

Tolerance to gratification as a proxy for corruption: Comparison between Indonesia and Hong Kong

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Abstract: Corruption is a global problem faced by every country and culture around the world. Since overt corrupt behaviour does not develop in a person overnight, it is therefore important to identify the more proximal and benign forms of corruption. In this research, taking advantage of the cultural and corruption perception index differences between Indonesia and Hong Kong, we conducted a qualitative study on the phenomenon of gratification, the act of giving a public officer monetary or physical rewards for a service they provide, even though the service is within their job description. The research subjects were drawn from Hong Kong and Indonesian college students or fresh graduates. During the interview, we found striking differences between Hong Kong and Indonesian respondents in terms of the experience of being asked for a reward, the perception and urge to give a reward, and the tendency to accept a reward during a public service transaction. Indonesian respondents are generally more exposed, familiar, and permissive to gratification than their Hong Kong counterparts. The reasons for this phenomenon were then investigated and a possible correlation of this permissiveness with the country's corruption perception index was then discussed. It is suggested that corruption eradication must be accompanied by sociocultural and educational intervention toward naïve subjects, thus preventing them from being permissive to gratification, which can act as the proxy for active corruption in the future.

Keywords: Gratification; Corruption; Culture; Indonesia; Hong Kong

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Introduction

Corruption is universally considered an overt crime, however its subtler versions exist in various entities. In Indonesia, the act of giving money or gifts to a public officer for a service can be regarded as a derivate of corruption; termed “gratification” by 2001 Law No. 20 article 12B on the Eradication of the Crime of Corruption. However, culturally, there is arguably a grey area in this regard, such as the sum of money that is necessary to categorize such an act as a gratification, as well as the context in which the giving takes place. These facts, among others, can be left to the interpretation of the actors. Gratification eradication is therefore not merely a juridical goal. Instead, an ethnographic study is necessary to complement any judicial intervention against gratification. This is because the tradition of giving has occurred in some societies for generations, and as stated by Meyer (2016), traditions will be passed to the next generations as collective rules called “culture”.

Hong Kong¹ and Indonesia lie at two different ends of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). In 2019, Hong Kong ranked in position 16 out of 198 countries (score: 76/100), while Indonesia ranked in position 85 with a score of 40/100 (Transparency International, 2019). Hong Kong and Indonesia are examples of two clusters that represent different faces of collectivism (Murphy-Berman & Berman, 2002). On the Hofstede (1984) dimension, Hong Kong showed to be high on collectivism², masculine, high on power difference, and weak on uncertainty avoidance. More

¹ Since 1997, Hong Kong has been considered a special administrative region of the Republic of China while maintaining its autonomy until the year 2047.

² It must be noted that the author made the comparison against the Western countries.

recently, however, Hong Kong has been shown to increasingly emphasize individualistic values such as instrumentalism and contractualism (Murphy-Berman & Berman, 2002). Indonesia, although said to possess a similar degree of collectivism, exhibits more femininity and fairly low uncertainty avoidance (Murphy-Berman & Berman, 2002). These contrasts and comparisons between Indonesia and Hong Kong on Hofstede's dimension of collectivism have become relevant when studying corruptive behaviour because Triandis et al. (2001) and Li, Triandis, & Yu (2006), among others, showed that collective societies are more susceptible to such behaviours compared to more individualistic societies.

Comparisons between the policies, strategies, and practices in fighting corruption between Indonesia and Hong Kong have been previously discussed (Arifin et al., 2019; Kamil et al., 2018). In Indonesia, the anti-corruption policies explicitly aim at formal education, while in Hong Kong they are included in the prevention measures for public education. In Indonesia, the initiation of law enforcement can be performed by the Indonesian Commission for Corruption Eradication (KPK) or the state attorney, while in Hong Kong it is mostly initiated by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Of note, the discontinuation of corruption investigation (as a balance mechanism for law) is regulated in expressive language in Indonesian, but not in Hong Kong, anti-corruption law (Ahwan & Santoso, 2022).

