

## Cultural Factors and Their Influence on the Corruptional Behavior of Government Officials

**Endang Murti<sup>1</sup>, Bambang Martin Baru<sup>2</sup>, Harianto<sup>3</sup>, Agus Wiyaka<sup>4</sup>, Zulin Nurchayati<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Merdeka Madiun University, Indonesia

**Article DOI:** [10.55677/SSHRB/2025-3050-1210](https://doi.org/10.55677/SSHRB/2025-3050-1210)

**DOI URL:** <https://doi.org/10.55677/SSHRB/2025-3050-1210>

**KEYWORDS:** Culture, Corruption, Officials, Government

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Bambang Martin Baru**

**Published:** December 26, 2025

**License:** This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

**ABSTRACT:** Corruption has become a culture that has developed within Indonesia's bureaucratic system. The prevalence of corruption has led to the conclusion that corruption is a cultural issue, as it is a cultural phenomenon that makes it so easy for every institution to engage in corruption. Therefore, it is necessary to identify and formulate strategies to address corruption from a cultural perspective. Corruption is a deviant act in social, cultural, societal, and state life. Corruption occurs everywhere, between businesspeople and powerful bureaucrats. It seems that in various conversations, the word "corruption" is no longer a strange term. It seems to have become commonplace. Corruption is no longer considered a violation of individual ethics but rather a violation of social ethics as a general agreement.

### BACKGROUND

Corruption cases in Indonesia are on the rise, and corruption involves not only central government officials but also regional officials. The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) has prosecuted corruption cases involving 79 regional heads in Indonesia. This demonstrates the low integrity of public officials who should be prioritizing the interests of the people, instead prioritizing personal interests. Of the 79 regional heads implicated in corruption cases, 45 are regents, 21 are mayors, and 13 are governors. Public leaders should possess a fighting spirit in championing the welfare of the people through various economic development and community empowerment programs. Instead, the impact of corruption cases hinders economic development and citizen welfare. Ironically, these corruption cases are perpetrated by relatively young and highly educated individuals. This is an important reminder for future corruption prevention efforts. The younger generation should be able to serve as good role models in upholding trustworthy leadership for the benefit of the people.

According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Indonesia ranks 96th out of 180 countries surveyed. Although this ranking is down from last year's CPI of 90, Indonesia actually achieved the same CPI score as last year, namely 37. The stagnant perception of corruption eradication in Indonesia can also be seen from the insignificant increase in the CPI score in the last five years. In the 2013 CPI release, Indonesia scored 32 and slowly rose to 37 in 2018. This score is still quite far compared to the number one CPI ranking, New Zealand, which has consistently scored above 88 in the last five years (Kompas.com). The corruption index is a reflection of the still high level of corruption in government, thus giving rise to increasing inequality between the rich and the poor. This inequality is caused, among other things, by policymakers who are only oriented towards personal or group interests. For example, the E-KTP corruption case which caused state financial losses of around Rp. 2.3 trillion, if it were used to empower the common people, it would be much more beneficial for the interests of the people.

The rise of corruption has been dominated by countries with a strong religious base, which should prioritize honesty and truth as the foundation for their policies and actions. This indicates that religion has little or no connection to corruption, or even minimal influence on corrupt behavior. This is due to the presence of stowaways or third parties outside the system who influence policy. Corruption often begins within legislative bodies during the formulation of public policies. Many parties take advantage of discussions on draft state policies by collaborating with third parties with vested interests. It is even suspected that the buying and selling of policies is carried out on an article-by-article basis. This is also emphasized by Nyoman Serikat Putra Jaya (2005) who stated that criminal acts of corruption are not only carried out by state officials, between state officials, but also state officials with other parties such as families, cronies and businessmen, thus destroying the joints of social, national and state life, and endangering

the existence of the state. This condition is what ultimately trapped criminal acts of corruption involving legislative institutions with other parties. Thus, corrupt behavior has nothing to do with religion but rather individual behavior that deviates from values and norms. This is also emphasized by Samuel Huntington in his book Political Order in Changing Societies, defining corruption as the behavior of public officials with deviates from accepted norms in order to serve private ends (1968:59). Judging from this definition, it is clear that corruption not only concerns legal, economic, and political aspects but also concerns human behavior (behavior) which is the main topic and norms (norms) accepted and adhered to by society (digilib.uinsby.ac.id > ...). In Indonesia, corrupt behavior has become a culture that has developed in our bureaucratic system. The rampant practice of corruption in Indonesia has led to the conclusion that corruption is a cultural problem because the symptoms of corruption as a cultural symptom that encourages every institution to easily commit corruption. For this reason, it is necessary to identify and formulate strategies for handling corruption from a cultural aspect.

