



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICAL WORK CLIMATE AND
ETHICS FACTORS, AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON MORAL JUDGEMENT
COMPETENCE OF ACADEMICIANS IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF
HIGHER LEARNING**

SIN CHEK NENG

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HIGHER LEARNING**

By

SIN CHEK NENG

Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November 2006



DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My parents

My wife, Wee Kwee Lan

My sons, Hsuen Ming, Shui Chiang,

My daughter, Mei Yee.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2006

Chairman: Associate Professor Asma Hj. Ahmad, PhD

Faculty: Educational Studies

The move towards corporatisation of Malaysian public universities and the establishment of a number of private institutions of higher learning were made to establish Malaysia as one of the regional educational hubs and a centre for providing educational excellence. However, the rapid expansion of private education institutions owned by profit-driven enterprises have posed a number of ethical problems and issues, such as the lack of a code of practice and the drive towards profit maximisation at the expense of a quality education.

Issues such as corporate integrity and accountability are being questioned, and professionals are now finding ways to promote and inculcate ethical culture to these



organisations. A number of studies have shown that there is clearly a relationship between the corporate organisations and individuals who work in the organisation when it comes to morals or ethics. Corporations could only act as a result of the choices and actions of human individuals in the corporations. This clearly shows that ethical culture of corporations, like the private institutions of higher learning can be affected by the ethical behaviour of the individuals, especially the academic staff.

This study was conducted to determine the level of moral judgement competence of academic staff in the private institutions of higher learning, and its relationship with ethical work climate and ethics factors. The research design of this study was a correlational research using a cross-sectional survey approach. Four hundred and six (406) academic staff in Malaysia participated in this study by returning the self-administered questionnaire distributed to them. For computation and analysis of data collected, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows program was used.

The findings revealed more than 78.1% of the academic staff had a medium level of moral judgement competence. The findings also indicated the emergence of the instrumental and service dimensions as two dominant dimensions of ethical work climates in the private institutions of higher learning.

The relationship between moral judgement competence, ethical work climate, demographic factors, professional factors, and ethic factors were tested and the

conclusions of the findings were mixed. However, seven hypotheses tested in this research confirmed that the ethical work climate dimensions and the selected ethics factors had positive and significant relationship with moral judgement competence.

The result suggests that consideration must be made with regards to demographic, professional and ethics factors when deciding on any human resource policies and development. The move towards institutionalising ethics through formulation of codes of ethics, formalising ethics training, factoring ethics in performance management and nurturing right ethical climate in the workplace can significantly accelerate the rate of moral development and moral judgement competence.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PERHUBUNGAN DI ANTARA SUASANA ETIKA KERJA DAN FAKTOR ETIK
SERTA PENGARUHNYA KE ATAS KOMPETENSI PENILAIAN MORAL
AHLI-AHLI AKADEMIK DI INSTITUSI PENGAJIAN TINGGI SWASTA**

Oleh

SIN CHEK NENG

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Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Asma Hj. Ahmad, PhD

Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan

Langkah pensyarikatan beberapa universiti awam Malaysia dan penubuhan sebilangan institusi pengajian tinggi swasta merupakan salah satu usaha ke arah menjadikan Malaysia sebagai sebuah pusat utama yang dapat menyediakan kemudahan pendidikan yang cemerlang. Walau bagaimanapun, perluasan/pertumbuhan pesat institusi pendidikan swasta milik usahawan yang lebih melihat kepada untung telah menimbulkan beberapa isu dan masalah seperti kurang kod etika amalan perniagaan dan memaksimumkan keuntungan tanpa mengirakan kualiti pendidikan yang dibekalkan.

Isu integriti korporat dan akauntibiliti yang menjadi persoalan utama pada masa ini telah mendorong beberapa profesional berusaha mencari penyelesaian ke arah memperkenalkan dan mengwujudkan budaya etika di dalam organisasi. Beberapa kajian telah menunjukkan bahawa terdapatnya perhubungan yang jelas di antara organisasi



korporat dan individu yang berkerja di dalamnya mengenai hal-hal moral dan etika. Organisasi korporat hanya bertindak hasil daripada tingkahlaku dan pilihan individu-individu di dalamnya. Ini menunjukkan bahawa budaya etika korporat seperti di dalam institusi-institusi pendidikan tinggi swasta boleh dipengaruhi oleh etika dan tingkahlaku individu, terutamanya ahli-ahli akademik institusi tersebut.

