Research Article

Digital Era and Ethical Behavior: A Study of Determination Theory

M.Yudhika Elrifi¹*, Icuk Rangga Bawono², Angelia Pribadi¹, Novalinda Shila Aryanti¹

¹Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Janabadra, 55231, Indonesia
²Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Jendral Soedirman, 53122, Indonesia

Abstract.

Based on the moral paradigm of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), an organization should encourage individuals to maintain ethical behavior through an internalization process. This study captures the views of police department personnel about unethical behavior, namely corruption, especially corruption in a new digital-normal era. This study measures the internalization level of ethical behavior through salary satisfaction and locus of control. The study uses a questionnaire to reveal the internalization level of ethical behavior and police officers as respondents. Results show that ethical behavior is internalized in intrinsic motivation form. Therefore, this study contributes to a new paradigm of SDT (moral paradigm) and ethical practice by developing the self-belief of an officer in the new digital normal era.

Keywords: digital, new normal, self-determination theory, salary satisfaction, locus of control

1. Introduction

In 2016, the Indonesia Police Department (IPD) launched a PolisiKu application to digitally integrate IPD’s service and database to the public, such as application driver’s license data, so this platform has high-quality transparency (1). Moreover, the normal era can be a magic trigger for IPD to implement massive digital services because societies worldwide struggle with dramatic health, economic, social, and human crises (2).

However, a report by Transparency International (TI) based on a survey from June 15 – July 20, 2020, that IPD faces accusations” from the public as an institution has the highest corruption rate in public service context (41%), and it is more than Asia Rate Survey – 23% (3). Another report showed that IPD’s corruption index rose to seven levels in 2018 from 2017 to 2015, reaching 89th rank from 180 and recording a score of 38 from maximum - 100 (the best value or clean of corruption). Indonesia’s 2017 and 2016 scores were only 37 out of a maximum of 100, while in 2015, it obtained 36. Therefore,
the results showed that the indicator “clean from corruption” was not significant from 2015 – 2017 to 2018 (4). It implies that reformation does not significantly enhance the quality of public service (3). There is a contradiction; police organizations have provided a good atmosphere for transparency practice through social service digitally, but people assume the opposite about IPD’s transparency.

The research question is whether IPD’s transparency value aligns with officers’ view of transparency. This study seeks IPD’s views (represented by salary satisfaction and locus of control) about corruption to measure the internalization level of ethical behavior. Therefore, this study examines salary satisfaction (as a representation of external regulation) and locus of control (as a representation of integrated regulation) on a member of IPD’s corruption perception. The examination aims to capture officers of IPD’s view of unethical behavior, namely corruption, especially corruption in a new digital normal era.

This study is based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which explains people’s motivation and behavior relationship. The environment can influence people to maintain their motivation (5), and ethical behavior relates to intrinsic motivation (being a valuable person) (6). SDT explains the motivation behind behavior in a continuum scale: from intrinsic (activity itself – integrated regulation) to extrinsic (as an instrument of achievement – external regulation) motivation (6). Intrinsic motivation has a positive effect on people’s performance because people do activities to satisfy their self-satisfaction. As an implication, it encourages to seek challenges, explore, and learn (5). Extrinsic motivation refers to an effort regarding an outcome, such as promotion, salary, or fulfilling orders from parents or bosses (6). Generally speaking, motivation can influence people in terms of learning, performance, experience, well-being, and ethical behavior.

Ryan & Deci (2000) state that one of the components of psychological needs in SDT is autonomy, namely more autonomous people and more persistent performance, and it is a part of SDT (organismic integration theory - CET). People have more variation in extrinsic motivation and need to execute it autonomously to maintain motivation. However, suppose other people (superiors) encourage or foster another organization member to take value or rule as a part of their motivation regarding an activity. In that case, there is the internalization of value in this organization or integrated regulation of SDT. Therefore, CET implements the role of social and environmental factors in intrinsic motivation.

