ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Corruption in Indonesia: An Investigation From Mental Health, Spirituality, And Leadership Perspectives

Sohra Sahama¹, Adinda Shofia¹, Muhammad Reiza², Bagus Riyono³

¹ Center of Indigenous & Cultural Psychology (CICP), Psychology Faculty, Gadjah Mada University, Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 55281
² Magister Profesi Psikologi, Psychology Faculty, Gadjah Mada University, Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 55281
³ The Center for South East Asian Social Studies (CSEASS), Gadjah Mada University, Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 55281

ABSTRACT

Introduction: This article explores the phenomenon of massive corruption in Indonesia, from the perspectives of “mental health”, “spirituality”, and “leadership”. The extensive corruption in Indonesia becomes a contradiction, considering Indonesia is known as a country with largest number of Muslims in the world. Methods: This study used qualitative method through discourse analysis in trying to explain what is really happening? Why is the country that supposedly promoting religious, moral, and spiritual values; yet trapped in extensive “culture of corruption”? Why are the components of “mental health”, “spirituality”, and “leadership” important in the context of corrupt behaviors and corruption eradication efforts? What is the position of “mental health” if associated with corruption? Results: Specific behaviors of corruptors in Indonesia: repetitive pattern of lies and manipulative behavior; campaigning opposing corruption while doing it behind the curtain; smile, calm and composed, even after committing crime; showing no signs of remorse and degree of arrogance; surprised when sentenced; stating the belief in legal process, yet playing with the very same legal process. Conclusion: This study’s highlights “spirituality” as pivotal factor affecting the components of “mental health” also “leadership”; and ultimately influencing behavior of leaders. As a country with substantial “spiritual capital” of largest Muslim population in the world, it is time for “spirituality” to no longer dwell at level of “religious rituals”, but internalized deeper into values that transform behaviors of government officials/bureaucrats.

Keywords: Corruption, mental health, spirituality, leadership, discourse analysis

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Bagus Riyono, M.A.
Email: bagus@ugm.ac.id
Tel: +628112544886

INTRODUCTION

Massive corruption in Indonesia is marked by continued growing cases of political elites corruption. In recent times, Indonesia public learned about mega corruption case involving “SN”, former chairman of major political party who also served as Speaker of DPR-RI “The People’s Representative Council”. He was sentenced to imprisonment, after went on trial for corruption in December 2017 and was sentenced to 15 years in jail(1). Corruption in Indonesia involved any ranks of bureaucrats, from head of village (“Kepala Desa”), head of sub-district (“Camat”), regent (“Bupati”), mayor (“Walikota”), governor, all the way to national level official such as Chief Justice of Constitutional Court of Indonesia (“Mahkamah Konstitusi”). The examples were shown as follows. In December 2017, village chief of Bagan Manunggal was arrested in the case of alleged corruption(2). A year before, in 2016, Kedungdung Sub-District Head was involved in corruption case of village fund(3). On 29th August 2017, the Mayor of Tegal was arrested for corruption(4). Mayor of Batu and three governors of Riau Province were being held by “KPK”, starting from “SD” (sentenced in 2008)(5), “RZ”(sentenced by High Court in 2014)(6) to “AnM” (arrested by KPK in 2014)(7). “AK”, who was former Chief Justice of Constitutional Court of Indonesia, was convicted to life imprisonment(8).

Corruption in Indonesia does not only involve individual but also transpires in form of “collective culture”, implicating group and political dynasty. In 2017, former Banten Governor “RA” was convicted to five years in prison. She was indicted along with her younger brother “TCW”. The former governor generated ill fame for developing political dynasty that involved her relatives who controlled many important positions(9).
example of “collective corruption” was Electronic ID card project (“E-KTP Project”) that’s stated to be the biggest financial scandal. With the total value of Rp 5.9 trillion (around USD 4,251,024,358), around Rp 2.3 trillion (equals to USD 1,657,178,987) entered pockets of representatives of the people, businessmen and bureaucrats(11).

Transparency International released a corruption perception index of 180 countries in the world for the year 2017. Indonesia is ranked 96th (with point 37, the index scale was 0-100, “0” means ‘most corrupt’ while “100” means ‘the cleanest’) (12).