Tujuan kajian selidik ini adalah untuk menentukan tahap kompetensi penilaian moral ahli-ahli akademik di institusi-institusi pengajian tinggi swasta, serta perhubungannya dengan faktor etika and suasana etika kerja yang wujud di institusi tersebut. Kajian ini berbentuk kajian korelasi antara variabel dengan kaedah soal selidik. Seramai empat ratus dan enam (406) ahli-ahli akademik di Malaysia telah menyertai kajian selidik ini. Perisian 'Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS)' telah diguna untuk mengira dan menganalisa data yang telah diperolehi.

Hasil kajian ini mendapati bahawa 78.1% responden berada di tahap kompetensi penilaian moral yang sederhana. Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan pewujudan dimensi 'instrumental' dan 'service' sebagai dimensi dominan dalam suasana etika kerja institusi-institusi pengajian tinggi swasta.

Perhubungan di antara kompetensi penilaian moral dengan suasana etika kerja, faktor demografi, faktor profesional, dan faktor etika telah diuji dan hasil kajian adalah berbeza. Walau bagaimana pun tujuh hipotesis yang diuji mengesahkan bahawa wujudnya

perhubungan yang positif dan signifikan di antara suasana etika kerja, faktor etik dengan kompetensi penilaian moral.

Kajian ini telah membuktikan bahawa faktor demografi, faktor profesional, dan faktor etika merupakan faktor-faktor yang perlu diambil kira semasa menentukan polisi pengurusan dan pembangunan sumber manusia. Langkah untuk menginstitusikan budaya etika melalui program latihan etika, pembentukan kod-kod etika, penggunaan faktor etika dalam penilaian prestasi dan pewujudan suasana etika kerja yang positif boleh membawa kepada peningkatan yang signifikan kepada tahap pembangunan moral dan kompetensi penilaian moral.



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I certify that the Examination Committee has met on 14th August 2006 to conduct the final examination of Sin Chek Neng on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Relationship Between Ethical Work Climate And Ethics Factors, And Their Influence On Moral Judgement Competence Of Academicians In Private Institutions Of Higher Learning.” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

SIN CHEK NENG

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
APPROVAL	x
DECLARATION	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xvii
LIST OF FIGURES	xx
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxii

CHAPTER

I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background of the Problem	1
	Ensuring Quality Private Higher Education	2
	Business Ethics and the Private Institutions of Higher Learning	3
	Ethics at the Workplace	4
	Problem Statement	5
	Objectives of Study	8
	General Objectives	8
	Specific Objectives	9
	Significance of the Study	9
	Assumptions	12
	Limitation of the Study	13
	Definitions of Terms	14
II	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	18
	Concepts of Ethics and Morality	18
	Theories and Models on Moral	20
	Moral and Ethical Theories	20
	Consequentialism	21
	Non-consequentialism	23
	Moral Standards for Academic Staff	25
	Codes of Ethics	26
	Theories and Models on Moral Judgement	28
	Moral Judgement Competence	30
	Ethical Decision Making Process	31
	Rest's Ethical Decision Making process	31
	Contingency Model	32
	General Theory of Marketing Ethics	34
	Person-situation Interactionist Model	35



Dubinsky & Loken’s Model on Ethical Analysis	37
Integrated Model	38
Issue-Contingency Model	39
Cognitive Elaboration Model of Ethical Decision Making	41
Kohlberg’s Theory of Cognitive Moral Development	42
Conclusion on the Models	47
Theories and Models on Ethical Work Climate	48
Ethical Work Climate	48
Victor and Cullen’s Framework	50
Studies of Moral Judgement	52
Summary of Previous Research on Moral Judgement	55
Studies on Ethical Work Climate	56
Summary of Previous Studies on Ethical Work Climate	61
Studies on the Relationship between Moral Judgement Competence and Ethical Work Climate	63
Studies on the Relationship between Demographic and Professional Factors, Ethics Factors, Ethical Work Climate, and Moral Judgement Competence	65
Demographic Factors	65
Professional Factors	71
Ethics Factors	72
Chapter Summary	76
III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	80
Research Design	80
Conceptual Framework	82
Theoretical Framework	83
Research Framework	84
Research Hypotheses	86
Population and Sample	86
Sample Size	87
Sampling Procedure	89
Instruments	93
Dependent Variable – Moral Judgement Competence	94
Independent Variable – Ethical Work Climate	96
Moderating Variables	99
Background Information of Respondents	102
Validation of the Research Instruments	102
Validity and Reliability	102
Pilot Test of the Instruments	103
Reliability of the Instruments	105
Data Collection Procedures	105
Questionnaire Response Rate	107
Data Analysis Procedures	108
Exploratory Data Analysis	109



