A behavioral model of unethical behavior in public service for villagers

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ABSTRACT: Issues of morality and ethics have increasingly become more important in local government and public service settings. Unethical behaviors refer to all activities considered non-ethical and immoral. The main causes of characters that form unethical action in public service are corruption and nepotism. The purpose of this research was to measure the level of unethical behaviors in a village public service. The design of this study was a survey and the data were collected through a cross-section method using a questionnaire. The unit of analysis was all villagers who used village services regularly. The results of this study indicated that corruption was more dominant compared to nepotism in forming unethical actions in public services. The practical implications of this research were useful for the local government, especially for village public service. They needed to improve the effort to reduce unethical behaviors in public service.

1 INTRODUCTION

Unethical behaviors were currently found in many government institutions, and public service sectors were no exception. In the science of state administration, the state civil apparatus or the member of bureaucracy have a function to formulate, implement, and evaluate public policy (Belle & Cantarelli 2017). Public service work is a practical implementation of public policy.

Citizens certainly need good quality public services. It is not an excessive demand because it is also their right as citizens who fulfill their obligations such as paying taxes, complying with legal rules and procedures, and maintaining environmental stability (Lourenço 2016). The question is then whether they are satisfied with the public service provided. Particularly in a village area, the public service provides all forms of government administrative services, especially in the case of essential documents needed by villagers.

Several previous studies analyzed a lot about the implementation of good governance. However, only very few focused on measuring unethical actions. A survey of 600 Australian consumers revealed that both empathy and moral identity were related to detrimental beliefs regarding the passive and the active/legal dimensions of consumer ethics and were related to definite conclusions regarding the "doing good"/recycling dimension. Cynicism was related to positive beliefs regarding the passive aspect of consumer ethics and was referred to as detrimental ideas regarding the "doing good"/recycling dimension. The role of moral disengagement in mediating these relationships was examined. Empathy and moral identity were only indirectly negatively related to the "no harm, no foul" dimension of consumer ethics through moral disengagement. At the same time, cynicism was indirectly positively related to this dimension through moral disengagement (Chowdhury & Fernando 2014). Even more frequent and pervasive were cases of "ordinary" unethical behavior. Unethical actions committed by people who value and care about morality, but failed to maintain their ethics when faced with an opportunity to cheat (Gino 2015; Kouchaki & Gino 2016). Engaging in unethical behavior produces changes in memory so that memories of unethical actions gradually become less bright and vivid than memories of ethical actions or other types of actions that are either positive or negative in valence. This memory obfuscation of one's unethical acts over time is called "unethical amnesia." Because of unethical amnesia, people are more likely to act dishonestly repeatedly over time (Kouchaki & Desai 2015; Kouchaki & Gino 2016). Their research investigates exposure to in-group members who misbehaved or to others. The cluster members during this analysis have the benefit of unethical actions, greed, self-concern, and pardon. They also expose incremental dishonesty, loss aversion, challenging performance goals, or time pressure to increase unethical behavior.

In contrast, monitoring employees, giving useful reminders, and individuals' willingness to maintain a definite self-view decrease unethical conduct. Findings on the effect of self-control depletion on unethical behavior are mixed (Belle & Cantarelli 2017). Building on the idea that we need to develop a more comprehensive and complete understanding of the value and how it influences actions and decisions as well as the importance and relevance of also adopting a descriptive approach that is grounded in the

behavioral sciences (De Cremer & Vandekerckhove 2017). Unethical behaviors, in a sense, are all actions that are not considered ethical and moral (Kouchaki & Gino 2016).

This study aims to measure unethical behavior in the public service sector in rural areas, which includes corruption and nepotism. Corruption and nepotism have a terrible impact on the economy, unfortunately most people in Indonesia view unethical behavior as something normal.

1.1 Corruption

Corruptions have a significant impact on the country's economy because economic growth is hampered by the involvement of employees and government officials in corruption (Purcell 2016). Corruption reduces investments made by the government, both domestically and abroad. Corrupt acts are dishonest behaviors that violate the truth. Corruption is the actions of public officials who abuse their authority, position, or power, resulting in violating some state legal norms (Transparency International 2016). Acts of corruption are usually carried out in secret and for personal gain for wealth or status or because of family, friends, ethnicity, or religious groups. One form of corruption is fundamental bribery and a wrong way that directly impacts it (Liu et al. 2016).

