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Influence Factors in the Effectiveness of National Defense Anti-Corruption Governance

Nathan Cheng-Hu CHOW¹, I-Jan YEh²

Abstract

Armed forces are currently in the environment with moral ambiguity and multiple cultures. In face of the chaos, corruption, and wasteful trend in current social value system, continuous conflict is bothering the cultivation and atmosphere of military character. Under the situation, officers and soldiers could easily fall into bad belief and become indifferent to surrounding affairs with apathy. Various military discipline events appear in domestic armed forces in past years; besides, the exaggeration and report of print media and electronic media, and even some officers and soldiers spilling, smearing, and slandering each other to defile others' innocence destroy the image of armed forces. Military character presents close relations with integrity building action. Aiming at military personnel in Ministry of National Defense, total 420 copies of questionnaire are distributed, and 347 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 83%. The research results are summarized as below. Factors in the effectiveness of armed forces personnel's anti-corruption governance contain micro aspects of lack of legal and disciplinary ideas and value deviation of armed forces personnel as well as macro aspect of complicated approval operation and rules resulting in lobbying interfering businesses. The effectiveness of armed forces personnel's anti-corruption governance not being affirmed by the society is related to the engagement of supervisors at all levels in anti-corruption work, as armed forces personnel are restricted to the political environment and aging senior customs personnel that the director's engagement in anti-corruption work is not manifested. Armed forces personnel involving in internal anti-corruption problems are minimized to largely reduce the effectiveness of anti-corruption governance. According to the results, suggestions are proposed, expecting to improve problems resulted from military discipline and to promote the armed forces' image of integrity, being close to the people, and loving the people.

Keywords: national defense, anti-corruption governance, governance effectiveness, critical factor.

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Introduction

National defense is the most important barrier for the survival and development of the nation and the maintenance of people's welfare; therefore, army is regarded as the patron of country and people, with lofty and sacred status. Furthermore, military character is the core thought of soldiers, relating to the long safety of armed forces and the nation. No matter how the time and environment trend are changed, armed forces with excellent military character should present the insistence, pride, and self-restraint to remain military character education. Armed forces are currently in the environment with moral ambiguity and multiple cultures. In face of the chaos, corruption, and wasteful atmosphere in current social value system, continuous conflict is bothering the cultivation and atmosphere of military character. Under the situation, officers and soldiers can easily fall into bad belief to become indifferent to the surround affairs with apathy. Modern arms of the services are finely divided; along with the all-round specialty era, it is inevitable for force military getting into specialty. In this case, the education of national defense anti-corruption governance encounters more severe challenges. In terms of the role definition, the positioning in the social stability and national security should be understood so as to well-play the professional role in the task characteristics. Moreover, the knowledge and professional skills should be kept up with the time to present the basic requirement for specialty.

Under the atmosphere of competing for luxury and being anxious for success in current society, armed forces officers and soldiers have to insist on the essential affairs without being puzzled by the social chaos, constantly encourage and strengthen the power, through various education and battle skills, to resist temptation, and cultivate firm determination and original intention of not apostatizing and not changing aspiration. Especially, soldiers stress on the spirit of not submitting to force, not being subdued by poverty, and not being corrupted by richness, as the lifelong principle and stand, and, more importantly, the shaping of "national defense anti-corruption governance". Apparently, the importance of moral character and military character cultivation is the universal value unanimously as well as the requirement for the force in advanced countries. Especially, army always encounters severe environment with changing lanes that tasks could merely be smoothly practiced by insisting on the core thoughts, strict discipline, and decrees of military character to overcome the pressure in the battlefield. A soldier with correct belief and lofty military character could practice the ideal without hesitation. A soldier being willing to sacrifice the life for protecting the nation is the lofty performance of military character and would receive national support and trust. Various military discipline events appear in domestic armed forces in past years; besides, the exaggeration and report of print media and electronic media and even some officers and soldiers spilling, smearing, and slandering each other to defile others' innocence destroy the image of armed forces. Military character presents close relations with integrity building