Descriptive Statistics	110
Chapter Summary	121
IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	122
Profile of the Respondents	123
Demographic Profile of Respondents	124
Professional Profile of Respondents	127
Descriptive Statistics for Key Study Variables	128
Moral Judgement Competence	128
Perceived Ethical Work Climate Dimensions	130
Ethics Factors	131
Importance of Various Sources of Guidance	136
Level of Moral Judgement Competence of Academic Staff, the	138
Relationship between Demographic Factors, Professional Factors and	
Moral Judgement Competence	
Level of Moral Judgement Competence of Academic Staff	139
Demographic Factors and Moral Judgement Competence	141
Professional Factors and Moral Judgement Competence	148
The Ethical Work Climate of Private Institutions of Higher Learning	152
The Factor Analysis	154
Relationship between Ethical Work Climate Dimensions, Ethics	161
Factors, and Moral Judgement Competence	
Relationship between Ethical Work Climate Dimensions and	162
Moral Judgement Competence	
Relationship between Ethics Factors and Moral Judgement	163
Competence	
Relationship between Ethical Work Climate Dimensions and	167
Ethics Factors	
Effects of Ethics Factors, Demographic Factors, Professional Factors,	169
and Ethical Work Climate Dimensions in Predicting Moral	
Judgement Competence	
Predictors of Moral Judgement Competence	171
Standardised Predicted Values	177
The Extent Ethics Factors Moderate Relationship between	177
Ethical Work Climate Dimensions and Moral Judgement Competence	
Ethics Factors as Moderators in the Relationship between	179
Service Dimension and Moral Judgement Competence	
Ethics Factors as Moderators in the Relationship between	190
Instrumental Dimension and Moral Judgement Competence	
Ethics Factors as Moderators in the Relationship between	192
Caring Dimension and Moral Judgement Competence	
Ethics Factors as Moderators in the Relationship between	195
Independence Dimension and Moral Judgement Competence	
Chapter Summary	198



V	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	201
	Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Implications	205
	Level of Moral Judgement Competence and Its Relationship with Demographic and Professional Factors	205
	Emergence of Perceived Ethical Work Climate Dimensions	213
	Relationship between Moral Judgement Competence, Perceived Ethical Work Climate, and Ethics Factors	217
	Ethics Factors, Demographic, Professional Factors and Perceived Ethical Work Climate as Predictors of Moral Judgement Competence	224
	The Extent Ethics Factors Moderate the Relationship between Ethical Work Climate Dimensions and Moral Judgement Competence	227
	Implication of the Study	230
	Recommendations	232
	Recommendations for Private Institutions of Higher Learning	232
	Recommendations for the Ministry of Higher Education	238
	Recommendations for Future Research	240
	REFERENCES	243
	APPENDICES	261
	BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR	313



LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Theoretical Ethical Climate Types	51
2.2	Studies on Ethical Work Climate Identified	60
2.3	Theoretical Framework	82
3.1	Moral Judgement Test Score against Kohlberg's Cognitive Moral Development Stages	96
3.2	Pre - Post Test Results	104
3.3	The Response Rate	107
3.4	Dummy Variables for Selected Demographic, Professional, and Ethics Factors	109
3.5	Guilford's Rule of Thumb	116
4.1	Respondents' Profile	125
4.2	Descriptive Findings for Key Study Variables	129
4.3	Frequency of Ethical Dilemma Faced by Academic Staff	132
4.4	Ethical Standards and Proponents of Ethics	133
4.5	Forms of Guidelines (Codes of Ethics) Formulated	135
4.6	Distribution of Respondents by Ethics Training	136
4.7	Importance of Various Sources of Guidance	137
4.8	Level of Moral Judgement Competency of Academic Staff	140
4.9	Level of Moral Judgement Competence (C-Index) and Selected Demographic Factors	144
4.10	Level of Moral Judgement Competence (C-Index) and Selected Professional Factors	149



4.11	KMO and Bartlett's Test	154
4.12	Total Variance Explained	155
4.13	Rotated Component Matrix(a)	156
4.14	Emergence of Ethical Climate Types	158
4.15	Ethical Work Climate Dimensions	160
4.16	Correlation of Relationship between Ethical Work Climate Dimensions and Moral Judgement Competence	162
4.17	Bivariate Correlations and Point Biserial Correlation between the Moral Judgement Competence and Ethics Factors	163
4.18	Bivariate Correlations and Point Biserial Correlation between the Ethical Work Climate Dimensions and Ethics Factors	167
4.19	Model Summary of Ethics Factors, Demographic Factors, Professional Factors, and Ethical Work Climate as Predictors of Moral Judgement Competence	171
4.20	Prediction of Moral Judgement Competence by Ethics Factors, Demographic Factors, Professional Factors, and Ethical Work Climate	173
4.21	Estimates of Coefficients for the Moral Judgement Competence (Y) with Collinearity Statistics	174
4.22	The Multicollinearity Diagnostic for the Final Model	175
4.23	Casewise Diagnostics for the Moral Judgement Competence	176
4.24	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Service Dimension with Religious Commitment as Moderator	180
4.25	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Service Dimension with Ethical Dilemma as Moderator	181



