

## Perception of Social Values and Its Role in Controlling Corruption Genie in Peshawar Region

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### Abstract

The major objective of this research study was to assess the impact of corruption upon the prevalent social values in Peshawar city, Pakistan. A sample size of 150 respondents was selected with stratified random sampling to ascertain respondent's attitude towards phenomena at hand through Likert scale as measurement tool. At first stage uni-variate analysis and then bi-variate analysis were carried out to reach into logical outcome. While indexing the dependent variable (corruption perception) and by cross-tabulating with independent variable (social values), Chi-square test was used to determine the association between dependent and independent variables. In addition, Gamma ( $\gamma$ ) statistics was applied to determine the strength and direction of the relationship. The study found a significant and positive associated of corruption perception with cognitive belief in social values ( $P=0.000$ ), uniformity in treatment by social value to various social classes ( $P=0.002$ ), uniformity in acceptance of social values by various classes ( $P=0.022$ ), values as derivatives of social power ( $P=0.001$ ), emotional attachment to social values ( $P=0.010$ ), social values as guide to truth and falsehood ( $P=0.000$ ). The study concluded that people in the study area had clear vision about social values, based on thoughts and experience, guiding human behavior towards truth. Social values have psychological bases, but their sociological foundations were much stronger. Social values under transition display disparity in its observance by various social layers of our society, different in nature i.e. economic and social, creating confusion like situation and encouraging corruption.

**Keywords:** Corruption; Social values; Norms; Beliefs; Deviance

### Introduction

Social order in any society across the globe is functioning through a well-integrated system of norms and values. This system is responsible for providing basis to the prevalence of healthy traditions and devising the rules and laws which governs the relative society. Although, change has been witnessed in the history of both human beings and societies but always in a subtle manner which guarantees consistency to social equilibrium of a system. Any deviation or disregard to the existing value system lands a society into a social disintegration and disorganization of social fabrics. This situation is also leading towards the origination of circumstances wherein the individuals are in total disconformities to their cognitive beliefs and emotions based on psychological drives which are also identified by Moss and Susman [1] and Schwartz and Bilsky [2] pointed out that value and beliefs are the evaluative standards which help people sensitizing through experience of understanding the surroundings, and understanding and identifying differences between truth and falsehood. This chain of operative mechanics provides a broader base of acting's in a number of social situations based on the demand of the task of nature ought to be performed as rightly been asserted by Parson and Shills [3] wherein purposes and means have been identified as major drives behind social actions. These actions are usually derived from morality, aesthetics and cognitions. Cultural values are synonymous standards of evaluation criteria humanly operational through social system. These cultural basis and norms are allocated at special positions and internalization of values generated by the individuals is a unique social mechanism displayed by any society [4]. Changes in the evaluative norms and standards of a society are imperative with the social transitions from simple to complex. This trend of transition is also reported by (Thorton [5] Alwin, [6] and Pope [7] that the strength of social values lie in the conformity to the social system where individuals and groups participate. The major reason attached to this phenomenon is the impression left on the mind map of people with respect to social values in a system. This system works as a catalyst for bringing stability, personality development and

consistency to the prevalent cultural values. Disconformities and less regard to cultural value always hamper the prevalent value system thus by taking the whole phenomenon to complete disintegration where the proscribed norms and values sprout. This eruption of values in total disconformities comprehensively shatters the very basis of the social systems in many societies across the globe. Corruption is a value, every society is witnessing in the present day scenario due to the complex social systems based on new economic values which dictates for competition and development through both on individual to group endeavors. The concept of this competitive sense ought to have been controlled, governed and directed by the existing cultural and social practices. Any society having a broader base for internalizing the fragmentation within their social fabrics succeeded in controlling and directing the change. While others with less capacities to absorb, suffered with the menace of new values in total contrast to the operational social system identified and called as corruption.

