

Cultural Contexts Of Corruption With Specific Reference To Fear Of Stigma In Pakistani Administrative Fabric

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Abstract

The focus of the current article was to determine the cultural contexts of corruption with specific reference to administrative norms within Pakistani society. A total of 384 respondents were selected from four public sector organizations. Data was collected through the Likert scale based questionnaire. Statistical analysis using the Chi-square test was used to evaluate and establish associations between the variables. At the bivariate level, statistical analysis revealed that corruption perception was found to be significantly associated to certain variable. Based on the comprehensive findings of this research, a number of policy recommendations and proposals include: redefining and revitalizing religious and moral values of honesty, dedication, uprightness and patriotism at the family, educational and community levels through active participation of all societal segments with specific emphasis on media, religious leaders, teachers and politicians; the promotion of social equality in rights irrespective of power status of societal members; the devaluation and demoralization of corruption through legal punishments and social sanctions; the promotion of admirations and rewards for honesty; devising research based policies and legislation to discourage norms that promote corruption; and the introduction of anti-corruption courses at all educational levels in Pakistani society.

Key Words: Corruption, Culture, Cultural Norms

Introduction

Corruption is more acceptable in some countries to their natives (Olivier and Jean, 1999) because of a cultural prerogative, thus, the officials involved in corruption justify their deeds due to the consistence in local culture. Moreover, strong flexible norms for the prevalence of such rules of business help corrupt officials and corrupt forces within the masses to perpetuate without any fear from government or system. In such a situation the bureaucratic system is also not more than a ghost as the state equilibrium is not supposed to determine the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the deeds. Gupta (1995), while working on the developed and underdeveloped nations, concluded corruption as a phenomenon purely social in nature but with variations from culture to culture. In most under developed countries bribery and other illegal contacts are usually given a place ultra to negative meaning. Payment has been connected to the solution of a problem without any other exit to do so. The feeling of mutual obligations are met with two apparent reasons; initially failure to reciprocate or self interest in the back of mind with the notion that helping other means helping one's own self. Corruption usually suffer a member of organization for the sins they committed as elders because it is trickling down to new generations as a deviance and thus labeling their ancestors as deviant. It is usually taken up as less acceptable in traditional societies, where value change is infrequent. It is usually considered as an outcome of moral breach without consideration, whether the existing law is broken or not. Cultural perspectives widely cover the actions of corruption either excessive or appropriate. A lose culture may work as a harbinger to the growth of corruption by taking the corrupt practices as cultural norm. This sense of ownership by those affected results in justifying the illegitimate deeds as legitimate, legal and consistent to the prevalent culture. Thus the social norms give taste approval to the prevalence of such behavior to support and dissolve corruption as an augmenting value to the prevalent culture (Yang, 1994; Chiabi, 2006; and Olivier and Jean, 1999).

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the cultural contexts of corruption with specific reference to administrative norms in Pakistani society.
2. To identify the perception of the people in different positions from sampled organizations towards corruption.
3. To put forward recommendations / Suggestions on the basis of studyfindings for curtailing / minimizing the menace of corruption from society.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The present study, being quantitative in nature, was carried out in Swat district. The study units included District Police, Excise & Taxation, Revenue & Estate, and Forest Departments whereby employees from lower to higher cadre were interviewed on the issue.

Sampling

Results obtained from sample are reliably generalizable to whole population, if properly drawn (Sekaran, 2003). In this study proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used for sampling purpose. The study population was divided into four strata on the basis of administrative departments namely, District Police, Excise & Taxation, Revenue & Estate and Forest Departments. Respondents from all cadres were then randomly chosen for data collection.

Sample Size

The sample size of the current study was drawn while adopting the analogy of Sekaran (2003). As per that analogy, the sample size of 384 was selected. It was further sub divided into 04 strata as per breakup given in the table, wherein samples are shown proportionally distributed. This distribution was made through proportionate stratified sampling. In each stratum samples were taken randomly. For allocation method, the following formula was used;

$$n_i = \frac{n \cdot N_i}{N} \quad (\text{Chaudry and Kamal, 1996})$$

Where;

n_i = Proportion of sample allocated to i th stratum

N_i = Population of i th stratum

n = Total sample size

N = Total Population

Breakup of Sample Size as per Proportionate Stratified Sampling.

| S.No | Categories of Respondents(Departments) | Sample Size |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Excise and Taxation | 51 |
| 2 | District Police | 74 |
| 3 | Revenue and Estate | 185 |
| 4 | Forest | 74 |
| TOTAL | | 384 |

Data Collection

Conceptual frame work for the current article is comprised of an independent and one dependent variable. For primary data collection on stated variables, a well thought-out and comprehensive questionnaire was prepared that encompassed all the aspects of the study variables.

