RESEARCH ON INTEGRITY: A REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Afzal Izzaz Zahari, Universiti Teknologi MARA
Jamaliah Said, Universiti Teknologi MARA
Nurisyal Muhamad, Kolej Universiti Poly-Tech MARA

ABSTRACT

The study of ethics and integrity are current issues that deserve scientific attention, the concept and development of integrity models and research studies in their own right. The concept of integrity had been vague as more research is incorporating integrity into their models of research. Throughout the years, improved models of integrity are useful for governments, corporations and individuals for them to make improved decision making. The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners stated that global fraud losses are at the levels of trillions of dollars a year. This could be prevented if the people in society act with higher levels of ethic and integrity. The purpose of this paper was to report the results of a systematically conducted literature review of studies related to integrity. The objective of this paper was to explore the development of integrity through literature and content review. This includes examining concepts that are considered part of integrity and the approach used towards assessing or integrating integrity in these studies. This study employed a structured review process that critically examined sources from various electronic databases. Electronic databases that only utilised strict content, scientific quality indicators and are peer-reviewed journals articles are the ones selected. Another selection criterion was that the selected article has high levels of citations. Most of the studies had associated integrity with positive ethical values practised such as leadership, honesty, and sincerity while including these values in their research models. The review briefly discusses the associated concepts of integrity and the underlying values that are connected with the use of the term integrity. The results of past studies related to integrity indicated that there are strong positive characteristics and positive values that are associated with the term integrity.

Keywords: Product Integrity, Empirical Literature, Deontological Ethics, Utilitarianism

INTRODUCTION

Integrity has become the focus of various subjects as the value generates a positive association with other terms used. For instance the usage of integrity in the context of product integrity (Clark & Fujimoto, 1990), research integrity (Haven, Tijdink, Martinson & Bouter, 2019), corporate integrity (Kaptein & Wempe, 2002), public integrity (Graaf, Huberts & Strüwer, 2017) and various other conceptual contexts. Integrity is part of a psychological construct that can impact the way of life, practice or environment of the individual or organisation (Barnard, Schurink & De Beer, 2008). The concept of integrity is associated with the three general ethical theories which are utilitarian ethics, deontological ethics and virtue ethics that are the core foundation of normative ethics (Kaptein & Wempe, 2002). Studies had been conducted on whether the values of integrity in a person will have an impact on the person's behaviour in conditions of becoming more honest, sense of justice, perceptions towards others, impulsiveness and deviousness (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Integrity was associated with other terms or phrases such as integral, integrate and integration while coming from the Latin word 'integrare' which means making it whole (Luban, 2003). One of the earliest pieces of literature that involved integrity was a novel that associated the values of integrity in its content (Torpid, 1802). This includes one of the earliest empirical literature that had used the term integrity in their research model was by Jarvie that illustrated

the use of integrity as ethical integrity in parts of the research (Jarvie, 1969). The concept of integrity was then discussed by Lynne Mcfall that highlighted the use of integrity is complex as it is connected to higher standards of morality for instance sincerity, honesty and fairness (Jarvie, 1969). Recent works of literature had associated integrity with values such as honesty and conscientiousness (Dobel, 2009; Martin et al., 2013; Erakovich & Kolthoff, 2016; Huberts, 2018).

The opposite or negative value of integrity had recently been associated with the term integrity violations (Kolthoff, Huberts & Heuvel, 2007; Gillespie, Dietz & Lockey, 2014; Graaf et al., 2017; Zahari & Said, 2019; Zahari, Said & Arshad, 2019b). Integrity violation was first coined by Huberts in the late 1990s that originated with the usage and terms of "violation of public integrity". Integrity violation is acts that violate integrity such as conducting misdemeanours, deviant behaviours, fraudulent behaviours, dishonesty or even criminal behaviours (Gillespie et al., 2014). The use of integrity violation had been common to be conducted in assessing levels of integrity for public service and private organisations (Kolthoff et al., 2007; Kolthoff, 2016; Graaf et al., 2017). This relates to the objective of this paper which is to examine the contents that are related to integrity.

The purpose of this paper was to report the results of a systematically conducted literature review of studies related to integrity.

THEORY

Integrity is categorised as part of ethics and the shared values in integrity are also part of ethicalness (Thoms, 2008). The use of integrity is associated with positive social and practical values such as honesty and truthfulness which in a sense is under the values of ethics (Barnard, 2011). People with integrity are connected with activities that have a positive tone such as being honest in work, responsible, conscientious, and being transparent in any work-related transactions (Becker, 1998; Brown, Lent, Telander & Tramayne, 2011). Leaders that possess integrity such as leader integrity are stated to bring in higher levels of productivity and performance in the organisation (Martin et al., 2013).

