

Integrity: Human and Money

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Abstract

Integrity, An Unseen Element That Can Make or Break Human Beings Through Monetary means is the gist of this first-hand observational research conducted by a student with the assistance of his lecturer. Observational research is a qualitative research method that employs the (direct and/or indirect) involvement of the researcher in the situation so as to gauge and identify what are the elements that need to be highlighted and is significant to the result as proof. The student was initially involved as the respondent but along the way he becomes the researcher (cum observer) looking into the situation or the study segment. Simultaneously, the observer also employs the ethnographic observational research method where all thoughts and opinions are written verbatim with minor grammar and structural amendments. The result is a clear-cut heartfelt observation that can be translated into a more quantified future research as a continuation of the present one. For clarification of the entire concept, the findings are tabulated to further emphasize the significance of integrity with regard to human and money. Using a newly created identifying scale (ID Scale) based on motivating and demotivating factors, we were able to 'see' and appreciate the relationship changes as the result.

Keywords: Integrity; Monetary; Identifying Scale; Observational Research; Verbatim

1. Introduction

When Human Beings Begin Its Civilization, they have been using the System of Exchange and Trade to interchange for what they need in their lives. The goods they used to exchange for must have the same value compared to the one they got exchanged back. If the goods did not have the same value, it was either they canceled that trade or they added more goods to be exactly the same value. When this system, better known as barter trade, was first introduced and used it gradually evolved to become a world of money where humans would give a value to a paper-like material and use it to exchange for something in the interactions. The same principle applied to the world of money where the goods they exchange for must have the same value with what they received in exchange for with integrity as the backbone. Fig 1.1 amplify the rudimentary functions of money by human beings.

1.1. Research Paradigm

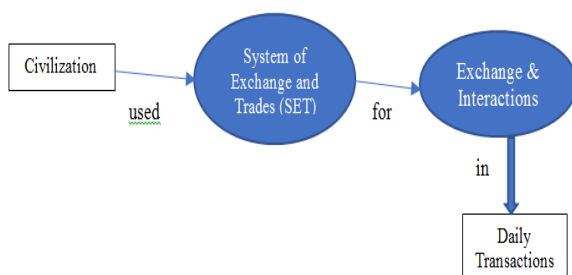


Fig. 1: Primary Human Functions of Money

1.2. Statement of the Problem

“Money is not everything but without money, you could not do a lot of things” is the maxim human beings live by in their everyday life that at times will make them lost their perspectives, values, and even lives. In the long run, the monetary power and influences on human beings will affect in lost integrity. Hence, one tends to contemplate and question the significance of integrity with regard to human and money in this fast changing whole.

1.3. Objective of the Study

Numerous rhetoric questions arise from myriad perspectives such as what is the identifying factor that motivated us human beings? which one, is it money or integrity that encouraged us to go on? what elements pushed us to go endlessly (it seems) till completion? how powerful and strong do any of us see the pull? which one? what suggestions and/or recommendation – to reduce and/or overcome the dependency? Thus, in order to identify and gauge which and what elements needed to be significantly highlighted as evidence or proof ends up to be the objective of this paper.

2. Literature Review

This aphorism: no matter how educated, talented, rich, or cool you believe you are, how you treat people tells all; Integrity is everything - is the turning point to this research. Money really amazes me on how it changes our behaviors. Sometimes, because of money, we would do something that we have never done before. Because of money, it makes us do sinful or unlawful things which are entirely of our own integrity. There are people out there, who are willing to betray their family for the sake of money. Yes, in-

deed money is so attractive and charming, it triggered me to think "What can replace the role of money?"

The respondent cum observer, anonymously known as the initial WX, was a student of the researcher involved as an enumerator in a socio-ethnic research project on general election conducted early this year of 2017. This observational research with partial ethnographic involvement was actually the story of his journey of honesty and truthfulness in search of integrity from the monetary standpoint. He (WX) was born in 1995 in the state of Melaka, one of the fourteen states of Malaysia. During his time, money was already something very important to the world, is that, the be-all that ends-all. He has been involved in a research process related to the general election, or formally known as the Forensic Investigation on the Socio-Election, Environment and Development with Dr. Wan Suraya binti Wan Nik, a senior lecturer from the Soft Skills Department, Centre of Modern Languages and Human Sciences (CMLHS), University Malaysia Pahang as the lecturer-in-charge. As her lead enumerator, he and his group of friends (as enumerators now) only have to look for people as respondents and ask them to fill in a survey booklet. A finished survey booklet will earned them a set rate that will multiply by the number of completed booklets.

