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**THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL INTEGRITY
CULTURE ON ETHICAL PERFORMANCE IN PRIVATE
HEALTHCARE: A STUDY**

Noor Haslina Harun ^{1*}, Fauziah Sh. Ahmad ²

¹ Azman Hashim International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: haslina.harun@gmail.com

² Azman Hashim International Business School, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia
Email: fsa@utm.my

* Corresponding Author

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Abstract:

This study thoroughly investigates the vital role of organisational integrity culture (OIC) in Malaysia's private healthcare sector, highlighting the complex interplay between employee integrity performance (EIP) and the resulting competitive advantage derived from effective integrity practices. By combining resource-based and ethical theories into OIC, the research emphasises its strategic importance as a fundamental asset driving competitive advantage by cultivating integrity practice and boosting EIP. The study aims to analyse model fit and quantify significant construct correlations. Research inquiries, objectives, and hypotheses focus on understanding the influence of OIC on integrity practice, the impact of integrity practice on EIP, and the mediating role of integrity practice in the OIC-EIP relationship. SmartPLS provides methodological rigour in study design, target population delineation, sample, and reasoning. The study also seeks to fill gaps in private healthcare ethics literature and better understand how OIC affects staff ethics. Through empirical investigation, the study pioneers the exploration of the relationship between OIC and EIP in Malaysia's private healthcare sector, utilising the Malaysian Institute Integrity Index to illuminate this association. Ultimately, the researcher expects the findings to provide actionable insights for improving EIP through effective integrity practices while highlighting the critical role of organisational resources in sustaining competitive advantage.

Keywords:

Theory Integrity, Resource-Base Theory; Integrity Practice Implementation; Private Healthcare; Ethical Culture

Introduction

This study offers valuable insights into organisations' integrity culture and practices, specifically focusing on the private healthcare sector. It comprehensively examines the theoretical underpinnings and contemporary challenges related to integrity in the private healthcare sector. The research problems address the probable deficiencies that this research can address.

Private healthcare businesses should prioritise recruiting personnel with the utmost integrity, as it serves as the fundamental basis for ensuring patient safety. Understanding the integrity phenomenon in the healthcare sector is crucial for comprehending the connection between organisational culture, integrity management practices, and employee ethical performance. Consequently, the company's commitment to integrity would lead to efficient implementation of integrity measures and exceptional staff integrity performance, providing it a competitive edge over rivals. However, while many studies have explored integrity in the public sector, more research is needed on integrity in private healthcare settings. The study sought to analyse the adequacy of the model and explore quantitative explanations for it, with a specific focus on the interaction between the components.

The private healthcare sector faces integrity issues such as corruption, biased licensing, and accreditation of healthcare providers. These issues lead to the infiltration of substandard products and services, compromising patient care and safety. Regulatory shortcuts and bribery further exacerbate these problems, allowing unqualified products to enter the market and posing significant risks to public health. Addressing these gaps in integrity is crucial to ensuring quality healthcare delivery and patient safety in the private healthcare sector.

Table 1 depicts the research questions, objectives, and hypotheses:

Table 1 Research Questions, Objectives, And Hypotheses

	Research Questions	Research Objectives	Hypotheses
	Predictor to consequences relationship		
1.	Does the organisation integrity culture (OIC) influence the integrity practice?	To examine the influence of organisational integrity culture (OIC) on integrity practice	H1. Organisational integrity culture congruency (OICC) will affect the practice of integrity. H2. Organisation integrity culture provision (OICP) will affect the integrity practice. H3. Organisation integrity culture ability (OICA) will affect the integrity practice
2.	Does integrity practice influence employee integrity performance?	To investigate the influence of integrity practice on employee integrity performance	H4. Integrity practice will affect employee integrity performance.