Conceptual Framework

Keeping in view the study dimensions based on observation on everyday practice and derivations from the related literature, the following conceptual frame work was designed.

| Independent Variables | | Dependent Variable |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Cultural Contexts | Corruption |
| 1. | Cultural Norms. | |

Tool of Data Collection

In present study, the questionnaire was constructed on the basis of study objectives, conceptual framework and research questions. Likert scale questionnaire was design with three option (agree, disagree, don't know).

Indexation

The responses on attitudinal statements (items) of dependent variable were indexed. The items were indexed to measure a single variable, "corruption perception" in analogy with Nachmias(1992). The indexed dependent variable was cross tabulated with independent variable for testing their significance of association.

Data Analysis

The data was entered and analyzed through SPSS (20) software for drawing the inferences from Uni-variate and Bi-variate analysis.

Uni-variate Analysis

All study variables including background, independent and dependent variables were analyzed through uni-variate technique by using frequencies and Percentagewise.

Bi-Variate Analysis

For ascertaining the strength of association between independent and dependent variables, the statistical technique of Bi-variate analysis was used. The tests used for this purpose included Chi-square test and Fishar Exact test respectively.

Chi-Square Test

For calculation of Chi-square value (χ^2) the procedure outlined by Tai (1978) was adopted.

$$(\chi^2) = x^2 = \sum_{j=1}^j \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{(o_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}} \quad (\text{Tai, 1978})$$

Where

(χ^2) = Chi-square for two categorical variables

o_{ij} = the observed frequencies in the cross-classified category at ith row and jth column

e_{ij} = the expected frequency for the same category, assuming no association between variables under investigation

The degree of freedom is calculated as follows;

Df = (r-1) (c-1) where

Df = Degree of freedom

r = the number of rows
c = the number of columns

One of the assumptions of Chi-square test i.e. no expected frequency is lesser than 5 was violated for several times in the data. Therefore, Fisher Exact Test was employed instead of Chi-square test to rectify the effects of assumption violation (Baily, 1982).

$$\text{Fisher Exact Test} = \frac{(a + b)! (c + d)! (a + c)! (b + d)!}{N! a! b! c! d!}$$

Where a, b, c and d were the observed numbers in four cells of contingency table and “N” the total number of observations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter examines and follows up on the existing sociological research on the problem. It is essential to understand the relevant literature. It provides background information; proposes theory approaches; shows the relevant areas of the subject, which have not yet been covered, and saves research sociologists from the unwitting duplication of already done research.

Fear of Stigma

Kim (2003) noted the determining factors in tax payment and tax evasion are government policy prior to the tax incomes and the share of honest people in the population. The taxpayers are concerned about the social stigma associated with dishonesty in a large proportion of the honest population. The numbers of people expected to be dishonest therefore have a great impact on individual evasion decisions. The majority force which tends to certain decisions, whether honest or dishonest, is called the effect of social coordination.

For two important reasons, **Link and Phelan (2000)** criticized previous stigma theories. In the beginning, past theories ignore or criticize those theories that are more philosophical than real experience. Finally, instead of the label applied by others, they criticize the individualistic focus. They mainly study the method of producing stigma and social strategies that they use to that effect, rather than study people to whom such behaviour. They conceptualize stigma through labelling, stereotyping, separation, loss of status and perception techniques. All these co-occur in a power situation that unfolds the stigma components.

An analysis of empirical studies was carried out by **Bordignon (1993)** and a higher level of tax compliance was observed in many countries. In some countries, most people pay their taxes honestly and the scam is low whatever their low detection probability and small, likely penalties if captured. The more puzzling is that some people never escape, regardless of the obvious advantages of tax evasion than fairness. This paradox is best described in the light of moral and ethical feelings, misunderstanding of detection chance and avoiding even low-grade risks. These people are most likely scared if they are caught and revealed as dishonest of the possible harm to their reputation. The fear of social stigma prevents them from being

dishonest. Yet the larger the population of tax evaders, the lower the odds are and the greater the odds of fraud.