It is unwise to see corruption from single angle because corruption involve complex interlinked aspects and already rooted deeply in history. Semma(13) revealed how corruption in Asia stemmed from conditions during World War II, it also could be traced back to Indonesia’s colonial era.

Corruption also dispersed in everyday life of society. Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) released the results of the 2015’s Anti-Corruption Behavior Survey (SPAK) that revealed habits or behavioral indicators in society that lead to corrupt behavior. First type of behavior, giving money to religious figures or community leaders is still often done (64% of respondents saw this behavior acceptable). Second, giving money or goods on religious holidays (46%). Third, giving is not only for religious figures, but also to local officials (RT/RW/Kades/Lurah). Fourth, giving money or collateral goods to family or colleagues to get someone accepted to be a civil servant, military, police or private company’s employee. Fifth, giving bribes to speed up administrative matters such as the creation of ID-card and so forth (almost 40% of the society judged this behavior as a reasonable act). Sixth, giving money to the police officer after violating traffic. Seventh, KUA officer who asks for extra money for transport, grants a deposit to the teacher or headmaster of a school so one’s child could get admission, to the distribution of money and goods regarding the election(14).

Indonesia’s corruption phenomenon is a paradox, considering Indonesia has the biggest Muslim population in the world. Up until 2015, it was estimated that Islam has 1.8 billion followers, equals to 24% of total world population. In 2010 population census, “BPS” (Central Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia) recorded the number of Muslim population of Indonesia was 207,176,162; 87.18% of total Indonesia population of 237,641,326 (15). It means that Indonesia has the biggest Muslim population in the world which equals to 13% of the world’s Muslims(16).

The other contradiction regarding corruption, Al-Qur’an, the Holy Guidance in Islam, clearly forbid any kinds of corrupt acts, as stated in these verses:

“And do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers, in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful]” (QS. Al-Baqarah: 188);

“As to the thief, Male or Female, cut off his or her hands, a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime, and Allah is Exalted in power.” (QS. Al-Maaida: 38) (17).

Analogous to Al-Qur’an, Al-Hadith, the words, actions, and approval of Prophet Muhammad, clearly outlaw all corrupt and bribery undertakings, as stated in these following examples.

Sahih Bukhari (81:780) The Prophet said, “The hand should be cut off for stealing something that is worth a quarter of a Dinar or more.” (18)

Buraidah ibn Al-Husaib (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “When we appoint someone to a (public) post and provide him with an allowance, anything he takes beyond that is an ill-gotten gain (Abu Dawud and authenticated by Al-Albani).

‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah said: “The curse of Allah is upon the one who offers a bribe and the one who takes it,” (Ahmad, Ibn Majah and authenticated by Al-Albani)

The practice of massive corruption is also against “The Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam” which was also ratified by Indonesia. In the declaration was article 23 point a, emphasized that “authority is a trust, it should not be abused or exploited”. In reality, however, some leaders’ behavior in Indonesia does not fit in accordance to this declaration(19).

Framework of this research is shown in Fig1 while the importance of this research emphasizes on spirituality as particular construct that is still less scrutinized in scientific investigations. Moberg(20) stated the emerging popularity of spirituality, a subject of research that’s closely related to religion, health, well-being also other topics. Spirituality is increasingly acknowledged as a theme that advanced deeply into the core of both human nature as well as society. In addition, this paper specifically relates “spirituality” to “mental health” and “leadership” components. It is rarely heard of scientific studies, publications and practical contributions by Psychology in relation to the issue of corruption(21). Adjacent to that fact, the impact of religion and spirituality on public sector had not been adequately
This research framework emphasizes on spirituality and how it affects "mental health" and "leadership" components, concerning corrupt behaviors in Indonesia context.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper uses qualitative methods to arrive at much deeper investigation of "spirituality" and "mental health" and "leadership" components; and how those components dynamically affect one another, relating to corruption phenomenon in Indonesia. This study used qualitative method through discourse analysis in trying to explain what is really happening? Why is the country that supposedly promoting religious, moral, and spiritual values; yet trapped in extensive "culture of corruption"? Why are the components of "mental health", "spirituality", and "leadership" important in the context of corrupt behaviors and corruption eradication efforts? What is the position of "mental health" if associated with corruption?