The impact of corruption is so high that it can reduce the quality of people's welfare; the high loss due to corruption will have an effect on the state's obligation to provide welfare rights (Yan & Oum 2014). Therefore, community participation in the prevention of acts of corruption is very much needed and has a critical role as a form of social control. High social power will be able to narrow the space for corruption and widen the scope for anti-corruption (De Cremer & Vandekerckhove 2017).

1.2 Nepotism

Nepotism is an action that refers to giving improper assistance to someone who has a closeness to government officials, such as family members, members of political parties, tribal members, or members of the same religious group (Baumeister & Alghamdi 2015). Although nepotism is not recommended in the public sector, some researchers see its positive aspects, especially in the business context (Chowdhury & Fernando 2014). Nepotism rules when authorities employ each other by providing ways to create relationships and support among many families in a network (Chowdhury & Fernando 2014). Besides that, nepotism is preferred in small-scale family business companies that have smaller systems.

The practice of corruption is rampant, and so is nepotism, however, discussion about nepotism is still rare. Research about nepotism has only been developed after 2010, where several studies showed the impact of nepotism on performing family and corporate companies. The results show that nepotism produces unbalanced decisions, unfair treatment, and damages the company's performance in the long run (Kouchaki & Desai 2015). Recent research also shows that nepotism causes loss of motivation, self-confidence, alienation, and it also discards highly skilled employees, and limits competition and innovation. The consequences of nepotism undermine the foundation of the organization, which will ultimately impact overall economic development (Stellar & Willer 2018). Nepotism causes a lot of negative impacts on organizational performance, and the lack of interest among researchers in this can have a more significant effect than imagined (Birtch & Chiang 2014).

2 METHOD

The stages in this study included (1) literature study, (2) problem formulation and research objectives, (3) data collection, (4) testing research instruments, (5) data processing, (6) interpretation of results, and (7) recommendations at the initial stage described in the introduction to the study of literature and research purposes. The purpose of this study was to measure the level of unethical actions using two dimensions, that is, corruption and nepotism (see Figure 1). The method of data collection was using questionnaires and direct interviews with villagers in East Java, Indonesia, which is the second largest region in Indonesia. This research was conducted over a three-month period, that from January to March, 2019.

The population of this study were all villagers in the Sidoarjo District who used and had been involved in public services in the village administration, aged between 17 and 65 years with a minimum education of high school or equivalent. 185 to 200 questionnaires were distributed to all villagers and interviews were
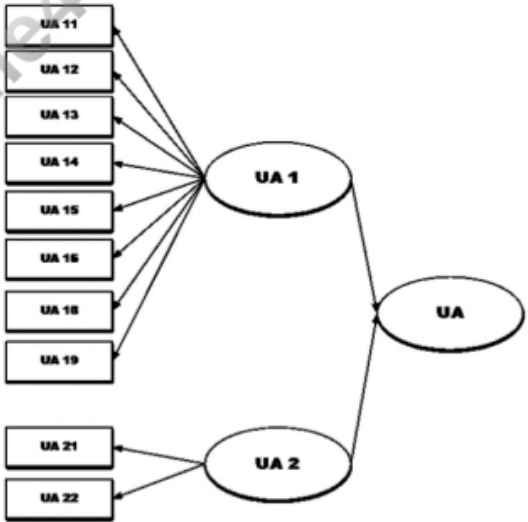
Figure 1. Research framework.

conducted directly by visiting all respondents in each village. Based on these criteria, for obtaining the population in this study, the sampling method of probability sampling was used, and the technique of determining the sample was simple random sampling. A Likert scale was used to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of the respondents on the object.

Testing the instrument of this study included validation and reliability to verify whether the instrument met the requirements of research method standards. The instrument is said to be good if it meets three main elements, namely being valid, reliable, and practical [10]. At the data processing stage, researchers used SEM (structural equation modelling) analysis. The data analysis was carried out by interpreting the assessment of dimensions that influence the Unethical Actions. The recommendations in this study were the results of the discussion and interpretation of data analysis processed by SEM.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The testing instrument in this study was aimed at measuring formative indicators from Unethical behavior. Model evaluation was completed by looking at the outer weight significance value with T-statistics > 1.96, and obtained through a resampling (bootstrapping) procedure, thus, validity and reliability testing was not required.