I, as the enumerator, got paid for every one survey done (and completed). At first, when Dr. Wan mentioned this research project to me, I was not that interested, but when I knew that there was monetary token given to the enumerator, immediately I said yes to Dr. Wan. We needed manpower to finish all the survey, so I looked for my friends to join me as well. Of course, when my friends knew that they would be paid, they promised to join. From here, I see how powerful and motivating money is. My friends and I become 'one' and be united between us just to finish the work and get paid i.e. in terms of monetary reward.

We were all so happy to go out once we were ready. We did not see human beings as a single person, but as a symbol of money or RM, because for each person we met, we earned money for it. I noticed how hard working we were to earn this so call easy money. However, due to the unexpected and numerous technical problems we faced where we could not get the public to finish all the questions in one survey, my friends chose to fill it up on their own some of the incomplete questions so they could claim the money. This was not right according to the rules and regulations because it would affect the outcome of this investigation. But for the sake of money, they chose to do it - quietly and subtly. Gradually, we expanded to other places that we were not familiar with. But again, for the sake of money, we were willing to go. Talking to strangers, being rejected by the public, being thick-skin yet we did not give up. And it is all for money.

3. Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Framework

We, humans are experiencing the desire of getting rich, the deception from money and the destruction of money. All of us want money. And we want more and more and more all the time. No one complains, if and when they have too much or loads of it. Even though they have more than enough, they will still work and work for money, non-stop. Money is our great servant, but a bad master. But we make it our master and we work for it. We love money and we long for money. This is somehow our nature. Money, itself is not a problem but our attitude is. We should bear in mind that money is like a loaded gun. It can protect us from unexpected incidents, it can provide us with what we need in our daily life, or it can kill our life.

We have the desire of wanting more and more money. It seems endless and continuous because money secures our life and provide us with what we need so that we can live comfortably. And that is why, most people have the desire of becoming rich, including me. Sometimes, we are not aware of the danger behind it.

Many want to be rich because of what money can do. Gradually our heart will place our hope and trust to what the money can offer. Basically, we are putting faith in money. But money tends to deceive us. It always promises what it cannot give or delivers.

There is a common saying that goes like this: *I can live happily with money*. But somehow, when I think carefully, I do not think it is the case that commonly materialize among us. Why? Because I do not see all the people with lots of money are living happily now. Only a few of them do. Some of them are alone and lonely after working hard to earn and acquire tons of money because now they have no friends and families to confer with and spent them on or with. Some of them are powerful, making people scared to approach them. Some of them are sick because when they were earning money, they ignore their health. Some of them are having frustration now after thinking hard on how to earn more money. Some of them are having hard times going through the economic crisis. Some of them are upset because their children had grown up without them. Money has greatly deceived them. Out of this world, only a few live happily with money. This group of people are usually those who give what they have back to the community to help the society. The continual flow of the process of money in one's life, whether it is the root of all evils or not, is tabulated in Table 3.1 below for further comprehension by the human minds.

