

Corruption in Perspective of Social Psychology and Psychology Cognitive Theory

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Abstract-*This study aims to explore corruption viewed from the perspective of social and cognitive psychology, that a variety of acts of deviant behavior, both caused by the background personality of people who do deviations and social situations that have the power to cause various acts of deviation. This paper uses a literature study approach. Data collection in this study, use study results, literature and mass media. These studies show that corruption and the crime of corruption is a phased development process based on social-psychological theory and cognitive psychology theory that explains why a person behaves in a distorted manner and ignores norms and mainstream truths that are not linear with the social psychology of the collective beliefs of society that uphold the value of truth namely the psychological effect of the asymmetry of power and self-interest becomes a driving force for someone to act corruptively.*

Keywords -*Corruption, Cognitive, Social Psychology.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Corruption in social societies is seen as contrary to social norms and values. Individuals who are raised with generally accepted social norms will certainly have a negative attitude towards acts of corruption [1]. Corruption is closely related to the context because the norms that apply both social, cultural and institutional arrangements affect the occurrence of corruption [2]. Nowadays corruption has hit and become a problem in various fields of life. Corrupt behavior is not only done by the executive and legislative branches but also many law enforcement agencies are involved in corruption. Seeing this massive and systemic problem of corruption, the handling must be done comprehensively and it seems that it is not enough to be done by one or two disciplines, but it must be done with multidisciplinary (BPHN, 2013) [3]. However, there are also common patterns in human behavior that explain what generally causes corruption.

As stated by Lisciandra (2017), corruption, in general, can be intended as an exchange (forbidden) between members of an organization and other subjects at the expense of either the organization itself or the rights of others, where acts of power that differ from official duties are exchanged for personal gain [4]. The existence of a combination of antagonistic attitudes, norms that are not held in high esteem, and weak self-control of state apparatus have retained the creation of deviant behavior with an indication of ignoring existing legal norms [5].

According to the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2001 concerning Eradication of Corruption Crimes. Corruption explains in detail the actions that could be subject to criminal sanctions on corruption. Basically it can be grouped as follows: (1) State financial losses (2) Bribery (3) Embezzlement in office (4) Extortion (5) Fraudulent acts (6) Conflicts of interest in procurement (7) Gratuities [6]. Corruption can have a negative impact on

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the development of a nation [7]. Community participation in government oversight is important. Community participation is an important thing that is good for the government in its efforts to increase the flow of information, accountability, provide protection to the community and give voice to those affected by public policies implemented [8].

The World Bank states that corruption is the biggest obstacle for a nation to carry out its economic and social development [9]. In the Indonesian context, corruption not only makes Indonesian people sink into poverty but also that abundant natural resources fail to be utilized for mutual prosperity [10].

In responding to the escalation of corrupt practices, the Government of Indonesia has tried hard to overcome them, through accelerating the corruption eradication program as a mandate for reform. Hamilton-Hart (2001) cites various reports that since 1998 the ruling government has rolled out several information programs in the political, social, and legal fields [11]. However, the practice of corruption does not recede and even extends to various levels of the bureaucracy and also the private sector.

The trend of scholars and practitioners in discussing working on the psychology of corruption have focused primarily on the social psychological determinants of unethical behaviour, such as the influence of group norms, interactions, and dynamics (c.f. Zaloznaya 2017; Hoffmann and Patel 2017; Camargo 2017; Köbis et al 2015; Weisel and Shalvi 2015 Bicchieri and Ganegonda 2016). This is well justified, given the social, interactive nature of corruption, but it neglects the the individual-level mental processes, such as decision-making and information processing that drive choices to act unethically, or the psychological determinants of unethical behaviour

This paper wants to discuss theoretically the factors that condition a person to behave in a corrupt manner by referring to some scientific reviews of social psychology, and communication, conceptually psychology as a study of behavior, so as to be able to explore almost all fields of work, where all behaviors are found. As described by a physicist who switched professions to become a psychologist, Kurt Lewin formulated $B = f(P \times E)$ that Behavior is a function of person and environment, therefore psychology can be interpreted more broadly including social studies. Therefore studying behavior, not only study personality factors that are the focus of attention, but also the environment and interaction of P and E [12].

II. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a literature study. A literature study can study various references, as well as the results of previous similar studies, which are useful to get the theoretical basis on the problem to be studied (Sarwono, 2016) [13]. A literature study was carried out in this study by collecting data and examining documents and reports relating to the theme of corruption writing from a psycho-social perspective. The process of library research is carried out by selecting topics based on phenomena that are happening, then looking for information as a database derived from books, journals and internet sources related to the topic, analyzing it and constructing and presenting it in the form of scientific writing.

III. RESULTS

Corruption Perspective on Social Psychology

Conceptually cognitive research on corruption, where the psychological processes of corrupt criminals can be divided into two types: first, the process from the inside out, can be used "moral decay" to illustrate, criminals always start from small unconscious corruption, gradually slip into the big illegal act. The whole process is "impulse" in role; second, namely processing from the outside in, criminals start from initial compliance with the standards or needs of corrupt groups, finally have unconscious or normal behavior towards corruption, the whole process is a deviation or destruction of "integrity" by "obedience" [14, 15]. According to psychological-social literature, the process of corruption from internal to external can be explained by bounded ethicality [16], ethical fading [17], and moral seduction [18]. A large number of social psychology researches are advised that from the aspect of individual psychology there is a general decision making bias and framing effects to support and explain the whole process more basically, specifically, there are three paths of this psychological process: self-serving bias, inability to judge outcomes and framing effects [19]. The psychological factor is a determinant to influence cooperative behavior seeing that personality is more stable and shows a static response in facing a given situation. (Van Lange, Joireman, Parks, & Van Dijk, 2013) [20] Corruption is a global problem. Each country fights massively against corruption. Not only Indonesia, but other countries also have difficulties in solving corruption, especially for developed countries. Indonesia is not the worst index of corruption in the world due to many countries having lower corruption value index than ours [21].

It is one of the big questions of corruption research: Why is it that some people abuse power for their private gain while others don't; some bend the rules while others adhere to them; some instigate bribe payments while others don't even think of it? A growing body of literature has studied the social, situational, and individual factors of the "dark side of human behavior", such as cheating, lying, and corruption. One of the main insights from behavioral ethics research is that social norms and justifications matter a great deal (Shalvi et al., 2015) [22]. The intuitive logic is both compelling and simple: if you consider a certain behavior to be normal you are likely to do it as well. When corruption becomes "the normal thing to do" justifying it is easy - both to oneself and others. Yet, what does "normal" actually mean? Explaining when and how corrupt behavior is regarded as normal requires a closer look at the conceptualization of social norms.

According to prominent definitions, social norms are "shared understandings about actions that are obligatory, permitted, or forbidden within a society" (Ostrom 2000) [23]; and, even closer to a specific situation, "the standards of behavior that are based on widely shared beliefs how individual group members ought to behave in a given situation" (Fehr & Fischbacher 2004) [24]. Since humans are equipped with a universal propensity to learn social norms (Pinker, 1994), it is not surprising that social norms have been a popular subject in social science in general (Darley & Latané 1970 [25]; Elster 1989; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004) [26] and have also been linked to corruption in particular (Bicchieri & Rovelli, 1995) [27]; Köbis et al., 2015) [28]. Social norms can thus be understood as informal rules that guide human behavior, including corruption. To zero-in on the link between these mostly unwritten rules and corrupt behavior from a psychological perspective, we employ a common distinction between two main types of social norms stemming from sociology (Goffman 1963) and philosophy (Paprzycka, 1999) [29]: first, what one

ought to do and second, what one expects others to do. The first type of social norms refers to the acceptability of specific behavior and describes whether a specific course of action is approved by others in a given social context. In short, they indicate whether a behavior is moral, that is, what one “ought to do”. While economists typically refer to these mental representations as normative expectations (Bicchieri, 2005) [30], social psychologists call them injunctive norms (Cialdini et. al. 1990) [31]. The second type of social norms deals with the expected frequency and thus indicates how likely others will follow the specific course of action. One might ask oneself whether or not a respective behavior is common. How many other people in the same situation would act in this specific way? These beliefs about the prevalence of a given behavior are labeled empirical expectations among economists (Bicchieri, 2005), and descriptive norms among social psychologists (Reno et al. 1993) [32]. To avoid confusion, we will use labels of injunctive and descriptive norms put forth in social psychology.