In more specific term, this paper uses "discourse analysis", an approach that has gained increasing importance in qualitative research this past decade(23). Discourse analysis in Psychology implies many different forms, but mostly used in social psychology to center on how to organize the language we speak in patterns of discourse.

RESULTS

This research gathered and analyzed data; then came up with specific behaviors of corruptors found in Indonesia. The findings were as follows:

a. Repetitive pattern of lies and manipulative behavior, not only involving the individual but also others.

"SN", corruption defendant who was mentioned earlier in this paper, has been linked to numerous corruption cases but was never prosecuted until December 2017(1). Later, regarding “E-KTP case” he failed to appear when he was summoned by KPK for interrogation by September 2017, on the grounds of poor health. Few months later, he created “drama of car crash” to escape justice system. He even made doctor to lie for him and convinced his lawyer to do anything to avoid KPK’s arrest.

b. Campaigning “Say No to Corruption” while they are doing the exact opposite behavior.

Several corruption cases, involving members of political party and some ministers, took place during the former president’s administration (which has massively campaigned to say “No” to corruption); Minister of Youth & Sports (AM) and Minister of Religious Affairs (SA) resigned after becoming suspects in corruption case(25).

c. Smile, as if no wrongdoings were done.

Current Cabinet Secretary “PA” complained about people who smile in the wrong time or the wrong place. They are convicted corruptors or corruption suspects. He said, “Let us see it. On the day he or she is arrested, his or her face looks sad. Then just see him or her after two or three days, his or her face looks calm. He or she even can wave his or her hand to the cameras. This only shows that he or she has no shame.”(26)

d. Calm and composed, even after committing crime.

"SN" was visibly calm and composed since the
beginning of the court session. He calmly sat in the defendant’s chair while making slight movements throughout the e-KTP trial(27).

e. Showing no signs of remorse and a degree of arrogance.

The former major party politician “AK”, showed no sign of remorse for his wrongdoings, after found guilty of accepting Rp57 billion (US$4.7 million) in bribes. The Jakarta Corruption Court also found out that “AK” also laundered Rp160 billion (during his term at the court) and Rp20 billion (during his term at the House). During the verdict reading and his almost four-month trial, “AK” frequently displayed some degree of arrogance. He listened impassively to the judge’s explanation of the verdict, occasionally closing his eyes. Nevertheless, he was taken aback after hearing the words of ‘life sentence’(8).

f. Committed crime, yet surprised when sentenced.

“SN” expressed on record that: “Quite frankly, as a person, I was really surprised [by the charge]. I’m honestly caught off guard by the severe indictment,” said “SN” after the trial at the Jakarta corruption court on Thursday, March 29 (27).

g. Saying that he believes in legal process, while he’s been playing with the very same legal process.

“SN” said that he trusts his future to the ongoing legal process(27).

Specific examples of images and statement regarding above “Point a” to “Point g” are shown in Fig.3

DISCUSSION

National Institute of Mental Health(28) stated that mental health is the successful presentation of mental function, that is resulting in productive activities, while fulfilling relationships with other people, also providing the ability of adaptation to change and adversity. Individuals are said to have a healthy mental when able to integrate aspects of his/her personality that includes cognition, emotion, and social to form a plan and purpose of life. If the individual fails to integrate these aspects, then it can be said that the individual is experiencing mental illness conditions. A “psychiatric disorder”, “mental disorder”, or “mental illness”, is behavioral or mental pattern that creates profound distress or damage the personal functioning(29). When related to corruptor’s behaviors, they show an incoherent behavioral symptom, indicating an inability to integrate aspects of personality.