Stark (1987) stated that numerous physical features support local crimes and deviance. These include visible signs of decay in moral standards, high population growth rates and high population density. In an area based on its pessimistic approach to this area, people are less socially controlled and motivated to participate in deviance. In analyzing and lining people with stigmatized sites and people living in them, ecological changes can help in determining the deviating behaviour prevailing in an area by means of environmental determinism. This approach is of great importance.

Wilson and Kelling (1982) reported the process of social disruption and disorder similar to the abandonment of a property in which weeds grow over time. A stable community can change into an appalling jungle if it is left of its own without taking care of its social order. The fact that the members have no interest in misconduct makes the members more resolute. They stop observing the rules and common social control mechanisms become ineffective in controlling them.

As a highly dubious quality, **Goffman (1963)** clarification of stigma. The concept has its roots in a hot iron branded Greek tattoo marking, which is made for these individuals to be dedicated to the temple. Those were either the slaves or the criminals who felt stigma. In order to redeem the true identity, the identity of the stigmatized has been reduced to a single characteristic. Goffman has identified three major types of stigma, namely body stigma, individual stigma and tribal stigma. The first two stigmas are personal and associated with body characteristics such as hideousness, disability or defects. Collectivity is associated with the third type, that is to say tribal stigma. This collective stigma has an effect on the particular religious, ethnic or regional groups from generation to generation. The term also connects the individual to his aversive physical and other characteristics and location practices based on space and time, which are stigmatized and society responds.

Fear of Stigma

The motivational and punitive mechanisms of social control in society are updated. A reward system of all types works as a motivator for action, while the fear of punishment and the preservation of face prevent society members from acting improperly. Stigma is an attribute of profound discredit. The stigma reduces the person's identity to a unique feature and prevents the restoration of the original identity. In the current study there were few attributes to the perception of fear of stigma.

Table provides the participants with their perceptions about fear of stigma. Most, i.e. 68% refuted that, out of fear of the stigma associating its violation, people observe moral standards, 26% reassert this view, and 6% were unsure. In the same vein, 59.1% of society's incentive for honest actions were disproportionate in majority, 34.9% admitted this and 6% were unsatisfactory. However, 55.2% of respondents said public servants were afraid of social stigma alienation, 38.8% repudiated this position and 6% were indeterminate. A

majority of 75.8% disclosed that the fear of family honor being stigmatized is an obstacle to corruption, 17.7% confirmed that evaluation and 6.5% remained uncertain. These results explain amply the standard of assessment of corruption and corrupt practices by the respondent. They had a clear vision of honesty, rectitude and dedication based on the reward punishment. Any practice without these virtues destroys the personalities of those who participate in mythical events, as **Goffman (1963)** pointed out, the stigmata not only disrupting the original traits of personalities but also hindering their healing process. There are profound and persistent effects of stigmatization, and their ramifications extend to the individual and group he belongs to. Stigma effects range from mere dislike to social alienation. This fear of stigma alienation is a major force for compliance. **Kappeler, Sluder and Alpert (1994)** also explained that when illegality occurs on a repetitive basis it is recognized as an organization's routine activity. The organisational culture is replaced by an abhorrent culture that standardizes corrupt activity. It is possible to normalize corrupt practices by making positive assumptions and beliefs promoting new values. Corruption rationalization requires corruption-neutralizing stigma.

Moreover, the majority of 75% replied that an increase in corruption incidents leads to fear of stigma, 18% said that this was the case, and 6,3% were unsure. 58.1% denied that the confidentiality of corruption is helpful to prevent social stigma, 37% confirmed that perception and 4.9% were undecided. But a majority of respondents (65.9%) said penalty concerns are a powerful force to avoid corruption, 28.4% denied it, and 5.7% were uncertain. In addition, most of the 54.9% who responded confirmed that people in corrupt culture are not afraid of stigma, 28.6% rebuttal and 16.4% are indiscriminate. However, 55.5% of respondents refused to discuss and rehash definitions of right and wrong, 40.4% confirmed this perception and 4.2% were uncertain. Social stigma is inevitable; regardless of how strong the corrupt element is, provided there is some checking and equilibrium in social fabrics of life. **Wilson and Kelling (1982)** reported the process of social disruption and disorder similar to the abandonment of a property in which weeds grow over time. A stable society, if left alone, cannot become a fearsome jungle without caring for its social order. The fact that the members have no interest in misconduct makes the members more resolute. You stop following the rules and ordinary social control mechanisms are ineffective in controlling them. The educated masses of developing countries have been actively debating right and wrong, said **Migdal (1988)**. In this respect, the optimistic approach of educated masses helps to differentiate between law and law. The new social standards marginalize standards of corruption and their adherents. Stigma acts as a strong innate anti-corruption prohibition force and encourages normal conduct. The sentiments of stigma are high when most people in society don't like corruption; thus corruption in these societies becomes rare. High prevalence of corruption, however, robs the general masses of stigma **(Spichtig and Traxler, 2011)**.