Corruption has become a cultural norm within this system, where power is a non-negotiable price for the nobility and their entourage. Corruption is a deviant act in social, cultural, societal, and state life. Corrupt behavior has occurred everywhere, between powerful businessmen and bureaucrats, or among lower-middle-class citizens. It seems that in various conversations, the word "corruption" is no longer strange. It has become commonplace. Corruption is no longer considered a violation of individual ethics but rather a violation of social ethics, as agreed upon by a general consensus. Members of parliament, the bureaucracy, and law enforcement still consider corruption to be an individual violation of ethics that must be avoided. The development of this attitude is actually dangerous, especially if it occurs among parliament members and is closely related to law enforcement. This is because corruption in the House of Representatives (DPR) is carried out within legitimate legislation as state policy (corruption by policy). The exposure of various corruption cases within the DPR has proven that corruption has become a culture in Indonesia. The House of Representatives (DPR) is an institution that holds the people's sovereignty. The people place great hope in them. While not all DPR members engage in corruption, the presence of corrupt members can alter public perception, leading to a loss of trust in their performance. Another issue is corruption among civil servants. One of the triggers is low employee salaries. Low salaries and the influence of political parties fuel corruption within the bureaucracy and society. Furthermore, lower-middle class individuals often engage in corruption without realizing it. For example, in village head elections, candidates give money to residents with the intention of encouraging them to vote for them. This also constitutes bribery.

Corruption also applies not only to those who receive bribes, but also to those who give them (Semma, 2008:36). Therefore, both the bribe giver and the bribe recipient are committing corrupt behavior. In the educational sphere, for example, a teacher leaks the National Exam answer key to his students so that they all pass with satisfactory grades. This is certainly considered corruption at a small level. Students are already taught to cheat, such as being dishonest in answering National Exam questions. In the educational sphere, children should be taught to always behave honestly from an early age. Seeing the above is indeed very worrying. Almost everyone in this country has begun to engage in corrupt behavior, from the lowest level to the highest. Corruption has indeed become a culture in this country. Any effort to eradicate corruption from society is tantamount to destroying the community's cultural heritage. One way to do this is by changing the culture in a society that still glorifies the old traditions it adheres to.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no complete consensus on the definition of corruption, as experts have varying perceptions. The term "corruption" comes from the Latin "corruption" or "corruptus," meaning rotten, damaged, destabilizing, or distorting. In the Indonesian dictionary, corruption is the misappropriation or misuse of state funds (companies, etc.) for personal or other personal gain. According to Syed Husein Alatas (1975), in general usage of the term "corruption" for officials, we consider corruption when a civil servant accepts a gift offered by a private individual with the intention of influencing them to give special attention to the giver's interests. Sometimes the act of offering such gifts or other enticing rewards is also included in the concept. Extortion, namely the solicitation of such gifts or rewards in the performance of public duties, can also be considered "corruption." Not much different from David H. Bayley, in Miftah (2014) that: Corruption as "inducement (a government official) based on bad faith (such as bribery) so that he commits a violation of his obligations". Then bribery (bribery) is defined as "a gift, award, gift or privilege that is bestowed or promised, with the aim of corrupting the judgment or behavior, especially of someone in a position of trust (as a government official). So corruption, although specifically related to bribery or bribery, is a general term that includes the abuse of authority as a result of consideration for the pursuit of personal gain. And it does not have to be only in the form of money. This is very well expressed by an Indian government report on corruption: in the broadest sense, corruption includes the abuse of power and influence of office or special position in society for personal purposes.

Meanwhile, according to Sudomo in Miftah (2014), there are three definitions of corruption, first, controlling or obtaining money from the state in various ways illegally and using it for personal interests, second, abusing authority, abuse of power. This authority is abused to provide facilities and other benefits. Third is extortion. This extortion is an interaction between two people, usually an official and a local resident, which means that the official provides a facility and so on, and certain members of the community give a reward for what the official in question does. Black's Law Dictionary in Miftah (2014), the view of the United States legal community on the definition of corruption can be seen from the definition of corruption according to the most popular

legal dictionary in the United States: An act done with an intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duty and the rights of others. The act of an official or fiduciary person who unlawfully and wrongfully uses his station or character to procure some benefit for himself or for another person, contrary to duty and the rights of others.(an act done with the intention of providing an advantage inconsistent with official duties and the rights of others. The act of an official or trustee who unlawfully and wrongfully uses his position or character to obtain an advantage for himself or for others, contrary to his duties and the rights of others). Transparency International Corruption involves behavior on the part of officials in the public sector, whether politicians or civil servants, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves, or those close to them, by the misuse of the public power entrusted to them.(corruption involves behavior on the part of officials in the public sector, whether politicians or civil servants, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves or others close to them, by misusing the public power entrusted to them).

