Corruption Censure among Gen Y Public Servants:
Do Organizational Culture, Work Values and Religiosity Matter?

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Abstract: Organizational culture, work values and religion play a vital role in shaping and controlling employees' behavior and perception of corruption. This study examines the relationship between organizational culture, work values, religion and corruption censure in a public organization setting. The instruments used to evaluate the variables are taken from various sources. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to Gen Y respondents in nine public organizations. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed to Gen Y employees who are currently serving at public organizations in Kedah. A total of 117 questionnaires were returned and used for further examination. Data was analyzed using smart Pls to investigate the relationship among the variables. Organizational culture and work values indicate a positive influence on corruption censure while religiosity does not have an effect on corruption censure.

Key words: Gen Y, public employees, organizational culture, work values, religiosity, corruption

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is repositioning itself to achieve a high-income nation status and this is reflected in many of its development plans (e.g., the 11th Malaysia Plan). While much effort is being taken to accomplish the plans, corruption seems to be one of the obstacles to achieving the plans successfully. The rise of high-profile corruption cases has made the public more aware of and sensitive to corruption and its negative consequences for the nation. The public has criticized openly the role of the government, in general and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in particular, in eradicating corruption. There are calls to the government to be more transparent in undertaking programs and instituting legislation for tackling corruption.

The 13th General Elections in Malaysia has led to a significant change in behavior among the Younger Generation (Gen Y) regarding many issues, particularly corruption. Religious and cultural values are the main factors influencing the youngsters' perception of issues related to corruption and how it should be dealt with. Their perception of an ideal society has changed and it is therefore crucial for Malaysia to lay the foundation for a healthy and resilient nation as it moves forward to achieving Vision 2020, i.e., to become an industrialized and developed country. Research has shown that the increasing occurrences of corruption in the Malaysian public sector are the result of poor governance (Abdullah, 2008). Balboa and Medallam (2006) also confirm that corruption can be attributed to poor governance because it leads to the ineffectiveness of organizational and management functions.

Despite various measures, the incidence of corruption is on the rise. The prevalence of corruption, incompetence, malpractices, abuse of power, fraud and other unethical behavior have contributed to the decline integrity among individuals, organizations and society at large. Renewed effort to fight corruption in Malaysia is encouraging but more efforts need to be done if Malaysia hopes to prosper in its attempt to reduce corruption, particularly in public organizations.

In line with this, scholars such as Callanan and Greenhaus (2008), Edmunds and Turner (2005), Giancola (2006), Haynes (2011) and Smola and Sutton (2002) said that future research need to look into the values and attitudes of employees in the workplace. Furthermore, Arsenault (2004) stated that generational differences have been "plagued by inaccurate misconceptions" due to lack of empirical research. Besides, the entry of increasingly higher number of Gen Y into the workplace augments the need for additional investigation. In Malaysia, the Gen Ys comprised over 40% of the country's population and they are also known as Millennials aged between 18-34 years old in 2015. In other words, they are born between 1981 and 1997.

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Generation is a meaningful and psychological variable because it includes the culture of one's upbringing. According to Caspi *et al.* (1987) and Stewart and Healy (1989), each generation is shaped by different experiences during their developmental phase. The influence of parents, peers, the media and culture creates common value systems among people growing up at a particular time that distinguishes them from people who grow up in another time period. According to Twenge and Campbell (2008), changes in cultures occur gradually and take time to appear in individuals' personality traits and attitudes. Thus, it is vital to determine the Gen Y's opinion on corruption censure in Malaysian public organizations. The objective of the study is to examine the relationship between organizational culture, work values, religion and corruption censure among the Gen Y workers in public organizations.

Literature review
Corruption: The word 'corruption' has numerous meanings. According to Park and Blenkinsopp (2011), corruption is a form of behavior which interrupts the official ethics of the public services. Barker and Carter (1994) said that corruption contain three elements, namely violation of the law, rules, regulations or ethical standards; misuse of an officer's position and acceptance of some actual or expected material reward or gain. According to Goel and Rich (1989), corruption can lead to being inefficient in the service delivery as public officials often fail to perform their duty in anticipation of receiving bribes.

