

ETHICS AND VALUES IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT STAGES IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to examine the awareness of the principles of ethics among the professionals in Project Management in construction industry. The objectives of this paper are as follows: Firstly, to compare and review between the concept of ethics from Western and Islamic perspective by evaluating the principles and practice of ethics when the professionals carry out their duty. Secondly, to investigate the wide range of ethical problems faced at project management stages during construction period. Thirdly, to explore solutions that can be utilized and applied among professionals in construction industry. Previous studies showed that ethics and values is the branch of philosophy that investigates morality and the ways of thinking that guide human behavior. Ethics involve examining moral standards of society and asking how these standards are reasonable or unreasonable. In the construction industry there are two main levels to consider in relation to ethics and values in terms of professionals and corporate/organizational ethics. Professional's ethics refer to the behavior expected of individual or industry or a group within the industry that was bound by a set of principles. However, it appears many cases in practice that professionals in the building industry deemed to behave unethical when implementing project management on various stages. This arises negative impact and causes a number of problems to the public. The methodology applied will be table research to professionals for project management stages in construction industry in Malaysia. The outcome of this paper will benefit the professionals in applying good ethics and values in various stages in of project management in construction industry terms of awareness and its application.

Keywords: Ethics, Values, Project Management, Construction Industry and Islamic Perspective

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The project management in construction industry is a very important in Malaysia and the construction industry is growing by leaps and bounds. While this industry increases in growth and size, it is submitted here that a number of practices that are deemed to be unethical are starting to take place and it is submitted here that these unethical practices causing a number of problems within projects. These unethical practices, if left unresolved, would have a very negative impact on the projects in this industry and the firm operating within it. A fine example of a giant firm that collapsed due to unethical practices is the Enron Corporation.

Hence, it is apparent that the presence of a code of ethics within a particular industry would be very beneficial in not only promoting sound practices within the firm but it would contribute to overall viability and profitability of the entire industry. In this paper, the concept of ethics and its most important theories will be examined and theorizations will be made in comparing ethics between Western and an Islamic perspective in project management stages in order to ensure that the practices within the construction industry are carried out in an ethical and responsible manner (Concrete-Ethics, 2009).

The main objective of this paper is to perform an extensive research on the method by which ethics and values can be successfully applied to professionals that are carried out projects in the construction industry. The project management in construction industry is a very important and the concept values and ethics apply equally to the practices and principles within the construction industry. It is understood here that just as professionals normally have an ethical standard. It is theorized that developers should also have identical standard. Otherwise, they will not able to complete projects (Construction Archives, 2009) and (Concrete-Ethics, 2009).

Recognizing the importance of ethics in project management has urged the researchers of this paper to focus on identifying and addressing the wide range of ethical issues which occurred in the project management stages in construction industry. This paper also aims to compare and review between the concept of ethics from Western and Islamic perspective by evaluating the principles and practice of ethics when the professionals carry out their duty. To offer alternative

Solutions by evaluating the opinions and view of managers of the projects on the most appropriate way in which ethical and Islamic practices can be utilized and applied for the betterment of the projects in construction industry.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Ethics from Western Perspective

Ethics is the branch of philosophy that investigates morality and the ways of thinking that guide human behavior. It evolved initially from religion by thinkers in the Judeo – Christian tradition. Ethics involves examining moral standards of society and asking how these standards apply to our lives and whether these standards are reasonable or unreasonable. Thus, ethics examines the moral standards of society, assesses their reasonableness or not, and evaluates the impact of these standards upon the lives of individuals.

There are three basic concerns of ethics. They involve the meaning and justification about the rightness or wrongness of acts, in particular the:

Intention-the virtue or vice of the motive which prompt them, and\or.

Means-the praiseworthiness or blameworthiness of the acts themselves and the

Ends-the goodness or badness of consequences (Ray et al, 1999).

Figure 1 *Basic Concept of Ethics*

While ethics is concerned with human conduct in general, construction researchers such as (Ray et al, 1999) identify ethical issues in the industry as falling into two categories. These are: ‘Personal ethics’ and ‘Professional ethics’.