An effective method towards understanding the theory that encompasses integrity is through explaining each of the functions and basic traits of the three main ethical theories. The three ethical theories are utilitarian ethics, deontological ethics and virtue ethics (Kaptein & Wempe, 2002). Utilitarian is a part of ethical theory that has two principles that are based on a consequentialist principle that states the rightness or wrongness of action and the hedonist principle states well is a pleasure and bad is associated with pain (Quinton, 1973). Spencer Carr had discussed integrity in the context of utilitarianism that there is a conflict between integrity and being a utilitarian as the person who is holding the concepts of utilitarian would always be in conflict with moral principles that do not adhere to the standard of the utilitarian (Carr, 1976). Deontological ethics is the sense of duty and levels of morality that the person adheres to and is based on the rules and principles (Alexander & Moore, 2007). The action itself can be wrong, meaning that the person is ethical while not having integrity values in themselves (Paternoster & Simpson, 1996). The duty is the centre of the moral and it would be independent of the consequences (Petrick & Quinn, 1997). In terms of integrity, leadership is usually associated as the leader would have cultivated some values of integrity in themselves to effectively perform their duties which are aligned to deontological ethics (Petrick & Quinn, 2001b). Virtue ethics is stated as the moral virtues that are based on individual values (Annas, 2006). The person would need values such as being honest or truthful to project the values of integrity (Murphy, 1999).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To systematically analyse literature review in the fields of integrity. The following research questions were set:

1. What is the meaning of integrity?

2. What are the concepts used in research models related to integrity?
3. What are the main findings of the studies reviewed?

METHODOLOGY

The keywords used in the search engine were using the term "integrity". Initial searches on various platforms of search engines include the use of Google Scholar, Emerald Insight, ProQuest, and SCOPUS. The search on one of the platform (Google Scholar) for example yielded 4,100,000 million articles. Emerald insight yielded 32,000 results. ProQuest yielded 217,750 results and SCOPUS yielded 325,006 documented results. The initial results were too wide, of which smaller exclusion criteria were implemented such as the exclusion of conference papers, books and book chapters. This includes focusing on only subject areas of ethics and social sciences. Further refinement was then adopted of where global reports, magazine articles, and non-peer-reviewed journal articles were then exempted. The final result was only journal articles that have high levels of citations, peer-reviewed and from reputable publishers that were used in this paper.

RESULTS

Focus and Topics

The first of the reviewed studies focusing on integrity was around the 1960s (Jarvie, 1969). Research into integrity has increased towards the late 2019 and early 2020s. A number of these studies had used the concept of integrity in their research models (Kaptein & Wempe, 2002; Graaf et al., 2017; Haven et al., 2019). The review identified areas of subject related to integrity. Studies are more focused on the concept of virtue ethics while maintaining a sense of honest and conscientious values in their shared practice (Ones, Viswesvaran & Schmidt, 1993; Sackett & Wanek, 1996; Becker, 1998). Studies had also used the concept of leadership values that have integrity in their research model utilising the positive values in integrity to project a positive output in the organisation (Palanski & Yammarino, 2009; Parry & Proctor-thomson, 2012; Erakovich & Kolthoff, 2016).

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REVIEWED STUDIES

The identification of the main findings was complex to the initial use or general search of the articles received. The following Table 1 shows the instruments used in the studies on integrity.

Table 1 INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE STUDIES ON INTEGRITY		
Instrument	**Author and year**	**Sub-concepts, content/main findings**
Academic Integrity	(Macfarlane, Zhang & Pun, 2014)	The concept is the materials and results involved in academic writing are from sources that are valid and honest
Behavioural Integrity	(Simons, 1999)	The perceived fit between espoused and enacted values
Corporate Integrity/Corporate Integrity Systems	(Petrick & Quinn, 2001a; Kaptein & Wempe, 2002; Brown, 2005; Said & Omar, 2014; Said, Omar, Zakaria & Yahya, 2015)	Corporate integrity in achieving the objectives of the organisation through enhancement of their viability, competitiveness and longevity
Leader Integrity	(Craig & Gustafson, 1998; Peterson, 2004; Martin et al., 2013; Moorman, Darnold & Priesemuth, 2013)	The association of leaders with the values and norms related to integrity