Frequencies and Percentagewise Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of their Perception of Fear of Stigma

| Statements | Agree | Disagree | Don't know |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| People observe moral norms out of fear that its violation will Stigmatize them | 100(26) | 261(68) | 23(6.0) |
| Our society encourages and rewards honest deed. | 134(34.9) | 227(59.1) | 23(6.0) |
| Public servants fear of alienation from society due to corruption stigma. | 212(55.2) | 149(38.8) | 23(6.0) |
| Fear of stigma to family honor and prestige is a hurdle to corruption. | 68(17.7) | 291(75.8) | 25(6.5) |
| Increase in incidence of corruption rub away fear of stigma from minds of public servants. | 72(18.8) | 288(75.0) | 24(6.3) |
| Confidentiality of corruption is a tool to avoid social stigma | 142(37.0) | 223(58.1) | 19(4.9) |
| Worries about penalties is strong force to refrain from corruption | 253(65.9) | 109(28.4) | 22(5.7) |
| Corrupt culture bring personality change in members and they stop to fear from stigma | 211(54.9) | 110(28.6) | 63(16.4) |
| The definitions of right and wrong are actively debated and continually refined | 155(40.4) | 213(55.5) | 16(4.2) |

Association between Perception of Fear of Stigma and Corruption

Social stigma is a highly discrediting attribute, which not only reduces one negative attribute to the identity and individual but also prevents it from being healed. Social stigma is related to faulty behaviour, society's disapproval and social resentment and hate. As a reaction to social stigma, the defamation produced is not confined to individuals but embraces the associated stigmatic person group in the dark. In this study, the perception of fear of stigma in the discussion mentioned above was limited to few attributes.

Summary

Perceptions of the respondents regarding fear of stigma reveal that majority of 68% respondents rebutted that people observe moral norms out of fear of stigma associated to its violation, 59.1% disproved encouragement and reward from society for honest deeds, 55.2% stated that public servants feared of alienation from society due to social stigma and 75.8% disclaimed that fear of stigma to family honor is a hurdle to corruption. Furthermore, majority of 75% respondents rebutted the view that increase in incidents of corruption rub away fear of stigma from minds, 58.1% negated that confidentiality of corruption is helpful in avoiding social stigma. However, a majority of respondents i.e (65.9%) agreed that worries of penalties are a strong force to refrain from corruption, 54.9% confirmed that in corrupt culture people stop to fear from stigma, 55.5% negated that definitions of right and wrong are debated and refined.

The association between perception of fear of stigma and corruption unveil that there was a significant association between observance of moral norms out of fear of social stigma, societal encouragement and rewards for honest deed ($p=0.046$), confidentiality of corruption

as a tool to avoid social stigma ($p=0.002$), corrupt culture bring personality change in members and they stop to fear from stigma ($p=0.000$), and definitions of right and wrong are actively debated and continually refined ($p=0.007$). Conversely, association of corruption perception was non-significant with public servants fear of alienation from society due to corruption stigma ($p=0.190$), fear of stigma to family honor and prestige is a hurdle to corruption ($p=0.215$), increase in incidence of corruption rub away fear of stigma from minds of public servants ($p=241$) and worries about penalties is strong force to refrain from corruption ($p=183$).

Conclusion

Man is innately afraid to be stigmatized when he indulges in such evils as corruption. The imperfect reward penalties motivate corruption to be abstained and to be exercised, but corrupt people find their way through confidentiality of corruption to avoid the social stigma of corruption. If the society and its institutions are not aware of ramifications of corruption, fear of social sanctions will be removed and corruption will be encouraged.

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