Personal ethics describes ethics as generally constituting a system of moral principles by which human actions and proposals may be judged good or bad or right or wrong. As for professional ethics, it refers to the behavior expected of an individual in an industry or a particular group within the industry that is bound by a set of principles, attitudes or types of character dispositions that control the way the profession is practiced (Vee and Skitmore, 2003).

Ray defines professional as 'a group of people organized to serve a body of specialized knowledge in the interests of society' (Ray et. Al, 1999). Professional ethics involves assessing each decision in practice not only in regard to individual moral concerns but also in terms of professional norms. According to (Fan et. La) this notion of 'professional ethics is linked with more practical concepts and expectations from the public such as competence and responsibility (Fan et. al, 2001). The themes of responsibility towards the public and the responsibility towards the client by the industry are discussed; however the responsibility of the client to the industry and also of the industry towards each other is not considered. The studies by (Vee and Skitmore, 2003) and (Christabel and Vincent, 2002) were specifically on consultant professionals; including architects, project managers, quantity surveyors and construction managers. This has been the generally accepted interpretation of professional ethics.

Also In terms of individual professions, it is often assumed that architects are not only talented in the design and construction of buildings, but also of the highest ethical caliber (Abramowitz, 1998:p3; Pressman, 1997:p46).

For project managers, one of the critical elements of their profession is the consideration of ethics and social responsibility (Fryer, 1997:p13). There should be no conflict between morality and good management (Willouby, 1994:p56). "... it is vital that project managers conduct their work in an ethical manner ... ". This quotation, from the Preamble of the Code of Ethics for Project Managers (Walker, 1989), confirms the scope of proper ethical conduct required by project managers.

Construction contractors are also expected to behave in an ethical manner. A recent interview survey of construction professionals indicated the significant role ethical conduct plays in construction contracting (Badger and Gay, 1996), an unsurprising fact considering that people working in the construction industry are twice as likely to sustain a major injury and five times more likely to be killed, than the average for all industries (Davis, 2001). Being honest and

realistic is also said to be a fundamental aspect of professional integrity, especially when making claims and estimates (Johnson, 1991:p114).

2.2 Ethics from Islamic Perspective

In order to understand the peculiarity of Islamic ethics in construction industry, it is imperative to understand the Islamic worldview. Islam in addition to faith and worship, treat complex issues of modern economic and technological development, as it treat the most minor and detailed issues in the private and public life of an individual (Al-Bouraeey, 1990:15). The principles in Islamic ethics not only upholds an ideal by which to live and for which to die but it also establishes a social order based on the principles of freedom, justice, equality, shura or consultation and the dignity of man (Al-Bouraeey, 1990:15).

Within an Islamic context, the term most closely related to ethics in the Quran is khuluq (manners). The Quran also uses a whole array of terms to describe the concepts of goodness: khayr (goodness), birr (righteousness), qist (equity), adl (equilibrium), haqq (truth and rights), maruf (known and approved), and taqwa (piety fear of Allah) pious actions are described as salihat (goodness) and impious actions are described as sayyiat (sins) (Fakhry: 1991).

The principles of Islamic ethics in construction industry

1- Tauhid (oneness of Allah)

Tauhid or belief in the "oneness of Allah" is not only important to Islamic faith but also is the fundamental principle which provides the basis for human actions. Islam propagates a systematic approach to life that the political, legal, social, economic, educational and moral systems function as a whole. Therefore, such belief must be manifested in all aspects of human activity, reflecting the vertical relationship between man and his creator. A person with a "tauhidic paradigm" therefore understands that, all wealth belongs to Allah, and human as his servant and vicegerent. He would be humble in his approach and avoid extravagance in his actions. In addition, the tauhidic paradigm strengthens one's conviction that only Allah can determine the outcome of our actions and only Allah provides assistance in times of difficulties and crisis. This is illustrated in the concept of tawawkkal (entrusted), or to put one's trust in Allah, as shown in the following verse: "Then when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah, for Allah love those who put their trust in him (Al-Quran 2:159).

The above verse states that, once a plan is made, actions are taken but the success or failure of the plan is left for Allah to decide. Interestingly, although western management gurus may not have read the above verse they do understand that "we may determine our choice but we may not be able to determine the consequences of those choices" (Stephen R: 1994).

