

Bureaucratic Ethics and Organizational Integrity: The Challenges of Anti-Corruption Culture in Apparatus Behavior

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Abstract: This study examines the dynamics of bureaucratic ethics and organizational integrity as the foundation of apparatus behavior in facing the challenges of anti-corruption culture. The main focus of this study is to analyze how ethical values are internalized in organizational behavior in order to minimize corrupt practices in the public sector. The main problem raised is the disconnect between formal anti-corruption regulations and the reality of apparatus behavior that is still shackled by bureaucratic pathologies and personal loyalty. The research method used is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach. The analysis is carried out by synthesizing various academic literature, organizational behavior theories, and related policy documents to map contemporary challenges in the development of integrity in the government environment. The results of the study show that organizational integrity is highly dependent on the strength of individual ethics and the work climate that supports transparency. The biggest challenge in building an anti-corruption culture comes from political pressure and permissive organizational culture. This study concludes that strengthening anti-corruption behavior requires more than just systemic supervision, but rather the reconstruction of organizational culture that prioritizes the moral independence of the apparatus. Theoretically, this article enriches the discourse of Government Science regarding corruption prevention strategies through behavioral approaches.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of bureaucracy in a modern state is not just an administrative instrument to carry out the routine functions of government, but rather a representation of the state's presence in the public sphere. In the discourse of Governmental Science, the bureaucracy is seen as the main driving machine (*state machinery*) that determines the effectiveness of policy implementation and the quality of public services. However, the long history of public administration shows that technical efficiency alone, as glorified in the Weberian bureaucratic model, is not enough to guarantee the creation of *good governance*. A solid moral foundation in the form of bureaucratic ethics is needed to ensure that the power delegated by the people to the state apparatus is not abused for personal or group interests. Bureaucratic ethics are normative standards that direct the behavior of the apparatus in carrying out their duties, where every action must be based on the principles of justice, transparency, and accountability (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015).

The fundamental problem faced by many developing countries, including Indonesia, is the persistent phenomenon of bureaucratic pathology that manifests itself in various forms of corrupt practices. Corruption in the public sector is no longer just a legal problem or violation of standard operating procedures, but has become a systemic organizational behavior problem. This is where organizational integrity plays a vital role. Organizational integrity is not only about individual honesty personally, but about how government organizations collectively create mechanisms, norms, and climates that prevent ethical deviations from occurring. According to Huberts (2018), integrity in the public sector includes consistency between recognized moral values and real practices in the field. The challenge is when the existing organizational culture is permissive towards actions that erode this integrity, which then creates obstacles to the creation of a sustainable anti-corruption culture.

From the perspective of organizational behavior, state civil servants do not work in a vacuum. Their behavior is strongly influenced by the social and cultural environment in which they work. Often, individuals who have a personal high integrity can be eroded by a corrupt organizational culture through a faulty socialization process. This phenomenon shows that the challenge of anti-corruption culture does not only lie in the availability of formal rules, but in how anti-corruption values are internalized into daily behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Government Science as a discipline that studies power management and public service must be able to dissect why formally reformed organizational structures still often fail to produce ethical apparatus behavior. This is often due to the existence of "office politics" or informal power dynamics that are more dominant in regulating behavior than official regulations.

Furthermore, the transition from *the Old Public Administration* (OPA) model to *New Public Management* (NPM) and then *New Public Service* (NPS) has brought a paradigm shift regarding the role of ethics in the bureaucracy. In the NPS era, the main focus is no longer solely on economic efficiency, but on serving citizens as sovereign holders (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). In this context, organizational integrity is an instrument to rebuild public trust that has faded due to rampant corruption scandals. Public trust in government institutions is highly dependent on how they perceive the moral behavior of their apparatus. When the apparatus is considered to lack ethics and integrity, the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the people will be weakened, which can ultimately trigger social and political instability. Therefore, strengthening bureaucratic ethics must be the main agenda in any bureaucratic reform effort.