action as there is certain moral value to guide the society developing towards ideal directions. Laws are the definite rules specifically formed from moral value for abundance. To change the thought and enhance the image of armed forces, it is necessary to explore the spiritual content and the specific measures of national defense anti-corruption governance education. For this reason, this study tends to discuss critical factors in the effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance, expecting to discuss, promote, and practice the content of soldiers' integrity building action through the philosophical spirits of character cultivation and integrity emphasized in national defense anti-corruption governance. It is expected to improve the problems caused by military discipline and promote armed forces' image of integrity, being close to the people, and loving the people.

Literature review

Corruption

Zhang *et al.* (2019) indicated that factors in corruption presented complexity and involved in economics, politics, culture, and history; but the fundamental was the lack of effective control mechanism in the political system to result in power arbitrariness and abuse. Erlingsson & Kristinsson (2018) stated that corruption constantly affected the society and economics of various nations in the world. When serious corruption existed in a government, the administration could hardly meet the people's expectation, the civil society and economic environment would be swallowed by corruption, and the people would lose the trust in the government and the legitimacy of political power to result in major crisis for the state governance. Apparently, the degree of anti-corruption of a government showed massive effects on the democratic and economic development of the nation and was regarded as an important indicator to evaluate national competitiveness. The reduction of corruption therefore became a primary issue for governments in various nations achieving good governance. Based on social interaction theory, Albrecht *et al.* (2018) emphasized that human behaviors would affect the surrounding people and be affected by the behavior of the surrounding people. Shaik & Abdul-Kader (2018) mentioned that the nature of work could have a person be easily affected by the surrounding people. For instance, customs officers, even being grass-root personnel, had broad discretionary power to interact with businesses with interests in the workplace. In fact, a lot of customs officers completed the work independently. Working in the situation almost without supervision would create the environment with mature corruption. Moreover, the pay for domestic officers was not proportional to the hard working conditions. All functions of customs were easily affected by corruption, including the definition of origin of imported goods, price and classification, examination of goods, warehouse management, and passenger clearance, which were related to the amount of taxes

and the import/export of controlled goods, to form the corruption environment with opportunities and motivation. From receiving “cold water fee” to large-scale collective corruption, it would continuously happen.

Lin *et al.* (2018) pointed out three factors in corruption, namely “opportunity condition”, “motivation condition”, and “low-risk condition”. First, there was “corruption opportunity” in the workplace, e.g. lots of corruption opportunities when customs executed investigation and seizure, taxation, and control. When customs personnel appeared self-value deviation, “motivation element” was satisfied. The risk of being seized corruption was further evaluated; when it was evaluated as low risk, corruption behavior would be likely preceded. Andersen & Jørgen (2019) pointed out large proportion of government procurement cases in various public servant corruption cases that the bad impression of procurement personnel’ integrity should be positively handled. Zheng *et al.* (2018) mentioned the award of bid amount in the annual procurement of institutes nationwide was massive; anti-corruption systems not being implemented would deeply affect national infrastructure and people’s trust in the government. Similar to the businesses of customs, government procurement cases also presented three conditions of “opportunity”, “motivation”, and “low risk”; and, compared to general administrative process, it revealed high expertise.

Liang & Nguyen (2018) indicated that Singapore being one of the most uncorrupted countries in the world was obviously the credit of Kuan Yew Lee, as an obvious example of political power affecting culture and suppressing human greed. Nevertheless, it was wondered whether Singapore would fall into the situation of work being stopped after the expiration of the person; after all, rule of man, rule of law, democracy, and culture were closely related to corruption. The guanxi culture in Chinese society was regarded as an important factor in interfering the reasonable distribution of the power of public servant to form the culture of “having guanxi as no guanxi, no guanxi as having guanxi”. Li *et al.* (2019) pointed out the similar etiquette culture of cultivating personal connections with illegal behaviors of gift, back door, and bribe between Taiwan and South Korea; nevertheless, the evaluation of Taiwan was much better than it of South Korea, because Taiwan society appeared low tolerance for corruption; when senior officials or business leaders were convicted of corruption, the public did not expect the pardon. Besides, there was not a financial magnate as in South Korea, and the judiciary would not offer preferential treatment for the family members of the magnate. The insider trading and the politics-business cahoots in Taiwan were weakened, and the tendering process became more transparent. Not only were anti-corruption related regulations passed, but the anti-corruption agency in the government also reinforced the energy and strictly executed the anti-corruption rules (Zio, 2018).