Application of Tauhidic in Construction Industry

There are several implications to this understanding of the principles of tauhid (oneness of Allah) upon construction work. Firstly, a professional must take into consideration the consumption and production behavior of others in the work, for Islam treats man both as an individual as well as a collective unit (Interview with the Bank Negara, 2001).

Secondly, tawakkal (entrusted) provides strength and confidence in facing the unknown future. In fact, tawakkal is an excellent tool for managing stress when we understand that, only Allah determines all outcomes, for example, the financial crisis in 1998 brought extreme stress and pressure to the Bank Negara officials because of the uncertainty surrounding the economic situation and the difficulty in determining the outcome of the currency control measures, which were later implemented. The steps taken to rectify the problem were extraordinary because the country was facing an extraordinary situation.

Thirdly, a Muslim professional would never discriminate his employee based on color, religion, sex, creed, this is because, all beings are created by Allah and the only difference amongst man and nations in the eyes of Allah is the level of taqwa or righteousness as mentioned in the Quran "O mankind we created you from a single (pair) of male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other) verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you and Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)" (Al-Quran 49:13).

Fourthly, the tauhidic paradigm creates motivation and drive to treat business and management as an act of ibadah or worship, just like another devotional acts such as praying, fasting, pilgrimage etc (Ahmed Ikram:1997). This is illustrated in the Quran:"I have only created jinns and humans that they may serve me" (Al-Quran 51:56). Since, all forms of human activities are acts of worship (provided they meet certain rules and prerequisites), one will therefore practice the same ethical code of conduct regardless whether the person is in the mosque, working in the office or learning his daily life.

2- Intention (niyyah)

All endeavors will be judged by their intentions (niyyah). For an effort to be considered as worship, the intention has to be for the sake of Allah only. Umar bin Al-Khatta narrates that the messenger of Allah, Prophet (pbuh) said "the value of an action depends on the intention behind it. A man will be rewarded only for what he intended" (Sahih al Bukhari, 3530). The intention is crucial in the planning, since the fate of work will depend on it and good intention will be blessed and rewarded accordingly. It is the intention that sets the mission and goal. In Islam the intention must be guided by divine guidance and knowledge, not by greed or personal glory.

Application of Intention In Construction Industry

The man must be sincere to his intentions and his actions in every walk of life results, more efficiency as well as a high rate of productivity. Allah said "And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering him sincere devotion, being true in faith, to establish regular prayer and, to practice regular charity, and that is the religion right and straight" (Al-Quran, 98:5). The Prophet (pbuh) said "actions are but intentions and every man shall have but which he intended. thus he whose migration was for Allah and his messenger, and he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or take some woman in marriage, his migration was for that for which he migrated" (Sahih al Bukhari:1907). Sincerity also discourages manipulation or exploitation of others for personal reasons, accordingly, a sincere worker is not expected to cheat or harm others deliberately.

3-Trustworthiness (Amanah)

The concern of most organization is trustworthiness (amanah). In Islam man is entrusted with amanah (Trustworthiness), to carry out the duties of a servant and vicegerent of Allah.

As a servant of Allah, man has to follow what have been commanded and to abstain from what have been forbidden. As a vicegerent, man has to encourage good and forever. This will be the main guideline as to the purpose of man's life. A person who is trustworthy speaks the truth and is punctual in his time, committed to his work and delivers what he has promised.

Islam places great emphasis on the trustworthiness and honesty, as revealed in the Quran. "Allah does order you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due, and when you judge

between man and man, that you judge with justice: verily how excellent is the teaching which he gives you for Allah is he who hears and sees all things (Al-Quran, 4:58)". In another verse Allah reminded "O you who believe neither betray not the trust of Allah and the messenger nor misappropriate knowingly things entrusted to you" (Al-Quran, 8:27).

This principle is especially crucial in construction industry since it is trying to maximize profits. The management is forbidden from taking advantage of its employees. Similarly for an employee, he will honestly carry out his work since his amanah (trustworthiness) towards the employer; he will discharge his duty accordingly. He is paid to do the work and therefore, he will perform his duty to earn that salary. Trustworthy person will accomplish the task for the organization; he will not betray the organization for his own selfish goals.