Empirical evidence from the study of Lindgren et al. (2019) revealed that the digitalization of public service could only transform the initiation, duration, and scope of service. However, the nature and purpose of the service are still the same. Referring to
the study of (8), being ethical is a moral development process from external regulation (such as an act to attain reward or avoid punishment) to integrated regulation (such as moral action is valuable), so this process shows the level internalization of an individual's ethic.

Moral development in the organization is a kind of intrinsic motivation internalization because of inherent satisfaction rather than outcome consideration. For example, the prior evidence of Taylor et al. (2014) proved that intrinsic motivation positively affects academic achievement. According to Taylor et al. (2014), students feel free to choose academic orientation; therefore – especially - intrinsic motivation does not need self-actualization, and employees do not need task identity (10). Consequently, individuals with high moral emotions will willingly avoid violation of moral principles (11) because valuable contribution is the priority of people who commit to ethical behaviors.

There are many efforts to eradicate corruption. For example, the Indonesian government carried out Law Number 24 of 1960 concerning the Eradication of Corruption Crimes until Law Number 20 of 2001. Internal factors, including greedy/greedy nature, insufficient morals, and consumptive lifestyles, and external factors, namely economy, politics, and organization, become a trigger of the corruption act (12). As an illustration, reward motivation (salary) as a part of extrinsic motivation does not have a relationship with ethical behavior because an individual has autonomous decisions regarding the individual's needs, and daily lifestyle does not refer to salary.

According to the findings of Singh & Loncar (2020), salary satisfaction is the main thing related to superiors and employees and affects the quality of employee work. However, a study by Hoffman & Lyons (2013) in the US stated that salary does not affect the politician's performance in running their office. A survey by Ni & Van (2005) that used the modeling method to formulate corruption in the Ming Dynasty revealed that low salaries triggered corruption.

From the description, salary is a part of extrinsic motivation and affects unethical behavior. An individual who expects outcome (salary or position) from their activity (career) will focus on outcome achievement during their career. Therefore, they do not hesitate to do unethical behavior to achieve their outcome. Based on this argument, we predict that salary satisfaction has a negative effect on corruption perception.

Locus of control is a perception of an individual's belief about their achievement – who has a role in their career (16). The prior finding of (17) revealed that internal locus of control does not moderate burnout and performance relationship. This study used CEOs as respondents and CEOs concerned with maintaining a favorable image. Therefore, CEOs regulate themselves regarding burnout.
This finding is supported by an empirical study by Sharan & Romano (2020) that states that an internal locus of control enhances high self-belief; therefore, it negatively affects an individual’s trust in an artificial intelligence algorithm. Self-belief also influences students at university to build their businesses (19). It implies that the self has a role in the struggle of students. Based on the findings, this study proposes that self-belief is central to the internal locus of control, and self-belief will maintain ethical behavior.

An individual with high self-belief does not depend on other people or hesitate to do unethical behavior because the environment cannot influence their belief or pride in themselves. This study uses a continuum locus of control, internal to external – a higher locus of control values a higher external locus of control. From this argument, we predict that locus of control positively affects corruption perception.

This study enriches self-determination theory in moral insight and transparency practice in IPD. As stated by Ryan & Deci (2000), an organization can internalize in the mind of any organization member values or rules easily, especially with no corruption, if the organization provides autonomy need, and autonomy generously becomes a basic need of people. Perception is how someone sees and estimates an object or event (20), and IPD, based on Law Number 2 of 2002, has the authority to search for and investigate corruption.

2. Method

This study implements primary data obtained by distributing questionnaires to officers of one of the police districts in Indonesia. Distribution of questionnaires advantages Google Form platform and questions in the questionnaire use Likert Scale measurement from 1 -5. The total number of officers working in this district is 1,781 persons. However, respondents should match the criteria below:

1. The officer should have worked for at least 4 years.
2. The minimum position is Briipda (Police Brigadier Two)
3. The officer has to make the budget decision in official operations
4. Feel free to fill in the research questionnaire distributed using Google Forms.