Corruption also can be defined as the misuse of public office for private gain (Svensson, 2005). Examples on corruption can range from the sale of government property by government officials, payments in public procurement, bribery to misuse of government funds. Svensson (2005) stated that corruption is a reflection of a country's legal, economic, cultural and political institution. The reaction of corruption can be either beneficial or harmful as corruption can occurs when individuals pay bribes to avoid penalties for harmful conduct or when monitoring of rules is incomplete such as in the case of theft. Corruption is often the result of the actions of individuals or groups in order to achieve special interests (Domoro and Agil, 2012).

In addition, corruption is a global phenomenon (Adzanela, 2011). It happens all over the world but does not affect societies/countries in the same way. It is the scale to which it affects the average or non-privileged citizens in their everyday life that makes the difference. It is precisely in this sense that corruption is linked to

human rights and dignity. There are two types of corruption as stated by Adzanela (2011), i.e., petty corruption and grand corruption. Petty corruption can include corruption that people experience in their encounter with public officials and when they use public services; while large scale corruption can include corruption received by heads of states, ministers and top officials where they can involves large amounts of assets.

From the above explanation, corruption can be defined in many ways. Corruption happens all over the world. Fai (2013) verifies that Malaysia ranked 53 out of 117 countries surveyed compared to 2012 score of 49 and ranked 54 out of 176 countries.

Organizational culture: Organizational culture can be explains as values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors which represent an organization's working environment, objectives and vision (Hofstede, 1984). It could affect organizational life, influence every aspect of the organization and productivity level of the organization as it influences employee's behavior which can influence the organizational productivity level (Ojo, 2012). Organizational culture can affect productivity, performance commitment, self-confidence and ethical behaviour.

According to Khanifar *et al.* (2012), organizational culture significantly affects staff behavior and actions; it plays a crucial role in internally controlling staff behavior which can prevent corrupt practices. They also found a significant relationship between Hofstede's organizational culture variables of power distance, individualism and avoiding uncertainty and organizational corruption.

In addition, Schein (2011) see organizational culture as the shared values, beliefs and norms that impact how employees think, feel and behave in the workplace. As stated by Nelson and Quick (2011), there are four roles of organizational culture, namely to give members a sense of identity; enhances their commitment; strengthens organizational values and assists as control mechanism to shape behaviour. Organizational culture can improve organizational performance, employees' job satisfaction and ability to solve problem (Kotter, 2012). Lunenberg (2011) agrees that organizational culture also affects organizational effectiveness. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and corruption censure.

Work value: Work values can be labelled as the results employees want and feel they should achieve through work (Brief, 1998; Frieze *et al.*, 2006). Work values can effect employees' preferences in the workplace, attitude

and behavior; job decisions (Judge and Bretz, 1992) and perceptions and problem-solving (Ravlin and Meglino, 1987). Thus, if a person is equipped with a higher level of work values, he or she is said to be focused on the context of work and motivated by the salary received, job security and a pleasant physical working environment (Kekesi and Agyemang, 2014).

Work values are a vital part of a complete package of a worker at the workplace. This situation is closely related to beliefs, understanding of an individual and attitude towards giving commitment to his or her job. Value is seen as presenting what is important to human beings. People bring along their values wherever they go, including to the workplace and this has an effect on both employers and colleagues. Therefore, understanding work value orientations of employees is important for management and the Human Resources (HR) department when applying work practices in the organization (Chandrakumara, 2011). Additionally, values may impact the behavior of employees and this can help to increase the understanding among human power in an organization on the employees' behavior at work (Chandrakumara, 2011).

According to Elizur (1984), work values are the important aspects which individuals assign to outcomes related to their work attributes. While some organizational behavioral scholars argue that work values are similar to employee motivation, others suggest work values are concerned with the importance assigned to work outcomes (Sagie *et al.*, 1996). Gursoy *et al.* (2013) suggest that understanding employees' values is important because it influences their attitude towards work. White (2006) implies that values have cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions that are linked to motivation and satisfaction. Studies report that values have significant effect over a range of attitudes and behaviors (Brown, 2002). Kekesi and Agyemang (2014) reveal work values as being closely related to attitude and behavior in the workplace and can be categorized as the personal value type. Work values affect behavior at work and this includes job performance among employees as indicated by Liao *et al.* (2012). Besides, work values can enhance job performance and help to generate better involvement in the tasks given which in turn help the organization to understand employees better (Liao *et al.*, 2012).