In any situation, the person who is trustworthy will not take advantage of other people sufferings, thus the problem of hoarding exploitation and deceit can be avoided. The employer in his effort to maximize profit will not resort to exploiting his staff. In profiteering through hoarding, Allah has reminded "There are those who buy gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, announce to them a most grievous penalty. On the day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of hell and with it will be branded their forehead, their flanks and their back this is the (treasure) which you buried for yourself, taste you then, the (treasure) you buried (hoarded) (Al-Quran 9:34-35).

The Applications of Trustworthiness In Construction Industry

To develop your venture, always speak the truth and shun falsehood in any form. The holy Prophet (s.a.w) has said "On the doomsday Allah shall not speak to, nor look at nor purify the person and admit him into paradise who prompts his business through false oaths" He (s.a.w) also said "Eschew false oaths for increasing your business, for although in the short term, they look like promotion, but ultimately it loses blessings and profit (Sahih al Bukhari, 1985). Professional or any Muslim for that matter, should not justify taking an unethical decision by merely blaming it on the pressure arising from business dealing or by saying that others indulge in unethical practices too.

This is because, each person is held accountable for his actions "Every soul will be held in pledge for its deeds" (Al-Quran, 74:38). The Muslim professional has to consider his vertical and horizontal relationships before carrying out his duties and achieving the needed results. In Islam the ends don't justify the means. In addition the modern day concept of empowerment holds

good only if the employees share the same business values and direction as well as understand the performance boundaries. This would enable them to take responsibility and ownership of any improvements made or decision taken (Noor , p 57,1999).

2.3 Ethics and Project Management

Project ethics is related to the concept of higher values in our awareness and dealings, and is guided by what is considered to be of benefit to project as a whole. In modern terms ethics is the systematic and principled thinking of our moral conduct. Project ethics will be defined here as the moral deliberation and the self-actualization processes that professional project management should require. A narrow definition of project ethics would be that it refers to a behavioral competence of project leaders that enables them to know when their professional identity might be compromised. A broader definition would claim that project ethics is not only one competence of many, but rather the core of what defines the project leader as a professional and, therefore, something that lies at the heart of the project management profession as such.

Project ethics can fail, despite the planning and execution being well orchestrated, just because they are, or appear to be, ethically unsound on some level. What follows is intended to guide future project managers to help them avoid such failures by moving beyond traditional notions of project success towards a more sustainable approach of collective project development (Haukur I. J. & Helgi T.I, 2013).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on table research. A great amount of data is collected from researching offline and online journals. In which, data that are gathered from search engines would be very beneficial in assisting to achieve the objectives of this study, though, care will be taken while using information that has been obtained via internet research because sometimes the data might not be entirely accurate and hence the data would be subject to a screening process in order to ensure only quality data is used in this research. Further more, government statistics will be used as a reference where necessary in order to acquire precise statistics that can be used for this paper. The benefit of using these sources is that, they are accredited, highly relevant and would provide high quality data for this research.

4.0 OVERVIEW OF ETHICAL ISSUES IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT STAGES

This section identifies some common ethical dilemmas that occur when executing each of the five process of life cycle of project in construction industry(For example, initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing). Each one is in turn associated with one or more of the five ethical categories. Many of these ethical dilemmas overlap; however, for purposes of the discussion, the project managers should be aware of unethical dilemmas could arise in the stages of the project and they need to take any appropriate corrective actions.

The author categorized the ethical dilemmas to five groups. **Compliance**, which deals with policies, procedures, laws and regulations. **Effectiveness**, which addresses the achievement of goals and objectives. **Accurate and Timely Information**, which deals with ensuring that the right people get the right information in the right amount in the right format at the right time . **Efficiency** ,which deals with using resources in manner that reduce waste for every unit of currency spent ,ideally there should be some incremental increase in return. **Protection of resources** ,this category is about the ethical area related to the physical and logical safekeeping of the project resources . physical resources deal with equipment ,supplies and other tangible assets . Logical resources pertain to non tangible items like information and intellectual property (Ralph L. Kliem, 2012).