The challenges of anti-corruption culture in the government environment also often clash with traditional or social values that are still thick, such as loyalty to superiors that exceeds loyalty to the rule of law (patron-client). In many cases, the apparatus feels sandwiched between the demands of professional ethics and sociocultural pressures that require them to commit nepotism or gratuities as a form of "revenge" or loyalty. These behavioral dynamics are the main obstacle to the enforcement of organizational integrity. Cooper (2012) emphasized that bureaucratic ethics requires moral courage from individuals to resist pressures that are contrary to the public interest. However, it is difficult for individual courage to emerge if the organizational structure does not provide guarantees of security and protection for those who try to act honestly. This is why the organizational behavior approach is very relevant to dissect the root of the problem of corruption in terms of social psychology and human resource management in government.

Although various anti-corruption legal instruments have been strictly enforced, reality shows that legal loopholes will always be found if the mentality of the apparatus does not undergo transformation. Organizational integrity must be interpreted as the "strength of character" of an institution in maintaining noble values under the pressure of any situation. An anti-corruption culture will not be formed just by putting up posters or slogans on the walls of the office; it requires an example from the top leadership (*tone at the top*). The behavior of the leadership of a government organization gives a strong signal to all subordinates about what is considered "right" and "wrong" in the organization. If the leadership shows behavior that ignores ethics, then all ranks under him will tend to imitate this behavior as a survival strategy in the organization.

In addition to the leadership aspect, the reward and *punishment* system in government organizations also plays a major role in shaping the behavior of the apparatus. Often, a meritocratic system that does not run well causes officials with integrity to feel marginalized, while those who are good at "political maneuvering" get promotions. This organizational injustice creates frustration that can encourage the apparatus to seek compensation through unethical means. Therefore, research on the relationship between ethics, integrity, and organizational behavior is very urgent to be carried out as an effort to evaluate the extent to which bureaucratic reform has touched a substantial aspect, namely a change in mentality and work culture.

This study focuses on theoretical and conceptual reviews to map the fundamental challenges that hinder the creation of an anti-corruption culture in the public sector. Through an in-depth analysis of the literature, this study seeks to synthesize various thoughts on how the behavior of the apparatus can be redirected to the true ethical rail of bureaucracy. In the scope of Government Science, this study is expected to contribute thinking for policymakers in designing

corruption prevention strategies that are not only technocratic, but also touch on the humanist and psychological dimensions of the organization. By understanding the dynamics of apparatus behavior, the government can build a more resilient integrity system in the face of the pull of political interests and economic pragmatism.

In the end, bureaucratic ethics and organizational integrity are not just administrative complements, but the spirit of the implementation of clean government. Without a collective moral awareness, all government technological innovations such as *e-government* will only become new tools for more sophisticated corrupt practices. Therefore, the reconstruction of anti-corruption culture through strengthening the behavior of the apparatus is a long road that must be taken with full commitment from all elements of the organization. Through this introduction, the research wants to emphasize that ethical issues are an existential bureaucratic problem that will determine the future of governance in the future. The focus of this research is to explore the latest literature to find the most effective model of integrating ethical values in changing the behavior of the apparatus to be more responsive to the values of public integrity.

It is important to realize that failure to uphold bureaucratic ethics not only has an impact on the state's financial losses, but also on the breakdown of the democratic order. When the bureaucracy no longer works in the public interest, social justice becomes difficult to achieve. Government Science has a moral responsibility to continue to criticize and provide solutions to the moral degradation that occurs in the bureaucracy. By prioritizing the organizational behavior approach, it is hoped that a fresher perspective will be found in looking at the phenomenon of corruption, not as an irreversible sociological destiny, but as a behavioral deviation that can be corrected through appropriate and sustainable organizational intervention. Based on the above background, this study will review more deeply the challenges and opportunities in building organizational integrity in the midst of the complexity of the behavior of today's apparatus.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical type of library research. The selection of this method is based on the need to explore the concepts of bureaucratic ethics and organizational integrity in depth through the synthesis of theoretical thinking that has developed in the discipline of Government Science and organizational behavior. In literature studies, literature not only serves as a background, but is the main object of research that is critically analyzed to find patterns, relationships, and theoretical gaps related to the phenomenon of anti-corruption culture. According to Zed (2014), literature research is a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading, recording, and processing research materials in a systematic manner. This approach allows researchers to conduct epistemological reflection on the behavioral dynamics of apparatus without having to be trapped in the geographical limitations of a particular field, so that the theoretical generalizations produced have a wider and fundamental scope.