Organisational Integrity	(Paine, 1994; Pulay, 2014)	The application of integrity such as compliance with integrity controls in the organisation
Product Integrity	(Clark & Fujimoto, 1990)	Assessing products with integrity that it has passed certain levels of qualified finish or assessment
Public Integrity	(Huberts & Six, 2012)	Using the values of integrity as the measurement of performance in public service
Integrity Capacity	(Petrick & Scherer, 2003)	The construct with four dimensions which are process, judgement, development and systems dimension
Integrity Climate	(Zahari, Said & Arshad, 2019a; Haven et al., 2019)	The use of integrity in evaluating the climate in the organisations
Integrity Governance	(Huberts, 2014)	
Integrity Management	(Webb, 2012; Borgonovi & Esposito, 2017)	The involvement and process of maintaining information and achieving the organisation's objectives
Integrity Systems	(Sampford, Smith & Brown, 2005; Rosli, Aziz, Mohd & Said, 2015)	The use of integrity in organisational management of the organisation
Integrity Violation	(Lasthuizen, Huberts & Heres, 2011; Gillespie et al., 2014; Graaf et al., 2017; Zahari, Said & Arshad, 2019; Zahari & Said, 2019; Kolthoff, 2016)	Actions that are directly or indirectly violating integrity such as fraud or corruption
Integrity	(Mowrer & Vattano, 1976; McFall, 1987; Sackett & Wanek, 1996; Luban, 2003; Huberts, Kapteinm, & Lasthuizen, 2007; Barnard et al., 2008; Shahid & Azhar, 2013; Bauman, 2013; Bakri, Said, & Karim, 2015; Huberts, 2018; Sullivan, 2020; Rice, Jiang & Shaipov, 2020)	The general use of integrity in the research studies

The listings in Table 1 are based on documents that were selected based on the research method process. The indication here is that the use of integrity in various fields and subjects. The analysis observed that integrity was commonly associated with positive values and norms in the individual, groups and social groupings. These studies are based on evaluating whether their units or organisation has such values in their research studies.

CONCLUSION

Research on integrity on various levels such as individual, organisations and national had expanded at an increasing rate in recent years. Integrity is defined as the quality of being honest while having strong levels of moral compass and principles (Martin et al., 2013). Known researchers' associated with integrity research are distinct and are often used as terms of reference in various publications. The overall review on the topic of integrity was initiated that had made considerable progress towards building a body of knowledge in this field (Dobel, 1990; Trevinyo-Rodríguez & Leigh, 2007; Huberts & Six, 2012; Huberts & Lasthuizen, 2014; Huberts, 2018). The common inquiries related to integrity would question what makes a person have integrity or what makes the organisation practice values of integrity.

The ethical theories have a strong presence with integrity, this is because that ethical decision making and moral development are crucial factors to a deontological approach to ethics (Menzel, 2005). The paper explored the individualistic values of integrity, before moving towards organisations, business or corporation values of integrity and finally towards an overall presence of integrity in the society.

The actions of integrity are acting within the society's moral value of norms that are considered ethical or with good judgement (Huberts, 2018). The actions of when the individual or organisation practice honest, conscientious and transparent values it would be perceived as the person practising values of integrity (Paine, 1994; Pulay, 2014). The actions when such an individual or organisation violates integrity it would then be considered as integrity violations (Lasthuizen et al., 2011; Gillespie et al., 2014; Kolthoff, 2016; Graaf et al., 2017; Zahari et al., 2019; Zahari & Said, 2019). These issues are the key questions that are currently being explored in the reported studies on setting the parameters associated with integrity. Such studies involving the areas of integrity are important in improving the overall values placed within the society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Alexander, L., & Moore, M. (2007). Deontological Ethics.

Annas, J. (2006). *Virtue ethics*. The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory.

Bakri, H.H.M., Said, J., & Karim, Z.A. (2015). Case study on integrity among Royal Malaysian Police (RMP): An ethical perspective. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 28*, 121-125.

Barnard, A. (2011). The competencies of integrity. *Journal of Psychology in Africa, 21*(2), 267-273.

Barnard, A., Schurink, W., & De Beer, M. (2008). A conceptual framework of integrity. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology, 34*(2), 40-49.

Bauman, D.C. (2013). Leadership and the three faces of integrity. *Leadership Quarterly, 24*(3), 414-426.

Becker, T.E. (1998). Integrity in organizations: Beyond Honesty and conscientiousness. *The Academy of Management Review Academy of Management Review, 23*(1), 154-161.

Borgonovi, E., & Esposito, P. (2017). Integrity management policy in Italy. *Symphonya. Emerging Issues in Management, 2*, 88-102.

