

The Impact of Cultural and Social Factors on the Tendency toward Administrative Corruption in Afghanistan (Case Study: Government Offices in Faryab Province)

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Administrative corruption is one of the most significant factors contributing to the backwardness of societies, which can be observed, to some extent, even in advanced societies, causing irreparable damages. The current study, which analyzes and examines the relationship between the cultural contexts and values of Faryab Province and administrative corruption, evaluates the role and degree of influence of three theoretical variables as independent variables on the dependent variable, namely the tendency to engage in administrative corruption. According to the results obtained from the statistical data of the study, a significant correlation exists between the dependent variable and all three variables: the nature of societal values (traditional culture), the dominance of economic values over social values, and the reduction of opportunities to achieve goals.

Keywords: Administrative corruption, cultural, social, tendency, government offices.

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1. Introduction

Administrative corruption is a phenomenon that exists, to some extent, in all countries worldwide. However, the type, form, extent, and scope of corruption vary in each country. Today, administrative corruption has become a global issue, and governments are aware that corruption causes significant damage and knows no boundaries. This problem paralyzes the domestic economy, disrupts the flow of development, threatens bureaucratic organizations, undermines the rule of law, increases the cost of doing business, weakens the morale of honest individuals, and facilitates the emergence of other threats to national security, including crimes in various forms.

Corruption, as a phenomenon, emerged simultaneously with the establishment of governments, and with the growth and specialization of organizations, its dimensions and types have also changed. This phenomenon is directly related to the principles of political-administrative behavior, culture, ethics, and so on (Sarwari, 2008). In developing countries, such as Afghanistan, the scope and variety of corruption, driven by numerous motives and causes, are more widespread. This is because perpetrators, in securing their future, exploit the non-implementation of laws, management gaps, lack of punishment and reward systems, inefficiency of judicial and legal institutions, low public participation, minimal media influence, lack of accountability and transparency, and self-regulation



mechanisms. These factors, which serve as deterrents, enable individuals to engage in corruption with relative impunity.

Historically, Afghanistan has experienced corruption, and its intensity, like in any other country, depends on the aforementioned factors. This issue has persisted throughout various periods in different forms, with both temporary and generally evolutionary downward trends. However, the will of politicians and government leaders has played a critical role in determining the speed and severity of this phenomenon (Khawati, 2011; Mahmood, 2008).

Corruption became evident during periods of political instability. Whenever a change in the ruling regime occurred through war, corruption also followed a rapid trajectory. As officials became preoccupied with priority issues, the market for opportunists and embezzlers flourished (Khawati, 2011).

After the events of May 1978, administrative corruption shifted from central offices and provincial institutions to personal circles, invitations, nepotism, and relationships based on ethnicity, family, political loyalty, and personal connections to those in power. However, bribery and embezzlement, while growing, were also publicly criticized. Following the fall of Dr. Najibullah's regime, there was a significant shock to administrative corruption. Various forms of administrative corruption became widespread, with bribery, embezzlement, and abuse of position at the forefront of the interlinked chain of corruption (Ghobar, 1964).

Today, administrative corruption in Afghanistan has reached its peak. There is a lack of sufficient political will to curb this phenomenon in all directions. A recent report from Transparency Watch Afghanistan reveals that administrative corruption in Afghanistan is on the rise, and efforts to control this phenomenon have not yielded desired results. According to this survey, the judicial and police institutions are recognized as the most corrupt, with the Ministry of Education ranking third.

Findings from this survey, published under the title "National Corruption Survey," indicate that administrative corruption in Afghanistan is increasing every day. In this survey, bribery was identified as the most common form of corruption, and it was noted that bribery has doubled over the past four years, reaching a total of two billion dollars. "Previously, people said that

security and then unemployment were their major challenges, followed by administrative corruption. However, now the issue of administrative corruption ranks just after security." The report indicates that corruption has become ingrained in Afghanistan, and many people believe that by paying bribes, their affairs in government institutions are expedited.