Corruption is a behavior that involves the abuse of power for personal or group gain. Because the impact is very detrimental to the interests of the state, nation and society, corrupt behavior is considered a serious crime and the perpetrators (corruptors) must be punished as severely as possible, because the consequences can be detrimental to the interests of the state and society. Corruption is also considered moral corruption, because it involves immoral behavior that deviates from the applicable rules. This was also put forward by Aristotle, followed by Machiavelli, who from the beginning formulated something he called moral corruption. Moral corruption refers to various forms of constitutions that have deviated, to the point that the rulers of regimes, including those in democratic systems, are no longer guided by law, but only seek to serve themselves (Mansyur Semma, 2008:32). As a bureaucratic official who should serve the interests of the people as well as possible, not be used for personal gain.

Based on Law No. 31 of 1999 concerning the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Corruption, it states that corruption is an act of self-enrichment, abuse of power, giving and promising something to officials or judges, cheating, embezzling, and receiving gifts related to the responsibilities carried out. Corruption is firmly stated as an act of abuse of office or authority carried out by a person for personal gain. Not much different from Brooks' opinion (Klitgaard 2001) the definition of corruption is: "Intentionally making mistakes or neglecting duties known as obligations or without the right to use power with the aim of obtaining more or less personal gain" (Kompas.com). Corruption is an act that makes mistakes or neglects its duties and functions that have the potential to benefit oneself personally. Errors or negligence are actions whether intentional or unintentional that result in losses for the state. Thus, the definition of corruption contains two elements, namely: first, corruption concerns the abuse of power carried out by state officials, and second, corruption is intended to benefit personal or group interests.

Corruption in various forms, including extortion, bribery, and gratuities, has essentially been occurring for a long time, with perpetrators ranging from state officials to the lowest level employees. Corruption that occurs in Indonesia today, especially that carried out by government officials, has begun to be carried out systematically, both by individuals and groups (congregations), and is increasingly widespread and increasingly sophisticated in its implementation process. This corruption is increasingly concerning when it occurs in aspects of services related to the public sector, considering that the main task and obligation of government officials is to provide services to the public or society. Corruption essentially begins with a habit (habit) that is not realized by every official, starting from the habit of accepting tributes, gifts, bribes, providing certain facilities or other things. Eventually, these habits will become habits that are actually carried out in the bureaucratic environment.

A person's nature and character will influence his or her actions, and imply various attributes including the presence or lack of virtues such as integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty, and loyalty, or good or habitual behavior. Moral character shows attitudes and behaviors that describe behavior in a consistent pattern of function across various situations. In Greek, it comes from the word character which was originally intended as an impressed mark or coin, and then developed into a point that distinguishes one individual from another. There are two approaches that can be used to understand moral character, namely: normative ethics and applied ethics. Normative ethics shows the distinction between right and wrong behavior. Meanwhile, applied ethics is an action that responds to certain issues with moral considerations. Campbell and R. Bond, in 1982, conveyed that the main factors influencing character and moral development are heredity, childhood experiences, modeling by important older adults and adolescents, peer influence, the general physical and social environment, communication media, what is taught in schools and other institutions, and specific situations and roles that give rise to appropriate behavior.

Character becomes an identity that marks one's mental and ethical nature as a form of accumulation of thoughts, values, words, and actions. Thoughts are the most important element in character formation because they are formed from various life experiences. If thoughts form beliefs that are in accordance with ethics and social values in general, it will result in actions that bring peace and happiness. However, conversely, if beliefs deviate from ethics and social values, it will result in misery and suffering. Cultural factors have a significant influence on a person's behavior and personality, especially cultural elements that directly affect the individual. Culture can be a guide for a person's life in meeting their needs. Therefore, the cultural elements that develop in society will always be studied and understood so that different personalities are formed between individuals or between cultural groups. The group experience factor for a person is quite important in developing his personality, there are two influential groups, namely the reference group (reference group). In general, a person's personality development will be influenced by the group that becomes his reference, especially the family because it will be the main reference in responding to and understanding every developing issue.