It must be noted that corruptors do not develop these behaviours overnight. There are arguably preconditioning phases where more subtle corruptive behaviours are being permitted, eventually culminating in an active, overt corruption crime. The model of Triandis et al (2001), therefore, lacked the causality analysis and did not provide an explanation about the proximal precursor of corruption, such as gratification, which we intend to investigate in this current research.

One subtle corruptive behaviour is the practice of giving or receiving an extra reward for a service provided by a public officer. In Indonesia, this behaviour is called '*gratifikasi*', which translates as 'gratification'³; a novel term coined by the KPK which refers to "a gift in a general meaning", which is then elaborated to be one within the context of public official service or country-related affairs (Fazzan & Ali, 2015; Gede & Sugama, 2019). Previous research has attempted to identify the causes of gratification in Indonesia. Hamzah (2005). identified several potential causes, including the low wages of public servants compared to their daily expenses, the sociocultural background of Indonesia, and insufficient control. Susanto and Fernando (2022) surmised that gratification occurs because of pressure, opportunity, and justification of the actors, followed by normalization by the society. Interestingly, the pressure can arise from the needs of both the public servant and service user themselves. For example, a user might need to produce a legal paper within a short period of time, therefore special handling by an insider is deemed necessary.

History and Development of Gratification: Indonesian Perspective

The term "gratification" was coined by the Indonesian government through the Indonesian Commission for Corruption Eradication in 2001 as a campaign to eliminate corruption, collusion, and nepotism in Indonesia. Before this, the practice of giving a public officer a monetary or physical reward existed without a name (some called it "thank you money" or more casually "cigarette money").

By using a historical analysis approach, it is possible to identify a primordial corruption practice by utilizing historical time-staging, which would eventually display the developmental pattern of gratification. Hilman (2018) argued that gratification stems from the ancient practice of *upeti* during the age of pre-Indonesian kingdoms, which continued to be practiced in the colonial era. *Upeti* is the concept of giving a "gift" to a higher authority, such as the ruling king (the root word *upatti* comes from Sanskrit, meaning proof of loyalty). It was a common practice that the hierarchically lower ruler would send a part of their fortune to the more sovereign kings as a sign of submission and respect, as stated by Hilman: "In a monarchical government, the concept

³ It must be noted, however, that in the English language, the meaning of gratification is more general, including any rewarding activities unrelated to public service.

of giving something in order to get protection, safety, or position is a common practice” (Hilman, 2018). In alignment with this, Sutherland regarded *upeti* as a pattern of power transaction between the society and the ruler, even when the Indonesian bureaucracy had been upgraded to be based on a modern administrative system (Sutherland, 1979).

In modern Indonesian culture, especially in a society that does not possess the understanding to discern gifts from gratification, the practice of gratification can become a common practice or standard procedure. However, Indonesia is just one of the countries that suffers from the corrupting effects of gratification, as this phenomenon also happens in more developed countries (Nadler & Schulman, 2006). After detaching the context from the public service environment, however, societies around the world have always shared resources through gift exchanges to maintain their bond in a social group. While this is a common and universal human behaviour, it is mainly trust-based (Graycar & Jancsics, 2017).

Gratification as a Benign Proxy for Corruption

In general, all members of society strongly disagree with and do not encourage corruption. However, it is not uncommon to encounter cases where people give money or gifts as an expression of gratitude. Not surprisingly, the Indonesian Survey Institution in 2018 revealed that 34% of respondents thought that giving a sum of money to a public officer was a “general and normal” practice (Lembaga Survey Indonesia, 2018). Therefore, as Ruyadi et al. (2016) have rightly asserted, gratification in civil service is a social, not merely jurisdictional phenomenon. Kayam (2005) described this phenomenon in an institutional context, such as education. Teachers who demand extra fees from their students, officers who go home before their time, manipulation of office invoices, and utilization of official vehicles for personal business are among the acts that could be regarded as *petit* (small-scale) corruption. These behaviours are not uncommon in the daily practice of public officials. On the other side, the society, which uses the service from the public officers, has been displaying a cultural tendency to reward the officers with harvests, materials, service-in-return (*balas jasa*), or even money, regardless of the motivations behind it. Within the governmental circle itself, it was common for the lower-level leaders to give a present to the higher officers as a sign of respect, gratitude, or submission, until it was declared illegal by the KPK in 2001.