Corruption is usually studied in relation to transitions within societies. A situation where corruption is usually less acceptable in traditional societies in contrast to the societies where value change is frequent. It is generally assumed that a moral breach irrespective of the fact whether existing law is broken or not provides an opportunity to creep in. "the principle of neutralization", which covers mostly the moral defect for actions not to be exposed served as a harbinger to the

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occurrence of corruption [8,9]. Local cultural circumstances are playing imminent role in making the idea of “excessive” or “appropriate”. Olivier [10] claimed that basically a loose cultural structure works for the growth of corruption as natives consider it specific to cultural norms. This sense of owning by the locals make official feel justifying the illegitimate deeds as legitimate, legal and consistent to the local culture. Thus the social norms give reasons to the prevalent behavior to support and dissolve corruption as a friendly value. In such culture favor to relatives and doing immoral acts on reciprocity is termed as solidarity.

Pakistan inherited corruption from British rule and it was a priority problem area, right from the independence [11], which has deep roots [12] as has been ranked worse than average in the international surveys on corruption [13]. Rose-Ackerman and Stone [14] has linked corruption with poor governance which impedes economic growth and slow down the development of a healthy private sector. In Pakistani society this phenomenon is also displaying harassment, hassle, red tapism and delays in accomplishing the legal tasks that provide few incentives for good performance [15]. Keeping into consideration the bleak picture of Pakistani society with reference to effects of corruption on its social order, the present study was designed while proceeding with the objective of associating the people’s perception on corruption with deteriorated social values.

## Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Peshawar City, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It was tried to find out the objectives of the study by preferring an approach which may be classified as realistic and diverse, by investigating from specialists with diverse academic and professional backgrounds. To have relevant, significant and creative information, the respondents comprised of the following characteristics were selected.

1. Officials of investigation cadre from Peshawar based anticorruption agencies like National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and Anti-Corruption departments were selected as representatives of Government servants.
2. Professors from Peshawar based public sector universities were selected as representatives of academicians.
3. Qualified Ulema teaching at major religious educational institutions like, Jamia Darwesh, and DarululoomSarhad were selected as representatives of Ulema and religious leaders.

Total population of potential respondents with said characteristics came out to be 235. Sekaran [16] simplified the sample size decision process, for multiple variables, by providing a table that greatly simplify the decision of sample size and ensure good decision model. For a population size of 235 a sample size of 150 respondents was selected through criterion devised by Sekaran [16]. Respondents were further categorized as Academicians, Anti-Corruption staff and Religious Scholars, being the custodians of dynamism and thereby predicting the transition in social value in the prevalent social environments.

A conceptual framework was devised as shown in the Table 1 and questions were asked accordingly from the respondents devised through Likert scale. The dependent variable (Corruption Perception) was indexed and cross tabulated with independent variable (economic aspects of social values) to measure the association. Chi-square test outlined by Tai [17] at bi-variate level was used through the formula as below;

Independent variable	Dependent variable
Social Values	Corruption perception

**Table 1:** Conceptual framework.

$$(\chi^2) = X^2 = \sum_{j=1}^j \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{(o_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

The Fisher Exact Test which also is known as Exit Chi-square Test was used instead of a simple Chi-Square, to overcome the violation of Chi-Square assumptions. The relationship developed by Fisher to overcome such violation is given in equation devised by Bailly [18] through equation shown below;

$$\text{Fisher Exit Test Probability} = \frac{(a+b)!(c+d)!(a+c)!(b+d)!}{N!a!b!c!d!}$$

Moreover, Gamma statistics was used to measure the strength and direction of association (Nachmias and Nachmias [19])

$$\text{Gamma } (\gamma) = \frac{SN - DN}{SN + DN}$$

NS=same order pair

ND=Different order pair

## Limitations of the Study

Lower sample size is the limitation of this study. Due to limited number of respondents of mentioned characteristics it was the research was left with no option but to opt for a smaller sample size. Moreover, due to small sample size it was statistically insignificant to study the variations of responses across their sub-groups.