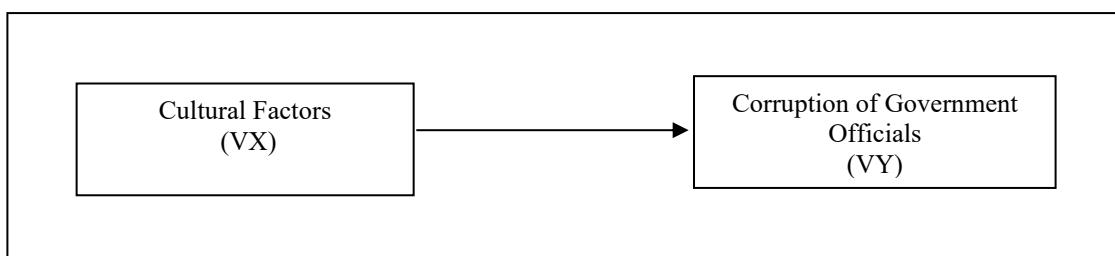
Meanwhile, other groups that influence the formation of a person's personality are plural groups, mainly showing the development of culture that exists in their social environment, so that it will become a belief and try to defend its rights in facing various problems.

Meanwhile, ethical or moral values also influence the formation of a person's character. A person receives a lot of information from outside, for example, information regarding domestic violence, information about corruption, promiscuity as a source of pride, sex that has become a habit, abortion as something normal, and so on. From various information, a person will then respond and think according to their capacity and quality. The occurrence of moral deviations today is rooted in the failure to instill religious values, which has implications for the weak personality and character of each individual and group. From this, it is actually here that religion has a very urgent role, especially in terms of personality formation. The role of religion, includes: a source of guidance for individual and group life, regulates the procedures for human relations with God and humans with humans, is a demand for the principles of right and wrong, guidelines for expressing a sense of togetherness, guidelines for feelings of faith, guidelines for civilization, guidelines for recreation and entertainment, expressions of aesthetics (beauty), and providing identity to humans as members of a religion (wordpress.com > 2014/04/13 > forming....)

In the process of forming a person's personality, it is necessary to instill religious values so that a person is able to recognize the rules of behavior in accordance with the teachings of their religion, so that a person in carrying out an action will always consider the good and bad. In addition, social values shared by members of society also contribute to the formation of a person's personality. Values are a set of habits or rules recognized as true by all members of society in order to create an orderly community life, and also bind individuals as part of a whole and complete community group. A person's character is formed from various factors that will later become the basis for considering each of their actions. Values something that is considered important in their life encourages people to take actions oriented towards achieving it, even though the methods used deviate from social values. There are several characteristics of a person's character that encourage corruption, namely: (1) Greed is a characteristic of an individual who wants something beyond his needs and always feels that it is not enough. This happens when someone has a great desire to enrich himself and is never satisfied with what he has. For example, a civil servant who expects a life that is more than decent or reasonable is very likely to commit corruption, because his income is not enough to cover his living expenses. Efforts to seek additional income can be categorized as an act of corruption, for example, a person will use his time, thoughts, and energy outside of working hours, when his time, thoughts, and energy should be devoted to official needs. Urgent needs such as family needs, the need to pay and cover debts, the need to pay for expensive house rentals, the need to finance his children's schooling, are factors that encourage someone to easily commit corruption. (2) A consumerist lifestyle is a human behavior that always wants to fulfill needs that are not too important so that it cannot balance income with expenses, a hedonistic view that is manifested in the form of a lifestyle where personal pleasure or happiness becomes the main goal in living a person's life. In particular, in big cities, life is something that often encourages a consumerist lifestyle, for example, someone wants to be able to have a luxury car, a luxury house, expensive clothes, expensive entertainment, and so on. Therefore, if consumerist behavior is not balanced with adequate income, then this will open up opportunities for someone to carry out various actions to fulfill their needs, and one of the possible actions is corruption. (3) Weak morals have a significant influence on a person's actions. Those with low morals are more easily tempted to commit corruption, while those with high morals are less likely to commit acts that deviate from ethics and morality. However, the fact remains that many religious people are involved in corruption, indicating that many religious teachings are not properly implemented by their adherents.

Based on the aforementioned thinking, cultural factors significantly influence the occurrence of criminal acts of corruption. Therefore, conceptually, a relationship between variables can be constructed as a hypothesis, namely:

1. Ho = There is an influence between cultural factors on the corrupt behavior of government officials
2. Ha = There is no influence between cultural factors on the corrupt behavior of government officials



## RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach to determine respondents' assessments of the prevailing culture in society and its influence on corrupt behavior by government officials. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 120 randomly selected respondents from six public institutions in Madiun Regency. Twenty respondents were randomly sampled from each public institution, consisting of 15 public officials and five members of the public who had previously interacted with the institution. Respondents' assessments were measured using a Likert scale ranging from very positive to very negative, with the following words:

a) Strongly agree (score 5), b) Agree (score 4), c) Undecided (score 3), d) Disagree (score 2), and e) Strongly disagree (score 1). Data analysis used a regression analysis model processed using SPSS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