4.1 Initiating and Ethics

The significance of ethical dilemmas during initiating is that they can have a downstream impact on all five process groups and phases of a project and will also span across all five ethical categories (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Initiating and Ethics

	Compliance	Effectiveness	Accurate and Timely Information	Efficiency	Projection of Resources
Low-balling				√	
Omitting key stakeholders		√			
Misalignment with Organizational Goals		√			
Conflicts of interest	√				√

Not clarifying expectations		√		√	
Lying to with contract	√		√		
Sabotaging relationships with Certain vendors		√		√	
Not engaging in good faith Negotiations		√		√	

Source: Ralph L. Kliem, 2012

4.2 Planning and Ethics

The significance of ethical issues during planning is that they can lead to poor and inaccurate reporting because the cost, schedule, and scope baselines are not realistic. Consequently, accurate and timely reporting will have the greatest impact (Table3.2).

TABLE 2
Planning and Ethics

	Compliance	Effectiveness	Accurate and timely information	Efficiency	Protection of Resources
Padding		√		√	
No accountability		√			√
Lying	√		√		
Allowing groupthink		√	√	√	
Using false information knowingly			√		
Providing unreliable cost and schedule baseline	√				
Not having a work breakdown structure		√	√	√	
Understating work effort		√	√	√	

Source: Ralph L. Kliem, 2012.

4.3 Executing and Ethics

The significance of ethical dilemmas during executing is that they can lead to a project not following the baselines and, subsequently, getting out of control. Adhering to plans becomes more difficult as stakeholders fail to act as a team because each is likely following a different or misinterpreted vision and not performing according to plans. All ethical dilemmas are impacted (Table3.3), though effectiveness is the hardest hit.

TALE 3
Executing and Ethics

	Compliance	Effectiveness	Accurate and Timely Information	Efficiency	Protection of Resources
Mischarging	√	√	√	√	
Executing and Ethics		√	√	√	
Misinformation or disinformation		√		√	
Straying from plan without authorization	√		√		√
Violating confidentiality		√		√	
Jeopardizing working relationships					
Vilifying peers		√			√
Violating employee rights	√	√			
Deliberately underperforming		√		√	
Ignoring needs of team members		√		√	
Lacking reliable, consistent treatment of team members		√		√	

Not encouraging collaboration		√		√	
Dismissing without cause	√	√		√	
Sending a defective product to Customer	√	√		√	
Unauthorized copying	√				√
Lacking consistent enforcement of standards	√	√			√

Source: *Ralph L. Kliem, 2012*

4.4 Monitoring &Controlling and Ethics

The significance of ethical dilemmas during monitoring and controlling is that it becomes difficult to ascertain how the project is progressing according to plan. The reason is that the information is unreliable and inaccurate. The impact of many of these ethical issues may be compounded by ethical dilemmas arising during the other project management processes (For example, initiating, planning) (Table 4)

TALE 4

Monitoring and Controlling and Ethics

	Compliance	Effectiveness	Accurate and Timely	Compliance	Effectiveness
Misreporting (underreporting or over reporting)	√		√		
Deliberately withholding bad news	√		√		√
Inflating expense reports	√		√	√	√
Mischarging	√		√	√	√
Destroying or stealing vital information	√		√		

Massaging or not sharing information with critical stakeholders	√		√		
not using reliable data to generate information			√		
Not using plans to report progress		√	√		

Source: Ralph L. Kliem, 2012

4.5 Closing and Ethics

The significance of ethical dilemmas during closing is that they can lead to litigation, reputational damage, and poor customer satisfaction. All ethical areas are impacted (Table 5), although effectiveness is the hardest hit.

TABLE 5
Closing and Ethics

	Compliance	Effectiveness	Accurate and Timely	Compliance	Effectiveness
Not delivering results as promised		√			√
Not satisfying contractual requirements	√	√		√	
Falsifying records	√		√		√

Source: Ralph L. Kliem, 2012

In summary, a large number of ethical dilemmas were presented. Many of these are interrelated, meaning that they overlap in their purpose and effects. Others have serious ethical impacts. Some of them occur more often than people like to think. Some of them happen by accident, some of them happen by design. Anyway, they have to be addressed and project managers should take serious actions.