Anti-corruption governance

Chou (2018) pointed out “stealing or misappropriating public equipment or properties”, “fraudulently making others to deliver personal property or a third person’s property under cover of legal authority”, and “bribery” as top three crimes of corruption. 60% crime of corruption should impute to oneself, but the effects of environment and systems on crime of corruption should not be ignored. Crime of corruption presented significant correlations with gender, age, education, degree of shame, determent of law, and post. Severe punishment could psychologically intimidate public servants’ crime of corruption, but could not really intimidate the behavior. Crime opportunity generated from post was closely related to crime of corruption. Businesses which could easily result in corruption practice could be controlled by administrative procedures and inspection mechanisms. Kalman (2020) found out the remarkable effects of demographic attribute, post, and opportunity pressure and monitoring on public servants’ corruption behavior; and, the control of corruption could start from supervision mechanisms, reduction of opportunity, and reinforcement of education. The following anti-corruption behaviors were therefore suggested, including strengthening supervision mechanism and building public servant behavior database, increasing evaluation records of public servants’ lifestyles, avoiding assigning high-risk personnel for post with high-risk corruption like procurement, approval, and penalty, regularly promoting ethics to reinforce the general prevention effect of punishment, implementing rotation and mandatory agent system, and reinforcing supervisors’ monitoring and control ability of the subordinates. Collins *et al.* (2018) indicated that the construction of domestic anti-corruption system presented complete bases, but points in parts of current laws could not effectively develop the anti-corruption effectiveness; comprehensive review and correction should be rapidly preceded. Moreover, in order to construct comprehensive preventive anti-corruption legal systems for public sectors, other coordinated measures, such as relevant personnel regulations, report and protection systems for whistle-blowing, and the integration of legal systems related to public employees’ ethical behaviors, should be corrected and appended. Peterson (2018) stated that, in the establishment of preventive anti-corruption mechanism, domestic anti-corruption system was developed after the establishment of Agency Against Corruption, Ministry of Justice; however, the accumulation of research on integrity policy and knowledge making, the promotion and spread of social anti-corruption concept, the building of social relationship, and the coordination between existing internal/external locus of control partnership, and even the independence and accountability of Agency Against Corruption would be the next program core for domestic anti-corruption. Challier (2018) discovered that anti-corruption governance was no longer restricted to government sectors; the promotion of anti-corruption work required the co-participation of public/private sectors and civil society. Anti-corruption work in Taiwan should start from the aspect of good governance to construct a transparent and honest political environment

to reduce the corruption behaviors of all public servants down to the lowest from the reinforcement of anti-corruption education and public servants' ethics as well as to establish the social and community anti-corruption network and collaborative governance with external supervision power to construct the anti-corruption governance direction suitable for Taiwan. Ural & Gençođlan (2020) also found out five prerequisites for successful anti-corruption governance mechanism, including leaders' political determination, inclusive anti-corruption legislation, healthy anti-corruption mechanisms and systems, collaboration of public/private section, and social participation.

Critical factors in the effectiveness of anti-corruption governance

Chang *et al.* (2019) induced factors in the effectiveness of domestic anti-corruption governance as personal-related factor, internal environment, and external environment.