One hundred respondents match the criteria, or 5.6% of the total respondents. This study involves officers who have worked for at least 4 years or more because they automatically received a periodic salary. A police officer gets a salary promotion every two years. Therefore, this study uses four salary ranges. This study also involves
respondents from outside of the district. 27 SATKER or territorial elements are outside the district, such as the District Police (Polres) and Sector Police (Polsek).

The instrument to capture data is tested by conducting validity and reliability tests on each item questionnaire question(2). The validity test measures the relationship or correlation among indicator questions, so questions in the questionnaire indicate whether they are valid. Testing validity uses the Product Moment from Karl Pearson with a significant level of 0.05. The reliability test measures the consistency of the respondent’s answer, and this study uses the Cronbach Alpha with a rate of reliability coefficient of more than 0.6. This study also implements the normality test with Kolmogorov Smirnov’s test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test.

There are two independent variables in this study, salary satisfaction and locus of control, and one dependent variable, corruption perception. Definition and measurement of variable as stated below:

1. Salary is a payment for the delivery of services performed by employees with a level of position, such as a manager (3). Salary satisfaction measurement uses the respondent’s perception of compensation schema in the respondent’s office. The questionnaire given to the respondents refers to Singh & Loncar (2020). There are 18 questions about compensation schema, respondents’ perception about the justice of any schema, and respondents’ satisfaction using a Likert scale of 1-5.

2. Locus of Control is defined as a person’s perspective on an event where he is able or not to control events occurring to him (5). Locus of control is divided into two categories, namely, internal and external locus of control (6). Locus of control measurement uses 16 questions of locus of control divided into eight questions of internal locus of control and eight questions of external locus of control. Questions of internal LOC measurement indicate the respondent's self-belief in their achievement, and questions of external LOC measurement indicate the respondent’s belief of others on their achievement. Questionnaires given to
respondents refer to Lee (2013) and respondents' beliefs using a Likert scale of 1-5.

3. Corruption perception as a dependent variable refers to the study of Lee (2013). This study uses 28 questions to measure the perception of corruption among respondents. The question contains cases of mistake – administration, behavior, and policy that may be unethical. Therefore, corruption perception requires respondents to predict which case is considered unethical by a Likert scale of 1-5.

3. Result and Discussion

There are eight questions about the respondent's demography: name (optional), gender, age, education, division, position, occupation, and salary. The result states that respondents are dominated by men (84%) versus women (16%). How about the age of the respondents? Respondents with the age range of 21-25 years (20%) are 20 people, and the age range is 26-35 years old (38%), as many as 38 people. Range 36-45 years (27%) is as many as 27 people. The last range is 46 - 58 years (15%) of 15 people. It means that respondents are dominated by their productive age as employees.

The 100 respondents of the district are divided into three groups based on their educational background, namely, high school, diploma, and S1 (undergraduate). Among 100 respondents who filled out this questionnaire, 48 respondents were high school graduates (48%), 12 were diploma graduates (12%), 40 were S1 graduates (40%), and no respondent had a master's (S2) degree. The majority of respondents in this study graduated from high school and undergraduate. This district has officers who graduated with master's (S2) and doctorate (S3) degrees, but no one was involved in this research.

This study also details that the operational division dominated the respondent's division by 38% (38 people). This division has the authority to decide the organization's budget. The second highest division in this research is a staff position, with 29 respondents from staff (29%). Then, respondents from the chief of division are six people (6%), the chief of the unit is four people (4%), the chief of command is three people (3%), the chief of administration is 11 people (11%), chief of operational is four people (4%). Finally, five people (5%) are in the highest position of head of subsection (KASUBAG). There is no respondent with a higher position than the head of the subsection (KASUBAG).

How about the levels of respondent salary? There are seven respondents (7%) with a salary lower than 4,000,000 IDR. There are 14 people (14%) who earn between 4,000,000 IDR - 4,500,000 IDR, and 21 people (21%) reach between 4,500,000 IDR -
5,000,000IDR. The percentage of respondents with the highest salary is 58 people (58%) who make more than 5,000,000IDR per month.