	Research Questions	Research Objectives	Hypotheses
3	Does the organisation integrity culture (OIC) influence employee integrity performance?	To examine the influence of organisational integrity culture (OIC) on employee integrity performance	H5. Organisation integrity culture congruency (OICC) will affect employee integrity performance. H6. Organisation integrity culture provision (OICP) will affect employee integrity performance. H7. Organisation integrity culture ability (OICA) will affect the employee integrity performance
	Mediation effect		
4.	Does integrity practice mediate the relationship between OIC and employee integrity performance?	To test the roles of integrity practice as a mediator between OIC and employee integrity performance.	H8. Integrity practice mediates the relationship between OIC and employee integrity performance.

Literature Review

The literature on the research's essential components is thoroughly reviewed to explain the research's main theories, which are resource-based theory and ethical theory. Ethical theory is the most used theory in integrity and ethical research, while a lack of research suggests using ethical culture as a resource in resource-based theory.

The resource-based view (RBV) theory, as explored in many references underscores the pivotal role of unique organisational resources in fostering competitive advantage and sustained performance (Hoopes et al., 2003; Miles, 2012; Mweru & Maina, 2016; Peteraf & Barney, 2003). Miles (2012) provides a comprehensive overview of management and organisation theory, likely detailing how organisations leverage resources for long-term success. Hoopes et al. (2003) introduction to a particular issue in the Strategic Management Journal likely delves into the origins and significance of RBV, shedding light on its role in understanding competitive heterogeneity. Additionally, Peteraf & Barney (2003) likely offer insights into the complexities and challenges of applying RBV in managerial contexts, while Mweru & Maina (2016) may focus on the practical aspects, such as outsourcing strategies, elucidating RBV's efficacy in real-world business scenarios. These references contribute to a nuanced understanding of how organisations can effectively utilise their resources to gain and maintain a competitive edge in dynamic markets.

Researchers classify perceived strengths within an organisation as resources, encompassing diverse assets such as brand equity, employee competencies, technological infrastructure, financial capital, contractual agreements, and operational efficiencies (Caves, 1980; Wernerfelt, 1984). These resources manifest in both tangible and intangible forms. Cultivating organisational culture emerges as a strategic asset, potentially serving as the linchpin of a business model (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012). Additionally, corporate integrity culture represents a pivotal facet of corporate identity. According to resource-based theory, a corporate integrity culture can confer a sustainable competitive advantage when it meets specific criteria,

including value, rarity, inimitability, and scarcity (Barney, 1991; Flamholtz & Randle, 2012). This theoretical framework, as delineated by (Wernerfelt, 1984) and further expounded by (Barney, 1991), underscores the significance of internal resources and capabilities in delineating performance differentials across organisations, a notion also echoed by (Caves, 1980)

The examination of organisational integrity culture constitutes a substantial area of scholarly inquiry (Al-Saggaf et al., 2015; de Graaf & van Asperen, 2016; Raatzsch, 2012) with implications extending to both organisational practice (Al-Saggaf et al., 2015) and sustainability efforts (Lukito, 2016). Particularly within the healthcare sector, establishing robust governance frameworks is crucial for ensuring the effective delivery of healthcare services and optimising investments in healthcare (Arsih & Anisah, 2015). Insights from various scholarly contributions substantiate these assertions (Al-Saggaf et al., 2015; Arsih & Anisah, 2015; de Graaf & van Asperen, 2016; Lukito, 2016; Raatzsch, 2012). The dimensions constituting Organizational Integrity Culture (OIC) encompass organisation culture congruency, organisation culture provision, organisation culture ability, and trustworthiness (Kaptein, 2007; Xu et al., 2019). Despite extensive prior research on integrity practices, a literature gap persists regarding the association between organisational culture and integrity practices (Kılıcoglu, 2017), as well as the nexus between integrity practices and integrity performance (Gong et al., 2015; Navot et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2018)

Conceptual Design

The proposed conceptual framework synthesises the theories from the extant literature pertaining to organisational integrity culture, integrity practice, and employee integrity performance. It also follows the major theories utilised in this research, which are resource-based theory and ethical theory.