## Results and Discussion

### Frequency and percentage distributions, regarding the perception of social values

Socio-cultural roots of corruption were limited to certain statement in this study, attributing to corruption in association with socio-psychological perception of social values. As depicted in Table 1, a majority i.e. 84.7% respondents considered social values as guide to human behavior because of their emotional and psychological influence in human behavior, 80% viewed social values as beliefs developed through thoughts, experiences and senses, 72.7% perceived social values as guide to truth and falsehood, however, 60.6% respondents did not accept that social values as an arrangement to safeguard the interest of rich, 66.6% respondents viewed social values as symbolic expression of ideas. Contrarily, 58% disregarded social values as rigid and unalterable, 46% considered that social values uniformly entertain all classes, 77.4% acknowledged that values hold the society intact, however, 54% rejected social values as uniformly observed by all classes of society, 79.3% thought ethically based social values play dominant role in controlling individual behavior co-dominated by power and prestige as its component.

The results clearly indicates social values as the strongest source of integration and cohesion of a society, subject to condition that these are regarded in uniformity towards all segments of society. These results are in support to the findings of Moss and Susman [1] that the basis of social norm and values is in the cognitive beliefs which are developed as a learning outcome of rational thinking and experiences, based on variations in guidance towards truth and falsehood from society to society. Moreover, conclusions of Schwartz and Bilsky [2] are seconded from these results that symbolic nature of social values don’t delineate the exact set of laws but act as a guide from whom members of society get direction (Table 2).

Statements regarding Social values	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Social Values are guide to human behavior because of their emotional and psychological bases	5 (3.3)	15 (10)	3 (2)	96 (64)	31 (20.7)
Social Values are beliefs developed through thoughts, experiences and senses.	4 (2.7)	4 (2.7)	22 (14.7)	86 (57.3)	34 (22.7)
Social Values are a guide to truth and falsehood.	1 (0.7)	14 (9.3)	26 (17.3)	81 (54)	28 (18.7)
Social Values are an arrangement to safeguard the interest of rich/elite.	14 (9.3)	77 (51.3)	19 (12.7)	30 (20)	10 (6.7)
Social Values are an array of symbols to which people have mentally held meaning.	1 (0.7)	15 (10)	34 (22.7)	86 (57.3)	14 (9.3)
Social Values are Rigid and unalterable.	17 (11.3)	70 (46.7)	24 (16)	23 (15.3)	16 (10.7)
Though classes exist but values entertain them with uniformity.	12 (8)	34 (22.7)	32 (21.3)	66 (44)	6 (4)
Values hold the society intact and integrated.	1 (0.7)	19 (12.7)	14 (9.3)	94 (62.7)	22 (14.7)
Values are equally regarded by all classes of society.	3 (2)	44 (29.3)	34 (22.7)	65 (43.3)	4 (2.7)
Power and prestige as a component, with support from ethics and morality is usually supported in the existing values.	1 (0.7)	9 (6)	21 (14)	104 (69.3)	15 (10)

\*Number in table represent frequencies and number in parenthesis represent percentage proportion of respondents.

**Table 2:** Frequency and Percentage Distributions Regarding the Perception of Social Values. N=150.

### Association between perception of social values and corruption

To test the association of social values and corruption, with convenience and reliability, perceptions of these variables were limited to some specific statements, reflected in Table 2. Findings are discussed below.

A positive ( $\gamma=+0.390$ ) and highly significant ( $P=0.000$ ) relationship was found between cognitive belief in social values and corruption perception, which advocates of importance of stronger cognitive belief in social values to bring clarity in corruption perception. Social values are based on strong ideas of right and wrong based on thoughts, experiences and senses, therefore, observance of social values ensures social control over individuals and groups and secures the interests of both the individual and the society. Cognitive beliefs based only on the material wellbeing of individuals, as emerging in our society, promote new values with greater acceptance for corruption. The above result is indicative of the fact that social values in shape of cognitive belief do exist with clear perception in conception. These cognitive values could work as a shield against the breeding of corrupt values; the society is passing through these days. Similar findings are been explored by Moss and Susman [1] where social norms and values in cognitive believe have been identified as the outcome of rational thinking and experiences which guides human behavior in a number of situations. Similarly a positive ( $\gamma=+0.356$ ) and significant ( $P=0.002$ ) association between uniformity in treatment by social value to various social classes and corruption perception was found. It is because of the prevalence of harmony within the social values which could enhance the rate of success in controlling human behavior towards corruption. Such situation also dictates about the application of state rule in the state affairs with impartiality as exposed by U. Myint, [20] while explaining the same state of affairs stated that the rules should be impartially applicable to all the players, irrespective of their social statuses, and should not be unnecessarily changed. Analyzing relationship between uniformity in acceptance of social values by various classes and corruption perception, a positive and significant ( $\gamma=+0.366$ ,  $P=0.022$ ) relationship was found. Consistency in behavior upon the acceptance of social values by the different classes could easily be attributed to reduction in corruption in the social fabrics these findings are also been supported by Myint [20] who besides the implementation of rules, stressed upon a desire from society for indiscriminate acceptance of the rules. A non-significant but positive ( $\gamma=+0.375$ ) relationship was found between perception of social value as possessing mentally held meanings to behavior and corruption perception. One could easily infer from