The results of path coefficient analysis explained that the Corruption indicator was the most dominant form of Unethical Actions with a value of 0.816 with CR = 37.369 (Table 1). The indicators of corruption show that corruption reduces satisfaction with service quality, accountability, and the responsiveness of the government. Corruption also causes a lack of information about government actions and low trust in the government to solve problems. As a disease, corruption endangers not only state finances, but also the nation's condition and state since it causes an imbalance in the share of income received by various groups of society (McLeod & Harun 2014). In such conditions, the most disadvantaged ones are the people at

Table 1. Path coefficients of unethical behavior indicators.

	Mean	Std Dev	T-Stat	P-Val
UA11 <- UA1	0,861	0,026	33,174	0,000
UA12 <- UA1	0,858	0,035	24,398	0,000
UA13 <- UA1	0,872	0,024	35,894	0,000
UA14 <- UA1	0,819	0,035	23,589	0,000
UA15 <- UA1	0,782	0,042	18,674	0,000
UA16 <- UA1	0,700	0,068	10,411	0,000
UA18 <- UA1	0,588	0,064	9,240	0,000
UA19 <- UA1	0,773	0,049	15,709	0,000
UA21 <- UA2	0,939	0,010	90,203	0,000
UA22 <- UA2	0,914	0,026	35,453	0,000
UA1->UA	0,816	0,022	37,369	0,000
UA2->UA	0,235	0,016	14,286	0,000

the grassroots level, whose welfare is actually under guarantee by the constitution (Liu et al. 2016).

However, in law enforcement, there is community participation, which functions as social control. Corruption uses power basically because of the weakness of social control, or the social environment that shapes it, especially in an environment with lost power and responsibility (Gong 2015). So corruption encompasses standard behavioral deviations, which are violating or contrary to the law. Social control is a normative aspect of social life that inhibits deviant behavior and its consequences, such as prohibitions, demands, punishment, and compensation, and according to abnormal behavior, depends on social control (Goddard et al. 2016). It means that social control determines how behavior is a deviant behavior. The attitude of society's rejection of deviant behavior can be qualified as a crime, where the offense is a shocking thing to the city (Baron et al. 2015). An act is a crime when the action violates a sharp and defined joint consciousness.

The indicator of nepotism with an outer weight value of 0.235 is significant with CR = 14.286 (Table 1). This indicator explains how nepotism reduces our satisfaction with service quality, and nepotism shows a low level of transparency. This indicator is a less dominant factor in shaping Unethical behavior, because it has the smallest value outer weight compared to other indicators. The practice of giving privilege to certain people based on personal preferences, blood ties, and family relations is still rampant today (Gino 2015). Regional leaders exercise their power by privileging their close family within the government. When local leaders with families and officials in the administration are no longer in force, their influence and political heritage will remain active (Kalshoven et al. 2016). Nepotism affects how one determines socio-economic classes based on skin color, appearance, and preferences. The practice of nepotism usually starts very early when parents differentiate their children based on who their parents like most (Kouchaki & Gino 2016). This behavior then enters the sub consciousness of the child, thus, shaping their behavior. The same thing also happens in government bureaucracies when many people choose officials based on personal subjective judgment rather than on quality and qualifications, assuming as long as the selected person is sufficiently qualified, then they can practice lawful nepotism (Baron et al. 2015). The justification of nepotism can affect how a country understands the practice. Therefore, people need to know the impact of nepotism behavior. The government should also make regulations that can prevent the exercise of nepotism from taking place in the government bureaucracy (Yan & Oum 2014).

4 CONCLUSION

The research was aimed to measure unethical behaviors in villages; the results show that corruption is the

dominant factor that forms unethical behavior. The perception that corruption reduces the importance of regulations so that there is an increase in unethical actions in the village, especially by public services. The perception of the regional government is more corrupt than the central government. In this case, the government needs to pay attention to the performance of the civilian state apparatus so that the prevention of unethical actions can be done early. This study implies that public perceptions and concerns about unethical actions are increasing. It needs cooperation between citizens and government officials to prevent and control unethical actions in government public services. Implementation of good governance requires the oversight of citizen involvement.

The limitation of this study was only in measuring the concept of unethical behavior in the village government office. As a complement to this research, further research can be carried out at the central government and the national private sector. In addition, future researchers can add several measurements of both variables and indicators related to the implications of unethical actions on good governance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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