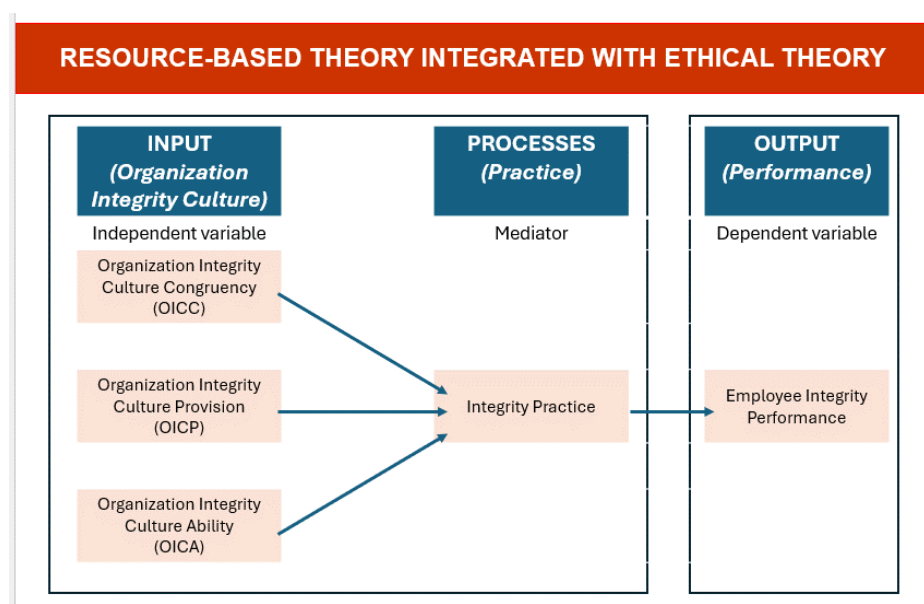


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework Of The Research

Methodology

The research employs a comprehensive methodology, beginning with elucidating the experiment design, including its overarching purpose, approach, strategy, and methodological framework. The comprehensive methodology provides a clear conceptualisation of the research design, explaining the rationale behind the chosen approach and outlining the strategic methodology adopted to address the research objectives. Subsequently, crucial components such as the target population, sampling frame, sampling size, and techniques employed are expounded upon, offering insights into the selection and recruitment processes underlying the research sample. Furthermore, the methodology delves into data collection procedures, including research instrument development, pilot study implementation, and subsequent data acquisition processes. The methodology ensures methodological rigour and reliability in the research process. Finally, the researcher outlines the plan for data analysis, specifying the analytical techniques and procedures envisaged for interpreting the collected data. Through this comprehensive exposition of the research methodology, the study underscores methodological robustness and scholarly rigour, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the research methodology and its implications for the study outcomes.

Adopting a sampling strategy is essential to answering the research questions. The sampling process, as elucidated by Taherdoost (2016), involves several sequential steps, each serving a distinct purpose in selecting a representative sample. Researchers navigate the complexities of sampling, ensuring the selection of a sample that accurately reflects the characteristics and diversity of the broader population.

With an extensive background working within Malaysia's largest private healthcare group of hospitals spanning over eighteen years, the researchers have a unique position to witness and analyse the industry's intricacies firsthand. This insider perspective allows them to collect invaluable insights, observations, and experiences from various stakeholders. By exploring integrity within Malaysia's healthcare landscape, the researchers aim to inform and shape organisational practices, policies, and decision-making processes, thereby making a meaningful contribution to advancing ethical standards and integrity within healthcare organisations.

Ensuring an adequate sample size is paramount for the success and validity of this study. Based on guidelines provided by Cunningham (2007) and insights from Faul et al. (2009), a sample size of 140 participants has been deemed appropriate. Convenience sampling will be employed as the methodological approach, as outlined by Taherdoost (2016), to ensure that data collection is streamlined and efficient. Through this approach, researchers can efficiently gather data from readily available participants, maximising efficiency and overcoming practical barriers while facilitating rigorous and impactful research outcomes.

In this study, the researchers developed the research instrument by adapting critical sources in the field of integrity and ethics. The instrument draws insights from Kaptein (2008) for theoretical foundations, incorporates practical methodologies from the Institute of Integrity Malaysia (IIM) adapted from Dubinsky and Richter (2015) for local relevance, and integrates global perspectives from the Global Ethics and Integrity Benchmark by Ingerson (2014). By synthesising these diverse sources, the instrument aims to assess organisational integrity culture within the study's context comprehensively.