To illustrate the difference between the two types of social norms, we use specific situations as the basic unit of analysis. Take the following corruption scenario that we will use as a guiding example throughout this chapter: Imagine you are driving in your car. All of a sudden you are stopped by the police. The police officer asks you to roll down your window, claims that you crossed a red light which will result in a fine, and asks to see your driver’s license. You hesitate. What would you do? Would you consider solving this issue with a bribe - for example by slipping a note in your driver’s license? What are the factors that would increase the chances that you would do so and consequently might even consider it to be “normal”? We seek to answer these questions on multiple levels. The first part focuses on the role of descriptive norms by introducing a basic macro-level distinction between high corruption and low corruption contexts. This section illustrates how the frequency of corruption in society determines the persisting descriptive norms. Then, we zoom in on the micro-level and show that in a specific situation the perception of descriptive norms plays a crucial role in people’s (corrupt) behavior. We then turn to injunctive norms and illustrate that the acceptability of a given corrupt act is shaped by evolutionary psychological mechanisms such as in-group favoritism and direct reciprocity. Against the backbone of this brief review on the origins of injunctive norms, we describe the relationship between injunctive and descriptive norms - why they are at times aligned with one another and at times opposed. Given that behavioral research analyzing corrupt behavior in a specific situation can provide answers to these questions, we review the few studies that have done so, as well as present novel data on the subject. To dig deeper into the understanding of social norms on the micro-level, we give a brief account of how both forms are acquired over a lifespan of an individual. Finally, we discuss how social norms of corruption can be changed – this time, zooming out from individual-based interventions to a broader approach that seeks to change norms via (mass) media.

Cognitive Psychology and Individual Encouragement to Be Corrupt

Initially, there was a view that corruption was associated with motives. Reasons for wanting to get rich quick and consumptive life habits are often the most common reasons. Other reasons are job opportunities and conflicts of interest. Sociologists and anthropologists see corruption because of its fall and ignoring norms and ethics. There are also reasons for a lack of education, including moral education (Bardhan, 2006). [33]

Economists then look at it differently. Corruption is seen not only because of motivation but also the existence of rational reasons that can be measured and not just because of immoral and unethical reasons (Mercer, 2005) [34], a psychologist says there is a 'shock' in this theory because the theory it says more about how people should have a reason (to corrupt) and not to a real reason (to corrupt).

Lately, cognitive psychology theories have developed underpinning corruption. "The cognitive psychology of corruption: Micro-level explanations for unethical behavior" written by Dupuy and Naset (2018) [35] opens my eyes. This theory says that corrupt behavior occurs because of psychological effects. This develops from the existence of great power, which makes someone can get out of control. the risk is taken because of excessive self-confidence. This concept was presented at the OECD Integrity Forum in 2016 [36].

Cognitive psychology studies brainwork processes or mental processes that involve attention, use of language, memory, perception, problem-solving, creativity, and thought patterns. In the case of corruption, we can interpret that there are ways to influence the workings of a person's brain to (finally) want to do corruption. When the time is 'right', the mood is right, and self-control is loose, get away with it. Could this have happened to Romi? Let's try searching again.

There is a concept of 'foot in the door effect' (FITD), which is an 'offer' to do small things, which is expected to be followed up into a bigger offer. This FITD psychology theory has actually been found for a long time regarding marketing strategies of household products (Freedman & Fraser, 1966) [37]. In insurance marketing, an agent who happens to be a friend can offer a free insurance request for 2 months. Furthermore, this is your responsibility for life. In the case of the day today, it can happen when an offer is just a coffee with a woman. Because of a sense of comfort and confidence, the person concerned is willing to take the risk to the gates of fraud. Time, opportunity, atmosphere, and feelings make it 'right' to take action.

