“Religious feeling, morality and ethical feelings: the case study on Indonesia”

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RELIGIOUS FEELING, MORALITY AND ETHICAL FEELINGS: THE CASE STUDY ON INDONESIA

Abstract

There is no guarantee that people will follow their professional code of ethics. Large number of violation occurred in almost every organization. In this study we argued that commitment toward code of ethics, which is related to ethical feelings, is imperative to predict whether a person will obey their professional code. This study predicted that commitment to the code of ethics is determined by individual morality (i.e. moral judgment and moral maturity), and religious feeling. The survey was conducted through online questionnaire to Indonesian employees from various sectors and undergraduate students. The analysis revealed that moral judgment cannot predict commitment toward code of ethics. The result showed that religious feeling and moral maturity have positive association with commitment to code of ethics. In addition, these two concepts also produced favorable effect on moral judgment. Discussion, implication, and limitation are provided in the final part of article.

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INTRODUCTION

Since ethical issues are becoming crucial and imperative concern among the corporates, various types of formal professional code of ethics were established. The existing of such formal code of conduct could be seen as expected behavior to follow by organization members. Wotruba (1990) stressed three major purposes of establishing the code of ethics: to state organizations concerned of ethical issues, share and transfer of organizational value to its members, and influencing the behavior of organization members. Despite the various benefits of having the formal code of ethics, the scholars argued that the established rules of ethical guidelines are not sufficient in shaping the individual behavior (Chao, Li, & Chen, 2016; Somers, 2001). In order to strengthen the codes, each organization member should have commitment to the professional code of ethics (Chao et al., 2016) and blend it with other organizational system.

Literature suggested that commitment is a consequence of interaction between personal traits and experiences, organizational forces, and the alignment among those factors (Kaur, 2017). Many scholars believed that commitment is an imperative construct on shaping productive behavior at work. It is believed to be able to reduce turnover intention (Mohamed, Taylor, & Hassan, 2006; Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008), enhance work motivation (Kaur, 2017), and increase

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performance (Camilleri & Van Der Heijden, 2007; Sharma, Kong, & Kingshott, 2016). However, commitment has a focal point (Redman & Snape, 2005). A person could have multiple commitment toward various things such as supervisor, CEO, union representative, or toward code of conduct.

Professional commitment consists of three dimensions, namely normative, affective, and continuance (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Hall, Smith, & Langfield-Smith, 2005; Meyer & Allen, 1991). It covers rational consideration, emotional attachment, and individual obligation about their working condition. As such, commitment can also be understood as individual specific mental judgment about their surroundings. Similarly, commitment codes of ethics should be determined by individual judgment about ethical dilemma. As people come to a judgment of their moral reasoning, it should affect their level of commitment toward particular issues, including code of ethics.

Social cognitive theory suggested that people judgment depends on the level of their moral development (Kracher, Chatterjee, & Lundquist, 2002; Martynov, 2009). Each level reflected people orientation when dealing with dilemmas and alternatives. Although literatures have sound consistency regarding the effect of moral development, the issues might be distinct when associated with moral maturity. Instead differing people with a certain level, moral maturity focused on ability to distinguish right from wrong and willingness to act morally (Chao et al., 2016; Mujtaba & Sims, 2006; Philibert, 1982). Mature people might have better judgment on moral issues and stronger commitment to formal code of ethics.

Judgment could also be influenced by individual values and norms (Finkeilstein, Hambrick, & Cannella, 2009), which reflected from consistent behavior or activity. Since ethical issues are closely related to right or wrong, people who have commitment to a religion and its doctrine might hold strong framework about ethical dilemmas. Religion usually consists of meaning, values, norm, and for particular also covers specific guidelines on behavior code of conduct (Zimmer, Jagger, Chiu, Beth, & Rojo, 2016). High engagement to religion activity such as pray, reading holy text, preaching, and others might shape individual judgment and attitude toward code of ethics.

