

ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF
TUITION CENTERS IN BESUT, TERENGGANU
(A CASE STUDY)

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ABSTRACT

Ethics provides a guideline to lead us to do the right things in a business. It is important to ensure that the interests of all the stakeholders involved are attained fairly. At the same time, education as a medium to teach us to practice ethics throughout our lives has become a valuable product to be sold in the market. This has encouraged many people to set up tuition centers selling education. However, the different interests among the stakeholders may create conflict in the business and thus cause ethical violations. This study involved five tuition centers in Besut District. It was carried out to identify the ethical issues in the management of those centers. The study was also intended to create awareness among the people involved; the management, the students, the parents, the society and the Ministry of Education towards such issues. The findings showed that most of the ethical practices in the management of the tuition centers were good. The services, facilities and conditions were well provided for students' learning.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Education is one of the media teaching us to practice ethics in our lives (Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid, 1997). The teacher, the society in general and the government are all responsible in the education process. The main purpose of education is to improve the society to achieve the targeted objectives. One of them is the inculcation of good ethics and values. However, the rapid changes of our life styles, norms and beliefs affect its practices in human daily activities.

1.1 Background of the study

In this challenging world, we are trying to compete with each other in order to survive. Today, education is seen as the most important tool to meet this challenge. Due to this, education has become an industry. There are so many educational institutions established to provide educational services to the society.

Education is now seen as a commercial item to be sold to the public. Like any other businesses, it raises many ethical issues in its conducts. Puttnam as quoted by Spender (1996) mentions that education would be the biggest business

of the future. However, its value is rather doubtful due to the conflict of interests that the owners of the business have in providing the services to the public. This same issue was raised in 1995 when Carnoy (1995) noted that education should be treated as a social responsibility of the society building a nation. When it is seen as a very valuable product in the business world, it has run away from its original purpose of providing education.

Chaharbagi and Newman (1999) claims that policy makers, providers and consumers of education as services have collaborated in the evolution of a business in which education is losing its purpose. Instead of advancing, applying, preserving and disseminating knowledge for the well being of the society, education is valued as a product that can be sold to make profit.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The demand for education in the market is great. Many commercial tuition centers are set up as extra channels to serve the education needs of the society. In achieving the main organizational goal, i.e. the company's right as a stakeholder, the company provides educational services under a certain obligation, for a fee. In other words, there is a contract.

However, some businessmen, due to greed, i.e. the need to make profit, are driven to violate ethics that affect the customers' right as a stakeholder. Some tuition centers do not provide their customers with appropriate level of teaching services in good learning environments. This is the violation of a business transaction. Students as stakeholders do not receive services they pay for. The violation of the contract is an ethical concern, as the students' right in receiving education is compromised.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

This study aims at giving and analyzing the ethical issues violated in the management of some private tuition centers. The study is intended to:

- a. identify the areas of concern where ethics are violated
- b. identify the ethical issues violated by the management of the tuition centers
- c. examine the responses of students towards such issues
- d. examine the responses of the management of the tuition centers towards the issues
- e. make recommendations to improve the situation