The Unraveled Myth of Ethical Differences in Educator Professionalism

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Abstract

Educators are responsible in guiding the students towards becoming the ideal human capital of the nation. Nevertheless, there are vast differences in ethical practices among the educators and this adds to the achievement of some students, victimizing others. This qualitative research has the main objective to explore the differences in ethical practices among educators, particularly in areas related to guidance and evaluation in education and to identify the implications of such practices on the students. The samples include institution administrators, educators and students of different levels and different institutions. Collection of data was mainly through interviews, observations, balance-sheet plotting, guided questionnaires as well as document studies and analyzed using frequency-percentage approach. The findings show the existence of vast differences between the educators in the area of ethical practices in relation to managing, educational procedures as well as evaluation of student work and performances. Although the element of HOW the educators mentor the learners is solely the responsibility and rights of the educators, it nevertheless shows in-depth problems of inter as well as intra reliability of professional values. These need to be carefully handled. As such, this paper opens a new gateway for further researches to enhance ethical values in professionalism.

Keywords: educator, human capital, ethics, evaluation, reliability

INTRODUCTION

An educator is a teacher. He is also a coach, a mentor and in fact he is the GURU or "Sifu" who educates the public which thereafter contribute in the form of human capital to witness the development of the beloved nation. Educators harbour the responsibility of guiding and helping the students at all levels to excel in the field of studies the latter take up. At the end of the road, the students are left with the responsibility to prove their capabilities, through the evaluation process. Hence, those students who come out as the scorers of grades provide the ideal human capital to fulfill the needs of the job market at better positions. Those who do not score well are left to struggle out in the battle of survival. Nevertheless, be it in the process of being educated or at the summative end evaluation, students are left to face vast differences in ethical practices among the educators. The students begin to face this phenomenon from the time they walk into the hands of an educational institution till the day they walk out of it in the pursuit of filling up the job market.

Basically, ethics is a theory about what makes actions right or wrong. As educators we are more concerned to explore normative ethics (others are meta-ethics and applied ethics) which take on a practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. Ethics is a word that can be used loosely, and thus people use the term as to suit what they want to mean. Hence, it's important to understand if there is, if at all, any justification to what some meant by personal ethics or professional ethics, as well as to why they practice certain such ethics. The unjustified practice of ethics, are what we are concerned about in the process of education.

BACKGROUND

The main aim of this paper was to explore professionalism from the angle of the differences in practices which are governed by the ethical sustainability of certain group of professionals, particularly in the elements of educator guidance and summative evaluation. The element that triggered the need to explore matters related to ethical practices is the non-stop grouses by not only students but even the educator colleagues that there are too many incidents and situation of unfairness and disparity in the evaluations and evaluation procedures by their tutors (for students) or colleagues (among educators).

Thus, the researcher disembarked on the long lasting (and never ending) process of collecting qualitative data from as many sources as possible. Every encounter with educators, students, classroom situations, curricular and

non-curricular guidance from teacher to students, allocation of marks and grades for evaluations, examination document and academic discussions were jotted down as data for the study.

Data analysis was done using a simple but meaningful approach that is the percentage-frequency distribution. The findings show the existence of vast differences between the GURUs (the educators) in how they guide the learners through the period the learners are with them as well as the manner they evaluate the learners either before the learners move up the education ladder or before they burst into the job market.

Although the element of HOW the educators mentor the learners throughout the learner span is solely the responsibility and rights of the educators, it nevertheless adds to the high grade achievement of some students but it does victimize the success of others. These inter as well as intra reliability of professionalism show a low level in value.

DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

Some of the data that highlighted the differences are presented and duly discussed. Comparisons are made to reveal the occurrence of differences in relation to ethical practices in various areas. Graphs and tables are are presented for identification of mismatch in guiding and evaluating students that lead to disparity.

