AN EMPIRICAL SURVEY OF AN ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AT A MAJOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN RECENT YEARS: THE MALAYSIAN EVIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

Academic dishonesty is increasingly and becoming a threat to the academic integrity across the world. The results showed that this phenomenon is increasing tremendously from time to time, especially in the context of higher education. This study provides some insight into the activities of academic dishonesty among a major students in a major public universities in Malaysia. The study conducted with convenience sampling technique and the data analyzed using IBM SPSS version 20. The study is based on survey method involves the 670 students in 2016 and 2017. The findings showed 57.4 % percent of students admitted academic dishonesty at least once in in their study. The dominant aspects of academic dishonesty are plagiarizing references in completing assignments and coursework and access information through digital resources. These results could aid the intention and development of ethical awareness for students and could also open the insight of the stakeholders and academic institutions.

Keywords: Academic dishonesty, Plagiarism, Malaysian students, academic integrity.

INTRODUCTION

The potential to become a competitive and competent in academic, the issues such as academic dishonesty, plagiarism and academic integrity must be handled wisely. In early 1933, H.W. James reported that 94% of high school students involved in academic cheating akademik (Stogner, Miller & marcum, 2014). The results of this report, began to open the eyes of many parties of the issues of academic dishonesty. Intensive study conducted by many researchers, for example Mc Cabe (2005) made a study of 60 educational institutions include 50,000 students and found that nearly 70% of the students involved with these behaviours. Another study conducted showed a similar results which academic dishonesty phenomena significantly increased (Davis, Grover, Becker & Mc Grregor, 1992; Haines, Diekhoff, Labeff & Clark, 1986; Mc Cabe, Trevino & Butterfield, 1999; Mc Cabe & Pamela, 2000).

Evidence and findings can be viewed as a threat to academic integrity. This signals that the drastic action is needed to curb this problem as our generation is the successor in the future datang (Nonis & Swift, 2001). Students of today are increasingly confronted with issues of academic dishonesty, especially the problem of plagiarism, copying, sabotage, and other matters related to academic dishonesty (Sahin, 2016).). As reported by Jeerghal, Surekha, Sharma, Vishanti, & Rani (2015) in their research stated that almost 94% of dental students cheated in their studies. Most of the reports presented by most researchers, indicate the direction is maintained as low as 40% and as high as 90% of students engaged in academic dishonesty (Imran & Nordin, 2013; McCabe & Trevino, 1993,2009). Fishbein (1994) presented survey data showing that 67% of students in higher education admitted to cheating

at least once in their studies and that 19% cheated on four or more tests (Bae, 2015). Based on the data that has been presented, the symptoms of this growing behaviours must be contained in a more consistent until it does not threaten the academic institutions around the world. Therefore, this study aims to identify the level and what is the main factors influencing academic dishonesty behaviours among Malaysian students in major public university in recent years.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In moving towards a developed nation, Malaysia needs to spearhead academic progress that is competitive with other countries. Issues involving academic dishonesty should be taken seriously in order for the country's progress in line with the rapid development of academic integrity. The issue of academic dishonesty in Malaysia began to be aware of when it was raised in parliament in October 26, 2009 (Harris, 2011) In the report he said the issue of plagiarism has spread widely in the academic world after academics at a university found guilty of plagiarism in his writings. The Sun newspaper report dated 13 September 2009 (Quah, Stewart & Lee, 2012) said there are professors who have plagiarized his doctorate in doubt some of the information from the website of Harvard University and Albion College in the United States contained in his book. The investigation found that there are 64 printed pages to match the information found in the website of the university. Additionally, a professor at the Islamic University in Malaysia found to perform plagiarism in writing his article (Moten, 2014).

In the context of higher education in Malaysia is no exception, the activities of academic dishonesty occurs among students. Nurshiha & Nurliyana (2013) reported found that 82% of students plead admitted academic dishonesty. Meanwhile Ramlan, Zaharah & Saedah (2016) in their survey among a Muslim student in a public universities students founds nearly 62% of Muslim students admitted to academic dishonesty in 2015 and 56% admitted to academic dishonesty in 2014. Similarly, Ibrahim, Hussein, Samat and David (2013) found that most students had academic dishonesty in their studies. Latisha & Surina (2012) reported that that most of the students understanding and knowledge about law institutions on issues of academic dishonesty. The study also noted that the influence and pressure of friends (peer pressure) and collective culture (collective culture) impacts directly on academic cheating in universities in Malaysia. Thus, this study will be desperately trying to uncover the latest data on student academic dishonesty among public universities in Malaysia and at the same time give a clear picture on this issue in the current context.