The findings of this survey in 2018 show that 51% of respondents consider insecurity to be their biggest challenge, 16% refer to unemployment as a challenge, and 13% mention corruption as one of their challenges. The statistics for 2024 are as follows: 45% still regard insecurity as the biggest challenge facing Afghan citizens, 18% rank administrative corruption second, and 18% view unemployment as the third major issue.

This report suggests that while access to services has generally improved, personal, ethnic relationships, and the use of bribery for quicker access to essential services are still considered important.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this article is based on a synthetic approach, examining the logical connection of the topic with four theoretical approaches and theories: "Parsons' Value-System Approach," "Merton's Theory of Dysfunction," "Steven Messner and Richard Rosenfeld's Institutional Anomie Theory," and "Hofstede's Theory on the Influence of National Culture on Corruption." These will be elaborated upon in the following discussion.

One of the primary concerns of functionalists is the order and stability of society. They view society as a system composed of multiple, distinct parts that are interconnected and interdependent. According to them, these various parts are so closely connected that not only do they influence each other, but their impact on the movement of the entire system is also noticeable.

From this perspective, Parsons' first discussion begins with his theory of action. Parsons argues that interaction and response are always present among individuals, but a critical question arises: how do these actions come into existence? And, moreover, what is their nature?

Parsons believes that all social phenomena, as Emile Durkheim argues, exist outside of the individual mind and precede human beings. This means that social phenomena came into existence first, and only later did human beings emerge within them, being influenced by them. In other words, humans were not inherently

aware, but it is through their interaction with these social phenomena that they acquire knowledge and awareness. Therefore, humans are surrounded by social phenomena and must engage with them, make choices, and adapt to them. When humans make such selections, they do so in two ways:

1. Rational and conscious method
2. Irrational and instinctual method

The reasons for using and acting on these two methods are twofold: First, humans inherently have two dimensions—one rational and the other instinctual. Second, the realities and social phenomena humans create are the very culture of the society, and this culture is not entirely rational, as humans act in both ways.

Thus, due to these reasons, humans are constrained by social phenomena and inevitably make their choices in these two ways. As a result of these choices, motivations arise, leading individuals toward the creation of behavior and actions. Once behavior is created, interactions emerge, and all actions have a social nature, because it is these realities, phenomena, and social norms that shape how actions are performed. Every action consists of three components:

1. Actor
2. Action situation
3. Action orientation

From this point, Parsons identifies behavioral patterns and believes that every actor, in any of their actions, faces five patterned variables:

- Choosing between emotional and formal behavior
- Choosing between diffuse and specific behavior
- Choosing between collective orientation and self-orientation
- Choosing between ascribed and achieved status

According to Parsons, these patterned variables can describe any role relationship.

Parsons thus believes that patterns of the first type of patterned variables reflect the irrational dimension, while patterns of the second type reflect the rational dimension. Based on this, two types of societies emerge: traditional societies, in which the first type of patterns prevail, and modern societies, where the second type dominates (Azad, 2014, p. 78).

Parsons' second major concept is the social system, in which human society is viewed as a system. He argues that relationships within this system are functional,

meaning that each part of the system has a specific function, and all parts work towards the system's overall goal. Parsons asserts that three conditions are necessary for the existence of a system:

1. Structure: Each system must have an organizational arrangement and consist of relatively stable elements with reciprocal relations.
2. Function: A system must meet certain needs to sustain itself.
3. Institutionalized norms: A system must have a set of rules and norms that organize and govern its members (Sarweri, 2008).

Parsons presents an ideal model of a social system, arguing that his ideal society is based on four fundamental and central values. These values, as general social values, form the framework of the social system, with the most crucial values being located within the cultural system of society. In this view, the cultural system is considered the dominant system over others, serving as the source of social phenomena. The value patterns that Parsons proposes for his ideal society include:

- Universalism
- Goal achievement
- Integration
- Pattern maintenance and tension management

Universalism refers to values that are relatively free from emotional constraints, emphasizing the effective use of resources and merit-based organization. Goal achievement reflects the overarching social values, asserting that the institutions of power and politics should set goals that align with the society's real needs, using rational means to achieve them. The value of integration focuses on social cohesion and emphasizes that social institutions should form in harmony with one another, with the actions of individuals aiming toward national unity. Finally, pattern maintenance and tension management relate to the cultural system, emphasizing values and norms that preserve the existing order within society. The cultural system shapes social interactions, norms, and relationships, determining what is socially acceptable and providing standards for distinguishing desirable from undesirable behavior (Sarweri, 2008).