Consequently, the morale and ethics of the civil servants are also associated with work values inherent in their performance achievement. Morale can influence workers' performance (Linz *et al.*, 2006) and increase productivity (Judge and Bono, 2001). Imam *et al.* (2013), in their study on ethics and job performance, found significant results. When people have work values, they will be determined to consider what is important in their life; while morale and ethics determine what is or not appropriate in one's life (Chippendale, 2001). According to Gursoy *et al.* (2013), employees from the same generation are likely to share similar norm, therefore their work values and attitude are likely to be influenced by the generation they belong to.

Research by Sihombing (2014) indicates that corruption is a non-positive youth value; it has been a major problem faced by Indonesians for decades (Robertson-Snape, 1999). Pande and Jain (2014) reveal that there is strong evidence that values impact individual behavior. Hence, the link between morale and ethics and work values is indirectly related to corruption censure since work values do influence behavior. Therefore, the following is hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: There is significant relationship between work values and corruption censure.

Religiosity: According to Khraim (2010), religion is a component of culture that is spread to society and enters the life of individuals. Johnstone (1975) states that religion is a system of beliefs and practices that dictates an individual's responses and interpretations regarding what is supernatural and sacred. Religion can influence people's goals, decisions, motivation, purpose and satisfaction. Apart from that, it could shaping one's attitude and behavior.

Religion plays an important role in most people life. Vitell and Paolillo (2003) said that faith provides the foundation for an ethical life based on religious beliefs. Religiosity is known to have an influence on human behavior and attitudes (Weaver and Agle, 2002). According to them, an individual's ethical behavior is shaped by religious self-identity and this formed their role expectations.

According to Zuckerman *et al.* (2013), religiosity can be defined as the degree of involvement in some or all facets of religion. Allport (1950) divides religious commitment into intrinsic religiosity and extrinsic religiosity. Intrinsic religiosity is a meaning-endowing framework within which all life is understood (Donahue, 1985) while extrinsic religiosity refers to the religion of comfort and social convention, a self-serving, instrumental approach shaped to serve oneself. Thus, intrinsic religiosity is assumed to have a positive relationship to ethical beliefs.

The research of Waithima (2011) indicates that religious association affects an individual's tendency to act corruptly. He further indicates that people's religious connection matters in the fight against corruption. Flavin and Ledet (2010) discover that states in America with a higher population of Catholics have higher level of

corruption in the government. Melgar *et al.* (2010) study indicate that there are no significant differences among religious groups as the degree of religiosity does influence perception of corruption. They found that attending religious services often reduces corruption. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3: There is significant relationship between religiosity and corruption censure.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Procedures: Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to Gen Y respondents in nine public organizations in Alor Setar, Kedah. The researchers went to the organizations and personally gave the questionnaires to the contact persons, who had been contacted prior to the researchers' visit. They were informed of the research objective and guidelines to answer all items in the questionnaire.

The questionnaires comprised items to measure corruption, organizational culture, work values and religiosity. The instrument developed by Jiang *et al.* (2012) consisting of 13 questions was employed to measure corruption censure. A total of eight items were used to evaluate the organizational culture construct which was developed by Denison and Mishra (1995). Work values construct was measured by eight items, adopted from Blood (1969). This study used the 10 items from the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire developed by Plante and Boccaccini (1997) to measure religiosity. Respondents were asked to respond to the items by indicating their level of agreement using a 7-point Likert scale, (i.e., 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree).

Sample: Purposive sampling method was utilized for the data collection among employees of public organizations located in Alor Setar, Kedah. Since the researchers were not able to obtain the number of Gen Y workers in each organization, 15-20 questionnaires were given to the contact person to be distributed to the intended group of respondents. The unit of analysis is Gen Y employees (below 34 years old at the time of questionnaire distribution), irrespective of their positions in the organizations. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed but only 150 questionnaires were returned. In total, only 117 were found to be usable, representing a usable rate of 73.13%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of the respondents: The 117 respondents comprised 49 (41.9%) male and 68 (58.1%)