Brown, M.T. (2005). *Corporate integrity : Rethinking organizational ethics, and leadership*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, S.D., Lent, R.W., Telander, K., & Tramayne, S. (2011). Social cognitive career theory, conscientiousness, and work performance: A meta-analytic path analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 79*(1), 81-90.

Carr, S. (1976). The integrity of a utilitarian. *Ethics, 86*(3), 241-246.

Clark, K.B., & Fujimoto, T. (1990). The power of product integrity. *Harvard Business Review, 68*(6), 107-118.

Craig, S.B., & Gustafson, S.B. (1998). Perceived leader integrity scale: An instrument for assessing employee perceptions of leader integrity. *The Leadership Quarterly, 9*(2), 127-145.

Dobel, J. P. (1990). Integrity in the public service. University of Washington, (May/June), 354–366. Retrieved from https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/.

Dobel, J.P. (2009). *Public management as ethics*. The Oxford Handbook of Public Management.

Erakovich, R., & Kolthoff, E. (2016). Analysis of ethical leadership and integrity development in local government: The United States, The Netherlands, Montenegro, and Serbia. *International Journal of Public Administration, 39*(11), 872-882.

Gillespie, N., Dietz, G., & Lockey, S. (2014). Organizational reintegration and trust repair after an integrity violation: A case study. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 24*(3), 371-410.

Graaf, G.de, Huberts, L., & Strüwer, T. (2017). Integrity violations and corruption in western public governance: Empirical evidence and reflection from the Netherlands. *Public Integrity, 20*(2), 131-149.

Haven, T.L., Tijdink, J.K., Martinson, B.C., & Bouter, L.M. (2019). Perceptions of research integrity climate differ between academic ranks and disciplinary fields: Results from a survey among academic researchers in Amsterdam. *PLoS One, 14*(1).

Huberts, L. (2014). The integrity of governance: What it is, what we know, what is done and where to go. Springer.

Huberts, L.W.J.C. (2018). Integrity: What it is and why it is important. *Public Integrity, 20*(1), S18-S32.

Huberts, L., Kapteinm, M., & Lasthuizen, K. (2007). A study of the impact of three leadership styles on integrity violations committed by police officers. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, 30*(4), 587-607.

Huberts, L., & Lasthuizen, K. M. (2014). *The integrity of governance, (1st Edition)*. In R. Fouchet & T. Brandsen (Eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, London. France.

1532-5806-24-S1-69

Huberts, L., & Six, F.E. (2012). Local integrity systems. *Public Integrity, 14*(2), 151-172.

Jarvie, I.C. (1969). The problem of ethical integrity in participant observation. *Current Anthropology, 10*(5), 505-508.

Kaptein, M., & Wempe, J.F.D.B. (2002). *The balanced company: A theory of corporate integrity*. USA: Oxford University Press.

Kolthoff, E. (2016). Integrity violations, white-collar crime, and violations of human rights: Revealing the connection. *Public Integrity, 18*(4), 396-418.

Kolthoff, E., Huberts, L., & Heuvel, H. van den. (2007). The ethics of new public management : Is integrity at stake ? *Public Administration Quarterly, 30*(4), 399-439.

Lasthuizen, K.M., Huberts, L., & Heres, L. (2011). How to measure integrity violations: Towards a validated typology of unethical behavior. *Public Management Review, 13*(3), 383-408.

Luban, D. (2003). Integrity: Its causes and cures. *Fordham L. Rev, 72*, 279-310.

Macfarlane, B., Zhang, J., & Pun, A. (2014). Academic integrity: A review of the literature. *Studies in Higher Education, 39*(2), 339-358.

Martin, G., Keating, M.A., Resick, C.J., Szabo, E., Kwan, H.K., & Peng, C. (2013). The meaning of leader integrity: A comparative study across Anglo, Asian, and Germanic cultures. *Leadership Quarterly, 24*(3), 445-461.

McFall, L. (1987). Integrity. *Ethics, 98*(1), 5-20.

Menzel, D.C. (2005). Research on ethics and integrity in governance: A review and assessment. *Public Integrity, 7*(2), 147-168.

Mowrer, O.H., & Vattano, A.J. (1976). Integrity groups: A context for growth in honesty, responsibility, and involvement. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 12*(3), 419-431.

Murphy, P.E. (1999). Character and virtue ethics in international marketing: An agenda for managers, researchers and educators. *Journal of Business Ethics, 18*(1), 107-124.

Ones, D.S., Viswesvaran, C., & Schmidt, F.L. (1993). Comprehensive meta-analysis of integrity test validities: Findings and implications for personnel selection and theories of job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(4), 679-703.