this relationship that clarity about corruption is dependent upon the understanding of prevalent social values. Values with fewer capabilities to delineate meaning to the members of a society, usually ends at the emergence of abnormality in the acts [2] This is further supported by looking into the association between rigidity in social values and corruption perception as positive ( $\gamma=+0.317$ ) but non-significant. It is because the values upholding is the outcome of displaying the meaning it communicates to the members. Rigidity signifies the clarity in delivering the message. Moss and Susman [1] disclose that persistence in the social value meaning seldom adequate for changes specifically in negative direction. Focusing on the relationship between values as derivatives of social power with perception of corruption, a negative ( $\gamma=-0.234$ ) and significant ( $P=0.001$ ) relationship was detected. It could easily be inferred from this relationship that people in the study area had a firm faith in social values as the product of morality and ethics. Emotional attachment to social values was negated ( $\gamma=-0.332$ ) but significant ( $P=0.010$ ) in association to perception of corruption. It is evident from this relationship that the people in the study area considered the creation/prevalence and intactness of social values as the product of consistent societal process with less recognition to psychological drives of an individual. A significant ( $P=0.000$ ) and positive ( $\gamma=+0.207$ ) relationship to the perception on social values as guide to truth and falsehood and corruption perception was found. This association conveys a meaning based on values working as guide to truth and falsehood envisages people's explicit level of behavior upon value system control in attaching meaning to deeds performed by the individuals. However, a positive ( $\gamma=+0.366$ ) and significant ( $P=0.022$ ) association was obtained between social values safeguarding the interest of rich and corruption perception. This relationship specifies the change in the existing value system to be getting inclined towards material gains rather than honesty and upright. The findings are in line with results of Rock each [4] who found it necessary to give priority to ethics if we want to improve living in this world (Table 3).

### Conclusions

The study concludes that people in the study area has a clear vision about social values as these are based on thoughts and experience that guide human behavior towards truth. Social values are having psychological bases, but sociological foundation of social values is much stronger. Morality based strong social values are more rigid and emphasize its uniform implementation to all sections of society hence are source of social solidarity and curb social evils like corruption. However, transition of social values in our society display disparity