As it is seen in Graph 1 and 2 below, students with similar achievements (low) in English Language at the point of entry into the institution are in two different classes. They are handled by two different tutors. Their final achievement in progressive evaluation shows such a difference in grades that have been awarded. Could there be a conflict in ethical practices among the two tutors in marking and awarding grades!

A. ACHIEVEMENT DISTRIBUTION
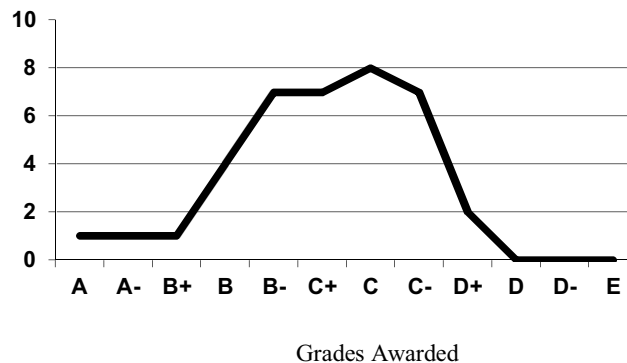
1. SUBJECT: ENGLISH LANGUAGE (33 stds)

1. CLASS X - A

No of Students
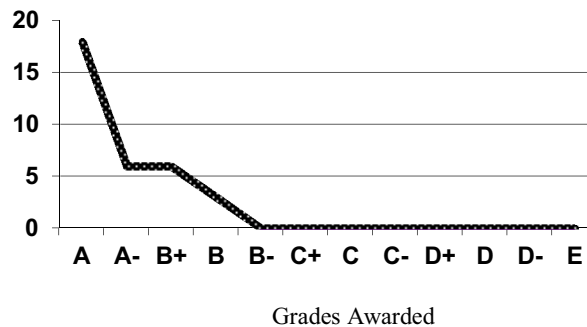
Grades Awarded
Graph 1 Students achievements in English Language Class X A

2. CLASS X - B

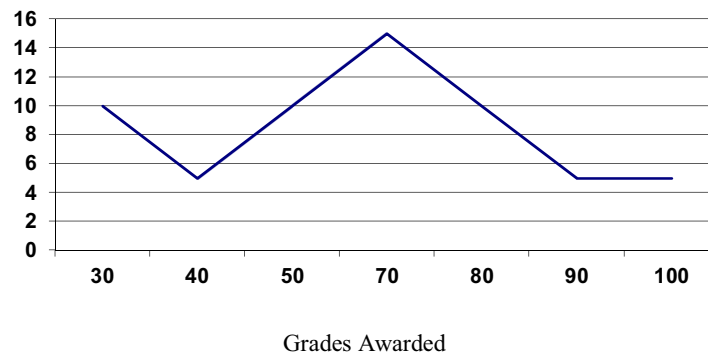No of Students

Grades Awarded
Graph 2 Students achievements in English Language Class X B

Graphs 3 and 4 below show the number students in different classes and they have almost similar achievement in Pendidikan Islam at the point of entry into the institution. They are handled by different tutors. Again, their final achievement in progressive evaluation shows such a difference in grades that have been awarded.

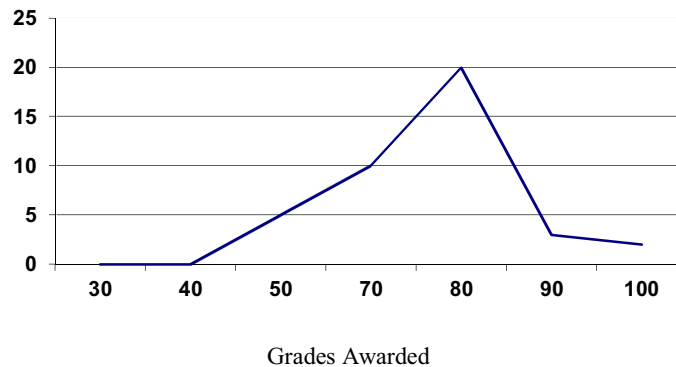## 2. SUBJECT: PENDIDIKAN ISLAM (40 stds)