Table 1: Results of confirmatory factor analysis

variables/ measurement item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Organizational culture				
OC1	0.581	0.431	0.242	0.520
OC2	0.748	0.541	0.389	0.664
OC3	0.799	0.517	0.336	0.556
OC4	0.822	0.529	0.322	0.532
OC5	0.777	0.476	0.260	0.361
OC6	0.699	0.532	0.344	0.282
OC7	0.752	0.495	0.336	0.273
OC8	0.753	0.477	0.305	0.252
Work value				
WV2	0.560	0.769	0.399	0.461
WV4	0.530	0.814	0.356	0.590
WV6	0.447	0.725	0.385	0.507
WV7	0.410	0.552	0.269	0.264
Religiosity				
R1	0.363	0.352	0.693	0.315
R2	0.354	0.204	0.574	0.296
R3	0.323	0.329	0.772	0.298
R4	0.283	0.375	0.773	0.377
R6	0.259	0.312	0.707	0.241
R7	0.286	0.425	0.737	0.360
R8	0.301	0.412	0.648	0.287
R9	0.264	0.347	0.780	0.366
R10	0.286	0.329	0.585	0.118
Corruption				
C1	0.394	0.434	0.298	0.764
C2	0.472	0.440	0.286	0.652
C3	0.446	0.504	0.215	0.637
C4	0.385	0.523	0.422	0.854
C5	0.397	0.549	0.427	0.869
C6	0.399	0.606	0.420	0.812
C8	0.478	0.503	0.435	0.884
C9	0.544	0.526	0.330	0.758
C10	0.561	0.514	0.379	0.824
C11	0.518	0.572	0.373	0.903
C12	0.556	0.578	0.385	0.910
C13	0.575	0.678	0.338	0.878

female employees. In terms of marital status, 61 (52.1%) are married while the rest are single. A total of 20 (17.1%) respondents are <24 years old; 52 (44.4%) are 25-29 year old and 40 (34.2%) are between 30-34 years old. In terms of religion, 116 respondents (99.1%) are Muslims while only one is a Buddhist. A total of 61 (52.1%) respondents had work tenure of <3 year. Majority of the respondents totaling 88 (75.2%) are from the support staff category although 39 (33.3%) have degrees as their highest academic achievement. With regards to respondents' income level, 51 (43.6%) receive a salary of <RM 1, 500 and another 50 (42.7%) receive a salary of between RM 1, 501-RM3, 000.

Validity and reliability: Data was analysed using Smart PLS 2.0. To ensure the measurement items are valid and reliable, the data was analyzed using a few tests: internal consistency (i.e., loading of each item); convergent validity and discriminant validity. The results of the measurement model and the details of the results of validity and reliability are indicated in Table 1-3.

Table 1 shows the factor loadings of all measurement items. Four items of work values (i.e., WV1,

Table 2: Results of convergent validity

Model construct	AVE	CR	α
Organizational culture	0.674	0.892	0.883
Work value	0.521	0.810	0.697
Religiosity	0.491	0.895	0.870
Corruption	0.912	0.954	0.953

AVE = Average Variance Extracted (AVE); CR = Composite reliability; α = Cronbach's alpha

Table 3: Results of discriminant validity

Model construct	R²	1	2	3	4
Organizational culture	-	0.821			
Work values	-	0.672	0.722		
Religiosity	-	0.427	0.490	0.701	
Corruption	0.482	0.584	0.658	0.443	0.955

Diagonals number (in bold) represent the square root of AVE while the other entries represent the correlation coefficients; R² = R square

Table 4: Path coefficients and hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	Coefficient	t-value	Supported
H₁	Organizational culture ¬corruption	0.237	3.157**	Yes
H₂	Work value ¬corruption	0.436	4.608**	Yes
H₃	Religiosity ¬corruption	0.129	1.375	No

t-value >2.58 = Significant at **$p < 0.01$

WV3, WV5 and WV8) and one item of religiosity (i.e., R5) were deleted. In addition, three items of corruption (i.e., C7, C14 and C15) were also deleted from further analysis due to their low loading value which was <0.50. To measure convergent validity of each construct's factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used. According to Barclay and coauthors, the values of AVE for each construct should be greater than 0.50. The results showed that the value of AVE of all constructs except religiosity was greater than 0.50. Although the value of AVE of religiosity was lower than 0.50, this construct was retained since it still satisfied the criteria of content validity and discriminant validity. In addition, to satisfy convergent validity, CR for all constructs should be >0.70 as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010). As indicated in Table 2, the values of CR for organizational culture, work values, religiosity and corruption are 0.892, 0.810, 0.895 and 0.954 respectively, all of which are above the acceptable value of 0.70.