(1) Personal-related factor

- Ethics of anti-corruption personnel: Ethics of anti-corruption personnel referred to anti-corruption personnel's morality. Civil service ethics and internal affairs departments could not dig out scandals in advance, did not fulfill the duties, and some anti-corruption personnel even became a part of corruption symbiotic structure to fall into the paradoxical situation of "investigators being investigated". It was said "weep before one's own door"; the quality of anti-corruption personnel's ethics was largely related to the success of anti-corruption governance.
- Cognition of anti-corruption: Armed forces personnel' cognition of anti-corruption is defined in this study as armed forces personnel' right value of public service ethics. Jia, Huang, & Man Zhang (2019) explained public service ethics as to teach public servants with self-awareness in face of difference and conflict resulted from multiple values to mindfully make right and proper decisions.

(2) Internal environment

- Engagement of directors: Agency directors of all levels invested sufficient manpower and budget resources in anti-corruption risk management of the agencies, annually adopted proper measures according to anti-corruption risk evaluation, hosted anti-corruption reports or related conferences, monitored the effectiveness of anti-corruption evaluation measures, combined news announcement mechanism to actively explain the investigation and prevention behaviors and the determination to strike corruption about happened wrongful cases, and implemented reward and accountability.

- Regulation complexity: Since customs regulations were complicated and various administrative regulations were numerous, the interpretations were often inconsistent to result in administrative discretion difficulty. Besides, unclear and various explanations could result in human manipulated explanations to affect the effectiveness of anti-corruption governance.
- Completeness of internal control mechanism: Completeness of internal control mechanism referred to being designed and built by internal agency for the abidance of all employees in the agency. It aimed to promote agency performance and enhance resource application efficiency to take care of both profit promotion and corruption prevention. In short, it referred to the implementation of the management mechanism of internal control and audit.
- Bad rules and culture: Bad rules and culture referred to the organizational culture of being on the take for positive work, e.g. express custom clearance fee and cold water fee. Such extrajudicial income did not conform to the ethics of anti-corruption, but was passed down for long. The long-term corrupt custom gradually evolved into unwritten rules to form bad organizational culture.
- Job rotation: referring to personnel change regularly or according to business requirement. Nonetheless, job rotation systems became a mere formality; personnel rotated among same businesses to result in dishonest officers engaging in same businesses for long period. Job rotation without fairness, completeness, appropriateness, and expectability would affect the effectiveness of anti-corruption governance.

(3) External environment

- Symbiotic structure: Many businesses on armed forces supply chain, in order to make profits, combined with the authority of armed forces personnel to collaboratively pursue illegal collective corruption.
- Lobby culture: referring to establishing personal connections through feast to make improper profits, e.g. lobbying for personnel promotion or post change to continuously rotate between sensitive posts (lucrative posts) to form the symbiotic relationship. The prevalent of guanxi culture to lobby for personnel affairs or businesses would easily result in personnel promotion or business scandals.
- Degree of prosecution effectiveness: referring to conviction rate of seized corruption. When armed forces personnel show self-value deviation, “motivation element” was satisfied; the risk of corruption being seized was further evaluated; when low risk was evaluated, the corruption behavior would be preceded. In this case, having all corruption crimes being reported and seized at any time could effectively prevent from corruption events.

Methodology

Delphi method

The AHP dimensions are established according to Delphi method, which aims to break through the limits of traditional Delphi method and cope with the complexity of policy problems. When decision makers encounter policy problems of bad structure, being complicated, inadequate information, specialized properties, and unpredictable results, experts, administrative representatives, legislators, and party representatives could be invited for brainstorming Delphi method to provide group decisions for the reference of decision makers. In addition to adopting the principles of retelling and feedback control in traditional Delphi method, other new principles are also introduced.

- *Selective anonymity*: The participants are merely anonymous in the first runs of prediction. When arguing about policy alternative programs, they have to defend the arguments in public.
- *Informed multiple advocacy*: “Interest” and “knowledgeableness”, rather than “expertise”, are the standards for selecting participants, and well-informed advocacy participants representing for the interest of various parties are better selected.
- *Polarized statistical response*: The conclusion of participants’ judgment should focus on the measurement of different opinions and conflicts. Traditional Delphi method (such as median, range, and standard deviation) might be used, but the positive/negative opinions between individuals and groups would be supplemented.
- *Structured conflict*: Based on conflict as the normal characteristic of policy topics, various possible policy programs and the results are explored from various opinions and conflicts.
- *Computer conferencing*: Computers are possibly used for dealing with the continuous process of anonymous interaction among participants to avoid series of individual Delphi response.