This study was partially inspired by the work of Chao et al. (2016). Instead of considering commitment to codes of ethics, as a consequence, they used it as predictors of moral judgment. Problem of their study is that they did not really discussed commitment to code of ethics, but rather the established hypothesis about the effect of having professional code of conduct. This study intended to answer specific questions: how moral maturity and religiosity affect individual moral judgment; and how moral judgment influences the level of individual commitment to codes of ethics.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various literatures have discussed and conceptualized the commitment. The most popular is commitment as a psychological state of employee indicating whether to involve or to not with organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It has components that reflect the individual desire (i.e. affective), need (i.e. continuance), and obligation (i.e. normative) (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Commitment was also defined beyond psychological state as attitudinal and behavioral tendency (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). As attitudinal commitment could be understood as individual mind set regarding their involvement with organization, behavioral commitment is related to how a person is engaged in organization through their performance of action (Meyerson & Kline, 2008; Mowday et al., 1982).

Both streams of definition indicated that commitment is related to emotional attachment, rational decision, and moral obligation influencing people attitude and behavior. In more recent study, commitment should be considered as multilevel and multifocal construct (Redman & Snape, 2005). The person might be more attached to other than their organization such as union representative, supervisor, or code of conduct.

Commitment to code of ethics could also be understood as psychological state or attitudinal and behavioral tendency toward code of ethics. It has to be able to indicate whether people having a stable mindset to commit with their professional code and to perform consistent actions following such code. We argued that the existence of code of ethics is not sufficient unless it is shared and stressed among employees. Evidence was found that although employees are aware of having a professional code, large numbers of code violation still remain (Chokprajakchat & Sumretphol, 2017; Somers, 2001). As such, being committed to ethical guidelines is more important than merely having formal code of conduct.

Kholberg's cognitive moral development explained why people might end up with different judgment of moral dilemma for the same existing issues (Shawver & Sennetti, 2009; Wright, 1995). The theory suggested that people are different in terms of the level of moral development. Consequentlly, the level consist of pre-conventional, which is oriented to self-interest, conventional level, which refers to social norms and value, and post-conventional, which relies on the ideals right (Kracher et al., 2002; Martynov, 2009). Moral judgment was argued as behavioral prediction, and it was established before decision (Gold, Pulford, & Colman, 2015). It means people might perform different action while having opposite judgment. Gold et al. (2015) explained that doing right action cannot completely be justifed as right, it still remains morally discreditable.

Chao et al., (2016) described moral judgment as a result of moral reasoning. It was defined as process of understanding the situation, recognizing ethical issues and dilemmas, and arriving at moral judgment (Chao et al., 2016; Shawver & Sennetti, 2009). It can be said that moral reasoning is a decision-making process. However, as argued by Gold et al. (2015), result on moral reasoning (i.e. moral judgment) could be arrived at different decision of behavior. They provided evidence that people judgment regarding moral dilemma was incongruent with their behavior as the result of economic consequences.

Scholars agreed that moral maturity has an important role in shaping the individual reasoning and judgment (Chao et al., 2016; Ferguson & Cairns, 1996). Maturity is often associated with development and progress. Such concept was defined as "growth or ability to distinguish right from wrong, to develop a framework of ethical values, and learn to act morally" (Chao et al., 2016; Jadack, Hyde, Moore, & Keller, 1995; Mujtaba & Sims, 2006). Philibert (1982) suggested that the imperative measure of maturity level is the individual willingness to take a responsible view of ethical questions. High level of maturity should be able to lead people arriving at the morally judgment toward ethical dilemmas. However, people could trap in moral truncation (Fields, 1973), which indicated the delay on individual maturity level. Many causes could affect the delay. Evidence showed that the maturity level of individual was influenced by social environment and family. Ferguson and Cairns (1996) found that children and adults in conflict area have lower maturity than those in the more stable area. Additionally, maturity level also determined the learning process in family and from parents (Simmons, 1982).

Religiosity is closely related with religion, which could be understood as "specific foundation of principles that are organized around distinct system of belief, practices, and rituals" (Zimmer et al., 2016). Different from spirituality, it is often measured in direct way of individual behavior (Bloodgood, Turnley, & Mudrack, 2008; Zimmer et al., 2016) such as frequency of pray, attendance of religion forum and discussion, reading sacred religion text, and others. Bloodgood et al. (2008) defined religiosity as "understanding, committing to, and following a set of religious doctrines or principles". Previous studies found that high students who are engaged more frequently in religious activities are less likely to conduct cheating behavior (Bloodgood et al., 2008), low level of hedonism (Hamzah, Suandi, Hamzah, & Tamam, 2014), and negative perception toward corruption (Yahya, Yean, Johari, & Saad, 2015).