Table 3 displays the result of discriminant validity of all constructs in this study. According to Cornel and Larcker, the square root of the value of AVE should be more than the correlation coefficient of the two constructs to support discriminant validity. As depicted in Table 3, discriminant validity is supported since the square root of AVE value is greater than the correlation coefficient. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the inter-item consistency of measurement items. As shown in Table 2, alpha values >0.60 as indicated by Nunnally and Berstein disclose that the measurements are valid and reliable.

Test of hypotheses: Table 4 presents the results of the PLS analysis. The results show that 48.2% of the variance in corruption is explained by organizational culture, work values and religiosity. The results of the study show that only religiosity has a non-significant influence on corruption (β = 0.129, t = 1.375, p>0.01). Meanwhile, organizational culture (β = 0.237, t = 3.157, p<0.01) and work values (β = 0.436, t = 4.608, p<0.01) are found to have a substantial impact on corruption (β = 0.556, p<0.01). Hence, H₁ and H₂ are supported but H₃ is rejected.

The results reveal that employees' organizational culture and work values do play a significant role in determining corruption censure among Gen Y employees. The results show that organizational culture and work values play a significant role in determining employees' perception of corruption censure. This means that organizational culture which comprises values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour that represent an organization's working environment does influence corruption censure among the younger generation. In addition, work values which reflect the employees' attitude regarding what is "right", as well as their attitude about what an individual should expect in the workplace does impact corruption censure among the Generation Y employees.

However, the results reveal that religion does not influence corruption censure among Gen Y employees. This indicates there is no relationship between religiosity and corruption censure. Although, religiosity is known to influence human behaviour and attitude, the non-influence of religion on corruption censure may indicate that an individual's ethical behaviour is not influenced by religious self-identity. This contradicts Weaver and Angle (2002)'s view that self-identity is formed by the internalization of role expectation offered by religion. This could be because a strong religious belief which is universally based on fairness and honesty, gives direction to behaviour, discourages evil acts and encourages ethical values. Thus, faith in one's religion can create awareness to avoid corrupt practices. This can be seen in all religions, including Islam. Most religions teach fairness and discourage immoral acts. Hence, knowledge of one's religion and strong faith can increase honesty.

As a result, there is a need to continuously improve the existing HR practices in organizations, particularly with regards to enhancing work values and organizational culture because the results have evidenced the relationship of these variables in enhancing and improving managerial effectiveness of the public sector employees, particularly the Gen Y workers.

The findings indicate that a better understanding is needed by policy makers to identify factors that influence

Gen Y perception on corruption. The results reveal that organizational culture plays a significant role in determining employees' perception of corruption. This means that organizational culture which comprises values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour that represent an organization's working environment does influence corruption censure among the younger generation. Thus, when this occurs, it will erode public respect for the government as a service provider and disappoint citizens, thus developing cynicism of the government (Park and Blenkinsopp, 2011). Besides, results also show that work values do influence employees to be involved in corruption. This is supported by Chandrakumara (2011) who indicates values may impact the behavior of employees. In addition, factors regarding religion, work values and culture have been the dominating factors influencing youngsters' perception of corruption and dealing with corruption censure. Their perception of an ideal society has changed. It is therefore important for Malaysia to nurture a healthy and resilient society as the country moves forward to achieve Vision 2020, i.e., to become an industrialized and developed country.

This study has successfully answered the objective, which is to examine the relationship between organizational culture, work values and religiosity and perception on corruption. The findings provide a better understanding of the relationship of these variables in order to enhance and improve managerial effectiveness of the public sector employees, particularly Gen Y workers. There is a need to constantly improve the existing HR practices at the organizational level, particularly to enhance work values and organizational culture in terms of values, attitude, beliefs and behaviour. Taken together, the results of this study lend support to the notion that work values and organizational culture have an impact on corruption censure among Gen Y public servants.

CONCLUSION

The results support that both work values and organizational culture have an effect on corruption but religion does not influence their perception on corruption. Attempts to reform both the governance system and control corruption must take into account the cultural and work value factors if such attempts are to succeed, especially among the Gen Y workers. Corruption is a phenomenon that is prevalent in developing countries and is a major hindrance to progress. It could damage the development of the organization and society. Corruption is like a virus which could lead to organizational distrust, thus weakening societal values. It is crucial to both prevent and combat corruption. Corruption must be taken seriously by the management of public organizations and the public at large.

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