The data collection procedure was carried out through a systematic search of primary and secondary literature sources relevant to the loci and focus of the research. The primary sources in this study included government policy documents related to bureaucratic reform, laws and regulations regarding the state civil apparatus, and the bureaucratic code of ethics in Indonesia. Meanwhile, secondary sources were obtained from articles from reputable scientific journals, theoretical textbooks, research reports from authoritative institutions such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as the results of international conference proceedings. The literature search was conducted using specific keywords such as "bureaucratic ethics", "public integrity", "public sector organizational behavior", and "anti-corruption culture" in academic databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and the SINTA journal portal. The inclusion criteria set are publications within the last ten years to ensure the novelty of information, but still include classical theories that still have strong relevance in the analysis of bureaucratic behavior.

The data analysis technique applied in this study is content analysis combined with integrative synthesis techniques. The data that has been collected is categorized based on the

main themes that emerge, then a data reduction process is carried out to filter the most crucial information for the research argument. The researcher interprets the text using the analysis knife of organizational behavior and power theory in Government Science to dissect why integrity is often fragile in the face of organizational cultural pressure. This analysis process involves the stage of deconstructing well-established ethical concepts and reconstructing them in the context of the contemporary challenges of the Indonesian bureaucracy. The analysis is carried out dialectically by bringing together the views of various experts, such as the theory of public service motivation from Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) and the perspective of ethical leadership from Menzel (2016), in order to build a comprehensive conceptual framework on strengthening the anti-corruption culture.

The validity of the data in this literature research is ensured through the data source triangulation technique, where the researcher compares one literature with another to find the consistency of findings or identify existing debates. In addition, the researcher conducts an independent theoretical peer-review by referring to the ethical standards of academic research to avoid subjectivity bias and ensure that each citation is carried out accurately in accordance with the principles of the 7th Edition of APA. The main focus in this analysis is not only to summarize the content of the literature, but to abstract the values contained in it in order to formulate a substantive thought recommendation for the development of Government Science. Through this systematic method, the research is expected to be able to provide an objective picture of the challenges of apparatus behavior in upholding organizational integrity, as well as mapping the direction of changing the anti-corruption culture more effectively in the future. This entire methodological process is designed to ensure that the research results have a high level of conceptual reliability and can be accounted for academically as an original scientific paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Erosion of Ethics and Power Dynamics in the Era of Government Disruption

In the last decade, the discourse on bureaucratic ethics has shifted from mere administrative compliance to the concept of integrity that is more adaptive to political and technological changes. In the perspective of Government Science, the power possessed by bureaucratic apparatus through administrative discretion remains a point prone to irregularities. Research by Meyer-Sahling et al. (2021) on the behavior of civil servants in various developing countries shows that the existence of formal ethical rules is often helpless when faced with informal pressure from political structures. In Indonesia, this is evident in the dynamics of filling high leadership positions that are often still co-opted by electoral political interests, even though the merit system has been enforced. The inability to separate the public interest and the privacy of power is what triggers what is called institutional corruption.

Furthermore, a contemporary study by O'Flynn (2021) confirms that modern public management models that place too much emphasis on quantitative performance targets risk creating a bureaucratic "dark side", where the apparatus tends to manipulate data or ignore ethical procedures in order to achieve these targets. In the Indonesian context, this phenomenon manifests itself in administrative reports that look perfect but do not reflect the reality of integrity on the ground. This contradiction between administrative performance and moral reality shows that bureaucratic ethics must be repositioned not as a regulatory burden, but as an internal defense mechanism that protects the basic values of government from the erosion of pragmatic interests.