Gratification can serve as a proxy for future corruption for several reasons. First, both involve risk-taking and monetary reward. Neuroscientifically, these behaviours are embedded within the human brain reward system, innately providing a sense of satisfaction and addiction due to dopamine release from the ventral tegmental area to the nucleus accumbens and its extended network (Ethridge et al., 2017; Schmidt et al., 2020). An officer may learn over time that their service (action) would be associated with a gift (reward)—a basic pattern of Skinner's instrumental conditioning. The absence of the expected reward (when a service user did not give any reward) induces a feeling of loss, and in turn, another compensatory behaviour may occur, such as compromising other fund reports with a delusive justification (“I have worked so hard and not get rewarded by the customer; thus, I have the right to tap money from this fund”) (Mulligan & Hajcak, 2018). Second, desensitization can happen over time, in terms of the reward being received. A small gift received in the early career of an officer might be not harmful; however, this would start lifelong serial desensitization that may result in larger corruption later in the future (Garrett et al., 2016). Third, the environment (=superego, which sometimes is conflicting, e.g., the law vs. the custom) can act to shape the landscape of normality inside a human mind. In Indonesia, for example, gratification is forbidden by law but is more permitted by the culture. In a conflicting situation like this, the brain tends to choose an immediate reward instead of the less proximate rule (e.g., the law). Given that law enforcement is rare in comparison to cultural approval, the human brain can eventually develop a conceptual framework to finally accept gratification as normal behaviour (Bahnik & Vranka, 2020a).

Formulation of the Model

We postulated that the culture-specific attitude towards gratification may act as an indicator of whether the environment is more susceptible to corruption. Furthermore, we extended our

argument to describe how a more compromised behaviour towards gratification could predict examples of overt corruption later in one's life. If the society does not possess the instinct to reward an officer with money or things, then the officer would not have any expectation to gain more than his/her determined salary, which would prevent him/her from actively gathering money/things from sources other than his/her salary. However, due to the cross-sectional nature of this research, we only focussed on the first part of the arguments, that is enquiring whether the practice of gratification is different between Indonesia and Hong Kong, which have relatively low and high corruption perception indices, respectively (Transparency International, 2019)⁴. More specifically, we examined the experience and perception of Indonesian and Hong Kong students and fresh graduates regarding the practice of giving money/things to public officers as an extra reward for a service they provided. The possibility that this could serve as a proxy of active corruption among government officials in the future will be discussed in the later sections, emphasizing the neuroeconomic aspects in the evolution of corrupt behaviours.

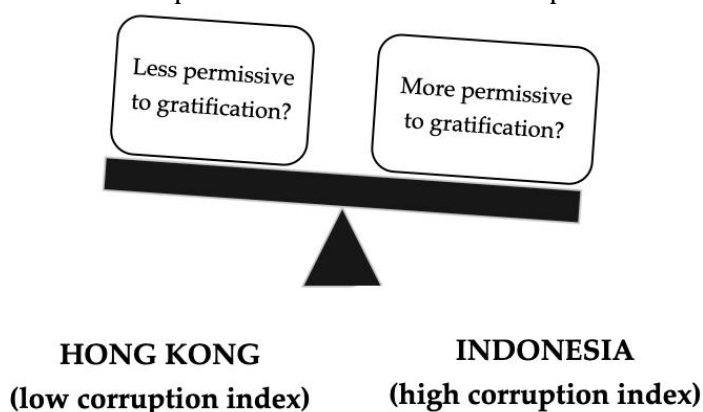


Figure 1. Model of the research. Hong Kong and Indonesia stand on relatively extreme ends of the corruption perception index. This research hypothesizes that the difference in gratification culture between these two countries is correlated with the relatively extreme indices of corruption.