Personality is the basic quality found in all individuals, and this quality is expressed in social acts. Personality plays an important part in both so-called normal or so-called sick individuals(30). A person’s mental health has a strong influence on how individual’s ability balancing those motives toward their personality trait. Individual traits such as low self-integrity, arrogance, a tendency to engage in risk behavior, manipulative behavior(31), greedy, narcissism, antisocial personality disorder, and lack of moral awareness, can be identified as pathological character in corruption behavioral context(32).

Research conducted by Alalehto(30) found that there are three types of white-collar criminals: (a)“the positive extrovert”, whose illegal behavior is marked by manipulative, egocentric, prone to control behaviors; (b)“the disagreeable business man”, who tends to be suspicious, jealous, competitive, and always ready to use deceitful tactics; and (c)“the neurotic anxious”, who has low self-esteem, anger, hostility, also proneness to self-blame. In this case, criminal behavior would serve as “substitute” of incapability in achieving objectives. Collins and Schmidt cited by (33) also found that white-collared criminals have a low score of responsibility, self-control, and inadequate socialization.

According to the Psychoanalytic perspective, corruption behavior is caused because the individual fails to harmonize between id, ego, and superego which is the core of one’s conscience. Fisher(34) research revealed several common personal characteristics of fraudsters, such as: living beyond one’s means, overwhelming desire for personal gain, having a high amount of personal debt, feeling that pay is not commensurate with job duties, having excessive gambling habits, feeling pressure from family or peer, and feeling a lack of recognition for job performance. Some of these characteristics when examined is a manifestation of impulse “id” and execution of the “ego”, without including the function of conscience.
According to motivational theory, Riyono(35), in his book “Motivation with Islamic Psychological Perspective” put forward some motives behind one’s behavior. He mentioned “forces” in the form of: natural force, socio-structural force, group force, and internal force; these layers of forces (shown in Fig.4) are the “forces” or pressures faced by humans in their life.

“Natural force” will encourage people to behave spontaneously; it will also affect socio-structural force, then it can also form individuals who have certain characteristics (“internal force”).

In the next layer, “socio-structural force” can form a particular behavior directly; it also affects “how groups are formed” and “what groups are formed” (“group force”). In relation to “internal force”, the influence of “socio-structural force” will be seen from individual capabilities that are evenly distributed in a society with a particular social system.

The third layer is the “group force” that is the power derived from group dynamics. The strength of the group will also form a certain personality within each individual member (“internal force”).

The last layer is the “internal force” that is the power of the individual who filters all the other forces that exist. When an individual has a strong influence, then this “internal force” will be able to influence “group force” and “socio-structural force”.

In addition to discussing “the force”, Riyono(35) also offers the concept of person’s behavior motivation. Each of the motivational themes and their psychological characteristics are as follows: (a)”urge” is an urgent desire from within the individual to do something; (b)”freedom to choose” is a condition perceived by individuals who give impetus to act independently of others; (c)”challenge” is stimulation given or derived from another party that provokes or presses an individual to move and respond; (d)”incentive” is something that is obtained as a result of behavior that gives higher attraction that triggers further behavior; and (e)”meaning” is value contained in particular behavioral choice, so that the behavior is felt worth doing.

The psychological health of an individual is determined by the nature of the relationship of “freedom to choose” and “urge”. In a psychologically healthy individual, “freedom to choose” has a position of “master”, while “urge” is in a position of “slave”. Conversely, when “urge” has a position of “master” within the individual, “freedom to choose” loses its meaning, which means losing its freedom. When this happens, then the individual will experience a psychological disorder.

From perspective of spirituality in general context, there is no fixed agreement on conceptual or operational definition of spirituality. Each scale has its own operational definition. Yet, there’s increase of evidence that there is a strong positive relationship between spiritual health with physical, psychological, also social health(20).

Al-Qur’an clearly mentioned that “Spirituality” in Islamic context referring to surah Al-Baqarah verse 3 and 4:

> Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; and who believe in what has been revealed to you [O Muhammad] and what was revealed before you; and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith](36).

“Spirituality” at this context derived deeply from faith that Allah (the Unseen) is always watching and all deeds will be measured on judgement day (the Hereafter). One must have faith, believe, and live his/her life also set the behavior, in accordance to Islamic teaching.