Table 2 Summary Of Items Adapted From Sources

Construct	Number of Items	Source
Integrity Culture Congruency	6	Kaptein (2008)
Integrity Culture Provision	6	Kaptein (2008)
Integrity Culture Ability	5	Kaptein (2008)
Integrity Management Practice	5	The Institute of Integrity of Malaysia (IIM) was adapted from Dubinsky & Richter's (2015) Global Ethics and Integrity Benchmark.
Employee Integrity Performance	12	Ingerson (2014)
Total	34	

Data Analysis And Findings

The researcher distributed 350 questionnaires using the organisation's email system and Google Forms to collect comprehensive data. Stringent measures ensured confidentiality and privacy. This data collection process took place over six months, from January to June 2023, with careful attention to detail in dissemination and response recording. The collected data underwent a thorough examination and interpretation to formulate the study's conclusions. Initially, the researcher assessed the response rate, revealing a successful return rate of 77.7% for the questionnaires—subsequent analysis involved scrutinising missing data, outliers, and data distribution to understand the dataset's characteristics. The researcher employed Harman's single-factor test to assess standard method variance or bias. The researcher then used descriptive statistics to explore participant demographics and responses to questionnaire items. The researcher conducted advanced data analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Evaluation of both measurement and structural models showed no multicollinearity in the measurement model. The researcher examined path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2), revealing satisfactory levels of explained variance (R^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) for the endogenous constructs within the structural model. However, some constructs showed relatively weaker predictive power.

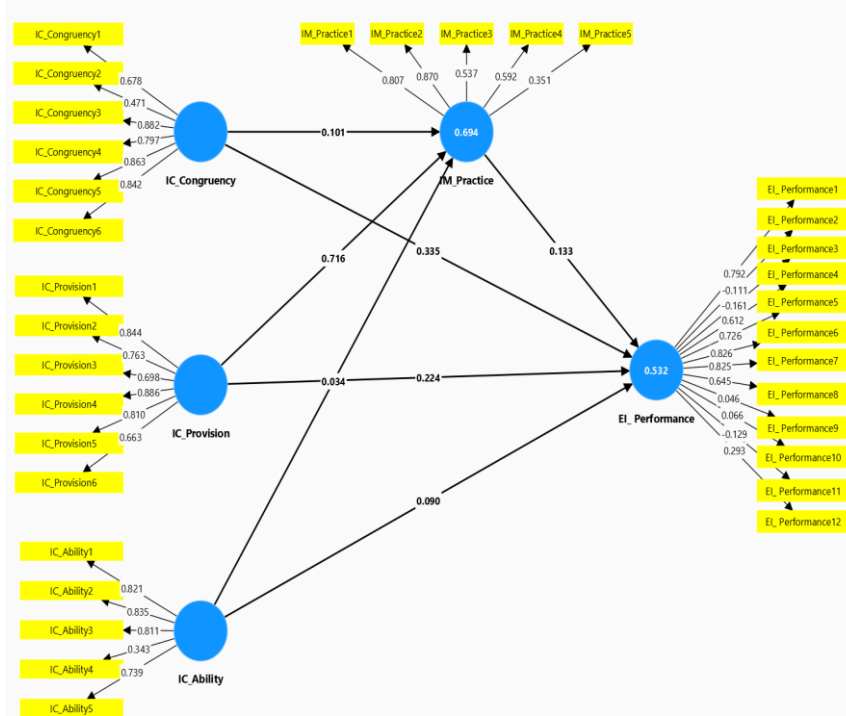


Figure 2 Results Of PLS Algorithms For Measurement Model

The findings suggest that the relationship between the three dimensions of Organizational Integrity Culture (OIC) and employee integrity performance is not solely mediated by integrity practice. They indicate a complex interplay of factors influencing employee integrity performance that warrants further investigation.