This research aims to evaluate the action and perception of giving money or gifts to public officers as an act of kindness or gratitude among college students and fresh graduates in Hong Kong and Indonesia. First, we examined the experiential incidence of being asked for a reward by a public officer (the experience of bribery), and if applicable, the reaction of the respondents. Second, we explored whether there was ever a voluntary urge, motivation, and consequential actions of the respondent to give a reward to a public officer even without being asked (the experience of gratification/giving), and if applicable, the motivation behind it. Third, we asked about the respondent's opinions about gratification or "thank you gifts" for the officers (the perception of gratification). Last, we put the respondents in an imaginary situation where they were acting as public officers. After a service, the customer offers them a gift or money as an expression of gratitude. We asked if they would accept the gift, and further explored their reasonings behind their intended choice (the behaviour of accepting gratification).

Methods

Both in Indonesia and Hong Kong, the respondents were taken from students and fresh graduates of several public universities. Due to the heterogeneity of the student population in Indonesia, respondents from urban (n=2) and rural areas (n=3) were included in the study. The interviews were conducted from March to December 2020. The first author (AS), who speaks both Indonesian and English, conducted the interviews with Indonesian and English-speaking respondents in Hong Kong, using mostly telecommunication devices. Interviews of Hong Kong respondents were carried out with the help of BL (English, Mandarin, and Cantonese speaker) and PC (English and Cantonese speaker). BL and PC also provided a triangulation of insights from the Hong Kong perspective on Indonesian gratification practices to ensure a cross-cultural integration

⁴ Low scores denote high corruption, and higher scores reflect lack of corruption.

of perspectives into this study. BL and PC listed the derivative questions to be discussed about gratification in Indonesia and Hong Kong, thus providing another point-of-view on the same phenomenal contrast. Interviews in Hong Kong were conducted either face-to-face or by telecommunication. Since the age of the respondents may have affected their exposure to gratification and altered their ideology about it, we performed our research in a relatively homogenous sample, taken from the currently enrolled college students and recent fresh graduates. The questions for the respondents were prepared in advance, enquiring about: (1) the experience of being asked to give money/things as a reward for public service by a public officer; (2) the experience of giving money/things voluntarily as a “thank you gift” to public officers for a service; (3) the personal opinion on such practices. The questions were open-ended and intended to unfold other points of inquiry. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian, English, or Cantonese, depending on the respondent’s convenience. The interview notes and/or recordings were translated into English, transcribed, and grouped based on the three main questions above while the unfolding keywords and themes were being recorded. Upon the finalization of the main argumentation constructs by the first author (AS), the co-authors were invited to validate the narration and provide a triangulation of inspection and comments to enrich the discussion, especially regarding the linguistics and Hong Kong cultural aspects, of which the first author has limited knowledge. When necessary, follow-up interviews were conducted to saturate the derived information.

Results and Discussion

Semantics Consideration

During a preliminary internal discussion between the authors, we realized that the term ‘gratification’ in English and Cantonese has a different meaning from the Indonesian language (meaning general satisfaction, unrelated to any take-and-give in an official business or political context). In fact, there is no Cantonese counterpart for the Indonesian word “*gratifikasi*”. The closest term was “*bribery*” (賄賂), which involves an illegal act against the job description of the public officer—and would be misleading if being used in this research. The next closest terms for giving money were “*pocket-money*” (零用錢) and “*lai si*” (利是) in the context of the Chinese New Year, yet both are even farther from the Indonesian word “*gratifikasi*”. Therefore, we avoided using the English term “gratification” or its Chinese translation, and instead described it as “asking for money”, “giving thank you money”, or “giving things as an expression of gratitude” throughout the interview process while providing context for the respondents.