Key points in Parsons' model of value patterns require further reflection, especially regarding the interrelationship of the four values and the determining

role of cultural values and the political system in the functioning of the entire system and its sub-systems.

The interrelations of the four values in Parsons' common value model (total system) are viewed as reciprocal and hierarchical, meaning the structure of these values is hierarchical, with each supported by a subsystem and corresponding to a specific level of the societal structure. Based on their logical connections, each value forms the next, with each level providing energy to the higher levels and controlling the lower ones (Sarweri, 2008).

The cultural system is responsible for maintaining the pattern, serving as the center for ideas, beliefs, and ideal values, as well as a repository of information. It serves as the basis for social transformations and the formation of social realities, as the cultural system informs the social system and, through its rules, regulations, and norms, appears at the level of social reality, ultimately creating the social system and exercising control over it. The social system's role is to maintain cohesion, creating social unity and preparing the ground for the formation of the political system.

The political system is, in fact, a product of the social system, as it is shaped by social rules, customs, and regulations. Based on the real needs of society, the political system determines social goals and, with the information received from the social system, formulates laws and regulations to achieve these goals, establishing a specific type of economic system (Taheri, 2002, p. 43). The economic system is shaped to fulfill the value of universalism. Organizations are structured based on their efficiency in improving the social system at the macro level, with individuals placed in positions according to their expertise, enabling the society to adapt to its environment (Khawati, 2011).

The strengthening of one subsystem by another means that the positive function of one subsystem further stabilizes the higher-level system. For example, the positive functioning of the economic system reinforces the political system. Political stability leads to the achievement of social goals, and this, in turn, fosters social unity. The observance of social regulations, which stems from social cohesion, further strengthens cultural values (Mahmood, 2008).

According to Parsons' perspective, the cultural system serves as the logic of collective life and the dominant subsystem within the social structure. It not only gives meaning to social phenomena but even creates social

realities, such as organizations, institutions, and social interactions, since objective reality is a reflection of mental beliefs. The real world is constructed based on the behavior of actors, and their actions are rooted in their internal values. How social subsystems operate as objective realities depends on the type of value system and the behavior derived from it.

The importance of the political system in social functionality lies in the government's essential role in the social structure. The state and political system not only determine and prioritize social goals but are also responsible for enacting and enforcing laws to achieve these objectives. With control over all levers of power, the political system has the capacity to act according to the collective interests, or, alternatively, it may prioritize individual or group interests and shape the administrative system accordingly (Khalaf Khani, 2009).

3. Methodology

The present research is categorized as field research, conducted using a survey method or cross-sectional study. Since various research methods closely relate to different approaches in the field of social research, the logic of social research dictates that their application (methods and approaches) must be coordinated for each specific social research context. In this article, considering the prevailing quantitative approach, the survey method has been deemed the most appropriate for studying the topic.

Survey research is a process employed to collect information on topics such as what people know, what they think, or what behaviors they engage in. It is important to note that in this type of research, what is measured are the statements of individuals and public sector employees regarding a specific subject, not the actual presence of the phenomena. The primary aim of this type of research is both description and explanation. The statistical population for this research consisted of government employees in the Faryab province. From the total population of approximately 5,000 individuals, a sample of 403 employees was selected using Cochran's sampling formula. The necessary data were gathered from them regarding the research topic. The sampling method employed was primarily probabilistic, and secondarily, it was stratified-random-proportional. The logic behind selecting this method is twofold: firstly, the population statistics were well-defined, and secondly,

due to the categorization of government departments based on their nature and areas of activity, various types of departments were involved, ensuring that all categories were represented in the study.