This study highlights spiritual realm as one aspect that was overlooked by contemporary psychology developed in the West, as it only recognizes three domains in the human faculties: cognitive, affective, and conative.

Riyono(35) stated that “spiritual” in sense of Islamic Psychology Paradigm breaks away from the basic assumptions underlying conventional psychological streams known in the world of contemporary psychology.
Contemporary psychology developed in the West recognizes only three of the four domains in the human faculties: cognitive, affective, and conative. One aspect left by Western psychology is the spiritual realm. Further, Riyono(35) argued that the dynamics of integrative “domain of human faculties” (as shown in Fig.5) are controlled by “the soul” which is a unity called “self”. The nature of this “soul” by Ibn Sina is described as a substance that became center of human consciousness. The basic assumption: humans are “spiritual being” that is integrative and simultaneous in behavior while using reason (“cognition”), feelings (“affection”), ‘will power’ (“conation”), and ‘the sharpness of his conscience’ (“spiritual”). Moreover, Riyono(35) elaborated that human is a creature that is always looking and exploring nature and universe, to find something that can serve as “grip” against life’s instability. Something that can be used as “grip”, in specific terms, is called an “anchor”. “Anchor” in the language has meaning as “something that can give stability to something related to it”. The search of this “anchor” is central phenomenon of the dynamics of human motivation.

Logically, human search or effort to reach “anchors” will come to its peak when “reaching” God. God is “the ultimate anchor” because logically God alone is the Almighty, so when someone relies on God, then helplessness of man will be perfectly compensated. “Anchor” centered on this Almighty God is the most powerful “anchor”, as a source energy of “motivational force”, as it is already shown by Prophet Muhammad, Prophet Ibrahim, a.s. and many more in history. Riyono(35) explains that the structure of “anchors” (as shown in Fig.6) can be categorized into layers based on the level of abstraction, namely: (a)God (“God”), as the most abstract “ultimate anchor”; (b)“Virtues”, as noble principles or values; (c)“Self”, that is all the qualities of the self which are the core of human; (d)“Others”, that is, something outside of yourself (the person or other party) that is the source of problem solving; and (e)Materials (“Materials”), which are valuable items, equipment or money that are used to solve problems. Fig.5 illustrates the “layers of anchor”.

Considering the “anchor” of a corruptor, the structure will be “up-side down” or reversed. “Materials” become the “topmost” anchor, while virtues were below, and God became the least-considered element.

From leadership perspective, Islam sees everyone as “leader” or “guardian” who will be hold accountable for his/her responsibility.

I heard that from Allah’s Messenger, “A man is guardian of his father’s property and is responsible for it.” (The Prophet continued,) “So all of you are guardians and responsible for what is under your care.” (Al- Bukhari)(37).

Ahmed(44) argued that the political leadership, ideas and practice of politics that are close to Islamic ideals have been laid out in Al-Quran and the life of the Prophet. His life showed perfect balance of action and spirit, between this world and the Hereafter concern: he is the perfect example of a person (insan-i-kamil). Muslims need to take that example from him and rebuild an idea of Islam which emphasize on justice, integrity, tolerance, and the quest for knowledge; these values were upheld in classic Islamic civilization. The emphasize is not solely on the insistence of rituals included in the five pillars of Islam; but also on “the entire building of the spirit and values of Islam”.

Hage and Posner(38) research findings revealed that religion and religiosity (both) affect behavior and practices of organizational leaders; although the former is much more significant than the latter. Fernando(39) suggested that religion plays an enormous role in affecting the judgment, emotional and motivational qualities of Sri Lankan leaders’ in decision making. It serves as reference and source of solace, guidance, and inspiration to these leaders’ critical decision-making.

Islam is the perfect religion that governs its adherents in every facets of life; from personal scope, to communal and global sphere. Ideally, when a Muslim really becomes a “real Muslim” he/she would follow what
is commanded and forbidden, both in Al-Qur’an and Al-Hadith. But in reality, what often happens is that individuals fail to internalize the teachings and values of spirituality of Islam, consequently incoherence between behavior and guidance of Islam appears. This condition has been stated in Al-Qur’an, surah Al-Baqarah verse 8 and 14:

And of the people there are some who say, “We believe in Allah and the Last Day,” but they are not believers. And when they meet those who believe, they say, “We believe”; but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, “Indeed, we are with you; we were only mockers.”