Organizational Integrity: Cultural Transformation in the Midst of Social Fragmentation

Organizational integrity is currently seen as a collective construct that is much more complex than individual honesty. Research by Huberts (2018) emphasizes that integrity is a multidimensional system that includes consistency between values, laws, and public expectations. However, a recent study in the Public Administration Review by Miao et al. (2020) found that the effectiveness of organizational integrity is highly dependent on the extent to which leaders are able to create a safe psychological climate for employees to be critical of deviations. In Indonesia, the launch of the ASN Core Values "BerAKHLAK" in 2021 is a strategic effort to

standardize behavior standards, but empirical research by Prasojo and Holidin (2018) warns that changes in values on paper are often hampered by the "*culture of silence*" that is still strong in government agencies.

This challenge to integrity is increasingly heavier with social fragmentation and political polarization that seeps into the bureaucracy. Officials are often caught in a loyalty dilemma between state rules and affiliation of certain groups or patrons. Research by Baniamin et al. (2020) during the global crisis shows that public trust in the government is greatly influenced by public perception of the integrity of the apparatus at the grassroots level. If the behavior of the apparatus in the field shows discrimination or partisanship, then the overall organizational integrity will collapse in the eyes of the public. Therefore, strengthening integrity must be carried out through a systemic approach that integrates technology-based supervision with the strengthening of the moral capacity of individuals in a sustainable manner.

Normalization of Bureaucratic Pathology in a New Paradigm

One of the most persistent obstacles in building an anti-corruption culture is the normalization of irregularities that now appear in a more subtle form (modern bureaucratic pathology). If corruption used to be identified with direct cash bribes, now it has transformed into a conflict of interest in the procurement of goods/services through digital loopholes or manipulation of policies that appear to be procedurally legal. Research by Bandura (2016) on moral disengagement explains how the apparatus rationalizes their corrupt actions under the pretext of "common welfare" or "acceleration of development". This rationalization is the main obstacle to the effectiveness of any anti-corruption policy because the perpetrators feel that they have not committed a moral mistake.

In the study of Government Science in Indonesia, this normalization is exacerbated by the high cost of social life for officials with salaries that are not fully competitive at all levels. However, research by Simamora and Ginting (2022) shows that an increase in income through performance allowances does not necessarily reduce the level of corrupt behavior if it is not accompanied by an improvement in the ethical climate of the organization. This refutes the classical assumption that corruption is only an economic problem; it is a behavioral problem rooted in a permissive organizational culture. The transformation of the anti-corruption culture requires the deconstruction of "traditional" practices that are considered reasonable, such as the provision of gratuities in the form of services or facilities, which theoretically remain a form of erosion of public integrity.

Ethical Leadership and Bureaucratic Resilience in the Digital Age

Ethical leadership remains the most crucial variable in changing the face of the bureaucracy. In the last ten years, the role of leaders has shifted to "*moral managers*". Research by Kim and Kim (2021) revealed that leaders with high integrity are able to reduce the level of burnout and *turnover intention* in employees, which indirectly increases ethical compliance. In Indonesia, the challenge for bureaucratic leaders is how to balance the pressure of achieving development targets with the protection of their staff's ethical values. Leaders who fail to provide moral protection for honest staff are actually destroying the foundation of the organization's integrity.

Bureaucratic digitalization or *e-government* is often predicted as a panacea for corruption. However, research by Haque et al. (2021) shows that digital systems without strong behavioral oversight actually create new types of corruption opportunities that are more difficult for traditional law enforcement officials to detect. Apparatus behavior in the digital era requires qualified digital ethical literacy. Government Science must start paying attention to how algorithms and automation systems can be used to strengthen organizational integrity, not just for administrative efficiency. Ethical leadership in the future is leadership that is able to marry human moral integrity with technological transparency.