Table 3 Overall Results Of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Decision
<u>Predictor to consequences relationship</u>	
H1. Organisational integrity culture congruency (OICC) will affect the practice of integrity.	Supported
H2. Organisation integrity culture provision (OICP) will affect the integrity practice.	Supported
H3. Organisational integrity culture ability (OICA) will affect the practice of integrity.	Supported
H4. Integrity practice will affect employee integrity performance	Supported
H5. Organisation integrity culture congruency (OICC) will affect employee integrity performance.	Supported
H6. Organisation integrity culture provision (OICP) will affect employee integrity performance	Supported
H7. Organisation integrity culture ability (OICA) will affect employee integrity performance	Supported
<u>Mediation effect</u>	
H8. Integrity practice mediates the relationship between OICC, OICP and OICA with employee integrity performance.	Not supported

Discussion And Conclusion

The discussion section thoroughly reviews the research findings outlined in the preceding section. It meticulously examines the results in the context of the four research inquiries initially outlined in the introductory chapter. Through a detailed comparison, this discussion juxtaposes the present findings with existing literature, aiming to identify congruences and disparities. This critical examination contextualises the current study within the broader research landscape, shedding light on its relevance and potential implications. Furthermore, the section meticulously elucidates the study's theoretical and practical ramifications, underscoring its significance in advancing knowledge within the field. Lastly, it conscientiously addresses the limitations inherent in the study and offers valuable recommendations for future research endeavours.

The Influence of Organization Integrity Culture on Integrity Practice

Research findings within the healthcare industry shed light on the intricate relationship between integrity culture and integrity practices, contributing to ongoing academic discourse. Notably, the study aligns with theoretical foundations established by Kaptein (2008) and Solomon (1992), enriching understanding of corporate integrity culture and its practical implications. The constructs of integrity culture congruency, provision, and ability, as posited by Kaptein (2007), serve as critical lenses for examining organisational ethics. The findings resonate with existing scholarly discourse, particularly in healthcare and service industries. While the relationship between integrity culture congruency and integrity practice exhibits relatively weak significance, it underscores the complexity of translating ethical ideals into actionable practices.

Conversely, a robust association between integrity culture provision and integrity practice suggests the pivotal role of organisational support structures in fostering ethical behaviour. However, the weak relationship between integrity culture ability and integrity practice highlights an area requiring further inquiry. Future research can explore the mechanisms underlying integrity culture ability and its impact on organisational effectiveness and ethical performance. In addressing these challenges, organisations can enhance their capacity to cultivate ethical cultures that promote integrity and drive sustainable success (Kaptein, 2008).

The Influence of Integrity Practice on Employee Integrity Performance

The correlation between integrity practices and employee integrity performance is a significant focus in the healthcare and services industry, drawing on insights from management literature, empirical studies, and psychology. The relatively weak level of significance indicated by the t-value of 0.579 suggests that integrity practices may have a less substantial impact on employee performance than previously assumed. However, research by Lederman et al. (2005), Albrecht et al. (2012), Husnin et al. (2016), and Marzuki et al. (2016) underscores the importance of robust governance frameworks in promoting integrity within these sectors. Integrity practice encompasses planning, implementation, and coordination of activities aimed at upholding organisational integrity, with management control systems and assessments by bodies like the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) playing key roles (Maciariello et al., 1994; Sajari et al., 2016). Insights from psychology, including theories such as the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior, elucidate individual behaviour within organisational contexts (Ajzen, 1991; Campbell, 1993; Sherman & Fazio, 1983). Understanding employee integrity performance within these sectors is crucial, as emphasised by Ingerson's (2014) conceptualisation, which encompasses cognitive, emotional, and

behavioural dimensions. The Employee Integrity Performance Scale developed by Ingerson provides a comprehensive tool for assessing and enhancing employee engagement with integrity-related matters. By integrating literature insights with survey findings, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of integrity management within healthcare and service organisations, emphasising the multifaceted nature of promoting integrity and ethical conduct.