Establishment of indicator

The questionnaire for this study is emailed to experts in different fields. The first-time feedback is organized to calculate the considered items for the effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance. Such factors with similar properties are further classified and emailed back to the experts for opinions. With several runs of inquiry, major classifications are achieved. An expert conference is called to make critical factors in the effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance, including personal-related factor, internal environment, and external environment. Such critical factors are used as the AHP dimensions to build the

AHP questionnaire. The following research principles modified through Delphi method are summarized for this study.

- Personal-related facto: ethics of anti-corruption personnel, cognition of anti-corruption.
- Internal environment: engagement of directors, regulation complexity, completeness of internal control mechanism, bad rules and culture, job rotation.
- External environment: symbiotic structure, lobby culture, degree of prosecution effectiveness.

Research subject

Aiming at military personnel in Ministry of National Defense, total 420 copies of questionnaire are distributed, and 347 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 83%.

Results

Organization of critical factors in effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance in Hierarchy 2

After completing the weights in Hierarchy 2, the distribution is based on the relative importance to show the importance of indicators in the entire hierarchy and to generate the overall weights of critical factors in the effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Weights for effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance in Hierarchy 2

Weight order	Critical factors in effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance	
1	personal-related factor	0.290
2	internal environment	0.383
3	external environment	0.327
$\lambda_{max}=4.132$ C.I.=0.004 C.R.=0.004		

Organization of critical factors in effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance

After completing the weights in all hierarchies, the distribution is based on the relative importance to show the importance of indicators in the entire evaluation system and to generate the overall weights of critical factors in the effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance (*Table 2*).

Table 2. Overall weight of critical factors in effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance

	Evaluation element in Hierarchy 2 (hierarchical weight)	Evaluation element in Hierarchy 3 (hierarchical weight)	Global priority	order
Critical factors in effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance $\lambda_{max}=10.366$ C.I.=0.006 C.R.=0.002	personal-related factor (0.290)	ethics of anti-corruption personnel	0.090	7
		cognition of anti-corruption	0.115	3
	internal environment (0.383)	engagement of directors	0.136	1
		regulation complexity	0.086	8
		completeness of internal control mechanism	0.106	4
		bad rules and culture	0.094	6
		job rotation	0.066	10
	external environment (0.327)	symbiotic structure	0.079	9
		lobby culture	0.127	2
		degree of prosecution effectiveness	0.101	5

According to the hierarchical weights, the indicators in Hierarchy 3 are sequenced as below:

- Indicators in personal-related factor are sequenced cognition of anti-corruption and ethics of anti-corruption personnel.
- Indicators in internal environment are sequenced engagement of directors, completeness of internal control mechanism, bad rules and culture, regulation complexity, and job rotation.
- Indicators in external environment are sequenced lobby culture, degree of prosecution effectiveness, and symbiotic structure.

From the overall weights of critical factors in the effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance, top five indicators, among 10, are ordered engagement of directors, lobby culture, cognition of anti-corruption, completeness of internal control mechanism, and degree of prosecution effectiveness.