There is a fertile space that is easy to become an arena of corruption when there is someone's big power. When the level of self-control is low, and there is an assumption that corruption only involves oneself, as well as organizations that do not take action against unethical acts, it is easy to take risks at once. Cognitive psychology believes in the presence of corrupt behaviors involving calculations or strategies for personal gain. This is easy when there is an asymmetry in power. If cognitive psychology is the strongest cause of corruption, transparency, and openness, as well as reward and punishment systems in institutions, are very important. Someone who is proven corrupt does not need to be 'treated' to remain in public and political positions. That's clear.

Limited cognitive abilities and the ability to process social information are also limited can encourage someone to behave in a corrupt manner. This limitation sometimes makes a person unable to recognize and realize that he has done activities that violate the law and organizational ethics (Reynolds, 2006) [38]. Corrupt practices that are inherent in daily routine make a person sometimes fails to capture social information from his social environment as a signal that the practice has entered the category of corruption.

In the researches on individual corrupt criminals, some researchers put forward specific personality traits relate to the occurrence of corruption, after investigated personality traits of this kind of crime crimes they result that such criminals tend to have selfishness, greed and lust, consciousness of strongly carving rights or power, inhibited guilt

on their own corruption, and low integrity characteristics. Whether the personality trait is the core of the crime of corruption is still controversial. In this paper, through interpreted three paths on the psychological process of corruption from internal to external, we extend to support the view of Sutherland that there is no relationship between personality traits and economic crime [39]. The personality traits of the corruption criminals mentioned before, is further evidence that the crime of corruption occurs in the unconscious state by the petty corruption gradually slide into the abyss of crime of corruption, through these three paths of the mental processing. These traits are just the results that the changes of individual criminals' cognition, evaluation or sensory are probed after the occurrence of acts. Certainly, the whole process is a natural occurrence process without the intervention of the outside world, that is, occurred without supervision and environmental moral constraints. However, some researchers point out that economic crime is not from the physical or psychological characteristics of criminals, but from the individual's context and social ties with the organization [40].

Some studies showed that the key factors influencing unethical behavior are behavioral regulation [41, 42]. We can think that if a person is put in the following situation, in which an authority appears him to involve in a number of acts of corruption, the person may simply act, and believes that he is just a loyal subordinate and do not take into account the legality and morality of the act itself. In addition, Sutherland (1939) also proposed a social learning theory of criminal behavior, in the process of interaction between the individual and peer, corrupt behavior of peer will encourage and rationalize corruption. Furthermore, there are experiments to prove that when the authority effects and peer effects work on the corrupt behavior at the same time, their influence will be amplified [43], in fact this is the process of individual socialization. In that way, how do you make the corrupt behavior norms to become their own social behavior norms during the process of socialization? In the discussion of corruption and organization attitude to the corruption, Fein and Weibler used related theories of moral development of Kohlberg [44], proposed that corruption or unethical behavior existed in a phased development process, that low levels of behavior and their corresponding states were coordinated and integrated into a high level of behavior through accumulation of quantity, as changes in the behavior of the individual is also accompanied by changes in the attitude [45, 46]. According to the description of the corrupt behavior, the individual can be regarded as the "corruption" just as enter the stage of generalization, in which individual clarifies social norms (such as honesty, to provide fair services) and roles (such as leadership, subordinates) and ignore the contradiction between role and social norms. This is the focus of most discussions - where did the corruption start?.

IV. CONCLUSION

The social and cognitive psychological approach in this paper analyzes corruptive behavior as a deviation from one's rational choice. The psychological corruption hypothesis model of the findings of this study are (1) the interaction of social psychology, intrinsic psychology and the characteristics of perceived behavioral control, and (2) the dynamics of changing moral behavior are contradictory between self-control and withoutself-control.

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