According to sample criteria, the minimum rank of the officer is Bripda. There are nine people with the rank of Bripda (9%) and 21 people with the rank of Briptu (21%). There are 12 officers (12%) with as Brigadier, eight people (8%) as Bripka, nine people (9%) as Aipda, ten people (10%) as Aiptu, six people (6%) as Ipda, ten people (10%) as Iptu, ten people (10%) as Akp and five people (5%) as Kompol. There are some personnel above Kompol. However, they do not fill out questionnaires—the Work Unit (SATKER) where the respondents are on duty. The highest number of respondents from SATKER DIT Samapta is 12 people (12%), and the fewest respondents come from SATKER DIT Tahti - 1 person (1%).

Salary satisfaction is used to measure a police officer’s perception of the compensation schema, namely salary, bonus, and remuneration schema. The result shows that the lowest value of the salary satisfaction variable is two, and the highest value is 5, with the lowest average value being 3.82 in the KG 10\textsuperscript{th} question and the highest being 4.15 in the KG 1\textsuperscript{st} question.

The structure of KG shows that police officers satisfy the compensation scheme because the lowest mean is 3.82. Locus of control is used to measure the perception of a police officer about achievement in their career and how it comes from (themself or others). Locus of control shows that the lowest value is one, and the highest is 5. A low value indicates internal LOC and a high value indicates the external LOC of police officers based on their achievement. The result shows the lowest average value of 2.35 in the LOC 12\textsuperscript{th} question, and the highest was 3.56 in the LOC 3\textsuperscript{rd} question.

How about the corruption perception of officers? The result shows that the lowest value of the corruption perception variable is one and the highest value is 5, with the lowest average value being 1.62 in the PC’s question 24\textsuperscript{th} and the highest being 2.17 in the PC 28\textsuperscript{th} question—this variable measures officer’s view about behaviors that categorized as unethical behavior or ethical behavior. High value shows that a police officer does not organize an activity as corruption; based on the definition, this activity is considered unethical. This means that police officers understand unethical behavior because perceptions of value or corruption are low.

According to the validity test (see table 1a-1c.), the value of the r table for respondents totaling 100 is 98. The significance level of 5% or 0.05 for the one-way test is 0.1654. The result shows that all the questions have an r value lower than the r count. Therefore, all the questions in this study are valid. According to Sirén et al. (2018), the reliability test shows that Cronbach’s Alpha value is lower than 0.60. Therefore, all the questions
TABLE 1: Validity Test of Salary Satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>r count</th>
<th>r table</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary Satisfaction (KG)</td>
<td>KG1</td>
<td>.728**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG2</td>
<td>.765**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG3</td>
<td>.762**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG4</td>
<td>.807**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG5</td>
<td>.814**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG6</td>
<td>.770**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG7</td>
<td>.759**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG8</td>
<td>.774**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG9</td>
<td>.640**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG10</td>
<td>.771**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>KG11</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>KG14</td>
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<td>KG15</td>
<td>.750**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG16</td>
<td>.739**</td>
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<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG17</td>
<td>.748**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KG18</td>
<td>.743**</td>
<td>0.1654</td>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in this study are reliable (see Table 2). Data also fulfill the normality, multi-collinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests.

This study determines the hypothesis that salary satisfaction has a negative effect on corruption perception. This hypothesis implies that lower satisfaction leads to a higher possibility of unethical behavior (corruption). The result shows that the salary satisfaction variable does not affect the perception of corruption among respondents because the significance value of the coefficient is more than 0.05 (0.174) (see Table 3). The study also states the hypothesis that locus of control positively affects corruption perception. This hypothesis implies that a lower respondent’s perception of their ability to achieve career achievement lowers the possibility of unethical behavior (corruption). The result shows that the locus of control variable has a significant positive effect on the respondents’ perception of corruption because of a significance value of less than 0.05 (0.000) (see Table 3).
This result implies that respondents’ activity or work is an effort to contribute to society or become valuable individuals. This implication is based on empirical evidence and respondents’ demography data as detailed below:

1. Men (84%) dominate the sample and are productive ages 21 – 45 years old, so based on this data, they prefer extrinsic motivation, namely, getting a reward, promotion, or getting credit from a superior. However, this study reveals that respondents are satisfied with their compensation schema based on the lowest mean of salary satisfaction, 3.28, and respondents do not think that compensation schema can influence their perception of corruption. This result supports the study of Hoffman & Lyons (2013), who found that money is not the primary trigger for ethical behavior.