Discussion

The corruption behavior and factors in armed forces personnel might not appear obvious differences from general government officials. However, customs corruption presents the stereotype that factors in the effectiveness of armed forces personnel's anti-corruption governance contain armed forces personnel's lack of law and discipline ideas and value deviation, in micro-aspect, and huge and complicated approval regulations resulting in lobbying interfering in businesses, in macro-aspect. Besides, businesses are lack of management and supervisors could not well do the duties to result in anti-corruption mechanisms not being implemented. Due to the closeness of agencies with various factions to hinder promotion, bad businesses lobbying personnel promotion and change through legislators to pollute armed forces personnel' discipline. The omission of inspection to play the law for discretion results is the blind spot for risk control in anti-corruption governance. In spite of the engagement of agency directors in anti-corruption work, with regular anti-corruption reports, employee condition reports, power to adjust the post of personnel with risk of affecting the effectiveness of anti-corruption governance, promotion of the abidance of anti-corruption ethics in various meetings and holidays, and recommendation and praise of anti-corruption model personnel, such behavior are passive and standard processing. To further inspect the factors in the effectiveness of armed forces personnel's anti-corruption governance not being affirmed by the society, it is discovered to relate to the attitudes of supervisors at all levels towards the engagement in anti-corruption work. Armed forces personnel is restricted to the entire political environment and aging senior customs personnel that the agency directors' engagement in anti-corruption work is not manifested. Once armed forces personnel appears corruption events, the crisis processing operation of review and accountability of senior officials, attack from media and public opinions, questioning of legislators, and investigation of members of the Control Yuan are faced. Moreover, those being promoted to the director of armed forces personnel are about to retire, would stably and carefully deal with affairs, and expect safe retirement and harmonious administration and people that they would minimize major problems in internal corruption of armed forces personnel to result in reduced effectiveness of anti-corruption governance in the agencies. It is discovered in this study that the engagement of agency directors in anti-corruption work is the key critical factor in the effectiveness of armed forces personnel's anti-corruption governance. As a result, it is primary to construct the environment for armed forces supervisors at all levels getting rid of conservative attitudes and shaping positive service.

Conclusion

According to the empirical results in this study, the following conclusions are summarized. “Internal environment”, weighted 0.383 and about 38.3% of overall weight, is the most emphasized dimension in Hierarchy 2, followed by “external environment” (weighted 0.327) and “personal-related factor” (weighted 0.290). Accordingly, internal environment is the most emphasis in the effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance.

Recommendations

According to the conclusions, the following suggestions are proposed in this study, expecting to provide definite guide and directions for promoting the effectiveness of national defense anti-corruption governance.

- Armed forces directors should positively apply the personnel discretionary power to adjust unsuitable supervisors to non-supervisors. The specific measure proposed in this study is to account supervisors for not actively digging out anti-corruption events and to clearly define types of disobeying anti-corruption. In addition to the punishment in the awards and penalties regulations for armed forces personnel, when armed forces personnel involve in cases, section heads are demoted to non-supervisors; when section heads involve in cases, section managers are demoted to non-supervisors; and so on. Those recommending the promotion should also receive penalties.
- Aiming at strengthening supervisors’ determination, it is suggested to establish the “anti-corruption work diary of supervisors at all levels”, which should record problem finding, problem solving, and subordinate interaction. Each supervisor should have the exclusive “anti-corruption work diary” for examination. Through the external measure of “anti-corruption work diary” to change supervisors’ working attitude, a new organizational culture would be built.
- For reinforcing armed forces personnel’s cognition of anti-corruption, agencies should slack budget, invite experts for speeches every month, and rule each armed forces personnel to attend at least 6 speeches in a year, which is listed in the quantitative indicator of Class A in year-end examination. By unconsciously influencing personal character through experts’ inspirations, correct value would be consolidated.
- Transparent measures are suggested. Armed forces should regularly hold the interaction forum between anti-corruption personnel and armed forces personnel for anti-corruption personnel understanding the businesses of armed forces personnel and directly listening to armed forces personnel’s opinions to realize the problems and difficulties for the improvement and

avoid excessive investigation cases caused by the unfamiliarity with armed forces personnel' businesses. In the interaction process, armed forces personnel's opinions should be directly explained and responded; issues requiring discussions should be promised the solutions within the time limit for zero distance between anti-corruption personnel and armed forces personnel and smooth promotion of various anti-corruption measures.

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