The Influence Of Organizational Integrity Culture On Employee Integrity Performance

The significant relationship between integrity culture congruency and employee integrity performance, as indicated by a t-value of 3.440, underscores the critical need to align an organisation's professed ethical values and actual practices. This congruence positively shapes employee integrity performance, resonating strongly with insights from healthcare research such as Smith et al. (2020), highlighting the profound impact of organisational integrity culture on patient safety and ethical standards. Similarly, Johnson and Williams (2019) emphasise the pivotal role of integrity culture congruency in building trust and fostering enduring customer relationships in the service industry. Conversely, the weaker levels of significance found in the relationships between organisational integrity culture provision and ability with employee integrity performance suggest that merely providing an integrity culture within an organisation may not substantially impact employee integrity performance. These findings align with healthcare literature, emphasising the importance of effectively implementing integrity guidelines to ensure patient safety, as highlighted by Smith et al. (2020).

Similarly, in the service industry, Johnson and Williams (2019) stress the need for practical application of integrity cultures to build trust and foster long-term customer relationships. The weak significance observed in the relationship between organisational integrity culture ability and employee integrity performance suggests that organisational capabilities alone may not substantially influence employee integrity. Findings from healthcare and service industry literature, these results highlight the nuanced interplay between different dimensions of organisational integrity culture and their varying effects on employee integrity performance. The congruence between stated values and organisational practices emerges as a significant factor in fostering integrity among employees, highlighting its universal importance across sectors (Smith et al., 2020; Johnson & Williams, 2019).

The Medicating Role Of Integrity Practice On The Relationship Between Organization Integrity Culture And Employee Integrity Performance

Examining integrity culture within healthcare assumes critical importance due to its implications for patient outcomes and organisational dynamics. While t-values derived from mediation analysis provide insights into the statistical significance of indirect effects, they do not surpass conventional thresholds. However, delving deeper into these relationships reveals valuable insights, considering factors like effect sizes and theoretical relevance. Aligning organisational goals with performance, as emphasised in strategic management literature, underscores the pivotal role of corporate culture in shaping objectives and fostering employee engagement. Drawing parallels with the service industry highlights the significance of integrity practices in shaping customer experiences and strategic outcomes. Insights from healthcare literature emphasise the profound impact of organisational culture on patient outcomes and safety, emphasising the interconnectedness of organisational dynamics and healthcare quality. Despite the lack of statistical significance, the broader narrative underscores the enduring importance of integrity practices and cultural alignment in shaping organisational resilience and fostering positive outcomes in both healthcare and service industries (Smith et al., 2017;

Johnson & O'Leary, 2018; Draf, 2003; Amah et al., 2013; Chadegani & Jari, 2016; Sims & Brinkmann, 2003).

Research Contributions

The research base theory of resource-based theory (RBT), as articulated by Peteraf & Barney (2003) and further substantiated by subsequent scholars such as Hoopes, Madsen, & Walker (2003), offers a comprehensive framework for comprehending the intricate dynamics underlying organisational performance and competitive advantage attainment. RBT posits that organisations possess diverse resources, tangible and intangible, shaping their competitive positioning. While these resources vary among firms and are challenging to replicate, they form the basis for performance disparities. Organisations leverage resources for sustainable competitive advantage based on value, rarity, imitability, and non-substitutability criteria. Wernerfelt (1984) expands the notion of resources to include tangible and intangible assets, resonating with healthcare's complex resource landscape. Drawing parallels with the service industry highlights the significance of integrity practices in shaping organisational cultures.

Moreover, the study aligns with Wernerfelt's perspective by emphasising organisational integrity culture as a strategic asset in healthcare, influencing integrity practices and employee performance. The mediation analysis reveals that while integrity practices positively influence employee integrity performance, they do not fully mediate the relationship between integrity culture dimensions and overall employee performance outcomes. This observation aligns with RBT's emphasis on strategic resource utilisation and highlights the need for a holistic understanding of organisational dynamics. Integrating RBT with current research findings underscores how organisational integrity culture functions as a strategic resource, influencing integrity practices and employee performance outcomes within healthcare organisations. This synthesis advances our understanding of organisational ethics and the imperative of fostering integrity cultures conducive to ethical behaviour across industries, extending beyond healthcare and service sectors to encompass broader discussions on ethical leadership and organisational effectiveness.