While most studies were focused on the overall commitment, this article scrutinized specific dimension of individual commitment toward code of ethics. The measurement of such dimension does not only only cover individual attitudes and values, but also considers behavioral tendencies (Laczniak & Murphy, 2006). Previous literature has investigated behavioral and attitude determinants of commitment. However, this article con-

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siders individual competencies of moral judgment as an important factor affecting the commitment to code of ethics.

2. HYPOTHESES

Although attitude could be influenced by various factors, belief and values were imperative as they consist of fundamental principle and meaning. Jin and Drozdenko (2003) found that values hold by manager influence their ethical attitudes. Religion does not only consisted of rituals and practice, but also has norms and values that are fundamental reason of such religious activity (Zimmer et al., 2016). The more active a person implements their religious activity, the more embedded are the norms of religion. Since religion consists of positive norms, which encompassed people to engage in good things, an individual with high level of religiosity should arrive at ethical judgment. Experiment of Piazza and Sousa (2014) revealed that those with high level religiosity has negative judgment toward consensual incest. Religiosity was also found to influence students' negative perception on corruptive behavior (Yahya et al., 2015), decreasing hedonism (Hamzah et al., 2014), less likely to cheat (Bloodgood et al., 2008), and more likely to choose "halal" product (Mukhtar & Mohsin Butt, 2012).

H1: There is a positive association between individual religiosity and commitment to code of ethics.

H2: There is a positive association between individual religiosity and moral judgment.

Relying on Kohlberg's (1981) cognitive moral development, an individual moral judgment can be placed on specific level of moral development. The highest level is indicating more considered people, while the lowest level reflects self-interestedness. The level is systematic, a person has to be on the lower level before arriving at the higher one (Chao et al., 2016; Martynov, 2009). Reaching higher levels indicated an increasing life experience, which is also reflected at higher maturity level (Mujtaba, Tajaddini, & Chen, 2011; Philibert, 1982). People with high level of moral development have better sensitivity and reasoning toward ethical dilemmas (Shawver & Sennetti, 2009), and, in turn, they might arrive at more ethical judgment. Chao et al. (2016) found positive association between moral maturity and moral judgment. In addition, study of Gibbs et al., (1986) showed that more mature people tend to have courage and be committed to ideal action.

H3: There is a positive association between individual moral maturity and commitment to code of ethics.

H4: There is a positive association between individual moral maturity and moral judgment.

Moral judgment is a result of moral reasoning. As people have specific judgment regarding particular ethical issues, it does not implicate their decision and behavior. Judgment is only a behavior prediction and is formed before decision (Gold et al., 2015). In order to commit, people have to make decision in form of psychological state about their desire, need, and obligation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). However, more ethical moral judgment should enhance individual courage to stick to their judgment, and hold ethical principle or code of conduct. Finally, ethical moral judgment might lead people to be more committed to their professional code of ethics.

H5: There is a positive association between individual moral judgment and commitment to code of ethics.

3. AIMS

There are three specific objectives of this study. First is to examine whether religiosity and moral maturity influence individual moral judgment. Next is to inquire the relationship of religiosity and moral maturity toward commitment to code of ethics. Finally, this study aims to investigate whether individual moral judgment determines the commitment to code of ethics.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Data and sample

The data were collected through surveys of business practitioners and business students in several regions in Indonesia, including Sumatra,

Java and Sulawesi. We used online questionnaire containing measurements of each variables and case scenario of moral judgment. The link of the questionnaire was spread through contact of all authors. We used convenience sampling technique in order to reach large response rate. To ensure valid measuring process, questionnaire was equipped with reverse question. The items were adopted from well-established measurement of previous studies. The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire with the measurement items adopted from well-established scales in the literature. Our survey got 274 of total responses. After initial check of data, there were two invalid responses, thus, a total of 272 responses were used in further analysis.

4.2. Measurement

4.2.1. Religiosity

The religiosity were measured using 11 items, developed by Özer, Özbek, Elçi, and Aydın, (2014). Respondents were asked to answer the questions on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree". The religiosity composite variable was created by averaging all items.

