

OPEN PEER REVIEW

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

Naqibullah. Rasikh^{1*}, Majid. Ghourchi-Beigi²

¹ PhD Student of Criminal Law, Department of Criminal Law, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

² Professor of Criminal Law, Department of Criminal Law, Faculty of Law and Political Science Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: Naqibullahrasikh2@gmail.com

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EDITOR:

Tahereh Ebrahimifar

Head of Sociology Department, Faculty of Arts, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt

Tah.Ebrahimifar@iauctb.ac.ir

REVIEWER 1:

Mehmet Yaşar

Department of Sociology, Boğaziçi University, 34342 Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey

mehmetyasardo@bogazici.edu.tr

REVIEWER 2:

Vanessa Indama

Public Administration Department, Basilan State College, Isabela City, Basilan, Philippines. Email: vanesindama@gmail.com

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

Introduction Clarity: In the Introduction (p. 1), you mention that "administrative corruption is a phenomenon that exists, to some extent, in all countries worldwide." This statement could be strengthened by referencing global studies that establish the universality of this phenomenon. Please include citations of global studies or data that support this claim to enhance the generalizability of your argument.

The definition of administrative corruption is somewhat vague in paragraph 4 (first section). You write: "Corruption, as a phenomenon, emerged simultaneously with the establishment of governments." Please define more explicitly what constitutes administrative corruption, especially in the context of Afghanistan, and what key forms it can take beyond bribery and nepotism. A more detailed operational definition could help clarify the focus of your study.

When discussing the rise of corruption in Afghanistan in paragraph 8, you cite a report from Transparency Watch Afghanistan. It would be helpful to compare these findings with corruption trends in other similar post-conflict nations. This comparison could deepen the reader's understanding of Afghanistan's unique challenges in combating corruption, as well as offer insights into broader patterns of corruption in fragile states.

In paragraph 9, you mention statistical findings from the "National Corruption Survey." Could you include specific references to the methodology of this survey, such as sampling techniques, response rates, and the number of respondents? This will help readers evaluate the robustness of the data and the reliability of the conclusions drawn.

In Conclusion (p. 7), you state that "there is a significant correlation between the dependent variable and each of the three variables." While the correlations are identified, the direction and strength of these correlations are not discussed. Could you provide more detailed analysis regarding how strong these relationships are and whether they are positive or negative? This would add depth to the interpretation of your findings.

In paragraph 2 of the Conclusion, you discuss the influence of "traditional culture" on the tendency to engage in corruption. However, the connection between traditional cultural values and administrative corruption needs more empirical evidence. Can you provide references to studies that have linked cultural values to corruption in other contexts? Furthermore, how do these cultural factors manifest specifically in Faryab Province?

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In paragraph 3 of the Introduction, you introduce corruption as a phenomenon tied to political-administrative behavior, culture, and ethics. However, the relationship between these constructs and administrative corruption is not clearly explained. Could you elaborate on how political-administrative behavior and ethics directly lead to corruption, perhaps with specific examples or references to existing literature? This would strengthen the theoretical framework.

In paragraph 6, you discuss the emergence of corruption during political instability, with specific reference to periods of regime changes. While this is insightful, it would benefit from a clearer connection between political instability and corruption. How does political instability trigger corruption in administrative systems? Could you provide additional examples from other countries or historical periods to highlight this dynamic?

In paragraph 10, you mention that bribery has doubled over four years, reaching a total of two billion dollars. This is a striking figure, but additional context would be valuable. Can you clarify the source of these statistics and offer a comparison with other regions? This would give the reader a more complete understanding of the scale and implications of corruption in Afghanistan.

In Methodology, you report Cronbach's alpha values for several variables, which is a strong approach. However, the report could benefit from more detailed information about the pilot testing process. Was the pilot test conducted on a similar population? How was the pilot test sample selected? Was any feedback from the pilot test used to further refine the instrument?

The description of the questionnaire development process in paragraph 6 is adequate, but it could be enhanced by explaining more about the validation process. For example, were the questions reviewed by experts in the field of political science or public administration? Additionally, were there any challenges in adapting existing scales to the Afghan context?

The section on ethnic variations in corruption in Conclusion (p. 7) refers to a higher prevalence of corruption among certain ethnic groups (Tajiks, Pashtuns, and smaller ethnic groups). This point warrants further exploration. How do ethnicity and group dynamics play a role in corrupt practices in Afghanistan? Could you reference literature that explores ethnic influences on corruption in similar societies?

In paragraph 3 of the Conclusion, you suggest that "economic values encourage success by any means necessary." This claim could be substantiated with reference to economic theories of corruption. Are you drawing on theories such as rent-seeking behavior or public choice theory? Explaining the theoretical foundations of this claim would strengthen your argument.

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2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.