2. Respondents are also involved in the budget decisions and contact with society directly on public service. However, respondents tend to choose an internal locus of control rather than an external locus of control for doing their duty. This conclusion refers to the mean perception of their achievement (2.35 - 3.56). Therefore, this study reveals that a higher external locus of control means a higher possibility of unethical behavior. This conclusion is based on the lower value of locus of control.
control and the lower possibility of corruption. The lower value of locus of control indicates respondents' preference for internal locus of control. This study supports the study of (10), Sirén et al. (2018), Sharan & Romano (2020), and Sharan & Romano (2020) that self-belief encourages ethical behavior.
TABLE 4: Reliability Test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary Satisfaction (KG)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control (LOC)</td>
<td>0.812</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Corruption Acts (PC)</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 5: Hypothesis Result.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary Satisfaction (KG)</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>1.368</td>
<td>0.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of Control (LOC)</td>
<td>0.372</td>
<td>3.983</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *** significant level < 0.01

This study especially contributes to SDT in the moral paradigm. According to (12) and (13), intrinsic motivation can protect people from unethical behavior, and prior research has little focus on morality as part of people’s motivation. This study also contributes to ethical practice in IPD. This contradiction phenomenon has become a major concern for IPD because IPD encourages digitalized public service, especially in the new normal era (COVID-19 era).

On one side, an officer of IPD has guidance in public service and is dedicated to guardians, protectors, and community servants. On the other hand, according to the study of Lindgren et al. (2019), the digitalization of public service could only transform the initiation, duration, and scope of service. Still, the nature and purpose of service remain the same. IPD could provide service to society 24 hours a day, but the essence of service is to decrease officers’ unethical behavior. Therefore, IPD is concerned with reducing direct contact between society and IPD officers through digitalized public service. Moral development through self-belief is the key to building the officer’s dignity.

4. Conclusion

This study is based on the contradiction phenomena of the Indonesia Police Department (IPD). Since 2016, IPD has launched a digital public service, namely, the policies application, that could integrate society data and enhance transparency in the public service of IPD. However, surveys during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the opposite perception of IPD’s transparency. Moreover, the reformation of IPD does not significantly influence the public’s perception of the unethical behavior of IPD based on the public’s opinion of the corruption rate – 42% and the corruption index – 38th. Therefore, this
study seeks IPD’s views on corruption perception to capture the internalization level of ethical behavior in any officer of IPD.

Based on self-determination theory, this study argues that ethical behavior is a moral development process from external regulation (such as an act to attain reward or avoid punishment) to integrated regulation (such as moral action is valuable), so this process shows the level internalization of an individual’s ethic. The study uses a questionnaire and one of the districts as respondents. The result reveals that respondents who have ethical behavior have internalized intrinsic motivation form.

This study especially contributes to the moral paradigm of self-determination theory. Discussion about motivation is not only about the satisfaction of work caused by an external trigger. This study also contributes to ethical practice through moral development based on self-belief in achievement.

This study has limitations, such as respondents from one of the districts, city A. Still, the survey and the phenomena that become the main problem may come from city B because of the wide area in Indonesia and many districts in Indonesia. Another limitation is that both cities may have different cultures and values. Further, researchers can obtain this result from organizational cultures, such as power distance and individualism-collectivism. Further research can also complete it with confusion dynamism that measures an individual’s expectation about his or her life because any city has a different level of competition for living.

**Acknowledgments**

Thank you to the reviewers and audience for the interesting advice.

**References**