### Correlation Test

To test the hypothesis, a correlation test was conducted between the cultural factor variable (VX) as the independent variable and the corrupt behavior of government officials (VY) as the dependent variable. The results of the correlation test are as follows:

**Table 1. Relationship between cultural factors and corrupt behavior of government officials**

#### Correlations

		Cultural Factors	Corruption of Government Officials
Kendall's tau_b	Cultural Factors	Coefisien Correlation	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.575**
		N	.000
Government Officials		Coefisien Correlation	120
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.575**
		N	.000

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the table above, the calculated r value for the correlation between the cultural variable and the corrupt behavior of government officials is 0.575, with a p-value of 0.000. Compared with the  $\alpha$  value of 0.05, the p-value is  $(0.000) < \alpha (0.05)$ . Thus, the Ha hypothesis is accepted, namely, there is a correlation between culture and corruption of government officials.

### Regression Test

The results of the regression calculation between cultural factors and corrupt behavior of government officials are:

**Table 2. The Influence of Cultural Factors on Corrupt Behavior of Government Officials**

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	3.803	3.311		1.133	.244
	Cultural Factors	.751	.047	.706	14.755	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Corruption of Government Officials

From the regression equation ( $Y = a + bX$ ), we can identify: (1) A constant value of 3.803 indicates that the corrupt behavior of government officials will remain constant if the cultural factor variable is equal to zero (non-existent), assuming that other factors remain constant or unchanged. (2) A positive value of 0.751 for the corrupt behavior of government officials indicates the influence of cultural factors on the corrupt behavior of government officials. If the cultural factor increases by 1 unit, the corrupt behavior of government officials also decreases by 0.751. Thus, cultural factors have a positive influence on the corrupt behavior of government officials.

### Determination Test.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is used to measure the model's ability to explain variation in the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2006). The results of the coefficient of determination test are:

**Table 3. Results of the Determination Test between Cultural Factor Variables and the Corrupt Behavior of Government Officials****Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.807 <sup>a</sup>	.663	.649	4.833

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Factors

b. Dependent Variable: Corruption of Government Officials

The magnitude of the Multiple Coefficient of Determination (R Square) is 0.663 or 67.0% which means that the corrupt behavior of government officials can be explained by cultural factor variables, while the remaining 32.0% is explained by other variables not explained in this study. The corrupt behavior of government officials is highly dependent on cultural factors as part of the values and norms that develop in society, because the corrupt behavior of government officials is an action that deviates from the prevailing social values and norms in order to achieve personal or group interests. Corruption of government officials will be resolved as long as cultural factors as part of self-control of social behavior.

## CONCLUSION

Corrupt behavior cannot be separated from cultural factors, as corruption begins with a habit that is unconsciously practiced by every official, starting from the habit of accepting tributes, gifts, bribes, certain facilities, or other forms of favors. Eventually, these habits become habitual and are practiced in a bureaucratic environment. A person's nature and character will influence their actions and imply various attributes, including the presence or absence of virtues such as integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty, and loyalty, or good or habitual behavior. Moral character reflects attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate consistent patterns of behavior across various situations. There are two approaches to understanding moral character: normative ethics and applied ethics. Normative ethics distinguishes between right and wrong behavior, while applied ethics is defined as actions that respond to specific issues based on moral considerations.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article was funded by the Research Institute for the Study of the University of Merdeka Madiun.

## REFERENCES

1. Gouzali Saydam. 2005. *Manajemen Sumber daya Manusia: Suatu pendekatan Mikro*. Penerbit: Djambaran, Jakarta.
2. Miftah Thoha, 2014, *Prilaku Organisasi: Konsep Dasar dan Aplikasinya*. Penerbit: PT Raja Grafindo, Jakarta Nyoman Serikat Putra Jaya (2005:2)
3. Syed Hussein Alatas, 1975, *Sosiologi Korupsi*, Penerbit LP3ES, Jakarta.
4. UU No. 31 tahun 1999 tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Korupsi
5. ...., PEMBENTUKAN KARAKTERISTIK INDIVIDU | My World, 2014, datakata.[wordpress.com/2014/04/13/pembentuk...](http://wordpress.com/2014/04/13/pembentuk...)
6. ...., Kompos.com, 2017,"Labirin Praktik Korupsi", <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/01/04/23230031/labirin.praktik.korupsi?page=all>.
7. ...., BAB II GAMBARAN UMUM KORUPSI A. Definisi Korupsi ..., [digilib.uinsby.ac.id/](http://digilib.uinsby.ac.id/) ...