Research objectives and questions
Research objectives

In general, this study aimed to analyze the level of academic dishonesty among students in a major public university ini Malaysia in the recent years.

Research questions

This study contains specific Questions as follows:
1. What level of academic dishonesty among students in a major public universities ini Malaysia in the recent years?
2. What is the dominant aspect that facilitated the academic dishonesty among students in a major public universities?

METHODOLOGY

This study basically uses quantitative methods involving surveys through questionnaires. We formulate 10 questions adapted from the Academic Integrity survey sample items, high school version (Mc Cabe, 2011). Students will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. All questionnaires distributed and taken back after completion answered by respondents. All the data obtained and analyzed using IBM SPSS version 20. The sample of this study is the 670 undergraduate students in selected major public universities in Malaysia.

Sampling

This study used the convenience sampling because researchers did not obtain the sampling frame. According to Sekaran (2003), this method can be used to obtain an initial overview of the situation and if the researcher is not able to obtain the sampling frame. As (Malhotra, 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010) stated that sampling can be used if the researcher is not able to obtain the sampling frame, although some said it might be biased opinion and does not represent (represent) population. This method selected based on suitability and ease to get feedback from survey respondents. This method is also suitable for use when respondents are homogenous which includes a bachelor's degree student in major public universities in Malaysia.

Reliability analysis

Reliability means the degree of conformity and confidence in the measurement of an instrument and it should have the characteristics of stability, consistency, friendliness and accuracy (Kerlinger, 1986). This study uses the Cronbachs Alpha model to measure the reliability or credibility of the Scale. In this study, we used reliability to measure the accuracy of the data (*goodness of data*). According to Sekaran & Bougie (2010) the reliability used to measure the consistency of the developed instrument. The results of the study carried out the value of Cronbach's alpha for the entire item is α =.755. The reliability of the study meets its validity based on the degree of compliance and confidence in measurement tools that have the characteristics of stability, consistency, friendliness and accuracy (Kerlinger, 1986). There are a variety of opinions to determine the reliability, value based on the review of the literature. Nunally (1978) argues that the reliability is more than 0.70 to determine internal consistency. In addition, Carmines and Zeller (1979) state that the reliability is 0.70 or more. However, the new scale shows that the value of 0.60 is to be considered and accepted (Nunally and Bernstein, 1994).

RESULTS
Demography analysis

Table 1: Demography of respondents

Gender	Frequencies	Percent's
Male	213	31.8
Female	444	66.3

N = 670

Table 2: Finding analysis

Item/ type of behaviour	Mean	Std. Deviation
Copied from another student during a test or exam	1.85	1.012
Got questions or answers from someone who had already taken a test	2.19	1.148
Used unpermitted cribbed notes during a test or exam	2.24	1.086
Helped someone else in test or exam	2.03	1.061
Copied a few sentences from a site on internet without citing them	2.58	1.157
Turned a paper obtained in large part from a website, or from a book, journal or other sources	2.79	1.172
Turned ini work you copied from another student	1.86	1.136
Copied a few sentences from a book, magazines or others sources without citing them	2.40	1.281
Worked on assignment with another students when a lecturer ask for individual work	1.63	1.020
Let's another student copy an assignment	1.66	1.006

Table 2 explained the reasons on why do students engage in academic dishonesty in major public university in Malaysia. The reasons were ranked according to the mostly answered to the least answered. The first four top reasons are (a) *turned a paper obtained in large part from a website, or from a book, journal or other sources* (μ = 2.79, SD = 1.172), (b) *copied a few sentences from a site on internet without citing them* (μ = 2.58, SD = 1.1571), (c) *copied a few sentences from a book, magazines or others sources without citing them* (μ = 2.40, SD = 1.281) and (d) *used unpermitted cribbed notes during a test or exam* (μ = 2.24, SD = 1.086). Meanwhile the three lowest ranks answered by the respondents are: (a) *worked on assignment with another students when a lecturer ask for individual work* (μ = 1.63, SD = 1.020), (b) *let's another student copy an assignment* (μ = 1.66, SD = 1.006), and (c) *turned ini work you copied from another student* (μ = 1.86, SD = 1.136). The results of this analysis showed that the most dominant aspect that leads to academic dishonesty are the aspects related to the internet and the materials accessible online. Based on these findings, the second research questions successfully answered