For data collection, a questionnaire was used as the conventional tool that aligns with the approach and method governing this research. The questions, after reviewing previous studies conducted in various regions and utilizing their insights, were initially drafted and adapted to the conditions of the statistical population. Subsequently, to ensure the measurement tool's validity—i.e., to assess what it measures and how successfully it measures the research topic and variables—it underwent several operations, including face and content validity checks, pilot testing, and reliability assessment. To ensure the tool's validity, the preliminary version was reviewed by researchers, university professors, experts, and members of the statistical population. Additionally, to ensure the reliability of the measuring instrument, the Cronbach's alpha method was employed. Likert scale was used to measure the variables of the research. The opinions and results obtained from the pilot testing within the statistical population led to the final version of the measuring instrument. The reliability of the variables was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency. The variable Cultural Values Dominant in Society showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.72, indicating acceptable reliability for the five questions in this scale. The variable Increasing Dominance of Economic Values Over Social Values had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.74, suggesting a good level of internal consistency for the seven questions measuring this variable. The variable Decreasing Opportunities to Achieve Goals in Society demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.77, reflecting strong internal consistency for the five questions included. Lastly, the dependent variable, Tendency to Engage in Corruption, exhibited a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75, also indicating good reliability for the five items used to measure this construct. Overall, all variables showed satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, suggesting that the scales used in the study are reliable measures of their respective constructs.

The analysis of the present research was carried out using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the

help of SPSS software. In the descriptive section, the characteristics of the statistical population were described using frequency calculations, percentage frequencies, and percentile rankings. In the analysis of variables, inferential statistical methods were used, such as central tendency indicators, dispersion indicators, and correlation tests.

4. Findings

Regarding gender, among the total responses, 14.9% were from women, 81.1% were from men, and 4.0% of the data were invalid. The conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of gender, were men, which is a natural phenomenon given the administrative structure of Afghanistan.

Regarding age, 33.7% of the respondents were between 15 and 30 years old, 35.5% were between 30 and 45 years old, 23.1% were between 45 and 60 years old, and 3.5% of the data were invalid. The conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of age, were between 15 and 45 years old.

Regarding education, 3.2% of the respondents had less than 12 years of education, 22.8% had a high school diploma, 17.6% had a college degree, 45.4% had a bachelor's degree, 6.5% had a master's degree, 0.2% had a doctoral degree, and 4.2% of the data were invalid. The conclusion from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of education, had a bachelor's degree, followed by those with a high school diploma and an associate's degree.

Regarding monthly income, 81.4% of the respondents earned between 5,000 and 15,000 Afghanis, 6.7% earned between 15,000 and 25,000 Afghanis, 2.2% earned between 25,000 and 35,000 Afghanis, 1.0% earned between 35,000 and 45,000 Afghanis, 0.5% earned between 45,000 and 55,000 Afghanis, 4.5% earned more than 55,000 Afghanis, and 3.7% of the data were invalid. The conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of monthly income, earned between 5,000 and 15,000 Afghanis.

Regarding work experience, 4.7% of respondents had less than one year of experience, 31.3% had between 1 and 6 years of experience, 23.3% had between 6 and 11 years, 10.2% had between 11 and 16 years, 25.3% had more than 16 years of experience, and 5.2% of the data

were invalid. The conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of work experience, had between 1 and 6 years, more than 16 years, between 6 and 11 years, and between 11 and 16 years of experience, respectively.

Regarding marital status, 18.4% of the respondents were single, 78.7% were married, and 3.0% of the data were invalid. The conclusion from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of marital status, were married.

Regarding family size, 5.0% of respondents had 2 family members, 20.8% had between 2 and 4 family members, 31.0% had between 4 and 6 family members, 37.7% had more than 6 family members, and 5.5% of the data were invalid. The conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of family size, had between 2 and 6 family members.