4.2.2. Moral maturity

To measure the moral maturity, we adopted the items and method used by Chao et al. (2016). The respondents were asked to rate 4 items with five-point Likert scale on the importance of the ethical belief related to the provided statement. Then, the first two questions were reverse-coded. To determine the respondent's moral maturity level, a P score was formulated by calculating the ranking of the data. The score was created for each statement in terms of perceived importance. If respondent scored "5", then four points were added to responses; three points for a score of 4, and so on. The composite score was created by averaging the P score to indicate the respondent's moral maturity level.

4.2.3. Moral judgment

The moral judgment was measured using procedure used by Marta, Heiss, Lurgio, and Delurgio (2008) and Chao et al. (2016). Respondents were provided a business scenario and then we asked them to respond on 3 items with seven-point Likert scale (1 = extremely disagree; 7 = extremely agree). The responses were reverse-coded and overall items were averaged to create the composite score of moral judgment variable.

4.2.4. Commitment to codes of ethics

To measure the commitment to codes of ethics, we followed the method used by Laczniak and Murphy (2006). The ethical values developed by the American Marketing Association (AMA) were adopted, including honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, openness, and citizenship. First, we asked the respondents to rate the importance of each code of ethics using a nine-point scale (1 = not important at all; 9 = extremely important). In the second stage, we asked the strength of their feelings about adopting each code of ethics (1 = not strong at all; 9 = extremely strong). The score of each code was calculated by averaging the score of importance and strength. The composite score of construct is indicated by average score of each of the averaged items.

5. RESULTS AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

Several steps were taken to analyze the data. We used the Cronbach's Alpha and Confirmatory Factor Analysis to check the reliability and validity of the measurement. Pearson correlation was used to indicate inter-item correlation among variables. Then, regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses.

Table 1 describes descriptive statistics and correlation matrix among variables. The result shows high positive correlation between religiosity and commitment to codes of ethics. Similarly, positive correlation appeared between moral maturity and commitment to ethics. No correlation occurred on the relationship between religiosity and moral maturity and it indicated the absence of multicollinearity between the independent variables. Moral maturity also has positive correlation with moral judgment.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

No	Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3	4
1	Religiosity	272	4.72	.43	1			
2	Commitment to codes of ethics	272	7.83	.97	.354**	1		
3	Moral judgment	272	5.39	1.69	.019	.053	1	
4	Moral maturity	272	1.80	.99	.038	.168**	.197**	1

Note: ** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression analysis revealed positive association between religiosity and commitment to codes of ethics (β = 0.348, $p < 0.01$). Result in Table 2 (model 1) indicated that people with high level of religiosity tend to be committed to code of conduct. Thus, hypothesis 1 is supported. However, as described in the model 2, hypothesis 2 was not supported, since the religiosity has an insignificant effect on moral judgment (β = 0.011, $p > 0.05$). This result means that religiosity level does not affected individual judgment related to moral issues.

Table 2. Regression results

Independent variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Com to ethic	Mor judg	Com to ethic	Com to ethic
Religiosity	.348**	.011		.348**
Moral maturity	.155**	0.197**		.151**
Moral judgment			.053	.017
F	23.60**	5.477**	.758	15.707**
Adjusted R square	.143	.032	.001	.140

Note: * significant at 5% (p<0.05), ** significant at 1% (p<0.01).

H3 is supported by data which revealed positive association between moral maturity and commitment to code of ethics (β = 0.155, $p < 0.01$). The relationship explained that high level of commitment toward code of conduct is determined by high maturity. Similarly, moral maturity has positive effect on moral judgment (β = 0.197, $p < 0.01$). It means that the higher morally mature a person, is the higher probability is that he/she ends up with moral judgment. Thus, *H4* is supported by empirical data. *H5* that predicts positive correlation between moral judgment and commitment to code of ethics was not supported by data. The result did not revealed any correlation between those constructs (β = 0.053, $p > 0.05$).

5.2.1. Validity and reliability

The confirmatory factor analysis using principal component analysis with varimax rotation indicated that the instruments are valid. KMO Bartlett's test shows 0.88, which indicated that the overall measurement model is valid. We used only valid items, which had above 0.5 loading score for further analysis. Complete results of validity and reliability are explained in Table 1.