Table 3: Mean interpretation

Mean level	value
Low	1.000-2.000
Moderate low	2.001-3.000
Moderate high	3.001-4.000
High	4.001- 5.000

Table 4: Percentage

item	Never	Once	Sometimes	More than one	Many times
1	51.3	19.1	23.4	5.1	1.0
2	34.3	25.4	31.5	6.3	2.2
3	34.8	20.4	32.7	10.6	1.5
4	43.7	18.5	30.1	6.0	1.6
5	23.7	18.5	40.0	11.2	6.6
6	18.2	17.3	41.6	13.3	9.6
7	55.7	16.4	18.4	5.8	3.7
8	34.8	17.6	27.8	12.2	7.6
9	66.0	13.9	13.4	4.5	2.2

10	63.9	14.9	13.7	6.4	1.0
Average of percentage	42.6	18.2	27.3	8.2	3.7
Overall of dishonest behavior		57.4 %			

Based on Table 4, the interpretation of the data indicates the perception level of students in a major public university against the practice of academic dishonesty at a moderate level, namely on the overall percentage was 57.4%. This result shows the level of student academic dishonesty is still at a moderate level, although it exists widely among students in Malaysia. Overall, the findings indicate that the analysis of academic dishonesty is at a moderately high level. Based on Table 3 and 4, aspects of academic dishonesty that becomes the highest note is item 5 and 6 which "C*opied a few sentences from a site on internet without citing them*" and Turned a paper obtained in large part from a website, or from a book, journal or other sources". Meanwhile the lowest perceptions is "*worked on assignment with another students when a lecturer ask for individual work*". As a conclusion, the percentage of an academic dishonesty among Malaysian students seen unsolved problems and widely occurred. The findings also showed the phenomenon of academic dishonesty still issues that need to be addressed and examined comprehensively so that it does not continue to show improvement from time to time. Based on these findings, the first research questions successfully answered.

Table 3: Percentage interpretation

Percentage	Interpretation
1 – 34	Low
35 - 64	Moderate
65-100	High

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is a robust finding carried out from this research. Based on the findings, most aspects of academic dishonesty among students in a major public universities in Malaysia revealed. The most dominant aspect that leads to academic dishonesty are the aspects related to the Internet and the resources available on-line. Gaining the information from the internet without giving credit to the original author and do not make proper reference to the source of the biggest problems among students in Malaysia. These problems may arise due to several factors, which the easiest access an internet causing most of them take the easy way to complete the tasks. In the modern world which is booming, technology, IT (information technology) such as the internet, social networking sites and so on to be a threat to the academic world (Peled, Eshet, Grinautski, 2013). This finding matches the study conducted by (Muir, 2006; Lau, Caracciolo, Roddenberry & Scroggins, 2012; Peled et al 2013) which found that in 1999 as much as 10% of students copying the "cut and paste" from internet sources, but by 2005, 40% of students use the same method in solving their project paper. This finding is also consistent with the earlier findings of (Stogner, Miller & Marcum, 2014; Thrushell, Byrne & Hassan, 2013) which found that among the aspects that contribute to the occurrence of academic dishonesty is the internet and technology. Stoner et al (2014) reported almost two out of every five students had engaged at least once form of electronic cheating in their studies.

In addition, this study further confirm the findings Harris, (2011) showed that there are some important factors that contribute to academic dishonesty within the scope of education in

Malaysia. The contributing factor is an institution, internet access and self-attitude. Meanwhile, Balazs & Laszlo (2013) reported that the aspects of technology affect academic dishonesty among students. If viewed from this scenario, the aspects of modern technology such as the Internet, digital resources and social media not only facilitate communication and access to material science and knowledge, but also simplifies the process of plagiarism occurred. Stoner et al. (2014) said nearly 40% of the students are utilizing the internet in most cases involving plagiarism. This higher rate, allows that the technological aspects will dominate academic dishonesty in the near future if no initiative can curb this from happening.

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