The Experience of being Asked for Money/Things as a Reward

All Hong Kong respondents (n=5) had never been asked to give monetary or other gifts as a reward for services by a public officer, both in campus and off-campus settings. More importantly, the respondents mentioned that it is “not acceptable” for public officers to expect or demand other rewards apart from his/her salary. When further asked about why the officers should not ask or expect a reward from the user, some respondents found this question did not make sense and just replied with generic answers such as “because it’s a service”. This impulsivity and brevity of answers could imply that Hong Kong respondents are largely alienated from the concept of rewarding public officers with gifts or monetary rewards, especially when prompted by an officer.

Indonesian respondents (n=5), on the other hand, had a mixed experience. While those who lived and studied in urban areas reported fewer occurrences of being asked for a reward for public services, those who lived in the rural areas recalled multiple occurrences of being asked for such a reward, reflecting a blackmail/bribery situation. Moreover, all respondents at some point had heard at least one story about the practice of gratification or blackmailing in dealings between the public and public service officers. Among the respondents who have experienced a face-to-face gratification-demanding situation, the modus operandi of the public officer included: (1) asking for a sum of money even before starting the service, referring to this as the “usual practice”⁵; (2)

⁵ “Usually people must pay this much.”

delaying the respondent's business until the next day for some made-up reason⁶; (3) slowly doing the job while engaging in a conversation about how other people have rewarded them for the same kind of service they gave in the past⁷.

The urge or Action of Voluntarily Rewarding a Public Officer as an Expression of Gratitude

Only one Hong Kong respondent said they would consider rewarding an officer with some kind of gift (but not money) for a service they provided. More specifically, this particular respondent said that they would reward a nice teacher at their public university. They did, however, emphasize that any reward-giving should be done communally as a whole class, and only after the academic year has ended. This was the most extreme answer among the respondents, as the remaining had no intention nor any urge to reward a public officer for any service they provided, both on-campus and off-campus. They had not ever had any compulsive urge or even a thought to reward an officer for their service. One respondent described it as an "unnecessary thank you". In addition, all respondents also firmly believed that the officers are not expecting any reward from the service user, adding another layer of reasoning for not giving any reward to the officer.

The Indonesian respondents, again, had a mixed experience. Respondents from urban areas did not feel the urge to reward the officer, as one of them mentioned, "just saying thank you is enough." They did not relate this non-rewarding action with the law even though they were aware of it; instead, the respondent emphasized the job description of the officers, which must be done without extra reward. Respondents from rural areas tended towards having more urge to reward an officer after a service, in particular: (1) if the service was satisfactory⁸, and interestingly; (2) if the officer did not ask for any reward. Based on the account of one Indonesian respondent, it seems that even though the public officer was not asking for a reward, they still expected to get it from the user. The respondent said, "we need to understand each other," referring to a service user needing to intrinsically understand the officer's unspoken wish. Another respondent mentioned the act of giving a reward as an expression of gratitude because the officer "has kindly helped us," despite knowing that the job is the officer's duty. This respondent in particular was not aware of the law against gratification. In addition, they expressed a feeling of respect for the officer as a country representative.

We would argue that there seem to be two independent factors underlying this gratitude-based giving among Indonesian respondents: (1) an embedded empathy in the mind of Indonesian respondents to innately reward the officer, and (2) a sense of respect for the officer, pushing respondents to put forward some reward, which in this case is comparable to the *upeti* concept.

Since Hong Kong respondents did not possess the urge to reward the officer, we then asked them further about an imaginary situation when an officer needs to act or judge their case on a basis of favouritism; for example, if they need to process a document faster and need personal help from the "inside". Two respondents found this scenario unlikely to happen but, to them, it still did not justify the act of rewarding the officer. At this point, one respondent said that "there is always some option for fast-processing with an extra fee, just check their website," indicating that extraordinary cases in Hong Kong have actually been anticipated and included in the rules.⁹ One respondent was asked whether, in this case, he would be willing to reward an officer in return for a "personal help". The response finally referred to the law as he mentioned: "definitely not, it's a bribery."