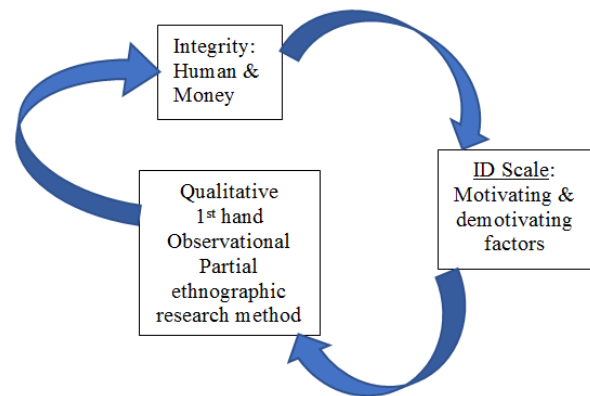


Fig. 2: The Continual Flow of the Process

3.2. Conceptual Framework

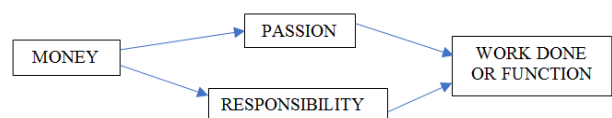


Fig. 3: The Consequence of the Tradition of Money

In a race or fight between money and passion, or in my observation when money meets passion, passion will win for sure. What is passion? According to the On-line Oxford Dictionary, passion is an intense desire or enthusiasm for something or it is a thing arousing enthusiasm. The scene to understanding the consequences of the tradition of money is set with the role and function of being a nurse in the 21st Century. Here, passion is the motivator to keep the nurses stimulated to go on. On a daily basis there are more and more people slowly become patients. How could you serve the patients with only a little or small salary if you are doing it for money? The researcher understands and knows for a fact that all of us do not receive a high salary even though we have been serving for a long period. And guess what? The training is a tough one to equip us with all kind of skills to save lives. Why do we all go through this hardship even if there is salary? Simple! It is because we got the passion to save lives. What do we get in return? It is the satisfaction of seeing peoples' life being saved! We do not wish to see death to separate people. Our existence is not entirely for money, but our heart is filled with passion to save lives. Pas-

sion can replace the role of money. We will not work for money sometimes, but we got the passion so we work toward it! We are civilized and we should act like one. Why are we controlled by money? We should get rid of this and start our day with a passionate heart.

Next, let turn to the responsibility which can replace the role of money. Again, according to the On-line Oxford dictionary, responsibility is the state of being accountable or to blame for something, or the opportunity or ability to act independently and take decisions without authorization. Yes, money can buy responsibility. Just like wages. I got the money and I am responsible for what I am doing. However, taking time to think deeply, I figured out that this is not always the case. For instance, our parents taking care of us out of their responsibilities. They do not get paid for taking care of us. They are not doing it for money. When we have the responsibilities within us, even though we do not get paid, we will still accomplish our tasks.

I can rest assured that without the passion and responsibility to saving lives, one will not stay too long as a nurse (or a doctor, for that matter). The Figure 3.2 above ascertain the consequences of the tradition or convention of money in reality as what had been revealed in this observational study. This is the norm in real life whether we like it or not.

3.3. Research Method

The approach employed in this qualitative research is through the observational ethnographic process since we are looking into the depth of a specific situation that have direct and/or indirect involvement of the researcher and his lecturer. The researcher, in turn, becomes the observer with first-hand heartfelt verbatim narration in writing format of his personal experiences with minor grammar and structural amendments by the lecturer-in-charge. His clear-cut observational discovery conducted utilizes partial ethnographic method since the respondents were close relatives and friends. The consequences of these relatives and friends from the monetary perspectives further substantiate the truth behind this observational research.

4. Results and Findings

4.1. Analysis of Data

There are two extremes that teach me to be careful with money. Let's talk about the bad impact of money on humans. There was an incident which occurred in Singapore a few years back. One man was knocked down by a car and was rushed to the hospital immediately for medical treatment. The man later found out that all his legs and arms got fractured which required surgery to connect all the bones back to its original position. However, the doctor insisted that if the man would like to have the operation, he would need to pay SGD\$100,000.00 as a deposit to the hospital. The man was left without any surgery done for about one week in the hospital. From this incident, I could clearly see that money sometimes has taken place of the importance of health. This is quite wretched as the primary role of a doctor is to save lives but this doctor from a hospital said no to the patient and said yes to the money. The aspect of being healthy and the aspect of saving life by a doctor is no longer important when money happens to be the only thing the doctor, the hospital, even the management find it to be vital and central to all things. I understand that the medical fees, equipment fees, surgery fees are expensive but is life not that important anymore, and should all of us not come forward in integrity and protect it?