Regarding ethnicity, 43.9% of the respondents were Uzbek, 0.5% were Pashtun, 26.3% were Tajik, 15.4% were Turkmen, 2.0% were Hazara, 1.0% were from smaller ethnic groups in terms of population size, and 10.9% of the data were invalid. The conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of ethnicity, were Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen, which is a natural phenomenon given the ethnic structure of Faryab province.

Regarding job position, 6.7% of respondents were department heads, 9.4% were section heads, 42.7% were department managers, 35.2% were department officers, and 6.0% of the data were invalid. The conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of job position, were managers and officers.

Regarding the monthly income in Afghanis, 64.0% of the respondents earned between 5,000 and 15,000 Afghanis, 7.7% earned between 15,000 and 25,000 Afghanis, 4.0% earned between 25,000 and 35,000 Afghanis, 1.0% earned between 35,000 and 45,000 Afghanis, 0.5% earned between 45,000 and 55,000 Afghanis, 5.7% earned more than 55,000 Afghanis, and 17.1% of the data were invalid as respondents chose not to provide an answer. The conclusion that can be drawn from these statistics is that the majority of respondents, in terms of monthly income, earned between 5,000 and 15,000 Afghanis.

Furthermore, the data were gathered from a total of 41 government offices, and the allocation of quotas for each

was based on the number of employees in these offices. After determining the number of employees, the proportion of each office within the total 100% was calculated. Among the data, only 1.7% were invalid, while the rest clearly identified the office the respondents worked in.

As mentioned in the research methodology section, a questionnaire was used to collect information, based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "No Opinion," "Disagree," to "Strongly Disagree." Given the natural distribution of responses across the different options, it was deemed practical to focus only on the responses from "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" for analysis. This choice was made because more than 50% of the sample data from the 403 respondents focused on these two options. Additionally, presenting large, lengthy statistical tables was considered cumbersome and impractical.

Regarding the question, "I would like to become wealthy and achieve great fame," 48.1% of the responses were provided by individuals who had "between 1 to 6 years" of work experience, 22.2% by individuals with "between 6 to 11 years" of experience, 14.8% by individuals with "between 11 to 16 years" of experience, and 14.8% by individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

Additionally, the data for the "Strongly Agree" option indicates that, of the total data, 4.9% of responses came from individuals with "less than 1 year" of work experience, 33.3% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 24.3% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 10.9% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 26.5% from those with "more than 16 years" of experience.

The inference that can be drawn from this data regarding the sample population is that a significant proportion of respondents who agreed with the question had work experience between 1 to 6 years, indicating a strong desire to become wealthy and achieve great fame.

Regarding the question, "If a member of our family can achieve great wealth and power, they are praised by the majority of family members," 6.3% of responses were from individuals with "less than 1 year" of experience, 50% from individuals with "between 1 to 6 years," 15.6% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 15.6% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 12.5% from individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

For the "Strongly Agree" option, the data shows that, out of the total data, 4.8% came from individuals with "less than 1 year" of work experience, 33.3% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 24.5% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 10.9% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 26.7% from those with "more than 16 years" of experience.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that a significant portion of the sample population agreed with the question, particularly those with work experience between 1 to 6 years and between 11 to 16 years, emphasizing that if a family member gains wealth and power, they are praised by the majority of family members.

Regarding the question, "In our family, everyone is encouraged to be self-reliant," 5.4% of responses came from individuals with "less than 1 year" of experience, 32.4% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 23.0% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 13.5% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 25.7% from individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

For the "Strongly Agree" option, the data indicates that, of the total data, 4.8% came from individuals with "less than 1 year" of work experience, 33.4% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 24.3% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 11.0% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 26.5% from individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

The inference that can be drawn from this data is that a significant portion of the sample population agreed with the question, particularly those with work experience between 1 to 6 years, between 11 to 16 years, and more than 16 years, recognizing self-reliance as a result of family encouragement.

Regarding the question, "I don't think it's necessary to be exactly on time every day for work at the office," 14.3% of responses were from individuals with "less than 1 year" of experience, 38.1% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 19.0% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 9.5% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 19.0% from those with "more than 16 years" of experience.