5.0 DISCUSSIONS OF THIS PAPER

5.1 Improving the Codes of Ethics and Conducts for Construction Projects

The suggested approach is to introduce prototype codes of ethics and conduct for projects in accordance with corporate codes and industry codes and modify them according to the feature of each project such as cultural issues, relationships among the participants, and environmental issues.

Codes of ethics are general guidelines to ethical decision-making and codes of conduct specify actions in workplace. Examples of ethical values in codes of ethics are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, etc. Examples of topics typically addressed by codes of conduct include avoiding illegal drugs, not using organization property for personal use, not accepting personal gift from stakeholders as a result of company role, etc (McNamara, 1999).

Therefore, to develop project-specific codes of ethics and conduct for construction: the goals of projects should be fully analyzed and understood by all the parties, with the application of dominant consequentialist theories. Virtue theories and deontological theories should be well organized, defined and facilitates to establish frameworks for project-specific codes of ethics and conduct. Workshops among the parties should be held to draw consensus of the codes of ethics and conduct which will be used throughout the lifecycle of projects.

5.2 Life Cycle Ethics Management

The central argument within this paper is that the management of all ethical issues within construction needs to reflect the whole life- cycle of projects as well as the organizations that operate in the industry. The purpose would be to ensure that the three critical questions on ethics are effectively explored by construction at all the various decision levels and stages within the project life- cycle.

→ Do I mind others knowing what I have decided?

→ Who does my decision affect or hurt?

→ Would my decision be considered fair by those affected?

The industry is typically project based and highly resource intensive. As construction projects are highly resource intensive, effective utilization of labor, material and equipment are essential to the entire project process (Hauck and Rockwell, 1996). Also parties involved in construction projects are various with different business goals – project owner, architects, engineers, contractor, subcontractors, suppliers, etc. Often this complicated relations lead to claims and disputes. So, ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interests can occur throughout the project life cycle.

The suggested approach is to classify ethical issues according to the life cycle of construction projects – for example planning, execution and termination phases – to develop more effective and efficient ethics management systems. The steps for the approach are:

- To identify ethical issues and social harms related to the projects in terms of ‘culture management’ ‘relationship management’ and ‘environment management’
- To quantify the ethical issues and social harms.
- To develop appropriate process/method minimizing ethical issues and social harms.
- To modify project specific codes of ethics/conduct based on the findings
- To reflect the findings to the organization codes and future ethics management.

5.3 Towards a System framework for Ethics

To enable companies within construction to manage these ethical issues effectively, a clear understanding of what the issues are becomes important. Equally, a guideline that would enable them to appropriate that information for appraising and managing projects as well as the corporate organization would be crucial. These two aspects form the thrust of the research on managing ethics in construction to build system framework for ethics by some subsequent outlines.

- Is there ethical leadership for the project or corporate body?
- Vision statement - a clear vision: what do we stand for and are prepared to be held responsible for?
- Values statement - clear values, supported by a code of conduct, setting out expected standards of behavior.
- Existence of a formal code of ethics.
- Designated ethics official.
- Ethics taskforce or committee.
- Ethics communication strategy.
- Ethics training.

- Ethics help line.
- Response system – investigations, rewards and sanctions.
- Comprehensive system to monitor and track ethics data.
- Periodic evaluation of ethics efforts and data.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Construction industry is shifting to the standard where ethics management is one of the industry's business principles as have seen in Latham report, Egan report and partnering. As the industry's unique features are project-based business transactions and intensive usage of resources, a more process oriented ethics management system has been developed. Codes of ethics and codes of conduct are suggested to be developed based on ethical theories, the goal of each project, agreement among the key participants. The concept of project life cycle should be the foundation of ethics management for construction projects. A process evaluating the ethical aspects of projects at each phase of major construction projects will be reviewed and investigated at the next stage of this study. Also relationship between ethics management and business reputation, and relationship between business reputation and profit will be reviewed in detail and investigated through a survey.

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