4.26	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Service Dimension with Codes of Ethics as Moderator	182
4.27	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Service Dimension with Ethics Training as Moderator	183
4.28	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Service Dimension with Perceived Ethical Standards as Moderator	186
4.29	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Service Dimension with Proponent of Ethics as Moderator	188
4.30	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Instrumental Dimension with Ethics Factors as Moderator	191
4.31	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Caring Dimension with Ethics Factors as Moderators	193
4.32	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Moral Judgement Competence and Independence Dimension with Ethics Factors as Moderators	196



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Moral Judgement Process	29
2.2	Three Aspects Relationship on Moral Judgement Competence	30
2.3	Rest's Ethical Making Process	32
2.4	Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organisation	33
2.5	General Theory of Marketing Ethics	35
2.6	Person-Situation Interactionist Model	36
2.7	Model for Analysing Ethical Decision Making in Marketing	37
2.8	A Synthesis-Integrated Model of Ethical Decision Making	39
2.9	Issue-Contingency Model	40
2.10	Cognitive Elaboration Model of Ethical Decision-making	41
2.11	Kohlberg's Stages of Cognitive Moral Development	43
2.12	Kohlberg's Six Stages CMD and Ethical Theories	46
3.1a	Theoretical Framework	83
3.1b	Research Framework	85
3.2	Sampling Technique (probability design) - Multiple Sampling Approach	91
3.3	Size/Magnitude/Strength of Correlation or Relationship (Effect Size)	112
4.1	Bar Chart on the Level of Moral Judgement Competence	141
4.2	The Scree Plot of the Ethical Work Climate Dimension	154
4.3	Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardised Residual	176



4.4	Scatterplot of Standardised Residuals against Standardised Predicted Values	177
4.5	The Moderator Effect of Ethics Training on the Relationship between Service Dimension and Moral Judgement Competence	184
4.6	The Moderator Effect of Perceived Ethical Standard on the Relationship between Service Dimension and Moral Judgement Competence	187
4.7	The Moderator Effect of Proponent of Ethics on the Relationship between Service Dimension and Moral Judgement Competence	190



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C	Constant
Care	Caring dimension
CMD	Cognitive Moral Development
Code	Code of Ethics
Des	Designation
DIT	Defining Issues Test
E. M'sia	East Malaysia
E. St.	Ethical Standard
ED	Ethics Dilemma
EP	Ethics Proponents
ECQ	Ethical Work Climate Questionnaire
EDA	Exploratory Data Analysis
Edu	Education
EWC	Ethical Work Climate
Exp	Industrial Experience
HR	Human Resource
HMRA	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis
Ind	Independence Dimension
Indept	Independence
Ins	Instrumental Dimension
Inst	Educational Institution
IQR	Interquartile range



JPS	Jabatan Pendidikan Swasta
LAN	Lembaga Akreditasi Nasional or National Accreditation Board
MS	Marital Status
MAX	Maximum
MBA	Master of Business Administration
Mdn	Median
MIN	Minimum
MJT	Moral Judgement Test
MOE	Ministry of Education
Nat	Nationality
NST	New Straits Times
RC	Religious Commitment
SE	Standard Error
Ser	Service Dimension
SK	Skewness
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TS	Tenure of Service
Train	Ethics Training
UK	United Kingdom



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Malaysia is embarking on education as the prime mover to develop a technologically competent and scientifically proficient society when it becomes a fully industrialised country in the 21st century (EIC, 2003). In order to achieve this goal, educational reform becomes necessary where new strategies for growth and development of education are needed. Through this reform, it is vital that the government and the private sector cooperate.

This dynamic partnership between the government, the private sector and foreign universities is to create Malaysia as a regional educational hub and a centre for educational excellence. In this view, it can be seen that the private education sector has been entrusted to play the important role of making Malaysia a centre of higher learning that offers high academic standards and international programmes (Lee, 2002).

To ensure that the private education sector does not capitalise on profit maximisation at the expense of quality education, the Ministry of Education has set up two special departments, namely, the Department of Private Education or known as Jabatan Pendidikan Swasta (JPS), and the National Accreditation Board or Lembaga Akreditasi