While governmental and public sectors have received significant attention in ethical research, the private sector, particularly private healthcare, still needs to be explored. This study addresses this gap by delving into the ethical dimensions of private healthcare practices, providing insights for decision-making and policy formulation. Through meticulous examination, it seeks to uncover the nuanced ethical challenges private healthcare providers face, including patient confidentiality and resource allocation. Additionally, the research aims to explore the role of organisational ethical culture in shaping employee behaviour and performance within private healthcare settings, filling a gap in the existing literature. Given the far-reaching implications of unethical behaviour, especially in today's digital age, understanding the determinants of ethical conduct among healthcare professionals is crucial for safeguarding organisational reputation and fostering trust. By innovatively employing the Institute Integrity of Malaysia (IIM) index, the study seeks to offer actionable insights for enhancing integrity management practices in Malaysian private healthcare organisations, ultimately contributing to improving ethical standards and patient outcomes.

Limitations Of The Study

The research primarily focused on its industry-specific nature within the private healthcare sector. While the insights garnered are valuable within this context, it is essential to exercise

caution when extrapolating them to other sectors due to the unique intricacies of private healthcare. The reliance on the Institute of Integrity Malaysia index introduces limitations, as it may need to capture the nuances of the private healthcare industry fully. Researchers must navigate these limitations carefully, employing ethical frameworks to ensure the robustness and generalizability of their findings across diverse organisational contexts. Despite these constraints, conscientiously addressing these limitations can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of integrity practices, fostering an environment conducive to ethical culture and practice in various industries.

Recommendations For Future Research

1. **Exploration of Additional Factors:** Future research should identify and examine additional factors beyond integrity practice that may mediate the relationship between Organizational Integrity Culture (OIC) dimensions and employee integrity performance within healthcare organisations. These additional factors could include factors such as individual characteristics, team dynamics, or external influences that may interact with OIC dimensions to impact employee behaviour and performance.
2. **Longitudinal Studies:** Longitudinal studies could offer valuable insights into the dynamic nature of integrity culture and its effects on employee behaviour over time. By tracking changes in OIC dimensions, integrity practice, and employee integrity performance longitudinally, researchers can understand the causal relationships and potential moderating factors involved.
3. **Comparative Analysis:** Comparative studies across different healthcare organisations or industries could provide a broader perspective on the influence of integrity culture on employee behaviour and organisational outcomes. By comparing organisations with varying levels of integrity culture or different approaches to promoting integrity, researchers can identify best practices and areas for improvement.
4. **Qualitative Research:** Complementing quantitative findings with qualitative research methods such as interviews or focus groups can offer richer insights into the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors shaping the relationship between OIC dimensions, integrity practice, and employee integrity performance. Qualitative data can uncover nuanced perspectives and better understand organisational culture dynamics.
5. **Exploration of Organisational Interventions:** Future research could focus on evaluating the effectiveness of specific interventions to enhance integrity culture within healthcare organisations. By implementing and assessing interventions to improve integrity culture congruency, provision, and ability, researchers can identify the most effective strategies for promoting integrity and improving organisational outcomes.
6. **Cross-Cultural Studies:** Given the cultural diversity within healthcare organisations, cross-cultural studies exploring the influence of integrity culture on employee behaviour across different cultural contexts could be valuable. Understanding how cultural factors interact with integrity culture dimensions to shape employee integrity performance can inform culturally sensitive interventions and organisational practices.
7. **Ethical Decision-Making Processes:** Further investigation into the ethical decision-making processes within healthcare settings could provide insights into how integrity culture influences individual and collective decision-making. By examining the role of integrity culture in guiding ethical reasoning and behaviour, researchers can identify opportunities to strengthen ethical practices and enhance patient care quality.
8. **Impact on Patient Outcomes:** Future research could investigate the direct impact of integrity culture and employee integrity performance on patient outcomes by expanding

on the findings concerning organisational reputation and adherence to regulatory standards. Understanding how integrity within healthcare organisations translates into improved patient care quality and outcomes is essential for advancing both organisational effectiveness and patient well-being.

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