1.   CLASS P - A

No of Students

Grades Awarded

Graph 3 Students achievements in Pendidikan Islam Class P A

2.   CLASS P-B

No of Students

Grades Awarded

Graph 4 Students achievements in Pendidikan Islam Class P B

B.   SUPERVISOR VS MENTOR

The table below represents the ethical miss-conception in mentoring between the supervisors from a higher learning institution and the mentors in schools or other institutions. The table shows Student 3 being awarded a grade "A" by the supervisor with a total of 83 marks and an "A" by the mentor BUT with a total of 95 marks. There is a difference of 12 marks which could create a difference of 3 grades but the both marks fall under the same grade. Student 3 is safe. Nevertheless, Student 4 faces some problem as the mentor awarded a "C – 58 marks", compared to a "B –71 marks" by the supervisor. Even Student 5, to a certain extent faces similar problem of moving plus or minus 3 grades (A, A-, B+ and B).

Supervision score on scale

Student	Supervisor	Mentor
1	Grade A - Score 80	Grade A - Score 85
2	Grade A – Score 82	Grade B + - Score 77
3	**Grade A – Score 83**	**Grade A – Score 95**
4	**Grade B – Score 71**	**Grade C- – Score 58**
5	Grade B – Score 73	Grade A – Score 82

C.   WORK PLACE EVALUATION

At work place, government and non-government organizations, performance evaluation has been very much argued about. There are bosses who feel / felt that a 98% (this was THE case at times when an exodus of federal officers from state X, moved up the ladder to fill up post at federal level compared to other states) score is reflective of excellence but others are / were with the stand that a human being could not be awarded more than 92% since human beings are not "complete" people. This has led to many "dead-logs" being found at different levels of work-places. Even the different approaches in "set-visits" and "random-visits" in industrial or academic supervision unfold thousand of problems to parallel standards.

D.   TUTOR GUIDANCE IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

It is not uncommon to see (or hear) tutors being autocratic and saying I am going to be strict with you or just being strict compared to some others who are lenient and adopt a "leisure-faire" approach. Some tutors are strict with adult learners but much lenient to the "fresh undergraduates" and others are fair throughout. Some tutors give the students so much guidance, be it in understanding the lectures or helping them to complete their work but others are "I leave you alone – type" Could it be due to the difference in individual's ethical practices!

CONCLUSION

It can ideally be concluded that individual educators interpret, adopt and adhere to what ethics means to each of them. Again it is an accepted fact that each individual has his or her own rights to what they consider ethics to be. Nevertheless, it is more pertinent for us to register in our mind that if and when practices in ethics differ in the common process of educating learners, there could be injustice done to the clients (students) as a whole. Educators deliver through guidance and at the end of the day, evaluating the students through different instruments and such evaluations play the role to make the students what they are in the job market. Although through a few data and explanations, it is still very clear that, taken the students as a whole team of clients, ethical differences among educators do play a major role at two extremes. First extreme is being advantageous to those students who had gained from the "helper" educators. Second extreme is being disadvantageous to those who have fallen due to the "killer" educators. Differences do exist in evaluation in different areas and at different levels of education and organizations. The existence of such differences that kills "client-centered" educational/organizational system must be deeply explored. The educationists and the professionals with similar responsibilities should interpret and practice ethics which are fair and just to the students. The myth in ethical practices among the educators is still unraveled. Researchers must work deeper into identifying ways and means to uphold the principles of the organization and its value. Measures should be proposed, at least to narrow the gap of such differences so that more clients are blessed with justice in education.

There may not be an absolute solution to this mythical problem. Most people would still strongly classify ethical practices as THE RIGHTS of individual human. Nevertheless, this could indeed be the eye opener for measures to narrow the gap created by the differences in the educator ethics. Through more related researches, the number of novices, particularly those who had been the comparative victims of negativism in ethics, could be reduced and more elites could be discovered.

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