care of. In the governmental organisations the cost of preventing or reducing the problem of corruption are not balance against the gains with a view to finding an optimal investment. Instead corruption is thought of when it comes under notice as something that must be eliminated no matter what the cost (Banfield, 1975). On the other hand, to leave this problem continuously happened ongoing for a very long time is impossible. This such activities will lead to the fall of any nation because as being said earlier this malpractice especially corruption is like a cancer, which poisons whatever surrounds it. If this spreading poison remains untouched for long periods of time, it may become accepted as 'normal', which may work against human betterment (Bernama, 2008). The approach is based on the premise that 'organisations change in the direction in which they inquire'. This means that, an organisation which inquires into problem will keep finding problems but an organisation which attempts to appreciate what is beat in itself will discover more and more that is good and to build up a new future where the best becomes more common. Due to that, this study will try to find out the best approach or theory in order to correct what is wrong and to cure what is 'sick' in the community. In order to realise this inspiration, it is best to use this modification of theory as an alternative method of achieving sustainable human development by incorporating and cultivating the *amanah* character or behaviour as a main target value to be achieved (as a goal) in the seminars and workshops. It will be conducted in the stages for instance in

seminars and workshops just like AI but with the difference target issue to approach and instil as an output of the implementation of the theory.

The way how its work is as follows

1. Discovery- people talk to another, often via structured interviews, to discover the times when the organisation is at its best. These stories are told as richly as possible.
 - *who are they? They have to identify who are they and when are they at their best (Their target or hope in their life and or work) they should be as good servants to God and do good deeds towards other creatures. They should constantly make self-purification (*tazkiyah al-nafs*) and self-reflection (*muhasabat al-nafs*) towards themselves. In order to fulfil their target, they definitely have to behave with the *amanah* character.
2. Dream- the dream phase is often run as large group conference where people are encouraged to envision the organisation as if the peak moments discovered in the 'discover' phase were the norm rather than exceptional.
 - *what are they (what is the type of self-do they want themselves to transform into) i.e. role model for others or their future generations by observing and practising the personality of the prophet in particular by following his personality and characteristics (acts and deeds). By practising *amanah* character this inspiration will become as a reality.
3. Design- a small team is empowered to go away and design ways of creating organisation dreamed in the conference(s).
 - *how? (How they want to transform themselves to become a role model) i.e. cultivating the *amanah* character and practising ordaining of good and forbidding of evil (*amal makruf nahi-munkar*) in organisation and by following the previous plans and programmes which has already implemented and introduce to the public can boosted the human development and organisations as well.
4. Destiny- the final phase is to implement the changes.

*where is their final ending? The final phase is to realise that they will be asked for all the responsibilities and acts which has been performed by them, i.e. in the hereafter they will punish because of their malpractice, misconduct, abuse of power and corruption or when they are caught with these misbehaviours they will be charged and people will have a negative perception towards themselves, neglected because people surrounding will not trust them anymore and they will also be punish in this worldly life. Meaning there is no chance for them to escape from punishment when they are behaving in non *amanah* character.

In addition to that, in order to cultivate *amanah* character among Malaysian and to enlighten the people about the importance of behaving with the character of *amanah*, there are several steps should be put into consideration. Base on the theory given, the most important matter to be cultivated is belief or having faith and religion. Furthermore, it should be considered into two stages that are for short term and long term plan to realise this inspiration. These two plans are needed because in order to eradicate these problems promptly, the

government should take to short term plan. Meanwhile, the long term plan is crucial in cultivating and shaping the new generations with the best attitudes and moral conducts.

In fact, everyone should bear in mind that one of the way how to acquire the good character is through keeping the company of the righteous. On top of it, Al-Ghazali had stressed the importance of constantly acting contrary to one's desire in order to achieve equilibrium and the consequent liberation of soul, using the image of the student calligrapher, who must force himself to imitate a good hand (Winter, 2007). Furthermore, as an evidence of the importance of *amanah* we will next discuss about the impact of this character in the society. The impact of *amanah* in the society in fact is begins with the individual. This is the most important aspect or part and the early step to care of in build up the strength in the society. If the *amanah* characters is well established in the society and this will reflect the good qualities and integrity of the individual in the society and at the same time it will shows that the society has a very strong bonding among the individual who has a good qualities of characters (Al-Husayn, 2003).

The impact of practising *amanah* in society can clearly be seen in at least four aspects of human life which known as; the effect of *amanah* on manner and self; the impact on society or sociological effects; the impact on economical and the effect of *amanah* on the global. This writing will only discuss on the first two aspects only that are the effect of *amanah* on manner and self and the impact on society or sociological effects. This character of *amanah* in individual which is the important entity in moulding the society basically can give a great impact to the development of society. In fact, we are quite familiar with the concept of 'individual' and 'society' with the first referred in the human as if he is an entity that is in fully isolated, while the other is generally oscillated among two opposite, but also misleading ideas. Society is built up from the combination of many individuals who are staying together as neighbourhood in one place. Society well understandable the accumulation of additive and not simply a collection of structured individual people or as objects that exist outside the individual and cannot be explain (Norbet & Michael, 1991).

Summary

Al-Qur'an had affirmed that nobody can achieve the glorious in their life unless they themselves struggle by themselves:

'...Verily never Will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls) (Al-Ra'd, (13: 11)).

Allah is not intent on punishment. He created man virtuous and pure: he gave him intelligence and knowledge; he surrounded him with all sorts of instruments of His grace and mercy. If, in spite of all this, man distorts his own will and goes against Allah's Will, yet is Allah's forgiveness open to him if he will take it. It is only when he has made his own sight blind and changed his own nature or soul away from the beautiful mould in which Allah formed it that Allah's Wrath will descend on him and the favourable position in which Allah placed him will be charged. When once punishment comes, there is no turning back. None of the things which he relied upon- other than Allah- can possibly protect him (Ali, 2000). In order to overcome and curb the problem of malpractice, misconduct and corruption among Malaysian in general and among the civil servants in particular, it is the best way is by using the modification of Appreciation Inquiry (AI) model as one of the alternative method on how to cultivating

amanah character. By practising this character of *amanah* we can attract others to share the same behaviour due to the featured of the advantages and the harmonious effect of the adopted and put it into practice this character in the daily social life. We have to practise this character no matter the consequences will come to us because what is hope by practising this only the reward from God in whatever actions done. From the discussion above we can conclude that having a noble character in general and *amanah* character in particular is really giving a great impact in building a good society and nation. The failure in practising this aspect will bring a great impact and disaster to the development of community and it sustainability. As a result, the problems of corruption, malpractices and abuse of power never come to the solutions.

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