Synthesis: Reconstruction of Apparatus Behavior with Integrity

Building a resilient anti-corruption culture requires a fundamental reconstruction of the behavior of the apparatus. Literature reviews in the last ten years consistently show that approaches that rely only on legal-formal aspects have reached a saturation point. Behavioral

interventions are needed that are more humane and touch on the psychological dimension of the organization. This strategy must include strengthening the identity of professionals as public servants who are proud of their integrity, not just proud of their social status. Government science has a vital role to formulate policies that support the creation of a healthy bureaucratic ecosystem, where integrity is the highest exchange rate in the career path.

To conclude this part of the discussion, it should be emphasized that the ethical challenge of bureaucracy in Indonesia is the struggle against cultural inertia and structural pressures. However, by adopting the latest research results on organizational behavior and ethical leadership, there is a great opportunity for the Indonesian bureaucracy to make a leap in integrity. Strengthening anti-corruption behavior is no longer about punishing wrongdoing, but about building a system that makes honesty the only path to organizational success. This change requires a collective commitment that transcends sectoral barriers and short-term political interests, in order to realize the ideals of a government that is clean, authoritative, and truly in the interests of the people.

CONCLUSION

Based on a series of in-depth analyses that have been conducted through a systematic literature study, this study concludes that strengthening bureaucratic ethics and organizational integrity are the main determinants that determine the success of the transformation of anti-corruption culture in the government environment. Through a review of various literature in the past decade, it is clear that the legalistic-formal approach that has dominated anti-corruption strategies in Indonesia has reached a saturation point. Systemic failures often occur not because of the absence of regulation, but because of the disconnect between the structure of the rules and the reality of the behavior of the apparatus who are still shackled by the pathological patterns of traditional bureaucracy and practical political pressure. Organizational integrity in this case should not be viewed reductionistly only as an accumulation of individual honesty, but must be understood as a dynamic ecosystem in which ethical values are internalized, practiced, and protected collectively by all organizational elements.

This study confirms that the behavior of the state civil servants is greatly influenced by the organizational climate which is often permissive towards minor deviations, which if left unchecked, will be normalized through a mechanism of moral release. The phenomenon of "the father is happy" or blind loyalty to the leader—which is a residue of paternalistic culture—has proven to be the main obstacle to the establishment of the moral independence of the apparatus. Analysis of various theories of organizational behavior shows that without ethical leadership that is able to provide a real example from the top (*tone at the top*), any form of integrity pact will only become an administrative document that loses its substantive spirit. Therefore, the reconstruction of the anti-corruption culture requires institutional courage to break the chain of political patronage and replace it with a meritocratic system that not only measures technical competence, but also the moral consistency of the apparatus in safeguarding public values.

Furthermore, technology integration through government digitalization (*e-government*) does offer higher transparency, but its effectiveness depends on the ethical readiness of its users. Technology is only an instrument that can be abused if its organizational behavior still adheres to the old paradigm that prioritizes rent and discretion without accountability. Another important conclusion from this study is that *public service motivation* will not thrive in an environment full of organizational injustice. When the reward system is unable to distinguish between officials with integrity and those who carry out political maneuvers, there is a degradation of commitment that ultimately weakens the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the public. Thus, strengthening ethics must be carried out simultaneously through rational welfare improvements, consistent enforcement of sanctions, and the provision of a safe space for ethical dialogue for whistleblowers.

In closing, this study concludes that the future of clean government science is highly dependent on the ability of organizations to carry out behavioral interventions that touch on psychological and cultural dimensions. The development of resilient organizational integrity is a long road that requires consistency between policy rhetoric and practice in the field. The main

recommendation of this theoretical study is the need for a paradigm shift in the management of human resources of the apparatus, from one that was originally based on administrative control to based on character development and ethical culture. By making integrity a collective identity, the bureaucracy will no longer only work to fulfill procedures, but will work to meet public moral expectations. This behavioral transformation is a long-term investment in the creation of governance that is resilient to corruption, as well as the main foundation for restoring public trust in state institutions in this challenging era of disruption.

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