It appears that the Hong Kong bureaucratic system is relatively transparent and pre-accessible through the corresponding websites, including how to manage extraordinary cases. While similar is likely true in the big cities of Indonesia, those from rural areas do not possess the power or facilities to access information about a particular case within the bureaucracy (Kumorotomo 2009). Because of this, many of the service users are not able to provide the documents needed

⁶ "The boss is not here today, please come back tomorrow." Note that this is a subjective story told by the respondent. The fact of whether the boss was there cannot be conclusively determined by the interviewer.

⁷ "Previously.... after I helped them on this manner... they gave me this...", quoting a respondent mimicking the officer.

⁸ Satisfactory criteria ranged from the officer being polite, explaining well, being talkative, as well as getting the job done.

⁹ We checked the websites; there are some options for fast-track processing.

by themselves, thus some personal assistance from the officer would be necessary. This, in part, can increase a feeling of dependency towards the officer, because the service user is not pre-informed about the process. Eventually, this—in combination with the sense of gratitude and respect from the service user—could create a permissive environment for gratification to happen.

Perception of the Act of “Asking for Rewards” by Public Officers

All Hong Kong respondents, except for one, straightforwardly considered the act of a public officer asking for a reward for providing a service required under their normal job description as totally inappropriate and embarrassing. One respondent, however, mentioned that it is acceptable “if they do a really good job.” Nevertheless, all of them mentioned that that scenario is very unlikely to happen anywhere in Hong Kong. On the other extreme, one respondent found the question hard to comprehend, saying “the question doesn’t make sense”, reflecting the novelty of the gratification concept in his life, continuing, “maybe because I’ve been living in Hong Kong my whole life, so I’m not exposed to this.”

Indonesian respondents unanimously agreed that a public officer should not ask for a reward from the user, but to a varying degree and with several reasons. In general, Indonesian respondents would consider a frontal request as inappropriate, and such an act would make the officer lose his/her respect from the respondents. It would be better if “we give it voluntarily” as an expression of gratitude. One respondent said, “we [the users] also know how to express a thankful feeling, so the officer should not ask; it is a humiliating act [Indonesian: *bikin malu*]”. From this phenomenon, it can be argued that the initiatives of the service user to reward the officer come from the internal respect of valuing the help they have received, rather than being encouraged by the officer themselves. However, follow-up research in interviewing the public officers themselves is necessary, in order to clarify whether there are other factors on the officer’s side encouraging the gratification to happen (implicit or explicit expectation of a reward, or any attempt to complicate the service to make it look more difficult, thus increasing the client’s sense of owing).

The Willingness to Accept a Reward from the Service User: An Imaginary Scenario

We asked the respondents to imagine that they are now a public officer. After finishing their service, the client voluntarily offers them a gift or money as an expression of gratitude. We asked if they would accept the gift, and further explored the reasoning behind their choice.

One Hong Kong respondent interestingly was willing to accept the reward from the service user, as stating, “this is a kind of compliment of my effort.” Other remaining respondents refused to accept any form of reward for various reasons. One respondent said they would “joke around and politely refuse”, while another would “understand their sincerity, but won’t accept”. Interestingly, no Hong Kong respondents would recall the law and state to the client that their behaviour may induce a lawsuit, nor would they outright express their upset and refuse the gift in an emotional way.

During the pre-set imaginary scenario among Indonesian respondents, a longer story emerged. Two Indonesian respondents from the capital and one from a rural area said they would politely refuse the gift *at the first attempt* by quoting the formal gesture and recalling verbal statements such as, “no need to be so busy with the gift¹⁰” or “it’s my duty.” However, they were aware that it is very likely that the service user will insist to hand the gift in any way possible, such as throwing it on the table or sliding it into the officer’s palm or pocket, in which instance the respondent would stop refusing and finally accept the gift. Two remaining respondents (from rural areas) said they would accept whatever gift the customer offered and just say thanks right away. Interestingly, all the respondents considered the reason for accepting the gift as respecting the gift giver instead of being monetary-driven, with one saying, “It’s just the way they say thanks and not a bribery, so just take it.” All of the respondents were aware of the gratification law, but nobody recited the law to refuse the gift, as they mostly regard the phenomenon as “tradition”. None of them mentioned reporting the gift to authorities, as required by Indonesian law.