Perception of Social Values	Attitude	Corruption Perception					Total	Statistics (P Value)
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree		
Social Values are emotional and Psychological drives that guide human behavior.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	2 (1.3)	0 (0)	5 (3.3)	$\chi^2=31.969$ (0.010); $\gamma=-0.332$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	12 (8)	0 (0)	15 (10)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	0 (0)	3 (2)	
	Agree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	11 (7.3)	75 (50)	9 (6)	96 (64)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	7 (4.7)	15 (10)	8 (5.3)	31 (20.7)	
Social Values are cognitive beliefs developed through thoughts, experiences and senses.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	1(0.7)	0 (0)	4 (2.7)	$\chi^2=77.741$ (0.000); $\gamma=+0.390$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	0 (0)	4 (2.7)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	17 (11.3)	2 (1.3)	22 (14.7)	
	Agree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	16 (10.7)	55 (36.7)	14 (9.3)	86 (57.3)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	32 (21.3)	1(0.7)	34 (22.7)	
Social Values are a guide to truth and falsehood.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	$\chi^2=46.359$ (0.000); $\gamma=+0.207$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	8 (5.3)	3 (2)	14 (9.3)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (2.7)	21 (14)	1(0.7)	26 (17.3)	
	Agree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	15 (10)	63 (42)	2 (1.3)	81 (54)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	14 (9.3)	11 (7.3)	28 (18.7)	
Social Values are an arrangement to safeguard the interest of rich/elite.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (4.7)	3 (2)	4 (2.7)	14 (9.3)	$\chi^2=29.371$ (0.022); $\gamma=+0.366$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	8 (5.3)	57 (38)	10 (6.7)	77 (51.3)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (2.7)	15 (10)	0 (0)	19 (12.7)	
	Agree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	2 (1.3)	24 (16)	3 (2)	30 (20)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	8 (5.3)	0 (0)	10 (6.7)	
Social Values are an array of symbols to which people have mentally held meaning.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	$\chi^2=17.638$ (0.346); $\gamma=+0.375$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	0 (0)	3 (2)	8 (5.3)	3 (2)	15 (10)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	1(0.7)	6 (4)	21 (14)	6 (4)	34 (22.7)	
	Agree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	13 (8.7)	64 (42.7)	8 (5.3)	86 (57.3)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	13 (8.7)	0 (0)	14 (9.3)	
Social Values are Rigid and unalterable.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	0 (0)	11 (7.3)	5 (3.3)	17 (11.3)	$\chi^2=24.3$ (0.083); $\gamma=+0.317$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	11 (7.3)	47 (31.3)	10 (6.7)	70 (46.7)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (5.3)	15 (10)	1(0.7)	24 (16)	
	Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	20 (13.3)	1(0.7)	23 (15.3)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	14 (9.3)	0 (0)	16 (10.7)	
Though classes exist but values entertain them with uniformity.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	0 (0)	11 (7.3)	0 (0)	12 (8)	$\chi^2=36.997$ (0.002); $\gamma=+0.356$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	5 (3.3)	17 (11.3)	10 (6.7)	34 (22.7)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (5.3)	19 (12.7)	5 (3.3)	32 (21.3)	
	Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (6.7)	55 (36.7)	1(0.7)	66 (44)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (3.3)	1(0.7)	6 (4)	
Values hold the society intact and integrated.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	$\chi^2=23.981$ (0.090); $\gamma=-0.394$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	17 (11.3)	0 (0)	19 (12.7)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	13 (8.7)	0 (0)	14 (9.3)	
	Agree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	20 (13.3)	61 (40.7)	12 (8)	94 (62.7)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	1(0.7)	1(0.7)	15 (10)	5 (3.3)	22 (14.7)	
Values are equally regarded by all classes of society.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (2)	0 (0)	3 (2)	$\chi^2=31.391$ (0.012); $\gamma=+0.366$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	2 (1.3)	8 (5.3)	21 (14)	12 (8)	44 (29.3)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (2.7)	29 (19.3)	1(0.7)	34 (22.7)	
	Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (6)	52 (34.7)	4 (2.7)	65 (43.3)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	2 (1.3)	0 (0)	4 (2.7)	
Power and prestige as a component, with support from ethics and morality is usually supported in the existing values.	Strongly disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	0 (0)	1(0.7)	$\chi^2=41.063$ (0.001); $\gamma=-0.234$
	Disagree	1(0.7)	0 (0)	3 (2)	5 (3.3)	0 (0)	9 (6)	
	Uncertain	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (2.7)	16 (10.7)	1(0.7)	21 (14)	
	Agree	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	14 (9.3)	79 (52.7)	9 (6)	104 (69.3)	
	Strongly Agree	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.3)	6 (4)	7 (4.7)	15 (10)	
Total		1 (0.7)	2 (1.3)	23 (15.3)	107 (71.3)	17 (11.3)	150 (100)	

\*Values in table represent frequencies and values in parenthesis represent percentage proportion of respondents.

**Table 3:** Association between perception of social values and corruption.



in its observance by various social layers different in nature i.e. economic and social, creating confusion like situation and encouraging corruption.

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