Dr. Afzalur Rahim may be the quintessential example of a self-made man. From his birth and education in Bangladesh to his current role as the world-traveling founding editor of two major journals, Rahim took a little job on the side.

Rahim is a 17-year veteran professor of Management at Western Kentucky University. This is not to say that Rahim’s teaching is not a major passion in his life. Indeed, Rahim teaches classes on the Hill, ranging from organizational management at the undergraduate level to a graduate class on organizational theory.
It seems that every minute that Rahim isn’t teaching, he’s studying in the library or his home. Yes, even his home is his workplace. It is the home of the International Journal of Conflict Management— and his publishing company, the Center for Advanced Studies in Management. It is the site where he has written most of 18 books and more than 140 articles, book chapters, case studies and research instruments.

Rahim said he wouldn’t do any of this if it weren’t fascinating — trying to measure the elusive intangible field of management.

“There are no easy answers to some difficult problems,” he said. “They have forgotten ‘boss,’ so that the survey could be used to counsel married couples.

All these accomplishments have turned Rahim into something of a world traveler. Before the end of the spring semester, Rahim was the keynote speaker at the 15th International Conference of the International Standards Association and Total Quality Management. He spent the last week of April in Singapore, speaking at the conference and at Asia’s largest business college at Nanyang Technical University. He spoke on the need to improve quality in organizations and was met warmly.

What I found there, all were tech people,” he said. “They have forgotten

Rahim’s third edition will include an extra chapter on management ethics, which he said he overlooked in his previous edition. “Without an understanding of ethics, conflict cannot be handled,” he said.

Rahim said he has always sought to measure the success of his endeavors; he said it is not enough to merely write journal articles and speculate about theories. “Faculty members have studies, but what is the impact?” he said. “One or two people will read it and it doesn’t go anywhere. That means other professors don’t find it useful.”

Perhaps Rahim’s most famous accomplishment is the ROCI (Return on Correct Investment), cited in more than 175 doctoral dissertations and now marketed nationwide. The inventory, developed in the mid-1980s, is a questionnaire designed to determine how an individual handles conflict with his superiors, employees or peers.

Rahim said that ROCI is truly unique and is still the measuring stick for surveys of organizational conflict. His electronic mailing list for that questionnaire is testimony to the survey’s usefulness to people; 135 people correspond regularly with the professor.

He has had requests to translate the survey into different languages.

The ROCI has been so popular, Rahim said, that the survey has been used to resolve other conflict management situations. For example, in one application of the questionnaire, the word “spouse” was substituted for "boss," so that the survey could be used to counsel married couples.

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why some people are effective and some are not.”

He blames that on consultants attending the conference who look at hard results too much and not at EQ. His goal was to provide the consultants with information on the newest research on organizational quality, so that they could bring the latest advice to the companies they represent.

Singapore is just one of the countries where Rahim has spoken. He has traveled the world ever since he picked up an undergraduate degree in commerce at the University of Dhaka in his native Bangladesh.

“I wanted to come to the United States but that was very difficult,” he said. “I was looking for a scholarship and I was really lucky to get a full graduate scholarship.”

That scholarship was the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship.

Without an understanding of ethics, conflict cannot be handled.”

Rahim said he is very happy in Bowling Green and he doesn’t think he will be bored with his management specialties anytime soon.

Management is always changing. It is always dynamic,” he said. “That is why I find it challenging.”

Matt Batcheldor is a senior print journalism major from Bardstown, Kentucky.

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