For the "Strongly Agree" option, the data reveals that, out of the total data, 4.8% came from individuals with "less than 1 year" of work experience, 33.4% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 24.6% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 11.0% from those with "between 11 to 16

years," and 26.2% from individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that a significant portion of the sample population agreed with the statement, particularly those with work experience between 1 to 6 years, between 11 to 16 years, and more than 16 years, indicating that they do not find it necessary to be punctual every day at work, which can be interpreted as a potential indicator of administrative corruption in Faryab Province.

Regarding the question, "I don't think it's necessary to apply pressure in the office for people's work," 16.7% of responses were from individuals with "less than 1 year" of experience, 50% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 16.7% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 16.7% from individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

For the "Strongly Agree" option, the data shows that, out of the total data, 4.6% came from individuals with "less than 1 year" of work experience, 33.1% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 24.7% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 10.8% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 26.9% from individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that a significant portion of the sample population agreed with the question, particularly those with work experience between 1 to 6 years, between 11 to 16 years, and more than 16 years, asserting that they do not think it's necessary to apply pressure for others' work in the office, which can be interpreted as a form of administrative corruption in Faryab Province.

Regarding the question, "In any case, I try to use any possible method to succeed in my career advancement despite obstacles and limitations," 8.7% of responses came from individuals with "less than 1 year" of experience, 36.2% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 27.5% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 8.7% from those with "between 11 to 16 years," and 18.8% from individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

For the "Strongly Agree" option, the data reveals that, out of the total data, 5.0% came from individuals with "less than 1 year" of work experience, 33.3% from those with "between 1 to 6 years," 24.6% from those with "between 6 to 11 years," 10.8% from those with "between 11 to 16

years," and 26.2% from individuals with "more than 16 years" of experience.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that a significant portion of the sample population agreed with the question, particularly those with work experience between 1 to 6 years, between 11 to 16 years, and more than 16 years, indicating that they are willing to do whatever it takes, including possibly engaging in administrative corruption, to succeed and advance in their careers.

The correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, "tendency to engage in administrative corruption." The three independent variables considered in the study were: Cultural Values Dominant in Society, Increasing Dominance of Economic Values Over Social Values, and Decreasing Opportunities to Achieve Goals. A moderate positive correlation was found between Cultural Values Dominant in Society and the dependent variable ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that societies with stronger traditional cultural values tend to exhibit a higher propensity for corruption. Similarly, Increasing Dominance of Economic Values Over Social Values was also positively correlated with the tendency to engage in corruption ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that societies where economic values take precedence over social ones are more likely to experience corrupt behavior. Additionally, Decreasing Opportunities to Achieve Goals showed a significant positive correlation with the dependent variable ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$), implying that when individuals perceive fewer legitimate opportunities to reach their goals, they are more inclined to engage in corrupt practices. These findings suggest that cultural, economic, and structural factors all play significant roles in fostering administrative corruption, with each contributing to individuals' inclination to resort to corrupt behavior in different ways.

5. Conclusion

The present research, which analyzes and examines the relationship between the cultural contexts and values of Faryab Province and administrative corruption, assesses the role and extent of influence of three theoretical variables as independent variables on the dependent variable, i.e., the tendency to engage in administrative

corruption. According to the results derived from the statistical data of the study, there is a significant correlation between the dependent variable and each of the three variables: the nature of the values prevailing in society (traditional culture), the increasing dominance of economic values over social values, and the reduction of opportunities to achieve goals. Specifically, "the tendency to engage in administrative corruption" refers to a situation where individuals in a society, within a specific time frame and under particular conditions, develop a behavioral inclination toward engaging in administrative corruption. This is influenced by a specific attitude or mindset that aligns with such a tendency and ultimately leads to actions such as bribery, discrimination, nepotism, abuse of authority, time-wasting, embezzlement, and others.