Table 3. Factor loading and Cronbach's Alpha

ITEMS	Factor loading				Cronbach's Alpha
	1	2	3	4	
MJ_2				.866	.664
MJ_3				.801	
MM_1			.850		.449
MM_2			.839		
MM_3			.504		
MM_4			.580		
CEC_1		.773			.902
CEC_2		.792			
CEC_3		.813			
CEC_4		.825			
CEC_5		.791			
CEC_6		.748			
RG_1	.860				.914
RG_2	.807				
RG_3	.700				
RG_4	.715				
RG_5	.667				
RG_6	.852				
RG_7	.879				
RG_8	.863				
RG_9	.853				
RG_{10}	.545				
RG_{11}	.629				

Note: MJ – moral judgment; MM – moral maturity; CEC – commitment to code ethics; RG – religiosity.

There are two valid items of moral judgment, which as overall construct having sufficient score of Cronbach's Alpha. Moral maturity has four valid instruments, although they produced unsatisfactory level of relia bility score. Commitment to code of ethics is having six valid measurements and high score of Cronbach's Alpha. Similarly, religiosity has higher level of reliability, which has 11 valid questions.

6. DISCUSSIONS

Data provided empirical evidence that religiosity could amplify individual commitment. It implied that by practicing the religious activity and doctrine regularly, people will eventually decide to stay at job. It means religiosity influences individual perception on weighting their desire, need, and considering their obligation toward job. As described by Bloodgood et al. (2008) and Zimmer et al. (2016), religiosity could be indicated through frequency of religious activity such as pray and reading sacred text, such consistency might affect individual behavior related to the ability in accepting job condition.

Our prediction of positive correlation between religiosity and moral judgment did not obtain empirical support. It seems religious activity cannot be easily embedded in to personal value in judging moral issues. Mural judgment was argued as function of justice, relativism, egoism, utilitarianism, and contractual when dealing with ethical dilemma at work (Shawver & Sennetti, 2009). Since religiosity is related to activity and behavior, it seems that being merely engaged in religious activity cannot guarantee the influence on personal core value. Instead of assessing religiosity, individual spirituality might be more reliable to indicate value awareness (Zimmer et al., 2016), including religion doctrine embeddedness.

Maturity level has positive effect on moral judgment. The result confirmed cognitive moral theory suggesting distinct style of thinking between people with different level of moral development. As maturity is constructed by personal life learning and experiences (Lăzărescu, 2012; Martinez & Jaeger, 2016; Martynov, 2009), then it shaped the way they see an ethical dilemma. Less mature tend to consider self-interest when dealing with ethical issues that might make them choose unethical action. On the other hand, mature people could end up with more ethical decision. This study support previous finding of Chao et al. (2016) who found positive association between maturity and moral judgment among China's managers.

Result also showed positive relationship between maturity and commitment to ethics. Mature people tend to have more consideration on weighting alternatives, including whether to stay or leave from job. More mature people will consider their job based on their obligation or normative commitment, which resulted in higher level of commitment. This study provides additional support to Gibbs et al.'s (1986) study who found positive effect of maturity on commitment to ideal action.

Relationship between moral judgment and commitment to code ethics was not supported by data. It implied that having ethical moral reasoning does not automatically arrive at positive attitude toward staying at job. Moral judgment is a people's perception about ethical or moral issues, it consists of psychological judgment which reflected individual attitude about the issues. However, it seems that individual might suffer cognitive dissonance when dealing with ethical issue. Although they firmed about ethical judgment, others factors might change the decision. Cognitive dissonance is a mental that stress arises as people find their actions are not consistent with belief (Lawson & Price, 2003). This study did not confirm Gold et al. (2015) argument saying that judgment is only a behavior prediction formed before decision to act. Individual needs to weight their desire, need, and obligation toward the issues simultaneously before decision to commit (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that religiosity needs to be considered in improving the individual commitment and obedience toward code of ethics. Regular commitment to be involved in religion activity affected the individual openness to commit to other rules like code of conduct. However, frequency of such activity does not determined reasoning process when dealing with ethical dilemmas. It seems various factors surrounded the judgment process. One factor was that empirically supported by this study is maturity level. This study suggested that distinct orientation and cognitive style reflected through maturity level play an imperative role in moral reasoning. Such distinctive features also influence individual commit-

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ment toward code of ethics. This study surveys students and employees in Indonesia using the online questionnaire. However, we did not categorize such groups in analysis. Future studies should consider to analyze different groups separately due to potential traits and characteristics between them.

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