The other extreme which makes a good impact is about the life of a Chartered Accountant, the late Datuk Pang FY. He had about 70 plus employees in his company, working as an accountant. He was so successful in his field. Yet, he was so kind to the people around him. Whenever he saw the needs of people, he would not hesitate

to give a helping hand and provide them with what is needed. He did all these without our acknowledgment. All his good works were revealed in his wake. He bought a car for a widow so she could send her children to school and pick them up from the school. He helped many mission works as well as the missionaries. He supported different ministries in the church. He helped the community. He helped my family before! He was not only rich but all so ever willing to help. This is a big contrast to the hospital mentioned above. One is to help with money and the other one is to help for money. Both are so different and they bring different impact to the people. I would like to say that our attitude is the most important factor here to decide which way we live, i.e. live with money like what Datuk Pang did or live for money like how the hospital did to their patients.

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When we focus more on money, we tend to forget our family. There are plenty of examples in the world showing us how someone leaves their family behind when they work hard for money. In some worst case scenario, the couples would get divorced, leaving

the children to live under pressurized situation of being children of single parent and gradually have no interest in the marriage anymore because they are scared the same thing that happened to their parents would happen to them. This is how money deceive us. It promises happiness in the family (when we are rich, the whole family can enjoy life) but when we work hard for it, in some cases, it leads to divorce or/and broken family.

When we focus more on money, it tends to lead us to do something unlawful, something that goes against our integrity or in some worst case scenario, it leads us to leave our human core values behind. This is where the destruction of money comes in. It slowly destructs our life, yet, we are still living under the destructed life without knowing it. Like what I mentioned before, how my neighbour transferred a property which belonged to my grandfather to become their property. I am not sure how they did this, either legally or not. I dare not say and point out the fact that they love money but somehow property is related to wealth. And they cared about the property a lot. They wanted the property and so they transferred the property without my grandfather's acknowledgement. And up to this date, they are going to the court to get this matter settled. It fully destroyed human values which is to be integrity towards themselves as well as others. It destroyed the friendship that has been built for the past 40 over years. Where is the human value over here? Where is the core value? Because of money, the hospital management and the doctors chose not to save a person's life as I discussed above. The kindness left and disappeared when we focus on money. Somehow, all of these are telling us that when we emphasize and focus more on the value of money, we are not aware of the danger that is lurking and we will then loss the human values.

Table1: The Motivating Factor Identifying Scale (ID Scale)

| Money | What Happened? |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Increase | Yes [Work done (surgery performed)] |
| Decrease | No [Work done (no surgery executed)] |

Table 1 above showed the consequences of money as the motivating factor in making daily life decisions, which may be to your liking or not is of no significance. Here, one can draw the conclusion that when money talks, work will be done or performed, is that, it is an accomplishment.

Table 2: The Demotivating Factors Identifying Scale (or ID Scale)

| Human Values | Money Value | Integrity |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| High | Low | High |
| Low | High | Low |
| Low | Low | Low |
| High | High | High |

The demotivating factors as tabulated in Table 2 above clearly define and delineate the invisible lines of integrity in deciding between human values and money. The scale in identifying each of the demotivating factors are just basic high and low of each in terms of significance. The love of and for money has called many to wander away from our purpose of life. Because we are being led by money, we become the servant of money but not master of it. If we did not live out our purpose, we never experience the fullness of life. And without the fullness of life, there would not be enough money to fill up the hollowness of life.

4.2. Significant of the Study

Despite the numerous limitations to this study in the form of the intangible elements involved that will be the motivating and/or the demotivating factors that will tip the identifying scale either way, the unseen elements can make or break human beings especially his/her integrity. With regard to monetary aspects, the values of human beings can fall either way depending on the identifying factors involved. As such, this study will bridge the gap of the chasm - in the form of the unseen and the intangible elements - that will break or make a human being with integrity.

5. Conclusion

Money can really change our behavior and our attitude. But what is most important is what do we want to achieve if we earn (or not earn) so much money? This should be the starting point, as the saying goes, "For what is man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This shall draw our attention to think about one question: Is money that important till we sacrifice our own soul and/or life for it? We may be busy here and there just to earn money. Or I should say, we always use our soul and/or life in exchange for it. Life has so many things which are far more crucial than the imperative ones and we should not ignore it. Let leave with this thought provoking question: is it the money that is cruel and evil? Or is it the human beings? For God sake, dig deep, really deep and decide, before too late!!!

Acknowledgement

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