The nature of the values prevailing in society also refers to a set of societal norms that define the behavioral standards of its members and determine the dos and don'ts of behavior within the community. The status of society in terms of whether it is healthy or corrupt reflects the nature and dominance of the values commonly found within it. According to Parsons, the most significant component of a value system is the phenomenon of "universalism," which refers to values that are relatively independent of emotional limitations and emphasize the effective use of resources, focusing on meritocracy within society. In this context, the criterion for selecting individuals for social positions and organizing specialized systems is their potential to improve the social system, not irrational emotional attachments. This includes emphasizing individuals' personal qualities over group affiliations, ethnicity, race, or gender. The absence of the dominance of these universalist values refers to the opposite, i.e., prioritizing group affiliations, ethnicity, race, or gender over individual characteristics and abilities when acquiring social positions. The present research indicates that in the cultural system of the surveyed society, most values reflect the opposite of universalism, leading to the formation of non-standard social and administrative structures, which ultimately culminates in the phenomenon of administrative corruption. In this process, individuals develop a tendency to engage in administrative corruption in its various forms, influenced by these underlying beliefs.

The increasing dominance of economic values over social values points to a situation where the balance of societal institutions is disrupted, with economic values infiltrating other economic institutions, creating a state of disintegration. Institutions that should control excessive emphasis on financial success (such as the family and education) are weakened and themselves become bearers of economic values. In such societies, where the economic institution is dominant, cultural values encourage success by any means necessary. The four major cultural values emphasized in these societies are: "progressivism," "individualism," "globalization," and "money-worship." In such conditions, work and financial demands take precedence over family, educational, and other aspects of social life. The results of the present study reflect this very dominance of economic values over social values in the surveyed community, where the primary outcome in social and administrative structures is the inclination to engage in administrative corruption, particularly bribery and embezzlement.

The reduction of opportunities to achieve goals refers to a situation where the cultural structure of society places individuals in front of unified goals, while also establishing legitimate rules for achieving these goals. However, the legitimate means to attain these goals are not equally accessible to all. This results in failure and frustration among individuals, leading to deviant behaviors. According to Merton, failure arises from the gap between goals, norms, resources, and opportunities, leading to a weakening of individuals' commitment to institutionalized goals and means, which subsequently fosters undesirable behaviors in society. For instance, while cultural values in society encourage individuals to pursue progress through means such as education, specialization, and employment, these legitimate pathways are not equally accessible to everyone. Consequently, individuals in such circumstances resort to illegitimate methods like bribery, abuse of authority, embezzlement, and others. The results of the present study precisely confirm this in the surveyed society, where individuals, when unable to access legitimate means to achieve their legitimate goals, develop a tendency toward illegitimate paths. In cases where individuals hold public positions or have access to public administrative offices, they exploit these positions for

personal gain, leading to various forms of administrative corruption.

In addition to the primary variables mentioned above, the relationship between the tendency to engage in administrative corruption and several other variables was also examined, including variables such as "gender," "nationality," "job position," "work experience," and "monthly salary."

As indicated by the relevant statistics in the analysis section, there is a significant relationship between all these variables and the tendency to engage in administrative corruption in the surveyed community. In terms of gender, this tendency was more prevalent among men. Regarding nationality, it was more prevalent among Tajiks, Pashtuns, and smaller ethnic groups. In terms of job position, this tendency was more observed among employees and administrators. Regarding work experience, this tendency was more evident in four groups of employees: first, those with 1 to 6 years of work experience; second, those with more than 16 years of work experience; third, those with 6 to 11 years of work experience; and fourth, those with 11 to 16 years of work experience. The only group that showed no tendency towards administrative corruption was those with less than 1 year of work experience. Regarding the monthly salary variable, this tendency was more observed among three groups of employees: first, those with a monthly salary between 5,000 and 15,000 Afghanis; second, those with a salary between 15,000 and 25,000 Afghanis; and third, those with a salary above 55,000 Afghanis. All these statistics and results ultimately confirm the research hypotheses, all of which were designed from a cultural perspective to analyze the phenomenon of the tendency to engage in administrative corruption in the surveyed community (Faryab Province).

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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