Paine, L.S. (1994). Managing for organizational integrity. *Harvard Business Review, 72*(2), 106-117.

Palanski, M.E., & Yammarino, F.J. (2009). Integrity and leadership: A multi-level conceptual framework. *Leadership Quarterly, 20*(3), 405-420.

Parry, K.W., & Proctor-thomson, S.B. (2012). Perceived integrity of settings leaders in organisational. *Journal of Business, 35*(2), 75-96.

Paternoster, R., & Simpson, S. (1996). Sanction threats and appeals to morality: Testing a rational choice model of corporate crime. *Law & Society Review, 30*(3), 549.

Peterson, D.K. (2004). Perceived leader integrity and ethical intentions of subordinates. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 25*(1), 7-23.

Petrick, J.A., & Quinn, J.F. (1997). *Management ethics: Integrity at work*. Sage.

Petrick, J.A., & Quinn, J.F. (2001a). Measuring corporate integrity: A survey-based approach. *Measuring Business Excellence, 5*(1), 24-31.

Petrick, J.A., & Quinn, J.F. (2001b). The challenge of leadership accountability for integrity capacity as a strategic asset. *Journal of Business Ethics, 34*(3), 331-343.

Petrick, J.A., & Scherer, R.F. (2003). The enron scandal and the neglect of management integrity capacity. *American Journal of Business, 18*(1), 37-50.

Pulay, G. (2014). Preventing corruption by strengthening organisational integrity. *Public Finance Quarterly, 59*(2), 133-148.

Quinton, A. (1973). Utilitarian Ethics. Springer.

Rice, T.H.S., Jiang, A., & Shaipov, A. (2020). Corruption, ethics and integrity in Public Administration in Ukraine. In Handbook on Corruption, Ethics and Integrity in Public Administration. *Edward Elgar Publishing*.

Robinson, S.L., & Bennett, R.J. (1995). A typology of deviant workplace behaviors: A multidimensional scaling study. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*(2), 555-572.

Rosli, M.H., Aziz, M.A., Mohd, F., & Said, J. (2015). Integrity systems in Malaysian public sector: An empirical finding. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 28*, 260-265.

Sackett, P.R., & Wanek, J.E. (1996). New developments in the use of measures of honesty integrity, conscientiousness, dependability trustworthiness, and reliability for personnel selection. *Personnel Psychology, 49*(4), 787–829.

Said, J., & Omar, N. (2014). Corporate integrity system: Comparative analysis of two giant government linked companies. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 145*, 12-17.

Said, J., Omar, N., Zakaria, N.B., & Yahya, N. (2015). Corporate integrity system infrastructure : Empirical findings from statutory body. *International Conference on Islamic Economics, Governance and Social Enterprise*.

Sampford, C., Smith, R., & Brown, A.J. (2005). From Greek temple to bird's nest: Towards a theory of coherence and mutual accountability for national integrity systems. *Australian Journal of Public Administration, 64*(2), 96-108.

Shahid, A., & Azhar, S.M. (2013). Integrity & amp; trust: The defining principles of great workplaces. *Journal of Management Research, 5*(4), 64.

Simons, T.L. (1999). Behavioral integrity as a critical ingredient for transformational leadership. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12*(2), 89-104.

Sullivan, H. (2020). Integrity and ethics in public service and amongst public servants: An introduction. *The Palgrave Handbook of the Public Servant*, 1-11.

Thoms, J.C. (2008). Ethical integrity in leadership and organizational moral culture. *Leadership Quarterly, 4*(4), 419-442.

Torpid, H. (1802). The man of integrity. *The Ladies' Museum, 9*, 301-310.

Trevinyo-Rodríguez, R.N., & Leigh, A. (2007). Integrity: A systems theory classification. *Journal of Management History, 13*(1), 74-93.

Webb, W.N. (2012). Ethical culture and the value-based approach to integrity management: A case study of the department of correctional services. *Public Administration and Development, 32*(1), 96-108.

Zahari, A.I., Said, J., & Arshad, R. (2019). Examining the link between ethical culture and integrity violations: The mediating role of integrity climate. *KnE Social Sciences*, 225–243.

Zahari, A., & Said, J. (2019). Public sector integrity violations. *GATR Global Journal of Business Social Sciences Review, 7*(2), 131-138.

Zahari, A.I., Said, J., & Arshad, R. (2019a). Integrity climate questionnaire. *Cogent Psychology, 6*(1).

Zahari, A., Said, J., & Arshad, R. (2019b). The effect of internal control systems and procrastination on public sector employees. *Indian Pacific Journal of Accounting and Finance, 3*(1), 50-64.