The perpetrators of corruption highlighted in this paper are relevant example to verses mentioned above. The facts showed that (sadly) some of them were Muslims, but their behaviors were in contrary to the teachings of Islam. Frequently, to the public they show Islamic “attributes” as part of ‘personal branding’, but behind the scenes, they perform immoral acts.

Being a Muslim in “kaffah” sense means “coherence” and “consistency”, in broad sense of aspects of life; no contradictions amongst speech, values, beliefs also everyday behavior. Mas Ayu(40) mentioned that “kaffah” means thoroughly without exception; this means the command to believers to carry out all the teachings of Islam based on the submission and sincerity to Allah SWT.

In this context, spirituality provides a mental space for individuals to live a balanced life amidst the demands of modern life. This spirituality is not owned by the corrupt. Failure of mental functions to interpret the pressures and demands that exist makes corruptors feel no guilt and even show antisocial behavior according to Duffield cited in (32).

As explained in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 9-10, the incoherence behavior between actions and speech is an indicator of a “sick soul and includes the behavior of deceiving others”. Al Qur’an, surah Al Baqarah verse 9-10:

They (think to) deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive (it) not. In their hearts is disease, so Allah has increased their disease, and for them is a painful punishment because they (habitually) used to lie(41).

Riyono(35), describes the types of pressures encountered by individuals in life, namely: natural, group, social, and internal pressure. In corruption phenomenon, the individual fails to balance that pressure because they place elements of materialism, pleasure, self-enjoyment, and the prestigious/luxurious life, above everything else. The mental function that should “go straight to God as anchor” becomes chaotic because the individual fails to harmonize between internal, group, and social pressures. This condition has resulted in incoherence between behavior “behind” and “up front” the scene. It is not surprising to see how a corruptor can still smile, laugh, and wave to the crowd like a celebrity(26), yet seemed in denial and surprised when given a prison sentence(27).

In Al-Qur’an perspective, corruptors are in ‘denial-state’; having “impaired perception/self efficacy” as mentioned in QS Al-Baqarah verses 11-13:

And when it is said to them, “Do not cause corruption on the earth,” they say, “We are but reformers.” Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters but they perceive (it) not. And when it is said to them, “Believe as the people have believed,” they say, “Should we believe as the foolish have believed?” Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know (it) not.

According to Hofstede cited by (35), Indonesian society is known to have collective culture. Feather and McKee cited by (35) mentioned that one characteristic of collective cultures is existence of “affiliative value”, namely tendency to maintain harmony with others in their environment. The same tendency can be found in phenomenon of corruption in Indonesia. “Corruption” itself is only tip of iceberg, whilst “sharing” behavior is strongly influenced by “group force” that exists in “system”. When individual’s internal force of prestige and hedonist lifestyle is intense, then individual will be compelled to pursue instant ways to ease “internal force”. Hedonist lifestyle(internal pressure), group pressure, and workplace systems, worsen by individual’s disregard of God as “anchor”, all could dynamically contribute in occurance of corrupt behavior.

CONCLUSION

It is time for “spirituality” to no longer dwell at the level of “religious rituals”, but it should be internalized deeper into values that transform behaviors of government officials/ bureaucrats in Indonesia. Islamic “attributes” should not become part of fake ‘personal branding’, but it should really become part of everyday life, inevitable portions of being Muslim in “kaffah” sense, where “coherence” and “consistency” found in speech, values, beliefs also behaviors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work is supported by Magister Profesi Psikologi and Center of Indigenous & Cultural Psychology (CICP) of Psychology Faculty, Gadjah Mada University; also The Center for South East Asian Social Studies (CSEASS), Gadjah Mada University.
Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2009.02117.x
40. Mas Ayu, S. Concept Of Islam Kaffah In Islamic Education Curriculum. International Conference on Science, Technology and Humanity; 2015.