¹⁰ Indonesian: “Nggak usah repot-repot.”

It is important to note that the respondents were students or fresh-graduates, single, and not working yet. Therefore, their lack of life experience should be taken into account when analyzing their common behaviours. Later monetary needs in their future life could change their stances, especially with repetitive exposure to the same scenario, where desensitization can occur (Garrett et al., 2016). The researchers raise our concern at the fact that Indonesian respondents are already willing to accept the gift—behaviour which could act as a proxy for later corruptive behaviour. In fact, Mapuasari and Mahmudah (2018) asserted that the environment could set a standard about whether gratification is “common” and “ethical” within a certain cultural context. This can lead to the rationalization of gratification within the actors’ minds (both the giver and the acceptor), thus the sociocultural approach for eradicating gratification is necessary.

Limitations of the Study

The current findings must be interpreted cautiously. While it has been shown that Indonesian and Hong Kong respondents had conflicting views regarding the act and perception of gratification—which also positively correlated with their respective global corruption rankings, a causal relationship between gratification and corruption could not be explicitly established. It is possible that gratification and explicit corruption are two different sets of phenomena with distinct risk factors, and our current finding have just highlighted these two extremities separately.

We are aware that this current study only involved a small sample of students from both countries and may reduce the ability to generalize. However, given the homogeneity of the information retrieved from both groups, this qualitative research may have already provided at least a preliminary suggestion that gratification behaviour and perception among students and fresh graduates could affect their actual likelihood of actively being involved in gratification in a real-world setting. This study also only provided a comparison between Indonesia and Hong Kong, attempting to correlate the gratification behaviour with the corruption index. When the same research method is applied to other countries, the study outcome may differ from ours, highlighting the complexity of the corruption problem depending on the cultural fingerprint of each country. Lastly, it is not possible to directly draw a line of a causal relationship between gratification and corruption indices. A longitudinal study to monitor gratification perception in current students and future corruptive behaviour would be necessary before making a conclusion, although it would be technically difficult due to its long duration and technical caveats. In the meantime, launching a cultural and educational-based campaign of anti-gratification behaviour would be a feasible option, as the future corruption indices may be measured later. Hopefully, this *theranostic* approach would elicit a decrease in a measurable corruption index, while also being considered a very successful intervention study.

Conclusion

Hong Kong and Indonesian respondents have a striking difference in their experience of being asked for monetary/physical gifts by a public officer. A predominantly negative attitude (e.g., rejection) toward gratification practices is exhibited by Hong Kong respondents, while Indonesian respondents are relatively more permissive. While the correlation of gratification and corruption indices does exist in these two countries, the determination of a causal relationship demands future research. In the meantime, it would be a rational step for the Indonesian government to eliminate gratification even at the smallest scale. This is achievable through a combination of law enforcement and socio-cultural and educational approaches in naïve young people, rather than pure law enforcement later in adult life, in order to prevent the oversaturation of permissive cultural influence towards gratification among younger generations. The efforts to reach the younger generations have been more frequently made recently, as reported by Zainuddin et al. (2023), using a group counselling method. Following the counselling, the students expressed their commitment to refusing gratification, even though it had not happened yet. Since religions hold a significant role as the ethical standard in Indonesia, religious approaches to the students also serve as feasible actions (Siregar et al., 2022). Of note, these recent activities were performed as

a collaboration between schools and universities as a part of the community service, emphasizing the importance of school-university cooperation in tackling multiple issues, including anticorruption education (Harahap et al., 2023; Supit et al., 2023). Lastly, in the bureaucratic system, providing clear information, preferably online, about a certain legal procedure can decrease the public's dependency on the officers-in-charge, and eventually reduce the instinct to reward them outside of their salary.

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